

Mapping Commercial Sex Across London

Sandra Dickson • The Poppy Project

Sex in the City:

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Information gathered between July and December 2003

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The information in this publication is correct to the best of our knowledge.

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Finally, we continue to be appreciative of the bravery of women trafficked into prostitution who share their often very traumatic experiences with us, both for themselves and to help other women sexually exploited in the sex industry.

Edited by Julie Bindel, Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Methodology	7
3. Summary of Key Findings	10
4. Recommendations	12
4a. Statutory Responses to the Sex Industry – The Police	12
4b. Statutory Responses to the Sex Industry – Local Authorities and Licensing	12
4c. Sexual Health Outreach Services	12
4d. Tackling Demand	13
4e. Further Mapping	14
5. The Sex Industry in London - Flats/Parlours/Saunas	15
5a. Numbers of Women	16
5b. Ethnicities of Women	17
5c. Marketing of Women	24
6. The Sex Industry in London - The Escort Industry	26
6a. Agencies	26
6b. Numbers of Women	26
6c. Ethnicities of Women	26
6d. Marketing of Women	28
7. The Sex Industry in London - On Street Prostitution	30
8. The Sex Industry in London - Chat Lines	32
9. The Sex Industry in London - Lap Dance Clubs	33
10. Trafficking for Marriage as a Route into the Sex Industry?	34
11. Evidence of Organised Crime	36
12. Statutory Responses to the Sex Industry	40
12a. The Police	40
12b. Local Authorities and Licensing	42
13. Sexual Health Outreach Services	47
14. Tackling Demand	51
15. Recommendations for Further Mapping	55
Appendix A – Ethnicity Analysis by Borough	56
References	73

List of Charts

1. Flats, Parlours and Saunas Selling Sex Across London by Borough	15
2. Number of Women Working in Flats/Parlours/Saunas in London by Borough	16
3. Ethnicity Groupings of Women Working in Flats/Parlours/Saunas	19
4. Ethnicity of Women Referred to the POPPY Project: March 2003 – January 2004	21
5. Ethnicity Groupings of Women Working for Escort Agencies	27
6. Results of Telephone Mapping of Related Numbers	36
7. Ethnicity of Women Working in London Sites with Prefix 290-400 and Prefix 770-810	38
8. Ethnicity of Women Working in Sites Outside of London with Prefix 290-400 and Prefix 770-810	38

List of Tables

1. Sample of Trafficked Women Supported by the POPPY Project	17
2. Nationality/Ethnicity Groupings of Women in the Sex Industry	18
3. Ethnicity Percentages Recorded by Outreach Agencies to Flats/Parlours/Saunas	20
4. Licenses Issued to Sites Selling Sex	43
5. Coverage of Current Sexual Health Outreach Services by Borough	47
6. Accessing Sexual Health Outreach Support	49

1. Introduction

The POPPY Project provides accommodation and support services for women who have been trafficked into the United Kingdom for sexual exploitation. POPPY also has a remit to research and develop services to assist women to exit prostitution and escape trafficking. This work has led to an increasing awareness that women are trafficked into prostitution in flats, parlours and saunas all over London and the rest of the United Kingdom, in direct contradiction to the dominant public perception of London's sex industry as primarily concentrated in sex 'hotspots' around Soho, Shepherd's Market and Kings Cross. Without accurate figures, it is very difficult to campaign for adequate resources to work with women involved in the sex industry in London who require support. Prompted by this lack of information, this research attempts to map where sex is being sold in London, in order to clarify the scale and range of venues selling sex, and therefore the numbers of women working in prostitution.

The mapping exercise began in July 2003. The POPPY Project spent six months gathering information from a range of sources in order to produce a 'snapshot' of London's sex industry. Resources were concentrated on exploring the situations of women selling sex, largely because as a feminist organisation Eaves currently develop and provide accommodation and support services for women. No information is included regarding men working in the sex industry.

The initial remit of the research was to locate the sites where sex was being sold, and the ethnicities of women working there. The report examines the extent and geographical range of London's commercial sex industry, and support services, including health care, outreach and exit strategies available to women. Additionally, it aims to estimate the number of women trafficked into London's sex industry¹. Although this report will briefly examine a range of sectors of the sex industry, including on-street prostitution, chat lines, and sex entertainment in the form of lap-dancing, its main focus is off-street prostitution, where the majority of trafficked women in the United Kingdom are exploited.

The main aim of this research is to focus the attention of policy-makers, statutory agencies, funding bodies and services supporting women in the sex industry on a simple truth: that women are selling sex, and men are buying sex, all over London.

¹ For the purposes of this report, trafficking will be defined using the United Nations Protocol To Prevent, Suppress And Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children, Supplementing The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (2000), commonly known as the Palermo Protocol. Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol states that :
(a) 'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs, (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.

Inevitably, many of these women will have been trafficked into the United Kingdom for the express purpose of their sexual exploitation profiting traffickers, pimps and those owning establishments where sex is sold.

Women in prostitution face abuse and exploitation, and for migrant women this is frequently exacerbated by their insecure immigration status, whether they have been trafficked or not. Research also shows that women of any background in on-street prostitution in the United Kingdom are disproportionately likely to have suffered sexual abuse as children; be involved in violent relationships, to have experienced homelessness, and to have substance misuse issues².

The mapping remit widened when links were uncovered between different agencies selling sex, outlined in the Evidence of Organised Crime section. The implications of a sex industry with the capacity to move women around the country poses clear challenges for both law enforcement and service provision for women in prostitution.

The POPPY Project also investigated the licensing of massage parlours and saunas by local authorities, the results of which are detailed in the Statutory Responses section. Most London boroughs were eager to discuss their difficulties in monitoring requests for licensing, and there are implications for further work involving partnerships between local councils, police, and service providers working with women in prostitution.

Women working in the sex industry will have a range of different experiences, which indicates that this research is only the beginning of creating a more comprehensive picture of the sex industry in London. Suggestions for further research and recommendations for ongoing development of services to tackle exploitation are raised later in this report.

² See, for example, James, Kehoe and Holdcroft, 2002; Moss and King, 2001, and YWCA Maze Marigold Project, 1999.

2. Methodology

A variety of methods were used to obtain phone numbers and, where possible, addresses, ethnicities and numbers of women working in particular establishments. In order to quantify the numbers of establishments selling sex and women working in them, free local papers³ were collected for each of London's thirty-three boroughs. All entries in the 'Adult Services' sections were recorded in three separate databases, Chat Lines, Flats/Parlours/Saunas and Escort Agencies. This is a method used by sexual health outreach teams to deliver services to women in the sex industry. The Flats/Parlours/Saunas database included any fixed premises from which sex was being sold, while Escort Agencies contained information on agencies offering visiting services, known as 'outcall'; or to a specific location, known as 'incall'.

The information was cross-referenced with all London entries from two guides to the sex industry⁴, and a number of Internet Sex Guides⁵. Using the internet sex guides, researchers followed a range of advertisements ('pop-up windows' or 'ad banners') to websites for escort agencies, massage parlours and saunas selling sex in London. Despite spending significant amounts of time on this particular piece of information gathering, we were unable to cover all Internet adverts due to the sheer numbers of sites available. In this area alone, it was clear that the figures would be an underestimation of the numbers of women in the sex industry. Extensive information on women working as escorts was gathered, including information about location and ethnicity. The internet was used to collect details of lap-dancing clubs, verifying these details with a project⁶ that monitors lap dancing establishments in London.

PunterNet⁷ field reports were monitored from January 2003 to the end of July 2003, numbering slightly under five thousand entries. PunterNet is a website for men who buy sex to share information about women and agencies they visit by writing 'field reports' about the purchase of sex. Field reports detail the location; contact details and price for the establishment men have bought sex from, describe the encounter explicitly, and comment on the woman herself, often including the man's perception of her ethnicity.

Statutory agencies were contacted in order to gather and collate official information regarding the sex industry in London. Very little data was available; CO14, Clubs and Vice Unit for the Metropolitan Police provided brief details on the main areas they monitor for both on and off street prostitution. Tower Hamlets Community Safety Unit released their Crime and Disorder Audit for 2002 for the purpose of the research, containing useful information about on-street prostitution in Tower Hamlets.

³ See bibliography for list of local papers used

⁴ 'McCoy's (2002-2003)', 'McCoy's (2003-2004)'

⁵ See bibliography for list of websites visited

⁶ The Lilith Project, part of Eaves Housing for Women, is a second-tier violence against women project offering support to organisations doing direct work with women who have experienced violence of any kind. Further details are available at www.lilith.ik.com

⁷ PunterNet (www.punternet.com) describes its purpose somewhat euphemistically as *'to facilitate the exchange of information on prostitution in the UK. Here you will find information on where to find services, what to expect, legalities, etc. You will be able to read reviews of encounters with working girls and submit your own "field reports". This web site aims to promote better understanding between customers and ladies in hopes that everyone may benefit, with less stressful, more enjoyable and mutually respectful visits.'*

Nine sexual health outreach projects across London were contacted and asked to complete a questionnaire about the geographical coverage of their service, and the nationalities of women to whom they provide services. Five agencies covering Camden, Croydon, Hackney, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster gave detailed information on the areas they visit, and nationalities/ethnicities of the women they work with both on and off street. Another two agencies provided general information but did not give statistics or locations. All sexual health agencies provided information on the basis that it would not be used to take punitive action against women working in the sex industry.

The information gathered was extensively cross-referenced to avoid 'double-counting' and to ensure sites were located in the correct borough. At this stage, any entries outside of London were deleted. Addresses were confirmed using an online database⁸, and another was utilised to narrow down the locations of agencies⁹.

Qualitatively, women trafficked into prostitution who subsequently received support services from the POPPY Project were interviewed by their Support Workers about where they had worked, if they had received sexual health or outreach services, and whether they felt able to estimate the degree of trafficking amongst other women selling sex in these flats, parlours and saunas.

In order to clarify the information received, men were employed to telephone all numbers in the Flats/Parlours/Saunas database. The telephone mappers dialled 141 (an anonymised phone code) before their call so it could not be traced, and then asked questions about the location of each place, the numbers of women available, and their nationalities/ethnicities. Agencies only appeared to find this suspicious if they were called several times on the same day, which happened initially as mappers discovered agencies used different names for the same address. Agencies would then just hang up, or say 'No Police' and hang up. Sixteen telephone mapping sessions took place during afternoons and evenings over a period of five months, with every entry in the Flats/Parlours/Saunas database contacted a minimum of three times. A debrief document was completed with most mappers after their sessions to gather further data about the ways women were being marketed.

It is not possible to identify exact numbers of women working in each establishment using these methods. Instead, ranges of numbers for women working in prostitution for both the Flats/Parlours/Saunas and the Escort Agency databases were estimated in the following way: when exact numbers of women at an establishment were identified via a web-site, or received by our mappers, that number was used for both the 'low' and 'high' estimate. The low estimate assumes that only one woman works at an establishment with unknown numbers of women, and where the information has been 'more than x women', x has been used. The high estimate assumes that seven women work at establishments with unknown numbers of women, and if the information was 'more than x women', x has been rounded up to the closest multiple of seven. This is based on mappers being told repeatedly that 'different women work here every day'.

⁸ Yellow Pages Online, www.yell.com

⁹ Bt Online, www.bt.com

To investigate the phenomena of trafficking for marriage, two non-government organisations working with women forced into marriage were contacted¹⁰. Limited internet research also identified one website offering to facilitate marriage between men from the United Kingdom and women from CIS countries.

The degree to which local authorities are monitoring their local sex industry was also investigated, particularly the numbers of massage parlours and saunas that had sought the legitimacy of a licence application. Every London borough was contacted, and information was cross-referenced with the Flats/Parlours/Saunas database.

The provision of sexual health outreach services across London was cross-referenced with all of the sites mapped in the Flats/Parlours/Saunas database. The POPPY Project contacts database and Ugly Mugs¹¹ newsletters were used to identify sexual health outreach providers. Every outreach project listed was contacted to verify their details, which in combination with the mapping databases enabled identification of gaps in sexual health outreach provision across London.

Each flat, parlour, or sauna identified was contacted a minimum of three times to minimise the possibility of 'double counting'. These figures should be taken as a minimum, and are likely to be an underestimation of both numbers of establishments where men can buy sex, and numbers of women in the sex industry. However, it was not possible to track individual women, and thus women who spend Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at one sauna, and Monday, Friday and Saturday at another may have been 'double-counted'.

The descriptions used by sex establishments defining the nationalities/ethnicities and numbers of women working in prostitution from their premises have been used. There is a need for caution in interpreting this information as sex establishments will not necessarily have been truthful. While they may wish to appear to have a lot of 'choice' for punters they will also want to avoid Police detection - especially if they are aware that women working at their premises have compromised immigration status. Thus, this research is a 'snapshot' of the sex industry, with suggestions for further research.

¹⁰ Ashiana and Southall Black Sisters are agencies which work with women forced into marriage. Their contact details are available in the References section.

¹¹ Ugly Mugs is a regular newsletter produced by London sexual health outreach projects. It includes information to protect women selling sex, and contact details of outreach projects across London.

3. Summary of Key Findings

- Research located 730 flats, parlours and saunas selling sex across London. This figure excludes some sites, such as many flats operating as 'walk-ups', and those located within particular ethnic communities¹².
- Every London borough has off-street prostitution. Westminster has the largest density with 138 flats/parlours/saunas. Other London boroughs have an average of 18.5 sites selling sex.
- Between 2972 and 5861 women are selling sex from flats, parlours and saunas across London. This translates as four to eight women per site.
- Women are trafficked into boroughs all over London.
- Ninety-three different ethnicities were mapped in the 730 flats, parlours and saunas, only 19% of women were from the United Kingdom.
- 25% of the women mapped working in London's sex industry were from Eastern Europe, 13% were from South East Asia, 12% from Western Europe and 2% from Africa.
- It is not possible to gauge exact figures of trafficked women. However, evidence gathered from this research, from sexual health outreach agencies and interviews with trafficked women indicates that more women, at various stages of the trafficking process, are working in London's sex industry than has previously been estimated.
- PunterNet frequently refers to men buying sex with women who are clearly unhappy, unwilling, frightened and/or in pain. Some of these women will have been trafficked.
- One hundred and sixty-four escort agencies were identified across London.
- Between 1755 and 2221 women are selling sex as escorts across London.
- Women from 79 different ethnic groups were identified in the 164 escort agencies. Only 20% of these women were from the United Kingdom.
- 33% of the women mapped working in London's escort industry were from Eastern Europe, 13% were from South East Asia, 12% from Western Europe and 1% from Africa.

¹² Walk-up flats are usually advertised immediately outside premises.

- Women were marketed online and over the phone using racial stereotypes, physical characteristics and comments about their enthusiasm for selling sex.
- On-street prostitution was discovered in 10 boroughs. The majority of the women are African Caribbean, British (both Black and white) or Irish. Substance misuse is a significant issue for women selling sex on the street.
- One hundred and eighty-two chat lines were identified.
- Sixty-six lap dancing clubs across 17 boroughs of London were identified. Anecdotal evidence of women trafficked into the United Kingdom suggests links between prostitution and lap dancing.
- Service providers have identified forced marriages, including trafficking into marriage, as taking place in the United Kingdom. To date there is evidence of these women being exploited within these relationships, including sexual exploitation. One agency facilitating marriage between British men and women from Russia and surrounding countries was identified.
- A connection between 88 different flats, parlours and saunas across the United Kingdom was discovered via linked telephone numbers. Many trafficked women housed and supported by the POPPY Project worked in a number of these establishments.
- Most local authorities issue Special Treatment Licenses across London to premises where massage or sauna treatments are provided. Investigation in every London borough (excluding Havering which did not provide information); found that 13 boroughs have licensed at least one premise at which sex is sold.
- Sexual health outreach provision for women in the sex industry is not available in all the London boroughs. Fifteen boroughs have no services at all, and where services exist they are often not adequately resourced.
- Sexual health outreach projects in London are predominantly based on harm minimisation/reduction. There is a lack of strategies, resources and safe housing in place to assist women who wish to leave prostitution.

4. Recommendations

4a. Statutory Responses to the Sex Industry – The Police

Only law enforcement agencies are able to follow up the evidence in this report of possible links between flats, parlours and saunas selling sex all over the United Kingdom. Increased Police activity must only take place in conjunction with increased resources to help women in the sex industry escape trafficking, or exit safely. It should further be recognised that returning a woman to her country of origin does not ensure her safety or curtail the sex industry. Service providers should be present when women are arrested at brothel raids to ensure that women know they have the opportunity to access safe housing and protection.

CO14, the Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit, should be allocated the resources to realistically challenge the trafficking of women into prostitution across all of London, or this responsibility should be relocated to Police units with a wider geographical remit. The Metropolitan Police Sapphire Units¹³ would seem to be a logical place to relocate anti-trafficking initiatives if this is required, as they are based in each of London's 33 boroughs and have extensive experience of working with women who have suffered sexual violence.

4b. Statutory Responses to the Sex Industry – Local Authorities and Licensing

This research identified gaps in the issuing of Special Treatment Licenses to massage parlours and saunas. Local Authority checks must be standardised so that establishments selling sex cannot attain relative respectability as a licensed premise. There is also a need to standardise the ways Local Authorities respond to complaints about premises and businesses advertising massage or sauna that do not apply for licenses but may well be selling sex. We suggest this area is developed using the Cross London Special Treatment Licensing Group, which meets regularly and requested feedback from this report.

Local Authorities that have been active in this area should share their successes and good practice through multi-agency and cross borough working. Increased service provision for women is required, including access to housing, employment programmes, substance misuse intervention programmes and provision for women wishing to exit prostitution. These must take place alongside any increase in monitoring of the sex industry in order that such policies do not lead to increased danger for women.

4c. Sexual Health Outreach Services

There is an urgent need for more sexual health outreach services to work with the significant numbers of women in London's sex industry. Not only do some boroughs have no services at all, it is clear that even in boroughs with sexual health coverage, there are significant numbers of women in the sex industry who are unable to access support.

¹³ Sapphire is a Pan London Project working to improve rape investigation and victim care
<http://www.met.police.uk/sapphire/>.

The nature of current sexual health provision prioritises harm minimisation/reduction. Alongside increased geographical coverage, additional services must be developed to assist women to exit prostitution. Safe, specialist housing for women in the sex industry who have not been trafficked, or who have been trafficked within the United Kingdom, should be provided. Currently these women have only one specialist housing option in London if they wish to exit prostitution¹⁴.

Increased mapping of ethnicity by sexual health outreach teams would assist in proactively providing relevant resources. This is a priority as the majority of women in the off-street sex industry in London are not British, do not necessarily speak English, and may have immigration issues.

There is a need for imaginative service development to provide outreach services to particular ethnic communities who are not currently receiving any services. This could link into effective outreach work taking place in minority ethnic communities under a different guise, for example substance misuse intervention or domestic violence.

Several sexual health outreach projects have indicated a need for training to identify women who may have been trafficked.

4d. Tackling Demand

Unless policy analysts seek to explore and challenge the reasons that men buy sex, the sex industry in London is unlikely to diminish in size. Further research into the demand for commercial sex is required.

Sex education packages should be developed for use with teenage boys¹⁵, which should comprise information on the realities of prostitution and developing positive sexual relationships. This work is already being undertaken by young people's projects across the United Kingdom, and could be developed for inclusion in the National Curriculum.

A project should be developed to re-educate men who buy sex on the effects of prostitution, building on the First Offender Programme in San Francisco¹⁶.

Interventions targeting men who buy sex should take place alongside services to support women wishing to exit the sex industry. Safe housing and exit resources should be a priority to ensure that women working in the sex industry are not faced with having to accept dangerous punters, or having less time to assess potential punters because men are worried about being caught.

¹⁴ St Mungos operate a 15 bed hostel for women working in the sex industry in Lambeth. Women must have a working connection to Lambeth. The service offers support with resettlement, mental health issues and substance misuse.

¹⁵ Prevention work also needs to be developed with girls and young women, exploring the issues around exploitative relationships, grooming and prostitution. This is particularly important for girls and young women at high risk, such as those leaving care.

¹⁶ An educational programme for first offenders (kerb crawlers) that takes a realistic, confrontation-style look at the legal, health, and other risks and effects of prostitution. Administrative fees collected from the men fund the intervention services for women and girls. This programme is part of the SAGE project, San Francisco, and has been running since 1995.

4e. Further Mapping

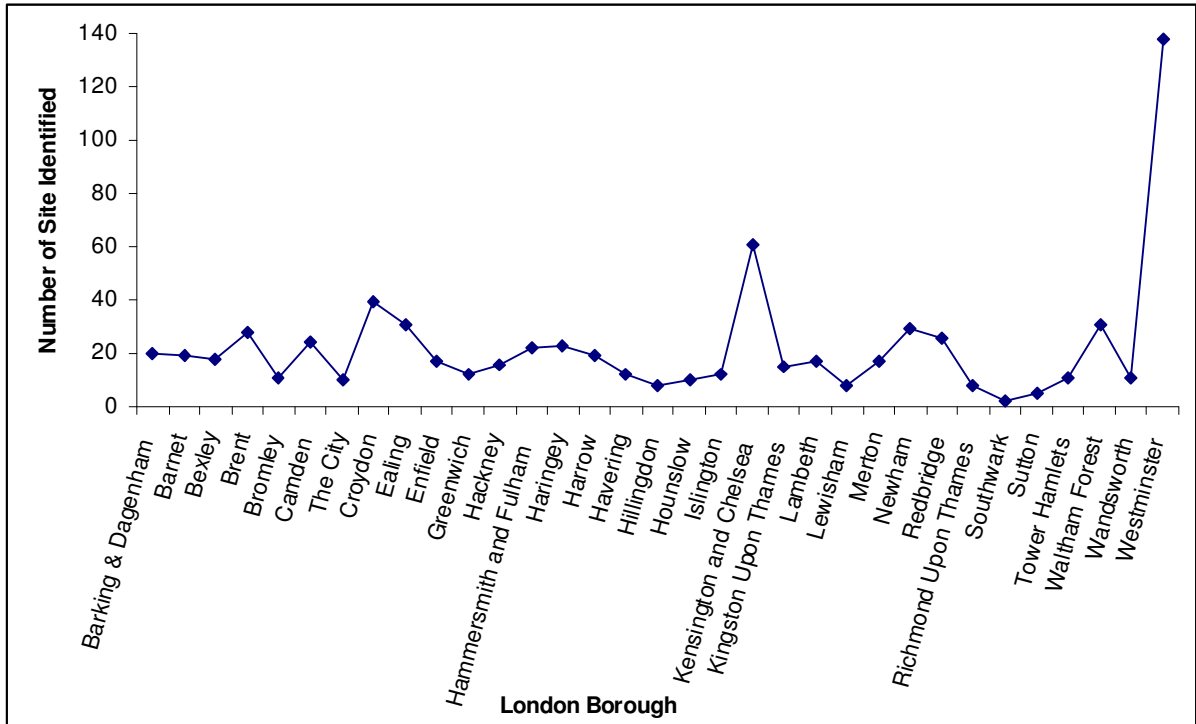
Further research into the needs of women working in the sex industry is required, which must include interviews with women currently working in prostitution. More detailed mapping of both on-street prostitution and the escort industry should also be carried out to develop a clearer needs analysis.

The phenomena of women trafficked into marriage needs further investigation. Very little is known about the circumstances of these women, despite it being clear from this research that they are experiencing significant abuses.

5. The Sex Industry in London - Flats/Parlours/Saunas

All sites identified during the period of information collection were recorded and called a minimum of three times to pinpoint exact location and to establish the numbers and nationalities/ethnicities of women working there. Chart 1 shows the numbers of off-street sites identified during the research.

Chart 1: Flats, Parlours and Saunas Selling Sex Across London by Borough



In total 730 sites providing prostitution services were identified across all 33 London boroughs. Excluding the borough of Westminster, with 138 sites identified, each borough of London averages 18.5 flats, parlours and saunas. 77% of the locations of these sites were positively identified. The remaining 23% either would not give information over the phone; would not pick up unidentified callers (141 was dialled before every call); or used a call back service, presumably as a safety and vetting strategy for callers. The mappers were unable to confirm details on these sites.

It was impossible to identify all existing off-street establishments, so these figures are an underestimation. The mappers relied primarily on advertised information. In the borough of Southwark, for example, only two sites were identified, at least partly due to a policy of the local paper not to advertise any sexual services¹⁷.

'Walk-up' flats in Soho, Chinatown and Shepherd's Market in Westminster tend not to advertise commercially, relying upon passer-by trade in 'hotspot' areas of London. Because women working in walk-ups tend to be selling sex in 10-15 minute time-slots, punters may be less likely to write about their experiences on sites such as PunterNet unless the experience was remarkable to them in some way.

¹⁷ Telephone conversation with Southwark News Classified Manager on 19 January 2004

So although the streets where walk-ups are situated are known, the exact number of these flats is under-represented in this study.

POPPY's work with trafficked women has uncovered evidence that women may be trafficked directly into settings not advertised at all publicly.

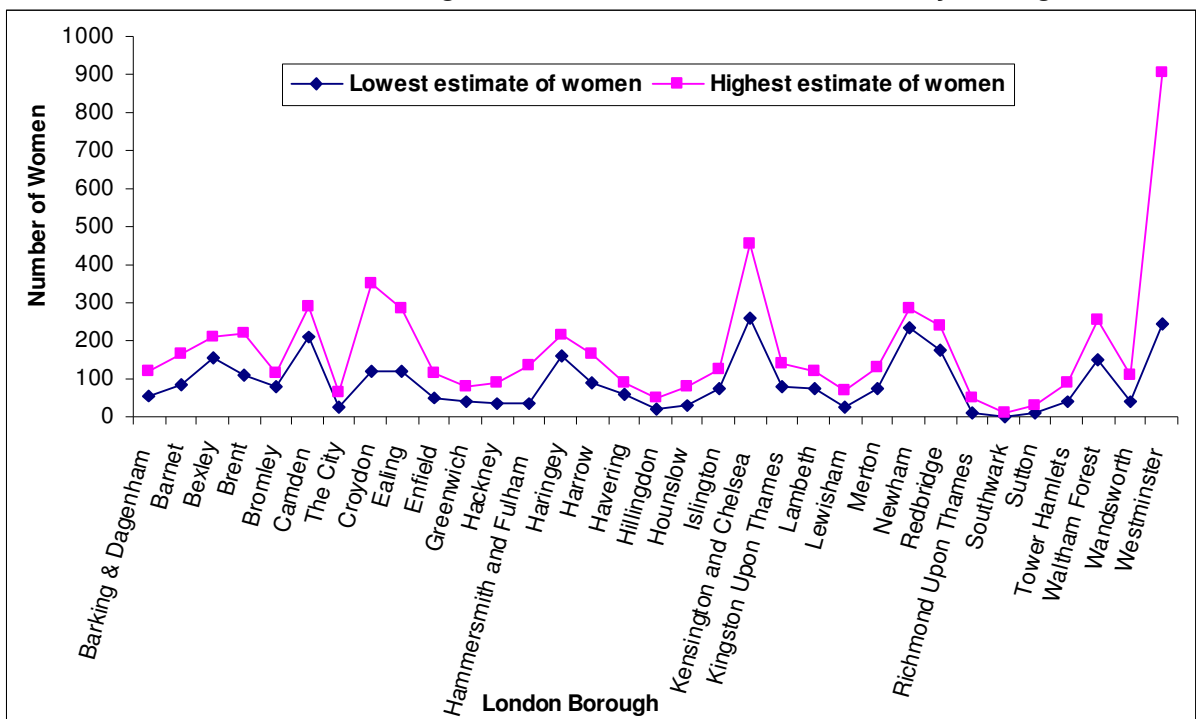
'F', a woman trafficked into Hackney and Haringey was solely prostituted in Turkish Social Clubs. There were other women involved in prostitution in the two sites where she worked; as far as she was aware, these women did not appear to be under the control of a specific pimp or trafficker.

Sexual health outreach agencies have highlighted a concern that women selling sex in particular ethnic communities are not currently receiving sexual health outreach services. When the social isolation of women in the sex industry includes being isolated within one ethnic community, there are particular challenges in providing intervention services. This is an area that requires resource development, possibly working in partnership with organisations providing specialist services to black and minority ethnic women.

5a. Numbers of Women

Researchers obtained information pertaining to the number of women working in 64% of the 730 agencies identified. This was used to estimate a low and high range for numbers working in Flats/Parlours/Saunas. Based on these estimations, between 2972 and 5861 women are selling sex from flats, parlours and saunas in 730 established sites across London, with between four and eight women working at each site.

Chart 2: Number of Women Working in Flats/Parlours/Saunas in London by Borough



These figures will undercount women because the number of flats, parlours and saunas are almost certainly underestimated. However, some women may have been counted twice as they frequently move, or are moved between, different flats, saunas and parlours.

‘G’, a woman trafficked into prostitution in three flats, saw on average 10-15 men daily. She would work in a flat in Barnet during the day, and a flat in Brent in the evening.

The trafficked women receiving support services from the POPPY Project were forced to sell sex at between one and seven sites, in between one and six different boroughs. The longer a woman was in prostitution, the more likely she was to have been moved to several sites.

Table 1: Sample of Trafficked Women Supported by the POPPY Project

Trafficked Woman	Boroughs Of Flats, Parlours, Saunas Trafficked Into
A	Camden, Haringey, Islington, Luton, Waltham Forest
B	Barnet, Ealing, Enfield, Islington, Newham, Waltham Forest
C	Westminster (one site)
D	Haringey (one site)
E	Croydon, Greenwich, Westminster (five different sites)
F	Hackney, Haringey
G	Barnet, Brent, other UK site
H	Camden, Islington, Luton, Redbridge, Waltham Forest
J	Bromley, Greenwich, Westminster (four different sites)
K	Lambeth (one site)

5b. Ethnicities of Women

Information was obtained about the nationality/ethnicity of women working in 65% of the agencies identified. This information was recorded verbatim, so erroneous ethnicities such as ‘Tropical’ and ‘Exotic’ were recorded. Ninety-three nationalities/ethnicities were identified across the 33 London boroughs. For graphs of ethnicities recorded in individual boroughs, see Appendix A. Table 2 (overleaf) summarises the groupings of ethnicities identified.

Whilst not geographically accurate, countries which are often used as code-words for one another have been grouped together. For this reason, Asia has not been included in Indian Subcontinent, as in the sex industry women described as Asian are likely to be from South East Asia. Similarly, East Europe here includes Italy and Greece, because these ethnicities are often used to code women from the Balkan region, advised by pimps and traffickers to lie about their ethnicity to avoid immigration issues. For example, Albanian trafficked women receiving services from the POPPY project were advertised as Italian, Greek and Latin American by their traffickers/pimps.

Table 2: Nationality/Ethnicity Groupings of Women in the Sex Industry

Group Assigned	Nationality/Ethnicity Indicated
South Pacific	Australia, Mauritius, New Zealand
East Europe	Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, East Europe, Estonia, Europe, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, Yugoslavia
Great Britain	Britain, England, Scotland
Scandinavia	Denmark, Finland, Nordic, Norway, Scandinavia, Sweden
West Europe	Celtic, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland
Indian Subcontinent	India, Pakistan
South East Asia	Asia, China, Far East, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Oriental, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam
Middle East	Arabic, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon
North America	Canada, Hawaii, United States
South America	Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Guyana, Latin, Mexico, Peru, South America, Venezuela
Caribbean	Caribbean, Cuba, Puerto Rico
Africa	Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, West Africa
Not Recognised Ethnicities	Black, Continental, Exotic, Foreign, International, Mediterranean, Mixed Race, Tropical, White

It is interesting to note that PunterNet makes many references to women or agencies giving false information about where women are from, for example not acknowledging when women are from particular Eastern European¹⁸ countries, or from Thailand¹⁹, two well-known areas of origin for trafficking in women.

‘Absolutely beautiful slim smiling blonde girl, says she's Swedish, more likely Latvia Lithuania Estonia - why are these girls ashamed of their country of origin, I'd prefer a Latvian to a Swede any day.

I was only in this squalid stretch of Peter St because it's the first part of Soho to commence operations of a morning, so I was expecting no more than an efficient discharge into a less than appealing woman and instead I got this beautiful and friendly young lady who should, as I told her, be turning 3 or 4 tricks per day at £150 each, not 30 punters paying £20. Anyway I paid my 20 and really enjoyed. Only small drawback, the trick that so many Eastern European girls seem to use, of grasping the base of your cock while you are inside.’

‘Gorgeous petite dark skinned Asian lady from "Singapore" but more likely Thailand. Very friendly girl. Normal massage followed by great oral. She had great technique and brought me eventually to completion.’

¹⁸ From http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=29484

¹⁹ From http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=37659

Chart 3: Ethnicity Groupings of Women Working in Flats/Parlours/Saunas²⁰

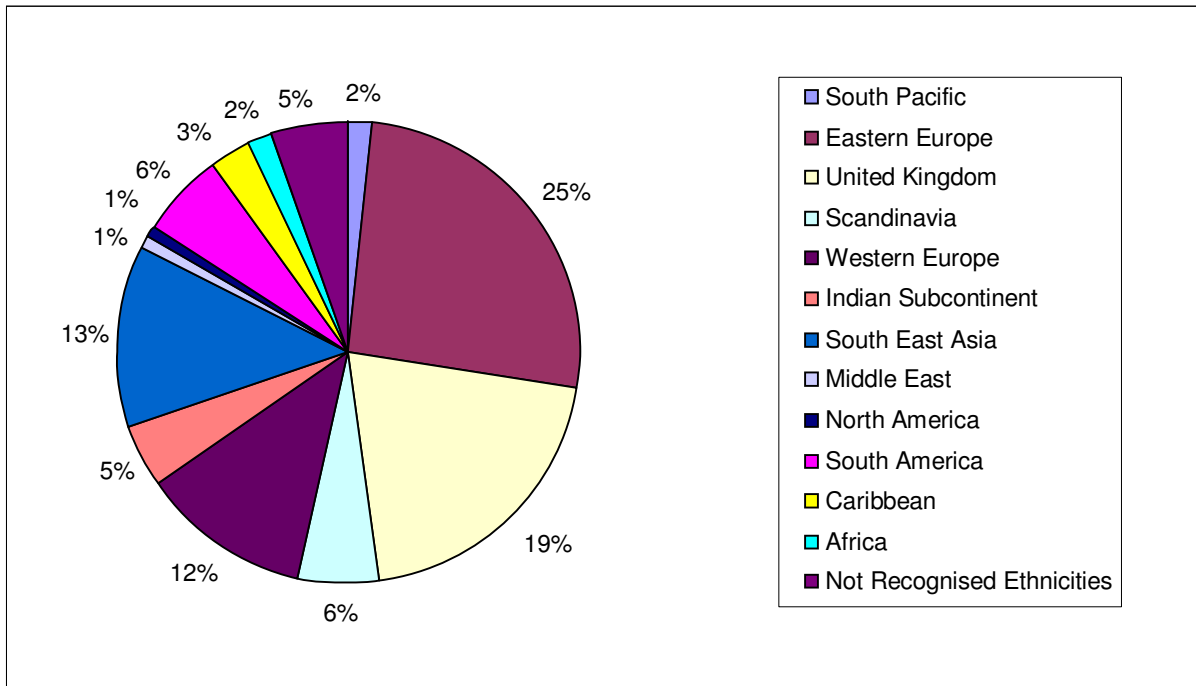


Chart 3 illustrates that the off-street sex industry in London overwhelmingly employs non-British nationals, with only 19% of women identified as from the United Kingdom. Sexual health outreach agencies working with women in prostitution highlight the changing ethnicity demographic from the mid to late 1990s, when many more British women were employed in flats, saunas and parlours, and also the changing nature of the sex industry. Outreach agencies reported how difficult it has become for them to access women; that they are often completely denied access to certain flats; and that overall the industry seems to be becoming more covert and exploitative, all of which suggest high numbers of trafficked women in the off street industry.

The nationalities/ethnicities mapped show some correlation to information provided by sexual health outreach agencies. Outreach agencies report that many women initially claim one nationality or ethnicity which they later inform outreach workers is inaccurate. Women without legal immigration status who have been intimidated by traffickers and pimps and told that they will be deported by the authorities rarely trust unknown outside agencies and tend not to divulge their real nationality or ethnicity.

²⁰ For consistency this range of ethnicities will be used in all further Ethnicity Charts, though not all will contain women from every ethnic grouping.

Table 3: Ethnicity Percentages Recorded by Outreach Agencies to Flats/Parlours/Saunas

	POPPY Mapping	Outreach Agency A ²¹	Outreach Agency B ²²
South Pacific	2%	3%	0%
Eastern Europe	25%	31%	51%
Great Britain	19%	21%	30%
Scandinavia	6%	0%	0%
West Europe	12%	3%	3%
Indian Subcontinent	5%	0%	0%
South East Asia	13%	6%	9%
Middle East	1%	0%	0%
North America	1%	0%	0%
South America	6%	5%	5%
Caribbean	3%	0%	1%
Africa	2%	3%	1%
Not Recognised Ethnicities	5%	28% ²³	0%

It is clear from Table 3 that not all Eastern European women in the sex industry in London have been mapped. POPPY Project research shows a higher number of women from Western Europe and from Scandinavia than the figures of the outreach agencies. This could be because women from these areas are not accessed by outreach workers, or that women in the sex industry are more likely to tell outreach workers their true ethnicity. The POPPY Project also mapped higher numbers of women from both the Indian Subcontinent and South East Asia.

Accurately estimating the degree of trafficking using these figures is extremely difficult. The sexual health outreach agencies contacted were unable to estimate how many trafficked women they provide services to due to the covert nature of the trade. One agency said they rarely had trafficked women approach them directly, but women often asked advice about trafficking situations told in the third person. Another agency raised concerns that identifying trafficked women required specialist training; the agency manager felt that without this specialist knowledge many trafficked women would not be recognised as such or offered appropriate support.

One outreach agency spokesperson disclosed that she believed that the majority of women her agency worked with had been trafficked, had paid off their debts to the trafficker and subsequently elected to remain working in the sex industry.

²¹ This information reflects outreach visits and drop-in operated in central London for January – September 2003

²² This information reflects outreach visits in four boroughs in south London between April and July 2003

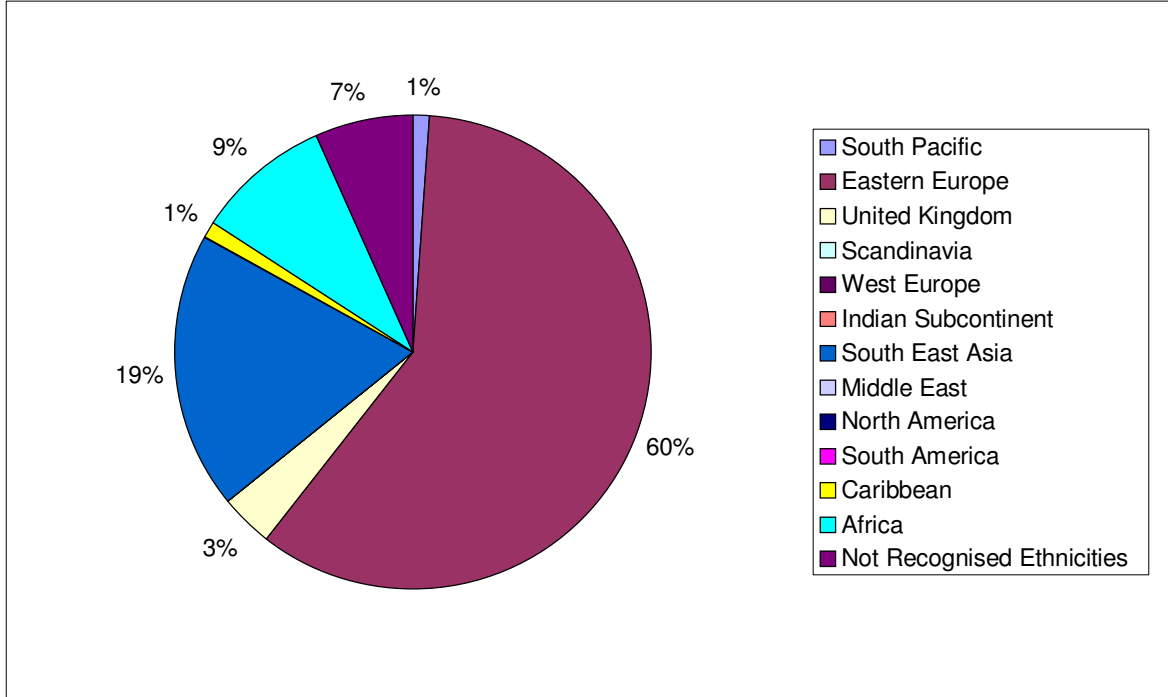
²³ This figure includes visits where the woman did not give her ethnicity

‘J’, a woman trafficked into six sites selling sex across London, was first trafficked when she was 16 years old. Forced into prostitution in three countries before coming to the UK, when she escaped she had been prostituted in London for just over two years. At this stage, having no other means of support, ‘J’ continued to sell sex to survive for several months before a solicitor helped her come to the POPPY Project.

A woman may choose to stay in prostitution in this situation because her irregular immigration status will prevent her from undertaking other types of work. Migrant women are also likely to face difficulties finding employment because of racism, and even when women have legal status in the United Kingdom a history in prostitution, with corresponding gap in references, may be difficult to explain to alternative employers. Trafficked women tend to come from countries where accessing education for girls and women is difficult, and additionally, they are likely to be learning to speak English. Finally, women may also have begun to see ‘sex worker’ as part of their identity, particularly when this is the only social and support network they know. The stigma faced by women can make it very difficult for them to return to their country of origin. Traffickers often inform people in women’s home communities of her involvement in prostitution, ensuring that a safe, welcoming return is impossible.

The women in prostitution referred to the POPPY Project²⁴ are mainly from Eastern Europe, followed by women from South East Asia and Africa.

Chart 4: Ethnicity of Women Referred to the POPPY Project: March 2003 – January 2004



²⁴ Note that these are all referrals of women in prostitution received by the POPPY Project. Not all of these women met the POPPY Project criteria for support; some women did not wish to accept support at time of referral; some women were returned to their country of origin and many of these women are housed or receive outreach support from the POPPY Project.

Because the POPPY Project provides supported housing for women trafficked *into* the United Kingdom, the numbers of British women are low. The comparison of referrals to the POPPY Project and the figures provided by sexual health outreach agencies, indicate that African women working in the sex industry are not receiving outreach support. This research has also not mapped African women in the sex industry in London as a numerically significant group. This may be because African women are isolated within particular ethnic communities, as well as being threatened by traffickers/pimps with voodoo.²⁵

The POPPY Project service users assisted this research by providing in depth information, which indicates that trafficking into the sex industry in London is worryingly prevalent. When service users were asked about the establishments in which they worked before they escaped, all but one woman independently reported that they had worked alongside other trafficked women. The woman who was not aware of working with other trafficked women had been unable to make connections with any other women in the sex industry. Women receiving support from the POPPY Project described meeting other women under varying degrees of control. Some were escorted to and from work and had their earnings taken by their pimp/trafficker. Other women had some control over their earnings and a degree of personal freedom. POPPY Project service users experienced a high degree of physical and sexual violence,²⁶ including witnessing other trafficked women being physically beaten. Frequently women reported that another woman was used as an example by traffickers and pimps to demonstrate how they would be treated if they did not comply with being forced into prostitution.

'H', trafficked into prostitution into Italy and the UK was threatened and verbally abused throughout the trips. She was told stories of other women being murdered, which she believed, and was threatened with a gun and with death herself. While in Italy, she saw evidence of torture on other trafficked women's bodies. While in the UK, she saw her pimp stab another trafficked woman.

To accurately estimate the true extent of trafficking of women into prostitution in the UK more women in the sex industry must be interviewed. At a 1999 Home Office seminar, workers from health projects estimated that 5%²⁷ of women working in the sex industry in London were trafficked. This figure was given before the surge in awareness of trafficking produced by increased media coverage, improved service provision (the POPPY Project provides the only specialist support to trafficked women, and this was established in March 2003), and increased Government action in the form of legislation²⁸.

²⁵ See, for example, Pearson, E., (2002), p 165

²⁶ Dickson, S. (2004)

²⁷ Kelly, L. and Regan, L., (2000) p20

²⁸ Since 1999 the UK government has passed the stopgap Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act(2002) and the Sexual Offences Act(2003). Sections 57 to 60 of the Sexual Offences Act explicitly criminalise trafficking into, within and out of the UK for sexual exploitation. The Asylum and Immigration Bill (2003), yet to be passed into law, criminalises trafficking for the purposes of exploitation in Section 4. This includes trafficking for forced labour, organ removal or to induce others to provide services or benefits of any kind.

Many sexual health outreach projects now feel they are unable to identify all instances of trafficking among the women they work with. The range of ethnicities mapped and the comments made by the POPPY Project service users both indicate that the sex industry in London has areas with a high concentration of trafficked women, including women who have paid off debts to traffickers and are still working in the sex industry.

The United Kingdom signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Palermo Protocol in 2000, but is yet to ratify the Palermo Protocol. In 2003 the Home Office published a Crime Reduction Toolkit in People Trafficking²⁹, which outlines the five common patterns of recruitment of women into trafficking for sexual exploitation:

1. Complete coercion through abduction or kidnapping
2. Deception by offers of employment with no sex industry connotations
3. Deception through offers of marriage
4. Deception through offers of employment in entertainment, dancing etc
5. Deception about the conditions in which the women will undertake prostitution

Thus women who are assisted by a trafficker to willingly come to London to work in the sex industry, and are subsequently subjected to conditions of control that they did not expect, are considered to be trafficked.

'B' was trafficked into the United Kingdom directly when she needed to raise money for her sister's cancer treatment. Her recruiter/trafficker promised her that the sex industry in the United Kingdom would allow her to make enormous amounts of money, that clients would be clean, and that she would be able to negotiate safe sex. In reality, 'B' had to work twelve hours per day, seven days per week. Half the money she earned was paid as 'rent' on the flats where she was prostituted; the other half went towards her £23,000 'debt' for the travel arrangements. By the time she left, two months later, she had paid off £13,000 of this 'debt'.

One trafficked woman interviewed by POPPY reported that many of the women she worked with knew they were coming to work in the sex industry, but believed they would be independent, and did not know they would be held in debt bondage.

The scale of trafficking from the point of view of those buying sex is illustrated by the quote below from a man in central London in August 2001³⁰.

'For anyone wanting to try a Soho walkup this flat is as good as anywhere - the girls here are well established pros and not East European sex slaves like in many of the other places.'

²⁹ 'Crime Reduction Toolkits: People Trafficking', (2003), p6

³⁰ Quote from http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=11021

The flat he was recommending as having ‘well established pros and not East European sex slaves’ is, incidentally, a flat in which two of the trafficked women currently housed by the POPPY Project worked in for four and two years respectively. They were both in this flat in the time period this field report was written.

5c. Marketing of Women

Those mappers who worked for more than one session took part in a debriefing exercise, either by telephone, by email, or in person with other mappers. This was specifically to examine the marketing of women in flats, parlours and saunas to prospective clients.

All mappers reported a rapid-fire patter that receptionists/maids employed in order to ‘sell’ women:³¹

“Maria is a brunette from Italy, 22 years old, with 34D chest, 24, 32. She’ll be wearing a black two-piece with black stockings and high heels. She’s very friendly and has many outfits and toys. Prices start from £50 for half an hour up to £90 for the full service.”

The mappers were given descriptions of the physical characteristics of women and regularly informed that the women enjoyed their work. Phrases such as ‘she’s a very friendly/popular/bubbly/playful girl’ were used repeatedly, as was ‘she likes to take her time’. Thus the idea of women's identity as prostitute is sold - the notion that women are positively enjoying the process of repeatedly selling sex to men. This marketing ploy is significant when looking at demand for sexual services, which will be examined later in the report.

Occasionally mappers were told it was a woman’s first day, with the implication that she was young, perhaps even only just over the legal age for consensual sex. Mappers were not offered underage girls. The ages of the women available were between eighteen and twenty-eight, with ‘mature’ used as a code-word for women aged in their forties and fifties. Sex without condoms was never offered, presumably because this was not requested, although women who allow penetration or oral sex without condoms are frequently reviewed on PunterNet. ‘Stimulation by hand’, ‘oral sex’, ‘intercourse’, ‘French kissing’, ‘cumming over women’s breasts’, ‘cumming twice in a session’ (typically half an hour to an hour long) were all mentioned as either ‘standard services’ or ‘extras’, with anal sex always mentioned as an ‘extra’. Some of these activities were ‘to be discussed with the woman’, an issue many trafficked woman mentioned. Some women were not forced to offer unsafe sex for example, but were aware that if they did their ‘debt’ to their trafficker would be repaid more quickly. Many pimp/traffickers particularly encouraged women to have sex without condoms because it is a more expensive activity.

³¹ Example given on one debrief form by R, telephone mapper

'D' was trafficked into prostitution in London for three months after being groomed in Italy. Once in London, she was sold and resold several times amongst traffickers and pimps before coming to the POPPY Project.

She was not always allowed to negotiate safe sex.

'D' is HIV positive.

'K' was trafficked into prostitution in one flat in Lambeth.

Condoms were only used when the man buying her wanted them.

'K' has syphilis.

Mappers were quoted prices from £20 for 'hand relief' or a 'sexy massage', to £120 for 'everything', often referred to as 'naughty boy'. Occasionally in the initial stages of data analysis they telephoned escort agencies that were offering visiting services. These were quoted at up to £200 for half an hour in Kensington and Chelsea or Westminster.

6. The Sex Industry in London - The Escort Industry

Monitoring the escort industry was limited within the scope of this project. The meaning of the term 'escort' varies considerably, from paying for a companion to accompany a client to an event for an evening, to being a code-word for women selling sex from a flat. Names and addresses of escort agencies were recorded as well as the nationalities/ethnicities of women working there. The research in this area in particular was not exhaustive, as enormous numbers of agencies advertise online. Some women working alone advertise as escorts, but there are also many agencies advertising significant numbers of women. Escort agencies may have women providing 'outcall' where women go to hotels or directly to the homes of the men and 'incall' where men go to the woman's flat or the agency establishment. It seems likely that Escort Agency 'incall' is simply another way of advertising women selling sex from flats, but this has been recorded in this section as 'outcall' services are also being advertised. Larger agencies tend to have both options available.

Areas around London airports were frequently mentioned on PunterNet as places where men bought sex with escorts. These were usually businessmen in London for a few days, who would pay for an escort to come to their hotel.

6a. Agencies

One hundred and sixty-four Escort Agencies were identified in total, many of whom had several 'incall' sites both within and across boroughs. Escorts were recorded providing 'incall' across 17 boroughs.

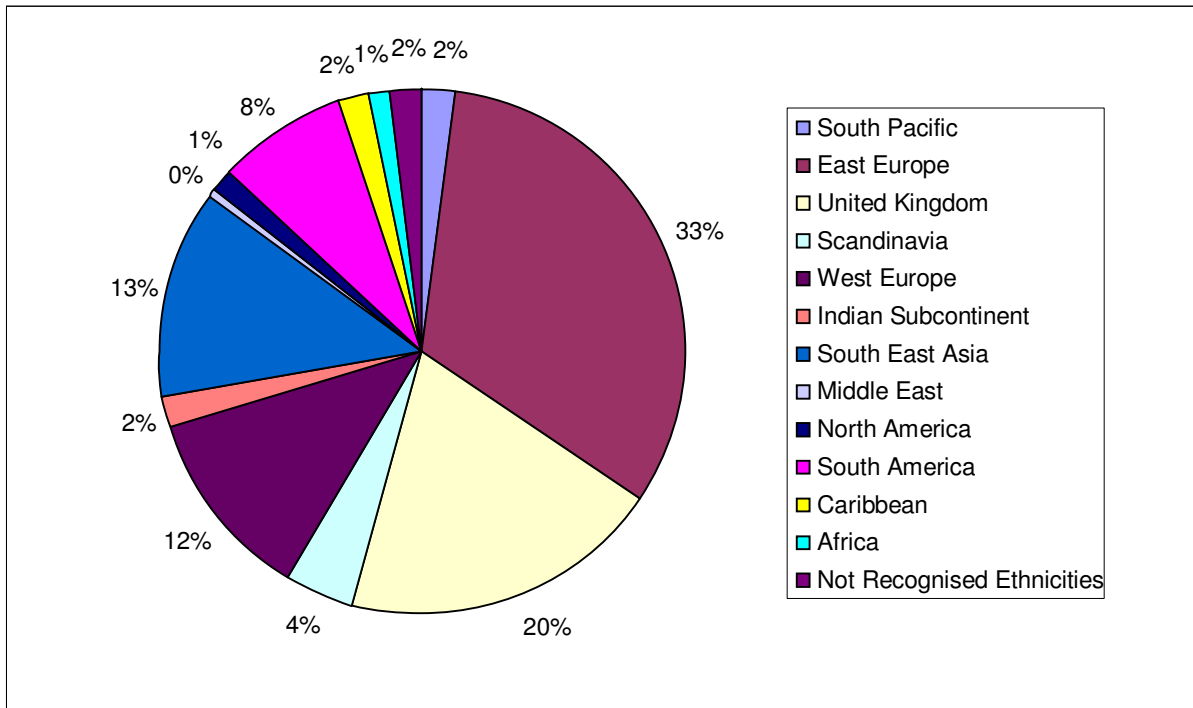
6b. Numbers of Women

Information regarding the numbers of women working from particular escort agency base was obtained for 91% of the agencies. Estimating a low and high range for numbers of women working in the escort industry using the methodology detailed in the Methodology section provides a range between 1755 and 2221 women working as escorts in London.

6c. Ethnicities of Women

Information on the nationalities/ethnicities of women was obtained for 84% of the escort agency sites identified and recorded in exactly the format it appeared online. Seventy-nine different ethnicities were recorded, and ethnicities grouped as described in Table 2.

Chart 5: Ethnicity Groupings of Women Working for Escort Agencies



The accuracy of these figures should be approached with caution. There are an almost unlimited amount of website links advertising escort agencies, only a fraction of whom have been identified. Therefore the number of escort agencies, and the numbers of women working as escorts, has been undercounted.

Secondly, women may be registered with more than one agency, using more than one name. PunterNet entries sometimes refer to this, and it was clear particularly with racially themed agencies (such as 'Oriental Angels') that women were also on other sites. Inevitably some of these women will have been counted twice.

The escort scene changes rapidly. Second checks were made on websites previously mapped, revealing that agencies frequently add and remove women from their websites. Agencies also close down regularly, perhaps reopening under another name to escape detection. The use of mobile phones is commonplace, thus making it difficult to monitor or locate these establishments.

Although a similar range of ethnicities were recorded in both the Escort Agency database and the Flats/Parlours/Saunas database, the POPPY Project has yet to receive a referral from a woman who was trafficked into escorting. It is possible that some of POPPY Project service users were advertised as 'incall' escorts as most of the women do not have a great deal of knowledge of how they were 'marketed'.

Women working as escorts can usually demand higher rates of pay, and it would seem there are greater opportunities for women working as escorts to escape. It may, therefore, be the case that women selling sex as 'escorts' are less likely to be trafficked. Escorts who visit or 'outcall' are expected to be able to socialise and therefore would need to be able to speak English fluently, which is not the case for many trafficked women. There is a clear need to learn more about women working as escorts in order to assess any needs for service provision they might have.

6d. Marketing of Women

Websites advertising escorts marketed women using racial stereotypes, for example South American women were described as 'hot-blooded' and women from South East Asia as 'submissive' and 'exotic'³².

**'Sun kissed girls and skin smoothed with the oils from the Far East. A gentle breeze, a waft of exotic perfumes.
Welcome to Asian Dream Girls Of London. Exotic beauties to caress your soul and indulge you in the most exciting fantasies imaginable.
Selected from the very finest available, our criteria not only being ravishing good looks and impeccable taste, but also refinement, charm and elegance'**

Descriptions of the physical attributes of women working as escorts are also used as a marketing tool, with particular reference to breast size. Most websites also feature pictures of naked women posing in a sexually provocative manner. Specific sexual services on offer are used as a selling point, with frequent use of euphemism³³. It is rare for unsafe sex to be mentioned explicitly.

The age of women is a selling point, with the premium age appearing to be late teens to early twenties. It is frequently noted on PunterNet that ages are under-estimated both on the telephone and in person. No advertisements for underage girls were discovered during the research.

Women who provide 'outcall' escorting services, will frequently be marketed as 'sophisticated', giving men the impression that they are buying not only sex, but a partner for the evening³⁴.

'Directors-Escorts established in London to cater for the discerning gentleman who requires sophisticated upmarket company and is prepared to pay for quality'.

Hence the prices for escort services are much higher than those quoted for flats, saunas and parlours. Whilst many websites profess ignorance of prostitution taking place, the way in which women are marketed clearly indicates that sex is for sale.

³² Asian Dream Girls – Escort Agency – details in bibliography

³³ For example, 'O Levels' refers to oral sex, 'A Levels' to anal sex.

³⁴ Directors-Escorts – Escort Agency – details in bibliography

This is confirmed by reports on PunterNet³⁵:

'Unfortunately I couldn't access the Internet (thanks BT!) so I called my old "friends" at Academy Girls who so often in the past supplied me with some of the best escort experiences ever...

Sean recommended Nikola and described her as outgoing and adventurous.

She turned up promptly and we had a long (30 min) chat over some glasses of wine and she is very direct, outspoken and clever. But as she started talking about her boyfriend I felt a bit uneasy...

And it was downhill from that point. No touching. Definitely no kissing and very mechanic. To be fare the BBBJ was OK with some moves that were new to me ;-)

Sex, very uninspiring she even started to complain saying I took too long (will it be faster after that comment? I think not!). She was getting tired, worn out...

I have trusted AG for discrete and lovely companions over many years now, but this was the exeption that proves they are not always right.'

³⁵ Quote from http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=35150

7. The Sex Industry in London - On Street Prostitution

As identified by outreach agencies and CO14, the Metropolitan Police Service Clubs and Vice Unit, the main areas of on-street prostitution in London are in the boroughs of Camden, Croydon, Hackney, Haringey, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster. This is not an exhaustive list and it is likely that sex is also being sold on streets in other parts of London.

Voluntary organisations supporting women in on-street prostitution are attempting to address high levels of substance misuse through multi-agency working, developing partnerships between drugs projects and outreach agencies³⁶.

Specifically, the areas of on-street prostitution mapped were:

- Kings Cross
- Thornton Heath
- Norwood
- Stoke Newington – Shacklewell Lane, Amhurst Road, Kingsland Road, Stoke Newington High Street, Manor Road
- Hackney - Brownswood Road, Seven Sisters Road, Pembury Road, Morning Lane
- Tottenham – Seven Sisters Road
- Bayswater - Ladbrooke Grove
- Earls Court
- Brixton Hill - Josephine Avenue, Water Lane, Upper Tulse Hill, Palace Road, Hillside Road
- Streatham - Streatham Hill, Sternhold Avenue
- Forest Gate
- Whitechapel – Commercial Street, Wheler Street, Commercial Road, Spitalfields, Banglatown
- Balham - Garrads Road, Bedford Hill
- Paddington - Edgware Road, Harrow Road, West End

All sexual health outreach agencies that provided information confirmed that women selling sex on the street are mainly African Caribbean, British (both Black and white) and Irish. One agency reported finding a young Eastern European woman on-street, who they referred to their local Social Services Team as they believed she was a minor.

³⁶ For example, long-established outreach project Maze Marigold carry out outreach work to women in Hackney in partnership with Addaction Hackney Community Drugs Project

Women trafficked from outside the United Kingdom are rarely found on street. Outreach agencies did not identify any British women trafficked *within* the United Kingdom. Internal trafficking is included in the UN definition of trafficking³⁷ and the Sexual Offences Bill (2003), however women trafficked internally are not currently provided with specific Government funded support services within the United Kingdom³⁸.

³⁷ United Nations Palermo Protocol, (2000)

³⁸ One of the Home Office referral criteria for the POPPY Project is that women must have been trafficked into the United Kingdom. British women moved from city to city under the control of, and exploited by pimps are therefore not eligible, neither are women who travelled to the UK legally but were later recruited into prostitution. The POPPY Project has received referrals of women in both of these situations.

8. The Sex Industry in London - Chat Lines

Chat lines were identified advertising across 18 boroughs, with a total of 182 different telephone numbers. Chat line information was collected from local papers and internet sex guides. Marketing of these services were predominantly grouped into these categories:

- Age
 - 'Just 18'
 - 'Young Girls 18+'
 - 'Young Backdoor Flesh'
 - 'School Uniform Frolics'

- Race
 - 'Pakistani and Indian Girls for Secret Sex'
 - 'Russian Slut'
 - 'Swedish Porn Star'
 - 'Stunning Ethnic Girls'

- Lesbian
 - '2 Girls and You'
 - 'Lusty Lesbos'
 - 'Licking Lesbians'

- Time scales
 - '30 Seconds Is All It Takes'
 - 'I'll Make You Totally Happy in 30 Seconds'

- Inexperience
 - 'First Sex'
 - 'It's My First Time'
 - 'Virgin's First Time'

- Sadomasochism
 - 'Chained and Whipped'
 - 'Crushed by my Stiletto Heel'
 - 'Mercy Denied'
 - 'Naughty Man Gets Caned'

9. The Sex Industry in London - Lap Dance Clubs

Lap dance clubs were located across London by searching internet sites. This information was supplemented by previous research³⁹ carried out by The Lilith Project. Sixty-six clubs across 17 boroughs were identified. Although, according to licensing restrictions, Lap Dance clubs are not supposed to offer sex, according to various PunterNet entries there do appear to be connections between women working in Lap Dance Clubs and women selling sex:⁴⁰

‘OK i was lured by a telephone box advert. But to my amazement this bitch was everything I could ask for! Incredible beauty a perfect body. She kissed me deep throat, sucked my dick (BBBJ) to utter perfection! She tasted so sweet and very wet. She had me fuck her in every position possible. Fuck me what a girl! I asked her why she had no web site. She replied she table danced at Spearmint Rhino and only escorted now and then.’

Women currently receiving support from the POPPY Project have spoken of their own experiences of connections between lap dancing and prostitution.

‘A’, a woman trafficked into prostitution in five sites in Camden, Haringey, Islington, Luton, Waltham Forest resisted her trafficker/pimps verbally, physically and by trying to encourage other women to resist. Her pimp would tell her if she was less ‘difficult’, he would take her to a lap dancing club in Haringey instead. He still expected her to sell sex in the lap dancing club – when she complained to the owner of the club about this, she was allowed to stop. She believes there was no doubt that the owner of the club was fully aware that prostitution was taking place in his premises.

³⁹ Eden, (2003), available at <http://www.communitykit.ik.com/pub/customersites/communitykit/ith-030704145016.nsf/0/FFA0CD061799E0E980256E9B004DC7BB?open&add=yes>

⁴⁰ Quote from www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=27920

10. Trafficking for Marriage as a Route into the Sex Industry?

The Ashiana Project⁴¹ provides support and safe housing for South Asian, Turkish and Iranian women, and has recently set up a project to provide housing for women and teenagers who wish to leave forced marriages.

Since 1979 Southall Black Sisters (SBS) has provided welfare services, as well as supporting and co-ordinating campaigns to highlight and bring about changes in the social, political, economic and cultural constrictions that particularly face Asian and African-Caribbean women. They have campaigned on the issue of forced marriage for several years.

Both agencies were approached and asked about the possibility of trafficking for marriage, not to be confused or conflated with arranged marriage⁴². Both agencies described similar scenarios, of men with British citizenship travelling to the Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were explicitly mentioned) and returning with young women, forced into this situation by familial and social pressure. Many women then find themselves in exploitative and abusive marriages, with their husbands using their immigration status, reliant on the marriage, as a tool to control them. There are many other reasons why women in this situation will be vulnerable: some may not speak English and will be reliant on their husbands to communicate and facilitate understanding of unfamiliar British institutions and laws. There is also a lack of appropriate support because of community resistance around acknowledging this issue, as well as a general lack of resources and even racism. Ashiana and SBS have evidence of men serially abusing women, returning a woman to their country of origin once the woman has immigration status in the United Kingdom (and could therefore leave him and seek support), and bringing back another woman to marry.

However, neither Ashiana nor Southall Black Sisters have identified women being forced into prostitution as a result of forced marriage, and had no evidence of agencies facilitating this process. Under current British law, unless these women are being forced into prostitution, no matter how serious the abuse they are experiencing within their marriage, they do not fit the current definition of trafficking⁴³.

There is growing evidence from other destination countries, such as the United States, of agencies selling women for marriage⁴⁴.

⁴¹ The Ashiana Project and Southall Black Sisters contact details are in the acknowledgment section.

⁴² Forced marriage, which may include trafficking for marriage, is marriage contracted under duress, whether mental or physical, without free and valid consent of one or both parties. Arranged marriages take place when there is free and valid consent of both parties. See Siddiqui, H. (2002) for further explanation of these issues.

⁴³ The Asylum and Immigration Act 2003 was at time of writing being debated in British parliament. This Act widens the definition of trafficking to include arranging or facilitating the arrival of someone else to the United Kingdom for the purposes of forced labour, organ removal, or to induce them to provide services or benefits of any kind. Full details can be found at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmbills/005/2004005.pdf>

⁴⁴ Hughes, Sporcic, Mendelsohn, and Chirgwin (1999); Luckhoo (2003)

Internet research discovered just one organisation, Blue Sapphire⁴⁵, which purports to have women available for marriage to men in the United Kingdom. Blue Sapphire advertises a database with more than 24,000 women, from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria. Men can search for a woman by age and physical characteristics such as eye and hair colour.

Disturbingly, men can also search for a potential wife by number of children she has, therefore allowing men access to children with virtually no safeguards as their mothers may find it difficult to effectively resist abuse in an unfamiliar country. It would be inaccurate to describe an agency such as Blue Sapphire as facilitating forced marriage – rather it is the economic and social vulnerability of women in these countries that is exploited, as a number of women may decide that marriage with an unknown British man may fulfil an understandable desire for a ‘better life’.

Little is known about what happens to these women once they marry a British citizen and come to the United Kingdom. The POPPY Project has received one referral of a woman trafficked into marriage, but are yet to receive a referral from a woman in this situation who has been sexually exploited in prostitution. However, domestic violence referrals have been made, where women seeking asylum in this country have been forced by their husbands to have sex with his friends. This is sexual exploitation under a different guise. Several women supported by POPPY were encouraged or forced to marry their trafficker in order to make the process of travel and control more straightforward.

⁴⁵ <http://www.bluesapphires.net/start.shtml> last visited on 16 January 2004

11. Evidence of Organised Crime

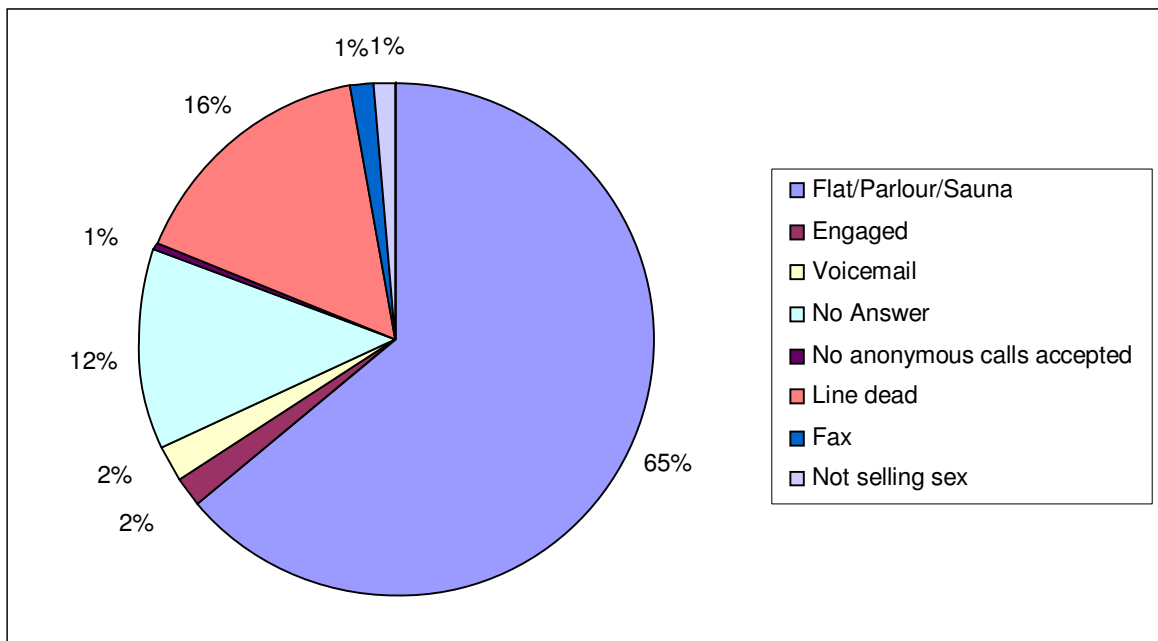
The research uncovered an apparent connection by telephone number between many of the flats, parlours and saunas contacted. The pattern that emerged was around a prefix of eight numbers, and was particularly concentrated in two ranges, prefix 290-400, and prefix 770-810.

Further investigations with Ofcom Consumer Helpline⁴⁶ revealed that numbers are allocated to phone operators in blocks of 10,000s, and that groups of related numbers are likely to have been allocated to the same company. Your Communications Limited is the phone operator with responsibility for the particular prefix that had been identified.

Your Communications Limited⁴⁷ advised that blocks of telephone numbers are available for companies to purchase. When asked if it was possible that numbers with the same prefix could be allocated to the different businesses/companies within the same industry, the company stated categorically that allocation of related telephone numbers would not happen in this way. These numbers are allocated free of charge, and are non-geographic, allowing companies to conceal their location.

The numbers *between* the previously established sites were contacted to try to ascertain the extent of the connection between telephone numbers and sites selling sex. An enormous correlation was established. Of the 138⁴⁸ 'businesses' contacted, 88, or 65% were positively identified as flats, parlours or saunas selling sex. Only two telephone numbers or 1% were for businesses that were definitely not selling sex.

Chart 6: Results of Telephone Mapping of Related Numbers



⁴⁶ Telephone conversation on 7 November 2003

⁴⁷ Telephone conversation on 7 November 2003

⁴⁸ In total there was a possibility of 152 numbers in these two ranges. However, twelve flats, parlours or saunas had two telephone numbers, leaving a total of 138 different businesses.

Of the 88 flats, parlours and saunas identified, 66 were in London, and 22 outside of London. All locations of the London based sites were positively identified. The connected flats, parlours and saunas were located in Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Enfield, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest and Westminster. 45%⁴⁹ of the locations outside of London were also positively identified. Flats, parlours and saunas were found in Bolton, Wigan, Preston, Leicester, Kirkby, Hoyle, Grantham, Hove, Northampton, and North Prestwich.

As well as containing flats, parlours and saunas from all over the United Kingdom, this database also includes saunas where trafficked women supported by the POPPY Project have worked. Many women were moved between sites. This implies that 88 flats/parlours and saunas selling sex across the United Kingdom are operating in an organised manner. This is likely to be the tip of the iceberg, as numbers outside the ranges noted above were not cold-called.

It is unclear to what extent these flats, parlours and saunas operate as an organised group. Possibilities range from the sites being under the control of one organised criminal network, to an agreement between many different criminal groups to share women and apply for block telephone numbers.

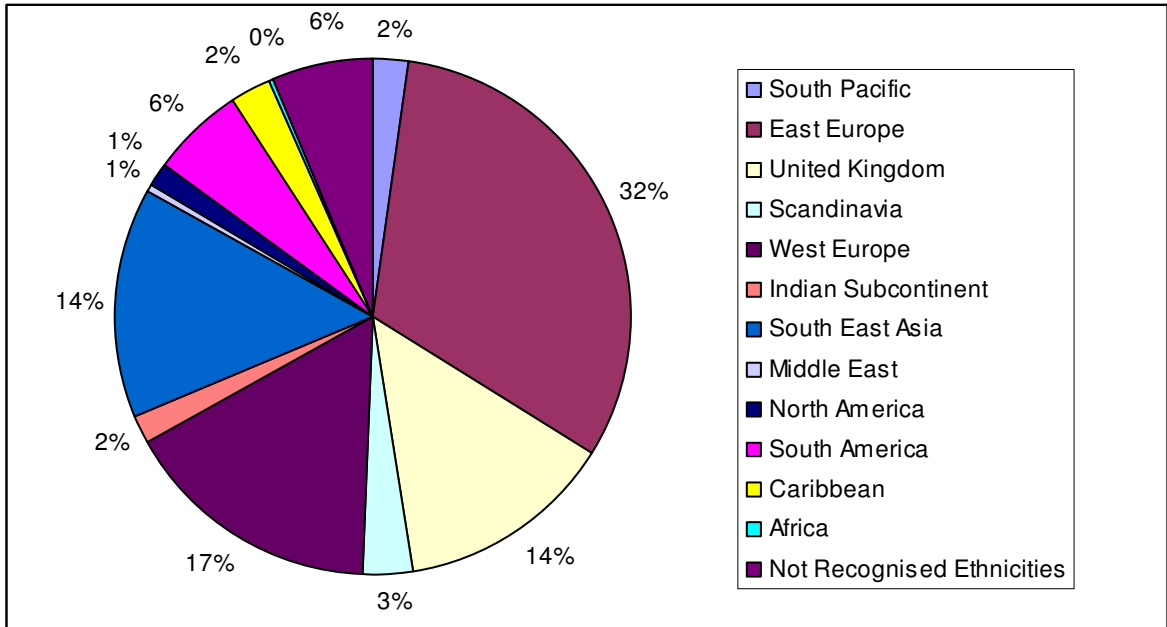
The number of women involved in these linked flats/parlours/saunas⁵⁰ (estimated using the technique detailed in the methodology section) range between 865 and 1076 women. If there is some degree of relationship between these sites, that implies that between 865 and 1076 women are being exploited by organised groups, perhaps being moved around London and the rest of the country to avoid detection. This would also result in keeping these women isolated and unable to build support networks and links with outreach agencies.

Information about the nationality/ethnicity of women working was obtained for 94% of these sites. Fifty-four distinct nationalities/ethnicities were recorded. There are clear differences between sites in and outside of London, with flats, parlours and saunas in this group in London recording only 14% of British national women.

⁴⁹ It was difficult to obtain as much information about the sites outside of London because the mapper had no idea where they were, so had to be cautious during telephone conversations to avoid causing suspicion.

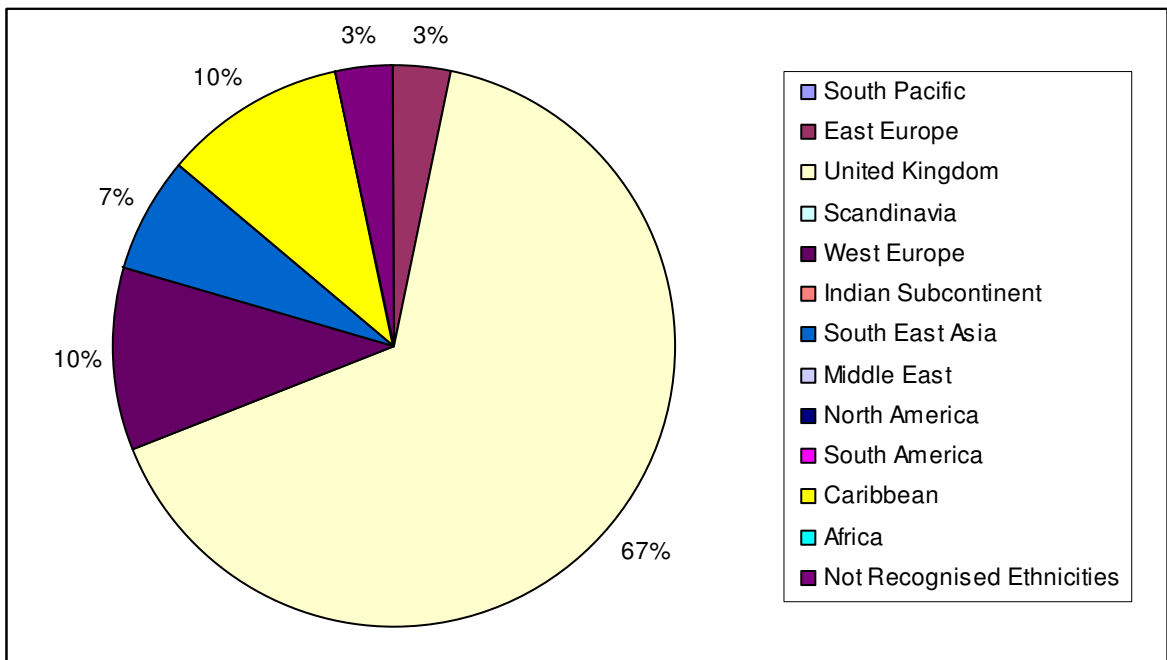
⁵⁰ The numbers of women are difficult to confirm. The very nature of the possible connections between these sites means it is extremely likely we have mapped the same woman at more than one flat, parlour or sauna.

Chart 7: Ethnicity of Women working in London Sites with Prefix 290-400 and Prefix 770-810



Outside of London 67% of women in the sex industry were mapped as British, and a further 10% as Caribbean. This is notable because Caribbean women have not been identified in significant numbers in flats, parlours and saunas or escort agencies in London. Bearing in mind that the mapping of the out-of-London sites was markedly less thorough, it would still appear that these sites outside of London sites are less likely to have both migrant women and trafficked women working in them.

Chart 8: Ethnicity of Women working in Sites Outside of London with Prefix 290-400 and Prefix 770-810



However, many of the POPPY Project service users have worked in flats, parlours and saunas outside of London including Scotland, Yorkshire, Newcastle, Birmingham, Luton, Reading and Brighton. It appears from recent referrals that trafficked women may be increasingly likely to be moved elsewhere in response to a growing awareness of trafficking in London. If trafficking to other cities in the United Kingdom increases, service provision and Police response in these areas will also need to develop. Currently, Police raids on brothels outside of London do not necessarily result in referrals to the POPPY Project⁵¹.

⁵¹ On 18th April 2004 an article appeared in The Observer newspaper, describing the arrest of 47 migrant women working in massage parlours in Sheffield and Leeds. Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Rennison, from West Yorkshire Police, was quoted as saying 'I would like to stress the women arrested are being viewed as victims of exploitation.' Following POPPY contacting the Joint Intelligence Group in South Yorkshire, a partnership between Police and Immigration Services, POPPY received a referral of just one woman on 25 April 2004. The officers who made the referral were unaware of the existence of the POPPY Project's supported housing for trafficked women, and requested the opportunity to receive training about the services available at a future date.

12. Statutory Responses to the Sex Industry

12a. The Police

It has been documented⁵² that the Police do not have the resources across the United Kingdom to enable them to effectively monitor the sex industry. In London, apart from investigating crimes of sexual violence against women involved in prostitution, the responsibility for policing the sex industry falls to CO14, the Metropolitan Police Service Clubs and Vice Unit based at Charing Cross. CO14 does not have the resources to cover all of London, so tends to concentrate resources on central London due to the large number of flats, parlours and saunas in Soho, Shepherds Market and King Cross; however, the sex industry is established throughout London. Effectively this means that traffickers wishing to escape detection can move women out of central London for periods of time, and they are relatively unlikely to be detected by other Police forces. Several of the trafficked women with whom the POPPY Project works have talked about being moved out of central London at particular times and sexual health outreach agencies also mentioned this phenomenon. Sexual health outreach workers also reported that initiatives such as the Police removing cards advertising prostitution and tracing women through this advertising has led to their established routes being disrupted. This has made it more difficult to support women by providing them with information and condoms. Some areas within central London are now fairly transitory, with flats opening and closing regularly to avoid police detection.

Police initiatives to combating trafficking should be linked explicitly to support and protection for the victims. Currently, when CO14 carries out a brothel raids to gather intelligence, they are often told by non-British national women taken into custody that they wish to return to their country of origin. This can be due to pressure from traffickers and pimps, who threaten women with repercussions if they give police any information. Trafficked women may not believe that the Police are sympathetic to them because they are criminalised for being involved in the sex industry. Many women will have experienced high levels of Police complicity with traffickers in their countries of origin during their trafficking. The POPPY Project currently houses several women who asked to their countries of origin when arrested, all of whom were re-trafficked after returning - one woman was kidnapped within three days by men wearing balaclavas and carrying guns.

Re-trafficking, however, does not always take place in such dramatic circumstances. For many women, returning to their country of origin after surviving trafficking into prostitution is extremely difficult.

Women who are removed from the United Kingdom without planning and support are likely to be without funds. Countries of origin are, by definition, places where it is difficult to survive, find employment, and access housing and education, particularly for women. For trafficked women these barriers are exacerbated by the potential stigma of having been involved in the sex industry. Social isolation and potential rejection by her family further diminish trafficked women's opportunities to survive.

⁵² See, for example, Kelly, L. and Regan, L., (2000).

Women trafficked into prostitution often experience ongoing physical, sexual and mental health difficulties as a result both of the trafficking process and of having worked in the sex industry⁵³. Returning trafficked women without any awareness of these difficult issues and reintegration support increases the likelihood of re-trafficking. Not only does this fail to challenge the sex industry and therefore not effectively utilise police resources, but women will continue to suffer the abuses of human rights which are well-documented in trafficking.

'E' was first trafficked at age 13, sold by her sister to traffickers, then sold again in Italy. Found there by the Police, she was returned to her country of origin.

She was home for four days before her father sold her again, this time to another group of traffickers who prostituted her in Italy and France before bringing her to the United Kingdom, where she was referred to the POPPY Project. 'E' has put in a claim for asylum in the UK, as she does not believe it would be safe for her to return.

Counter-trafficking initiatives across Europe attempt to reduce the rate of re-trafficking through multi-agency working between the Police, Immigration Services and Non-Government Organisations⁵⁴. When Police carry out raids on flats, parlours or saunas, having an agency present with a remit to provide support and protection to trafficked women should allow women to feel they have a real alternative. For women wishing to return home, it should be possible to provide information on possible support services in her country of origin, and allow her access to safe housing while this is arranged, therefore decreasing the likelihood of re-trafficking. Women who wish to remain in the United Kingdom for safety reasons require a period of time for reflection to consider their options before reaching any decisions⁵⁵.

Further mapping of the sex industry must be undertaken by or in partnership with the police across the United Kingdom, as lack of knowledge about the sex industry outside London will result in traffickers operating with relative impunity in other towns and cities, moving women out of London if the Police become more aware of their activities. The Police are clearly the best-placed agency to investigate the possibility of links between establishments selling sex across the UK. If the evidence regarding connections between flats, parlours and saunas is even partially correct, it should be a priority for Police forces to work in partnership around the country to monitor the movements of women in the sex industry, and break up trafficking networks. Given the size of CO14, and their geographical specificity in central London, the possibility of linking anti-trafficking initiatives into other Police units should be considered. As regards London, the Metropolitan Police set up Sapphire in 2001 to investigate rape and support victims. Every London borough has a Sapphire Unit, staffed by officers with experience of working with women who have suffered sexual violence.

⁵³ Zimmerman, C., (2003)

⁵⁴ La Strada, Czech Republic, is an example of a long-established non-governmental organisation working with women trafficked into prostitution that accompanies police on brothel raids.

⁵⁵ Trafficked women are currently able to remain in the United Kingdom with support after four weeks only if they agree to provide evidence to the Police about their traffickers. This may increase the risks for women to an unacceptable level if she is to be returned to her home country at a later date.

Sapphire Units could be a possible site to relocate anti-trafficking work both in terms of expertise and geographical reach, though further trafficking awareness training would be required.

This work must be done in partnership with agencies working to support women to escape traffickers and exit prostitution. Without exit strategies and resources in place, closing down sites selling sex will not result in fewer women involved in prostitution, but could simply result in women being sold on, or having to move to another flat, parlour or sauna to continue working for themselves in the sex industry.

12b. Local Authorities and Licensing

Under the London Local Authorities Act 1991, local authorities within London are authorised to license establishments for special treatments where:

"establishment for **special treatment**" means any premises in the borough used, intended to be used or represented as being used for the reception or **treatment** of persons requiring *massage*, manicure, acupuncture, tattooing, cosmetic piercing, chiropody, light, electric or other **special treatment** of a like kind or vapour, *sauna* or other baths⁵⁶

As many of the sites mapped selling sex across London advertised themselves as 'saunas' or 'massage parlours', we investigated how many of these sites had applied for or received licenses for Special Treatment. The 1991 Act, supplemented with London Local Authorities Act 2000, gives clear guidance as to how and for what length of time establishments should be licensed, who is exempt (those qualified as health professionals, and those establishments who are not charging for their services), and on what grounds establishments can be refused a license. These include:

- (a) the premises are not structurally suitable for the purpose;
- (b) there is a likelihood of nuisance being caused by reason of the conduct, management or situation of the premises or the character of the relevant locality or the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put;
- (c) the persons concerned or intended to be concerned in the conduct or management of the premises used for special treatment could be reasonably regarded as not being fit and proper persons to hold such a licence;
- (d) the persons giving the special treatment are not suitably qualified;
- (e) the premises have been or are being improperly conducted;
- (f) the premises are not provided with satisfactory means of lighting, sanitation and ventilation;
- (g) the means of heating the premises are not safe;
- (h) proper precautions against fire on the premises are not being taken;
- (i) they are not satisfied as to the safety of equipment used in the special treatment or as to the manner in which the treatment is to be given;
- (j) they are not satisfied as to the safety of the special treatment to be given;
- (k) satisfactory means of escape in case of fire and suitable means for fighting fire are not provided on the premises;
- (l) the applicant has, within the period of five years immediately preceding the application to the borough council, been convicted of an offence under this Part of this Act; or
- (m) the applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of subsection (4) or (6) of section 7⁵⁷

⁵⁶ London Local Authorities Act 1991, Chapter xiii, Part II

⁵⁷ London Local Authorities Act 1991, Chapter xiii, Part II

The 1991 Act also states that:

'No premises shall be used in the borough as an establishment for **special treatment** except under and in accordance with a **special treatment** licence granted under this section by the borough council.'

Therefore, if establishments provide massage or sauna treatments, they must be licensed by the appropriate local authority.

POPPY contacted local authorities to request information about special treatments licenses and found the majority of boroughs helpful, with several raising issues regarding difficulties in enforcing legislation. The list of licensed premises for each borough was then compared with sites in our Flats/Parlours/Saunas database, all of which had been telephoned by the mappers.

Table 4: Licenses Issued to Sites Selling Sex

Borough	Licenses Issued	Unlicensed Sites
Barking and Dagenham	1	19
Barnet	0	19
Bexley	Borough does not license	18
Brent	2, 4 in process	22
Bromley	0	11
Camden	8	16
The City	0	10
Croydon	1	38
Ealing	0	31
Enfield	1	16
Greenwich	0	12
Hackney	3	13
Hammersmith and Fulham	1	21
Haringey	4	19
Harrow	2	17
Havering	No Information	No Information
Hillingdon	0	8
Hounslow	0	10
Islington	1	11
Kensington and Chelsea	1	60
Kingston Upon Thames	0	15
Lambeth	1	16
Lewisham	0	8
Merton	Does not license parlours or saunas	17
Newham	Borough does not license	29
Redbridge	0	26
Richmond Upon Thames	0	8
Southwark	0	2
Sutton	Does not license parlours or saunas	5
Tower Hamlets	0	11
Waltham Forest	0	31
Wandsworth	0	11
Westminster	4	134

Only one borough, Havering, did not provide licensing information⁵⁸. The boroughs of Bexley and Newham do not license at all, having not adopted this legislation, and the boroughs of Merton and Sutton license other special treatments, but do not license massage parlours or saunas.

Selected below are quotes from men buying sex on PunterNet, further confirmation that many of the flats, parlours and saunas licensed by local authorities are in fact establishments selling sex⁵⁹:

***'Exclusive Sauna Judd Street Kings Cross WC1...Well established sauna type place use to be full of about 6 or 7 girls now reduced to 1 or 2. All facilities
Very enjoyable service everything protected she is responsive but no kissing etc everything by the book. no reverse o only if you pay extra approx £50.'***

***'College Sauna is located on quite a busy road with a shop-front so no seedy alleys to go down....I paid £15 to get in which included... a shower, a nice cup of tea & nice oily rub with music thrown in!The extras ranged from £20 to £60.
I paid £60 and got head(with), sex(with), and a superb oily hand job (WITHOUT) whilst I was playing with my host til I came!'***

***'Harmony...Rundown parlour near King's Cross station. Entrance on busy road, so not very discrete....
The only reason I do this hobby is to shag women with fake tits....She seemed to want £100 for a 30-min punt, but no payment was taken till afterwards! A quick massage was followed by OW and sex in various positions incl mish & cowgirl.'***

'Omega Sauna....15 sheets entrance fee, choice of 8 girls, mostly eastern European, which I make a point of not punting with normally....Bj, and Titty fuck to finish, reasonable but I wasn't satisfied for some reason.'

⁵⁸ Havering Council, were first contacted by telephone on 24 November 2003. After further telephone communication on 4 December 2003, they advised us via email on 4 December 2003 that they would not provide the licensing information due to Data Protection concerns. However, after we applied for the information under the Freedom of Information Act and after a discussion with a Havering Data Protection office on 5 January 2004, licensing information was offered to us via email on 8 January 2004 for a fee of £30. We advised that other boroughs were not charging for this information.

⁵⁹ Quotes from
http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=13005 Exclusive Sauna;
http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=7768 College Sauna;
http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=31531 Harmony;
http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=37370 Omega Sauna;
http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=5944 Sun and Steam Sauna;
http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=8647 Prestige Health and Beauty;
http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=23828 Euston Sauna.

**'Sun & Steam Sauna, Sauna near Euston Station.
There was a choice of 15 or so girls all sitting in the same room wearing skimpy nurses kit...We agreed on £110 for coming twice.'**

**'Prestige Health and Beauty, Parlour on a busy main road.
Excellent unhurried massage. She's very friendly and chatted away and kept me well entertained. When I turned over, she asked whether I'd like any other services. I wanted HR so she stripped off, and got to work, chatting away while I felt her bum and the rest of her. She did a really good job down there (about the best I've ever had) and I came a bit quickly, I'll admit.'**

'A NOT run-down sauna (yes that is correct) up the right hand side of Euston Station. The entrance is very exposed so it's not for those seeking anonymity. This place seems to be revolutionary in a way as you can actually look in through the windows from the street and see which girls are working....

I walked past *Euston Sauna* and the sun was shining directly into it and as I glanced in I noticed an incredibly beautiful oriental face looking out. I don't normally frequent saunas but this girl looked very tempting.... I was asked to pay an upfront charge of £20 for a 30 minute massage by the receptionist. There were only 2 girls on displayalso another girl with a customer downstairs who turned out to be a standard eastern european blonde.....

She said it would be £100 for FP. I look horrified and she quickly mentioned that the cheapest extra was £50 for massage and HR. We agreed on that and she left me to undress and take a shower. I could hear a punter in the room next to ours and I bumped into him when I was coming out the shower.'

It is apparent that a number of establishments that sell sex have been licensed. Other unlicensed sites are advertising as massage parlours and saunas but are providing commercial sexual services, and are doing so with relative impunity. Many boroughs admitted that they do not have the resources to carry out checks on premises outside of the regular licensing checks. Other boroughs only act if they receive a complaint from a member of the public about particular premises, but for some boroughs even this information is difficult to act upon, as they did not feel their licensing officers were equipped to deal with the potential of organised crime should they attend a parlour or sauna where prostitution was clearly taking place.

Tower Hamlets appears to be one of the more proactive boroughs in London. In addition to following up complaints, Tower Hamlets has worked in partnership with CO14 to monitor establishments that they believed to be selling sex, with impressive results. However, unless other boroughs follow a similar approach, flats, parlours and saunas will simply relocate elsewhere. Provision should also be made to support women who had been working in closed down sites either with support programmes for trafficked women or with exiting programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution.

Several boroughs mentioned that they would like feedback from these findings, with the possibility of ongoing communications with the Cross-London Special Treatment licensing meetings, as they had no wish to be unintentionally licensing sites in which prostitution was taking place.

There are several issues to consider, including how boroughs monitor premises once they have been licensed, and how they deal with sites advertising activities which should be licensed (such as massage or saunas) when they receive complaints from the public or otherwise suspect prostitution may be taking place. It appears most boroughs are currently finding it difficult to resource special treatment licensing in a way that ensures no licenses are given to sites selling sex, it is difficult to envisage local authorities safely monitoring the sex industry if aspects of the sex industry were to be legalised.

Most importantly, the potential effect on women in the sex industry as a result of action from Police and local authorities needs to be seriously considered. Closing down flats, parlours and saunas by more extensive monitoring of the provision of licenses, and by proactively investigating sites clearly not providing advertised 'massage', will not seriously affect the size of the sex industry. Provision of exiting services, including safe housing for all women in prostitution who wish to leave must take place alongside any interventions planned by local authorities.

13. Sexual Health Outreach Services

Currently, sexual health outreach workers visit flats, parlours and saunas to work with women involved in the sex industry in the following boroughs⁶⁰:

Table 5: Coverage of Current Sexual Health Outreach Services by Borough

Borough	Sites Mapped	Sexual Health Outreach Teams
Barking and Dagenham	20	
Barnet	19	Sexual Health On Call (SHOC)
Bexley	18	Beresford Project Substance Misuse Team Signpost
Brent	28	
Bromley	11	
Camden	24	Mortimer Market Centre Central London Action On Street Health
The City	10	Open Doors
Croydon	39	Mainliners
Ealing	31	
Enfield	17	Sexual Health On Call (SHOC)
Greenwich	12	Beresford Project Substance Misuse Team
Hackney	16	Open Doors
Hammersmith and Fulham	22	
Haringey	23	Sexual Health On Call (SHOC)
Harrow	19	
Havering	12	
Hillingdon	8	
Hounslow	10	
Islington	12	Mortimer Market Centre Central London Action On Street Health
Kensington and Chelsea	61	The Space KC Praed Street Project
Kingston Upon Thames	15	
Lambeth	17	Mainliners
Lewisham	8	Mainliners
Merton	17	
Newham	29	Open Doors
Redbridge	26	
Richmond Upon Thames	8	
Southwark	2	Mainliners
Sutton	5	
Tower Hamlets	11	Open Doors Door of Hope Street Matters
Waltham Forest	31	
Wandsworth	11	Courtyard Clinic
Westminster	138	Central London Action On Street Health Praed Street Project

⁶⁰ Note this does not include agencies who work solely with women on street, such as Maze Marigold (Hackney) and Streatham Streetlink (Lambeth), though clearly women selling sex on street also require access to exit strategies and safe housing.

Many of these outreach agencies work with women in prostitution despite this not being their primary purpose. The Beresford Project Substance Misuse Team is primarily an organisation providing support for those with substance misuse issues. This is also true of Signpost, who, with the Beresford Project, share one sexual health outreach worker. Similarly, the main purpose of The Space KC is to provide support to young people around sexual health issues. The Courtyard Clinic based at St George's Hospital provides sexual health outreach to women in prostitution solely to advertise their fast track clinic system.

Thus the resources of outreach agencies specialising in providing services and support to women in prostitution in flats, parlours and saunas across London are even more thinly spread than first glance at Table 5 would suggest.

The boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Bromley, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Waltham Forest receive no outreach coverage at all. Based on this research, this means that women in the 262 flats, parlours and saunas selling sex in these boroughs have no access to outreach support.

There is a clear need for more sexual health outreach services across London. Every London borough has women in off-street prostitution, so therefore funding should be made available to work with all these women.

Regular monitoring of the nationalities/ethnicities of women involved in the London sex industry was identified as a need. This would enable services to be better targeted to meet the needs of women from different cultures and with different language needs. Thus appropriate interpreting services could be identified, leaflets printed in a variety of appropriate languages and immigration advice made available for women about the possibility of migrating legally or claiming asylum if they feel there are dangers in returning to their country of origin.

The majority of sexual health outreach agencies in London tend to focus on harm minimisation or reduction, helping women to be safer whilst they are working in the sex industry through provision of health information, counselling, condoms, safe injecting, and dissemination of self-defence strategies. One outreach worker commented that it was very difficult to offer only exit strategies and support, as this could be seen as judgmental of women currently working in the sex industry. However, established sexual health outreach project Maze Marigold in East London argue that harm reduction without exit strategies simply serves as a 'band aid'. They believe that the two strategies work most effectively when applied together.⁶¹

There is an obvious need for exit strategies and provision to be set up across London, so that women who wish to exit the sex industry are able to access services. Ideally this must build on, and be integrated with, some of the excellent sexual health outreach work currently taking place.

⁶¹ Bindel, J. and Kelly, L., (2003), p29

The number of British national women working in the sex industry who are referred to the POPPY Project⁶² reflects the scarcity of supported housing for *all* women who wish to exit prostitution. There is only one dedicated safe house for women who have been involved in prostitution across all of London’s 33 boroughs⁶³.

Judging from the experiences of the trafficked women the POPPY Project is working with, even in boroughs with one or even two support agencies, some women in the sex industry do not get the opportunity to link into any sexual health services.

Table 6: Accessing Sexual Health Outreach Support

Woman	Boroughs Of Flats, Parlours, Saunas Trafficked Into	Received Outreach Services
A	Camden, Haringey, Islington, Luton, Waltham Forest	Never
B	Barnet, Ealing, Enfield, Islington, Newham, Waltham Forest	No outreach, but was regularly taken by her trafficker to sexual health clinic
C	Westminster	Never
D	Haringey	Yes – outreach to flat
E	Croydon, Greenwich, Westminster	Never
F	Hackney, Haringey	Never
G	Barnet, Brent, Other UK site	Never
H	Camden, Islington, Luton, Redbridge, Waltham Forest	Weekly outreach workers in Islington and Redbridge only
J	Bromley, Greenwich, Westminster	No outreach, but attended drop-in in Westminster
K	Lambeth	Never

There are many reasons why trafficked women might receive little or no outreach support. It is likely that visits to flats, parlours and saunas where trafficked women are working are monitored by pimps/traffickers to ensure women do not receive advice or help. Also, many areas of London have no outreach cover at all, and thus moving trafficked women into these areas would mean it is unlikely that the women will be detected. Even in boroughs where sexual health outreach agencies are proactive, have built up good relationships, and are able to access trafficked women, it is likely that these agencies will be operating with limited resources in terms of staffing and ability to communicate with women for whom speaking in English is difficult. The phenomenon of women isolated in particular ethnic communities to sell sex is an issue that has been raised by a number of sexual health outreach agencies as a gap in service provision.

POPPY recommends an extension of current outreach provision in terms of both geographical reach and explicit exiting strategies. More outreach workers are required to provide support to the high numbers of women in prostitution, within the boroughs where there are existing services, and to the boroughs with no services.

⁶² 3% of the POPPY Project’s referrals between March 2003 and January 2004 were for British women.

⁶³ The St Mungos hostel in Lambeth.

These services need to be well resourced and able to offer safe housing to women who wish to exit.

There is a need for training on the effective identification of trafficked women. Although POPPY have worked with women who fit the stereotype of a young Eastern European victim of kidnapping by an organised gang who is chained to a bed and regularly beaten, the reality for many trafficked women is more complex and less extreme. This should not mean that women are not able to access services when their human rights have been abused, as the law in the United Kingdom allows us to work with a wider range of women than the stereotypical trafficking victim. Several agencies have recently approached the POPPY Project with training requests around identifying trafficking, and there is scope to develop training packages in consultation with outreach agencies.

The definition of 'trafficking' is a contentious issue in the sexual health field in London, largely due to political differences between those organisations who wish to assert the agency of women working in prostitution, and those who define the institution of prostitution as abusive to women. However, using the wider definition of trafficking which recognises that women may be deceived as well as coerced into working in the sex industry (see previous comments on the Palermo Protocol) does not mean that the POPPY Project, or any project working with women in the sex industry, will be forcing services on women working in prostitution who do not wish to receive them.

The POPPY Project does not have the resources to work with all the women in prostitution who are referred to us. The concept that women might be unwilling to access services to leave the sex industry has not been our experience.

14. Tackling Demand

Very little is being done to explore or address the reasons why men buy sex. When the issue of demand for commercial sexual services is raised, it is often met with discomfort, and myths about prostitution use, such as the argument that prostitution is 'the oldest profession' and some men will always need to buy sex. Those working in the area should dispel these myths. For example, if men buy sex with women solely because of biological need, then how do we explain men who do not buy sex? Or men involved in sexual relationships who continue to buy sex?

The number of men buying sex from women differs over both geographical place and time⁶⁴ which implies that men's choice to buy sex is socially constructed. The sex industry is not static; for example sex tourism now contributes significant amounts to the Gross Domestic Product of some developing countries⁶⁵, and lap dancing, a relatively recent phenomenon, is now fairly common across London. If we see the demand for women to work in the sex industry to service men as a result of gender inequality, rather than a biological inevitability, the possibility emerges for interventions to reduce this demand. In other words, it should be possible to challenge social norms around men buying sex.

It is clear from entries on PunterNet that men buy sex in very different ways, and with a variety of mythologies supporting their purchase of commercial sex. One of the most frequently occurring mythologies on PunterNet seems to be that women selling sex do so because they have incredible sexual appetites⁶⁶ that cannot be met by 'ordinary' relationships.

**Excited by her daring boast 'you are ze virst of my vorty coccks
today'.....
She's in her 30s and probably after the first couple of dozen cocks she
gets pretty slack, but at midmorning she was just what I needed.**

Men buying sex seem to continue to hold onto this mythology despite ample evidence to the contrary – men on PunterNet frequently refer to being aware that women are in pain during intercourse, are using lubricants to ease discomfort and in order not to prolong the experience are trying to make them reach orgasm as quickly as possible.

An intervention piloted from November 1998 to November 1999 in West Yorkshire offered men caught attempting to buy sex by the West Yorkshire Police the choice of attending a one day Kerb Crawler Re-education Program in order to avoid a small court fine and the publication of their name in the local press. The pilot was a partnership between West Yorkshire police and Leeds Metropolitan University. The Programme aimed to educate men buying sex about the potential effects of kerb crawling, specifically that this is not a victimless crime but has adverse effects on girls

⁶⁴ See Anderson, B. and O'Connell Davidson, J. for a discussion of social norms around buying sex across countries

⁶⁵ Luckhoo, F. (2003), p10

⁶⁶ http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=29575

and women in prostitution, their families and the communities in which kerb crawling is located.

Information from the Police, health professionals, women involved in prostitution, and women in relationships with men buying sex was presented alongside group work. Leeds Metropolitan University recommended that this pilot be extended, but the Police refused to continue to support the initiative, despite evidence that the Programme served to educate the public, as well as the men attending, about the reality of prostitution⁶⁷.

This scheme was based upon the First Offender Prostitution Program (FOPP), established by the SAGE Project, based in San Francisco. According to their website⁶⁸, FOPP has worked with 2000 men since 1995, of which only 18 have been re-arrested on prostitution related offences.

It would appear that it is possible to target the mythologies men use to justify their purchasing of commercial sex. As with the SAGE Project's FOPP, any interventions targeting demand for prostitution would need to ensure that exit programmes and resources are available to women working in prostitution in the area targeted. At present, UK law permits this type of intervention into men buying sex on the street, as kerb crawling is criminalised, unlike visiting flats, parlours, saunas or escort agencies.

The eroticisation of racial difference was another clear theme in both PunterNet entries and websites advertising escort agencies. The fact that the sex industry in London is now mainly populated by non-British national women needs to be explained. The question is whether demand for women who are racially different to the dominant culture has contributed or led to trafficking of non-British national women into the sex industry. If so, the racialised allure may be of women possibly unable to speak English and likely to be vulnerable and easier to manipulate into having unsafe sex.

If the 'foreign prostitute' is not sought out by British men buying sex, then has the ethnic profile of London's sex industry come about because traffickers and pimps are using the most profitable source of women? If so, do British men buy sex with non-British nationals simply because they are available?

It is difficult to respond to such questions from this research project. Cautiously, using PunterNet as a guide, it seems that many men buy sex particularly with women from particular racial or ethnic backgrounds because they believe that the racial stereotyping used to advertise women, and women's vulnerability is definitely part of this. Other men comment favourably when they visit a British woman, simply because she is British and sometimes because they suggest communicating with British women is easier.

Some entries on PunterNet referred to women being unhappy with what they were doing, so there may be scope here for developing some sort of 'punter whistle-blowing' scheme on trafficking⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ Research Centre on Violence Abuse and Gender Relations, (2000)

⁶⁸ <http://www.sageprojectinc.org/index.html>

⁶⁹ http://www.PunterNet.com/frs/fr_view.php?recnum=36412

Description:

'east european probably russian - dark hair deep eyes - figure was ok bit cuddly with 36B tits - she looked about 24/25 difficult to tell as she was so shut off from the whole experience'

Comments:

'The worst shag of my life - my fault in a way - should have booked for cottage or les girls- but Id been to a lovely lap dance venue and my stiffy needed release.

Tried 70A Berwick St but too busy then walking round saw two girls talking out of windows in Peter street just after you turn left at the end of the market - thought they looked ok so went in.

The girl was a robot - felt sorry for her kept thinking why is she doing this?- she only said a couple of words to me - stripped then gave me 10 mins of hand job while looking the other way and jumping when I tried to touch her - I said i wanted condom on and she lay down trying to cover her tits - 15 mins mish with me trying to grab her tits and eventually she allowed me to touch her pussy on the outside.

I asked her to turn over, she said "dont understand english" so confused by this I gave up and we went back to the hand job - wanted her to get messy at least - when i came she desperately tried to point it away from herself and jumped up as if electrocuted.

Why does she do it? I probably can guess - stick to the places I know next time'

Encouraging punters to report or refer women they believe to be trafficked does not mean condoning men buying sex. It cannot be assumed or be expected that the majority of punters will suddenly care that the women they are buying sex from are probably unhappy providing sexual services. As evidenced in the 'field report' above, although this punter noticed the woman he was buying sex with was not enjoying the experience and was probably frightened of him, and although he felt sorry for her, he still continued until he was finished. He even, despite his awareness of her state of mind, 'wanted her to get messy at least'. Thus relying on men who buy sex to 'rescue' women in the sex industry could well be unsafe for women.

'C' escaped her traffickers after jumping out of a window and going to the Police.

She was then involved with a man who she had met while in prostitution, a relationship which continued when she was housed with the POPPY Project.

Several months later, when she voiced her growing doubts over his possessiveness and talked to him about ending their relationship, he physically threatened her, harassed her on the telephone, loitered outside her house, and telephoned her sister in another country and threatened to tell her traffickers where she was, and that she was giving evidence to the Police.

'C' moved house, and has had no further contact with him.

A punter whistle-blowing scheme could operate via a helpline or a website, and would need co-ordination between service providers and the Police in order to help trafficked women safely their situation leave. The POPPY Project has already received a referral by email from a man who, following media coverage of trafficking, gave details of a woman he believed was trafficked. Similar schemes run successfully in Italy, where, for example, at least 8%⁷⁰ of calls to the national trafficking hotline from July 2000 to September 2002 were from men buying sex.

A recent multi-country pilot study⁷¹ tentatively suggests that among their sample of men buying sex, the older a man was when he began, the less likely it was he would continue to do so. This indicates that education and prevention work with teenage boys should be made a priority if the demand for men buying sex is to be reduced. Many young people's projects⁷² across the United Kingdom already carry out similar preventative work programmes. Further development could include information on the realities for many women involved in prostitution, including trafficking, as well as routes into prostitution such as substance misuse, homelessness, poverty and previous sexual abuse. Locating this in sex education packages, which aim to help teenage boys negotiate the changes in their bodies during adolescence and explore their sexuality in a safe, respectful and non-exploitative way with others, would seem to be a logical extension.

⁷⁰ Orfano, I., (2003), p30. Orfano suggests the real figure may be even higher, as some men buying sex may have identified themselves as 'Citizens' rather than 'Clients'

⁷¹ Anderson, B. and O'Connell Davidson, J. (2003), p19

⁷² The Family Planning Association has information on a variety of organisations educating young people around sexuality and exploitation issues.

15. Recommendations for Further Mapping

Time and resources have limited this study. It is therefore recommended that further mapping take place in several areas. Firstly, mapping of marriage agencies and trafficking into marriage is required. This issue is not a priority concern in the United Kingdom, as it has not yet been identified as another route into staffing London's sex industry, although it has been raised as an issue in other destination countries.

This research has not attempted to explore the differences between methods of selling sex. However, differences can be surmised in terms of safety, degree of autonomy, and perhaps proportion of trafficked women in the escort industry as opposed to flats, parlours and saunas. There are significant differences in the prices of sexual services offered in these situations.

The on-street sex industry was briefly mapped to establish which boroughs in London have well-known street prostitution. There is a need to further map the experiences of women selling sex on street, and to further develop the types of resources needed to support these women.

The motivations, ages, racial backgrounds, socio-economic positions or marital status of men buying sex was not investigated. Mapping of demand is a huge area of work, particularly when considering trafficking and whether there is a demand in the UK for migrant women because these women are more vulnerable to manipulation.

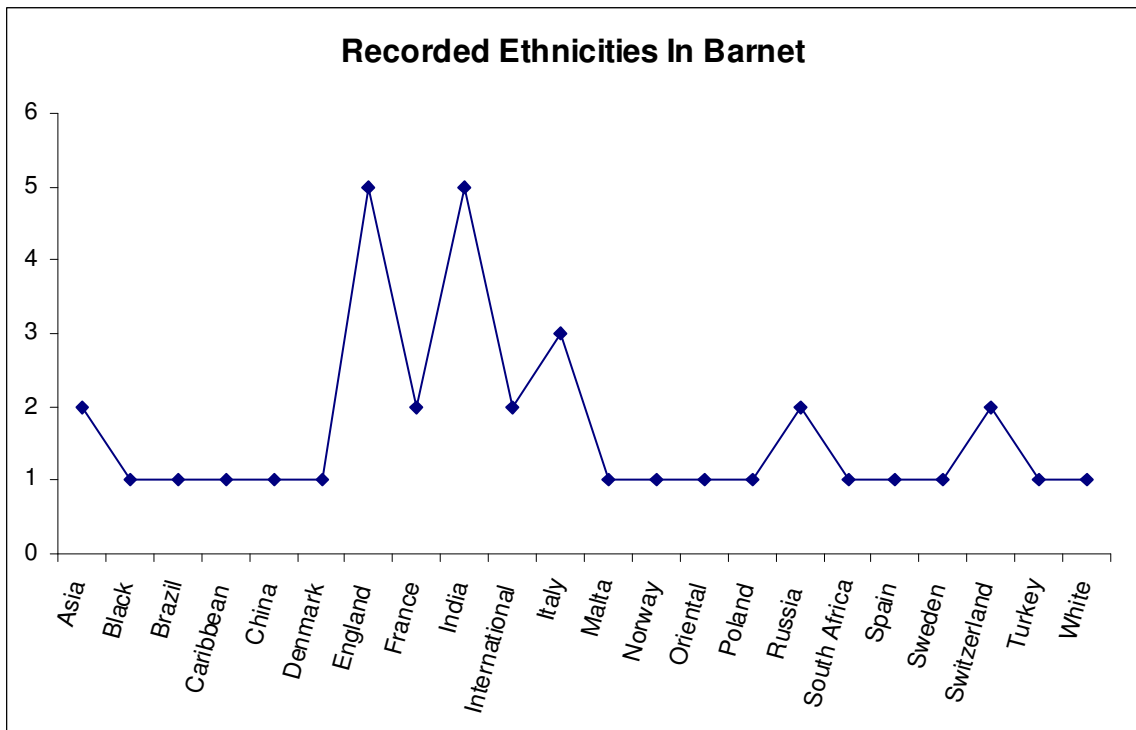
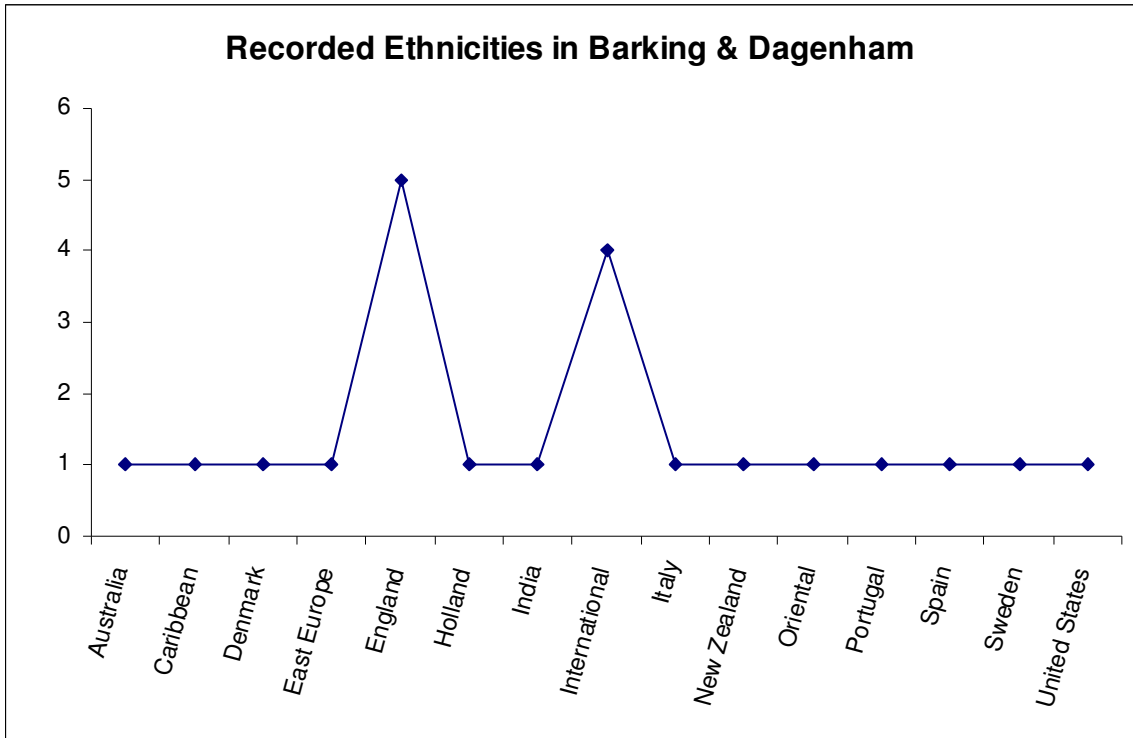
It was not possible to contact every Metropolitan Police unit to explore their awareness of their local sex industry. CO14 advised⁷³ that they do not formally map off-street prostitution, and due to time constraints, this research did not attempt to further investigate the nature of the information other Police units currently hold.

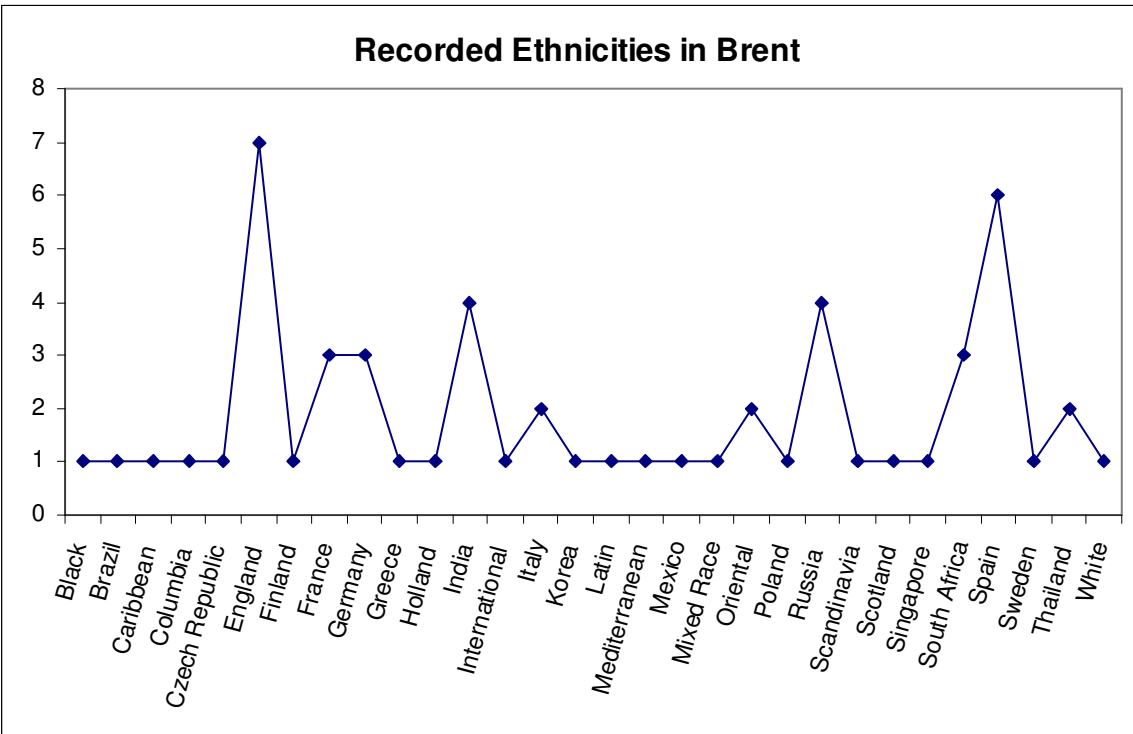
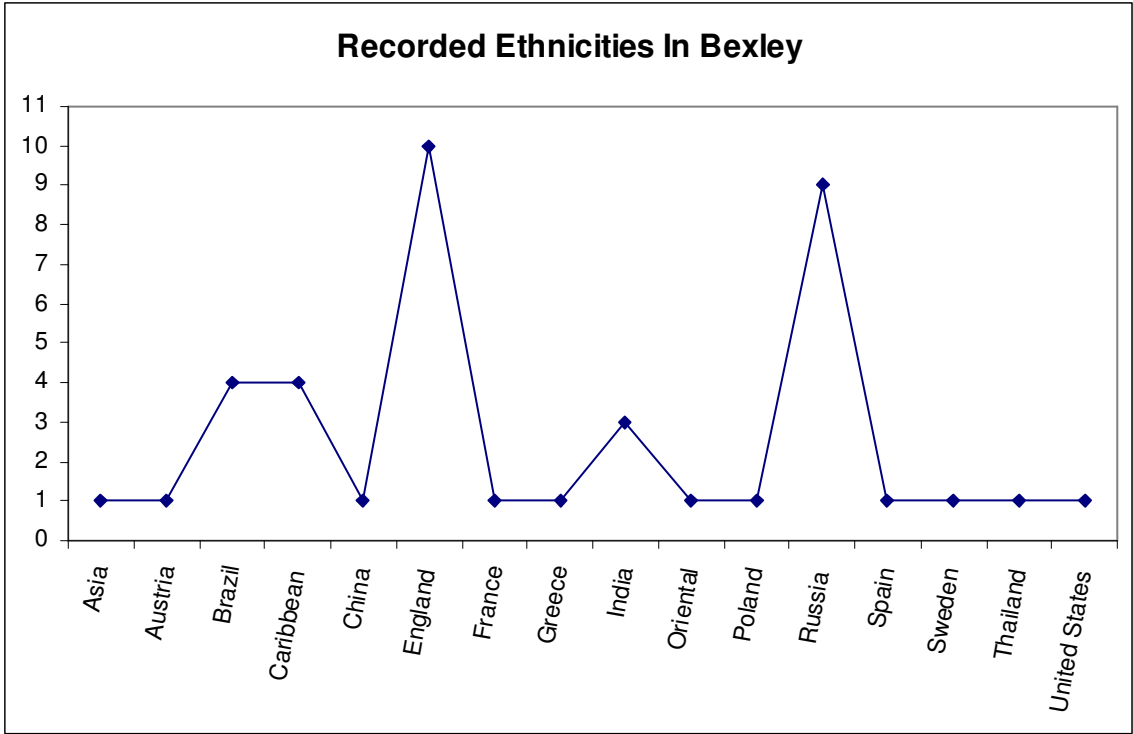
Women currently working in London's sex industry were not interviewed for this research. This is crucial to estimating the prevalence of trafficking, particularly when none of the agencies providing outreach work are prepared to estimate the numbers of women working in the sex industry who have been trafficked. If further mapping work in this area is to be carried out POPPY recommends joint work with outreach agencies currently running drop-in clinics to facilitate this. This would probably necessitate long-term research, due to the difficult issues for women working in prostitution around disclosure and trust.

Sex is for sale all over London, and women are trafficked into London's outer boroughs as well as the sex 'hotspots' of central London. Services need to be provided to women in the sex industry to help women stay safe while selling sex and to help women who wish to exit sex work. Further mapping of the ways the sex industry operates would enable service providers to better tailor services to meet the needs of women currently working in London's sex industry.

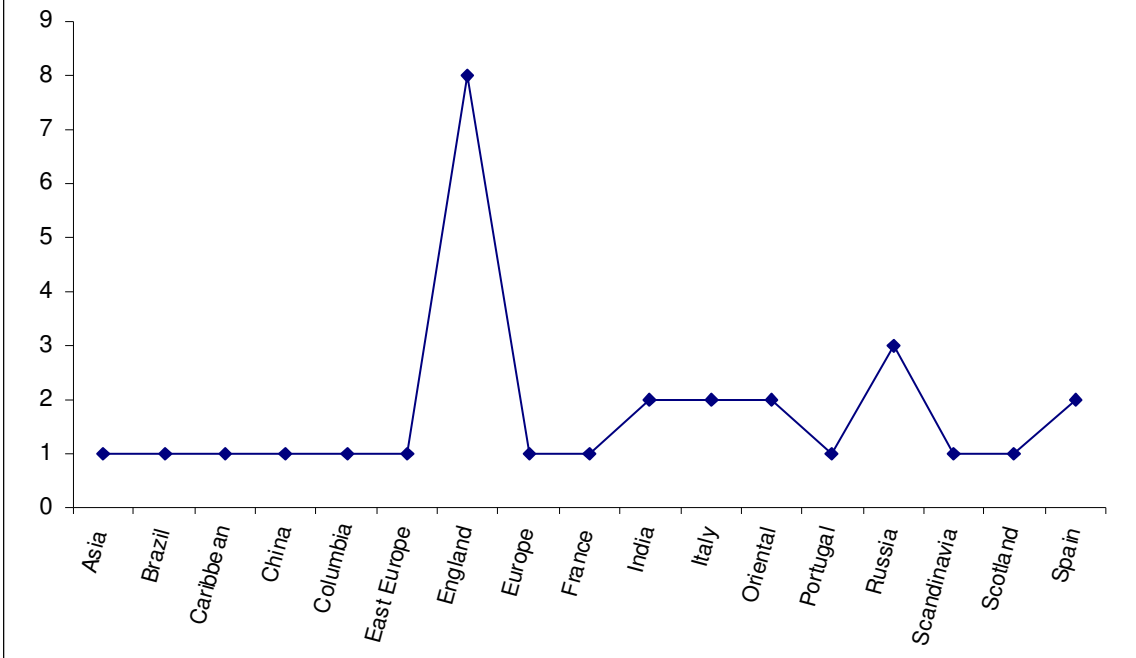
⁷³ Email communications with Detective Inspector Dick Powell on 14 July 2003, 25 July 2003 and 19 November 2003

Appendix A – Ethnicity Analysis by Borough

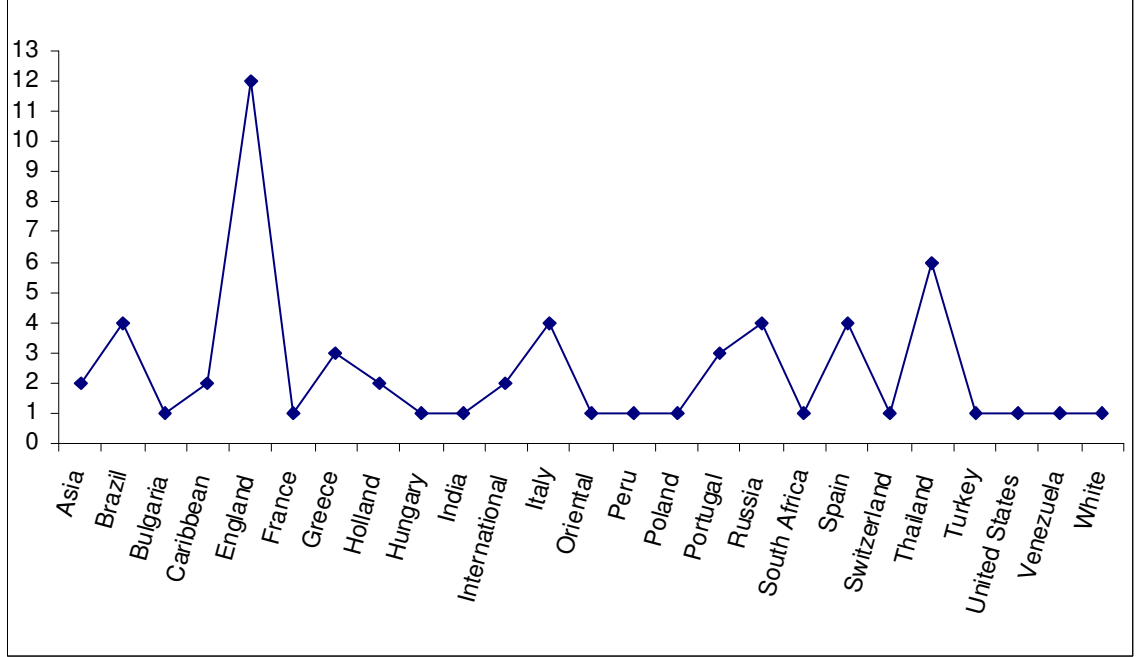


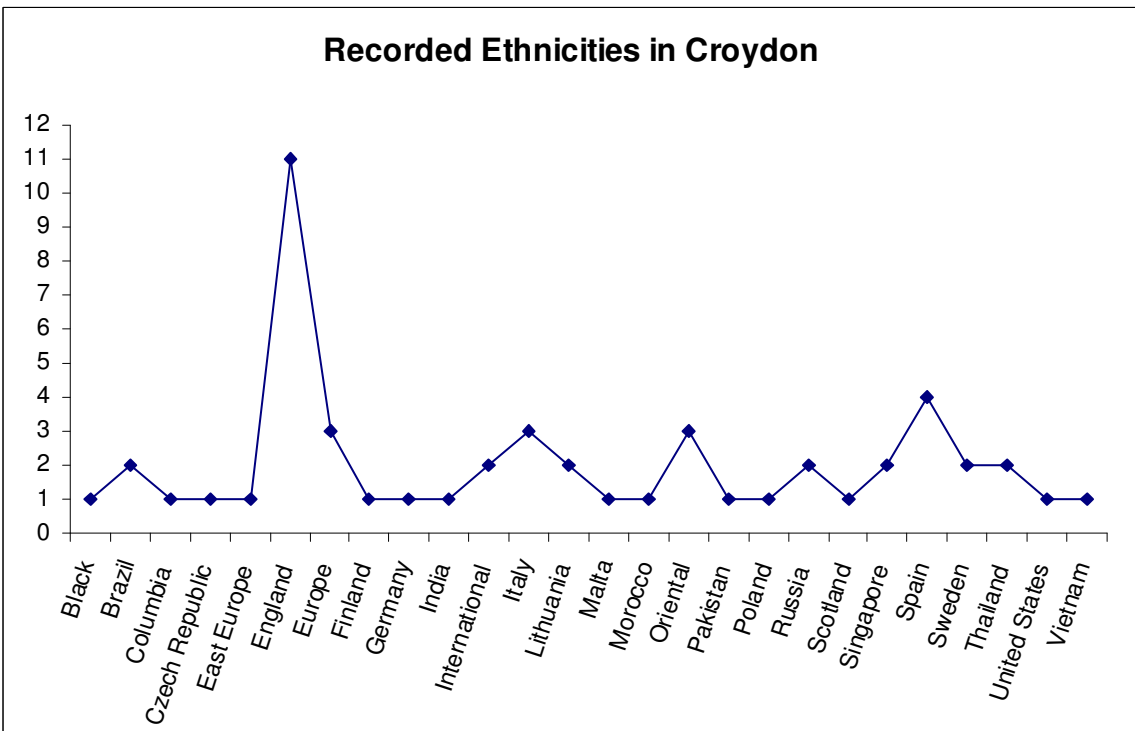
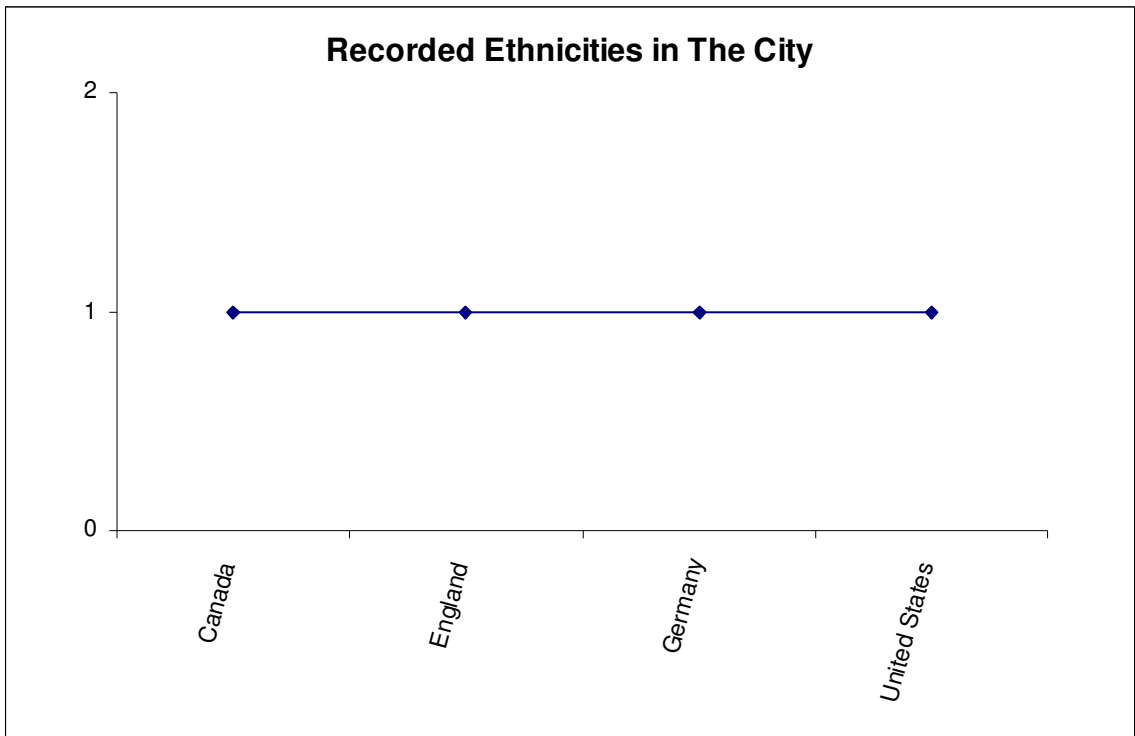


Recorded Ethnicities in Bromley

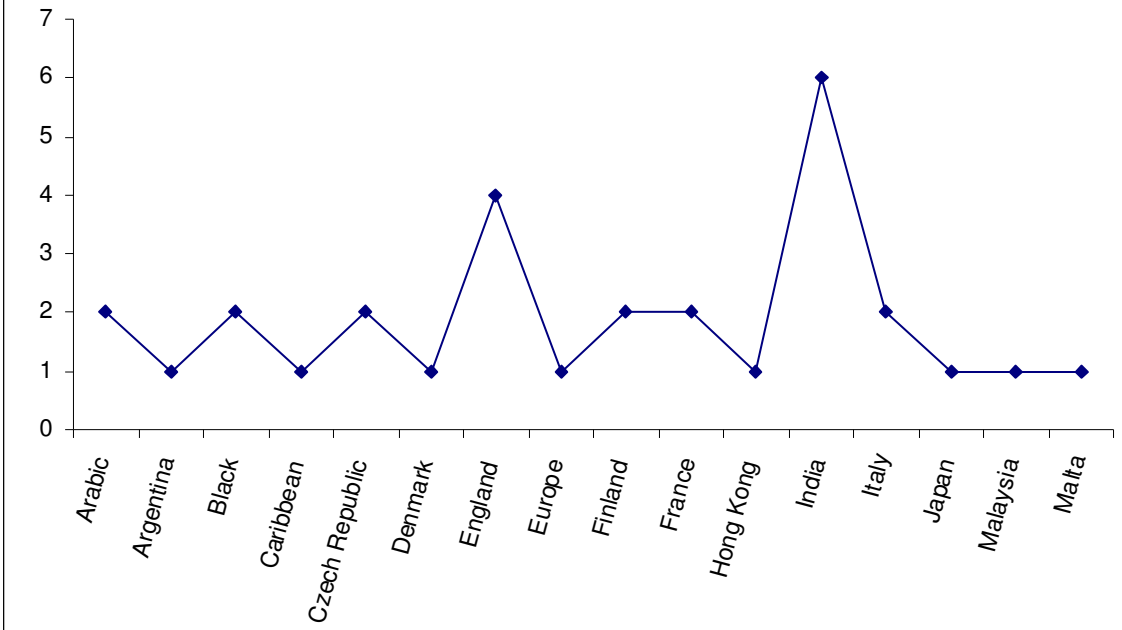


Recorded Ethnicities in Camden

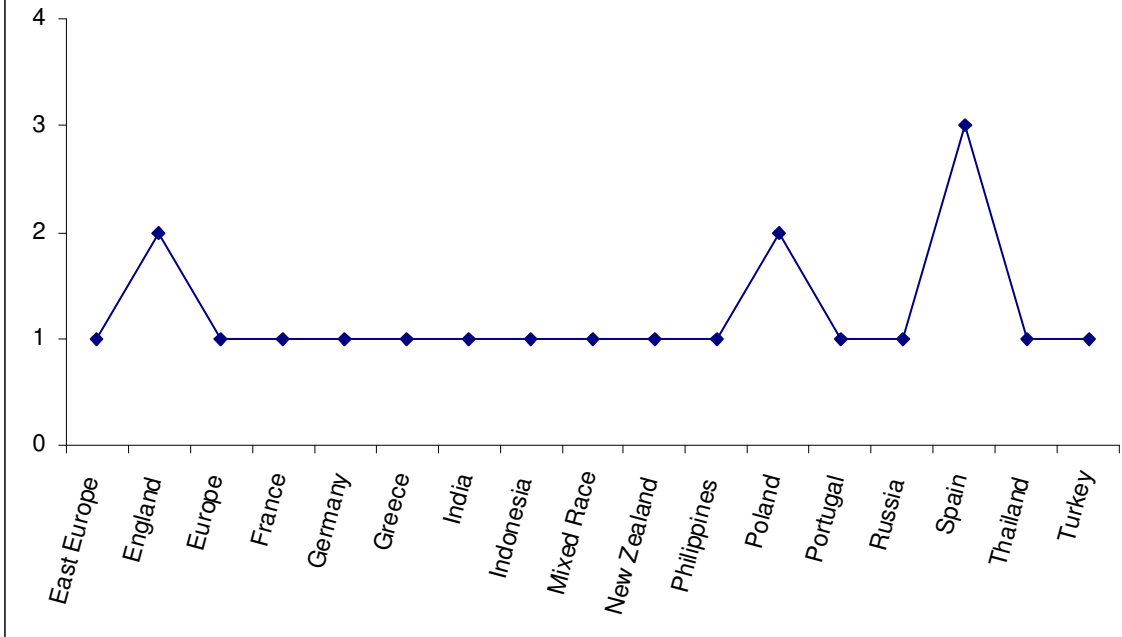


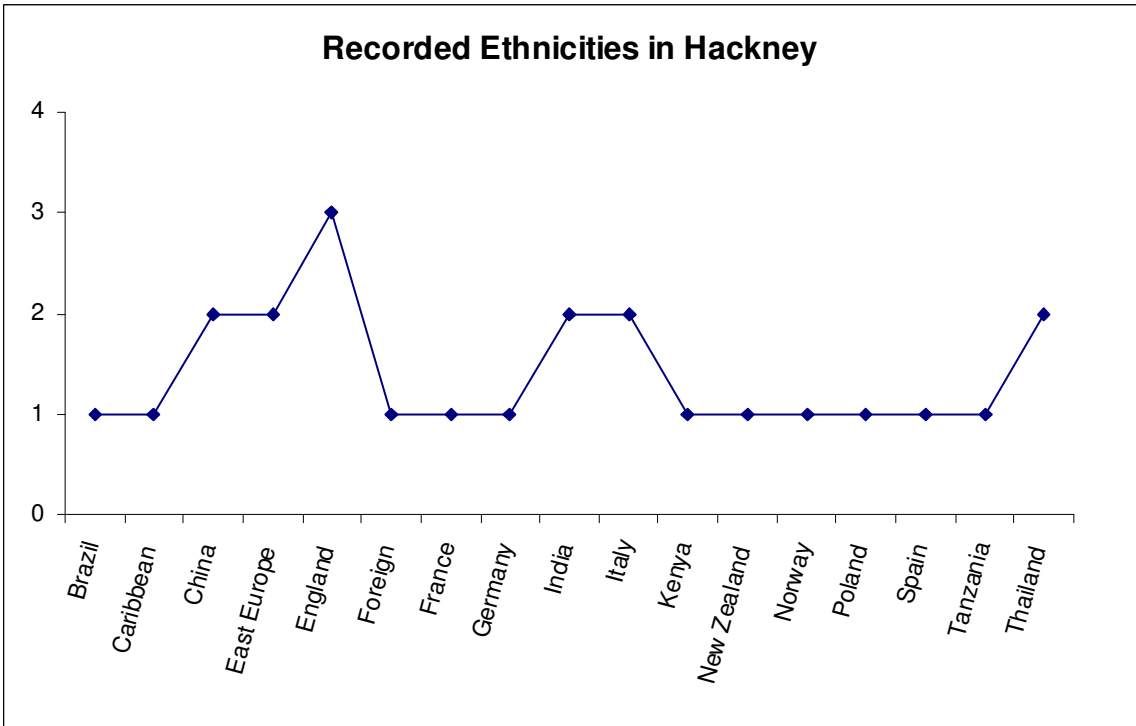
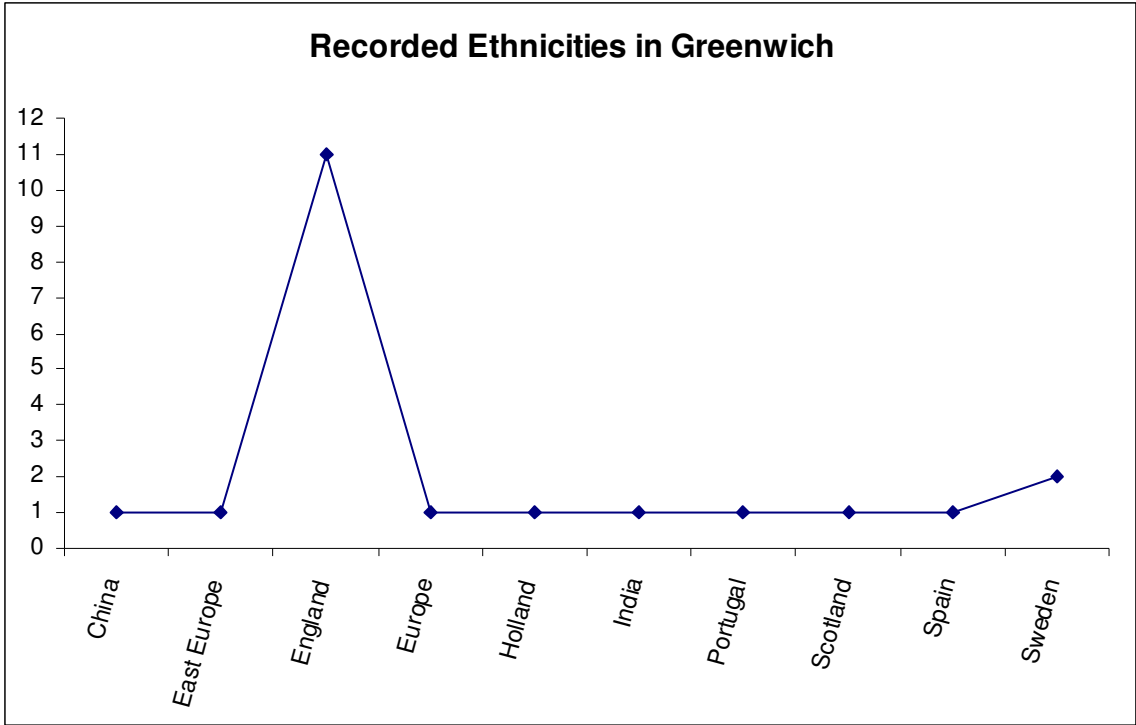


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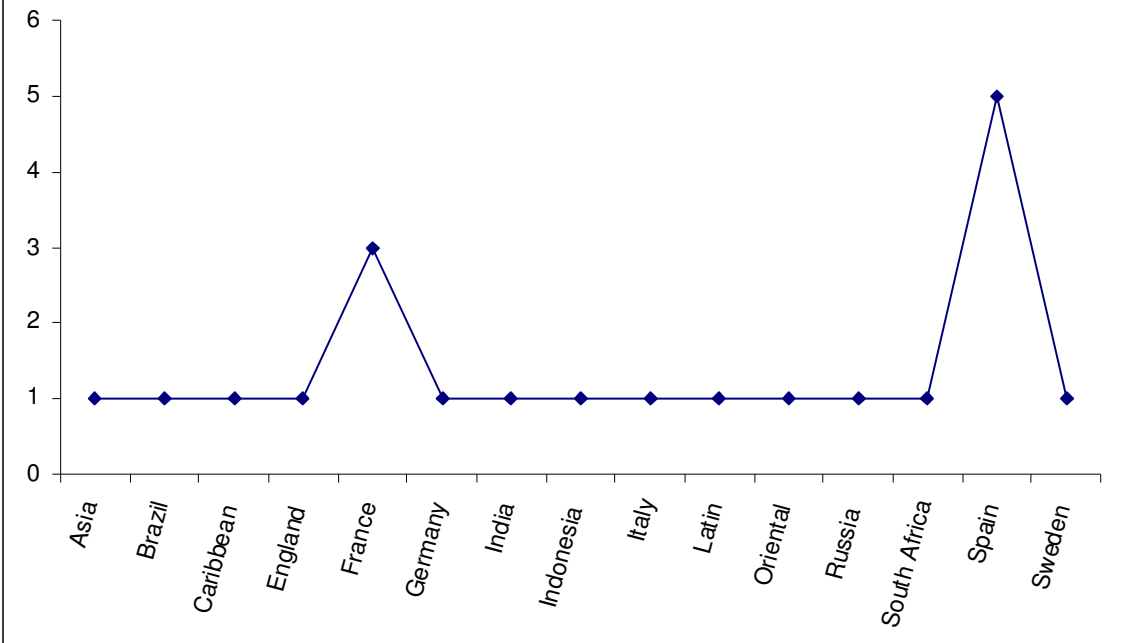


Recorded Ethnicities in Enfield

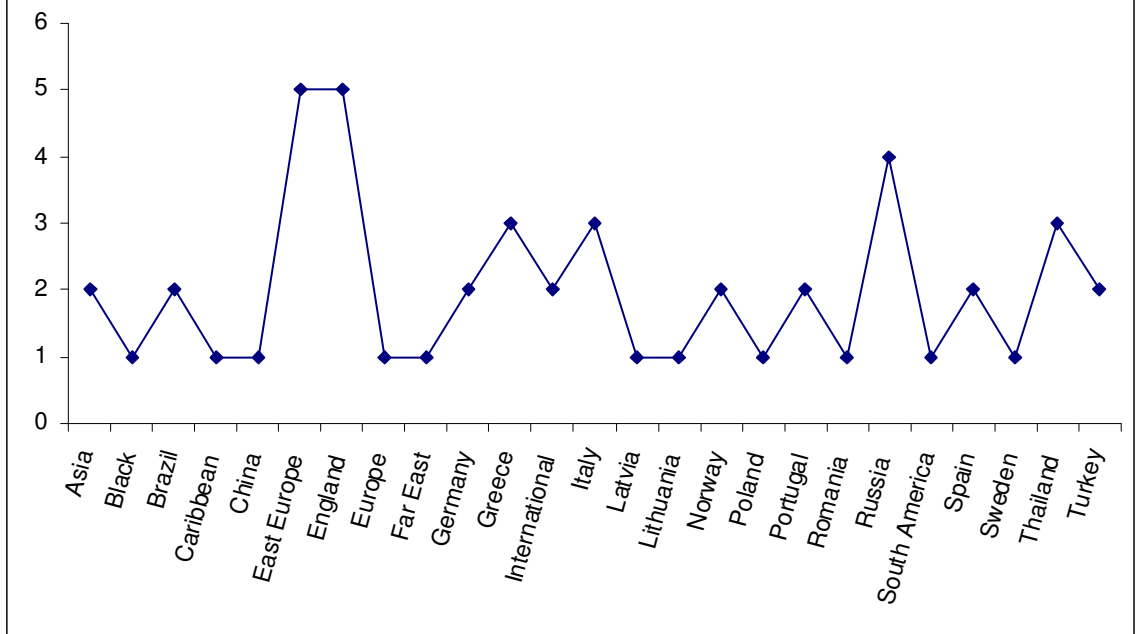


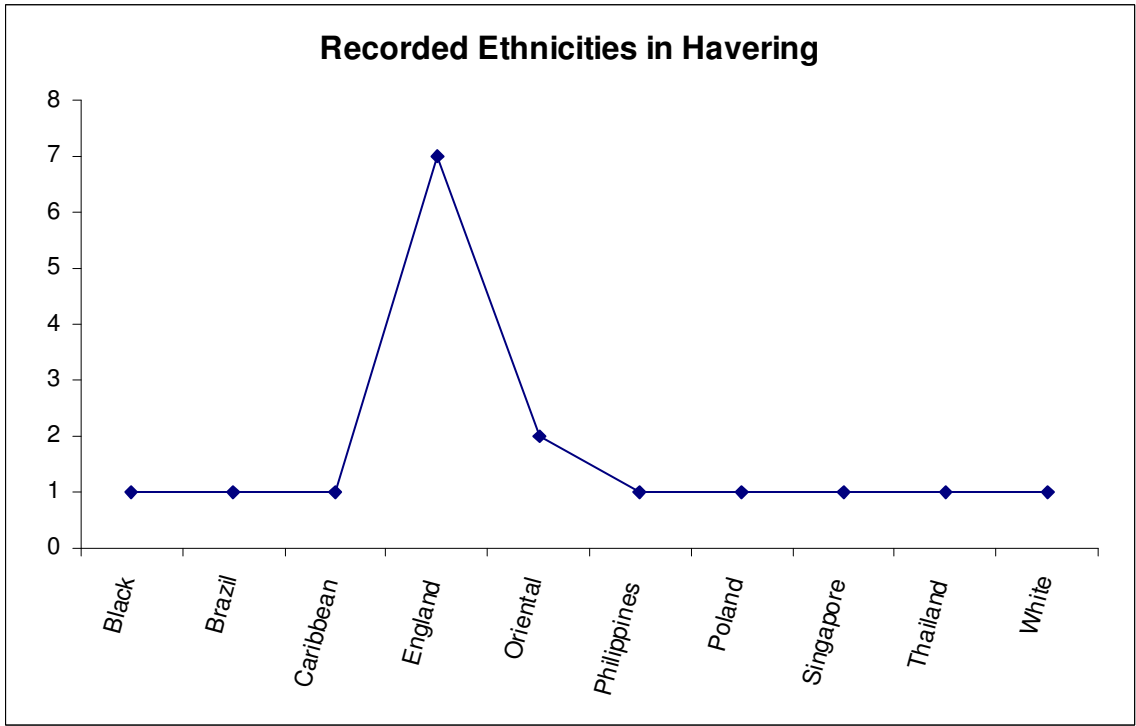
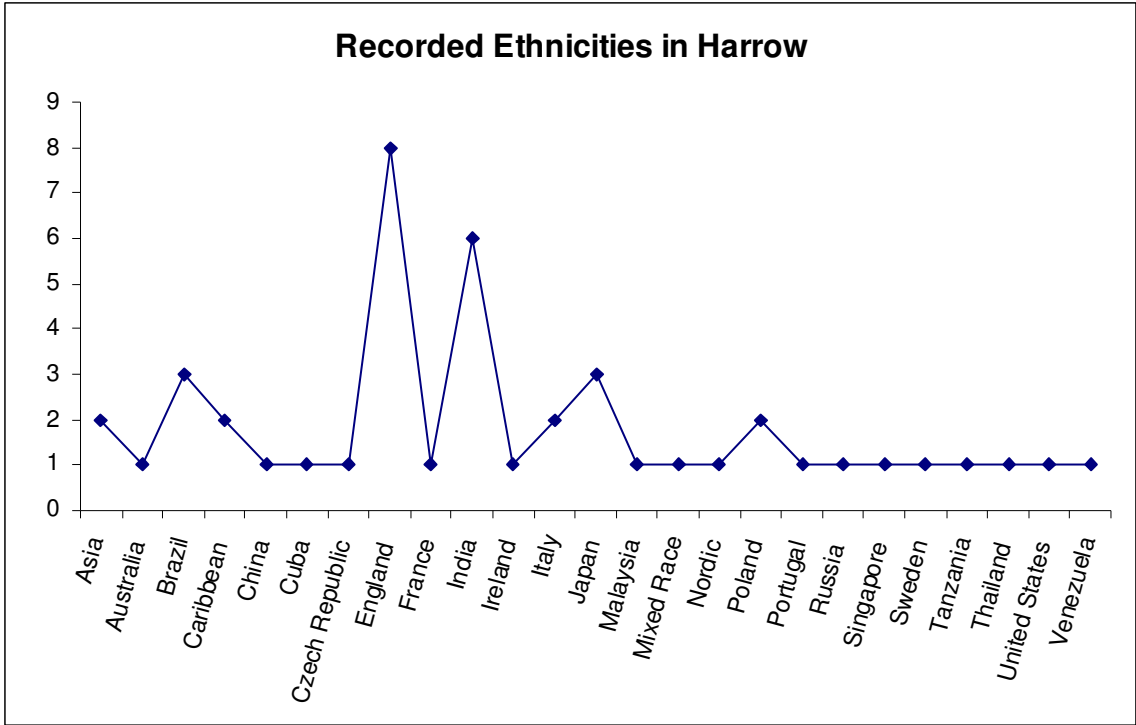


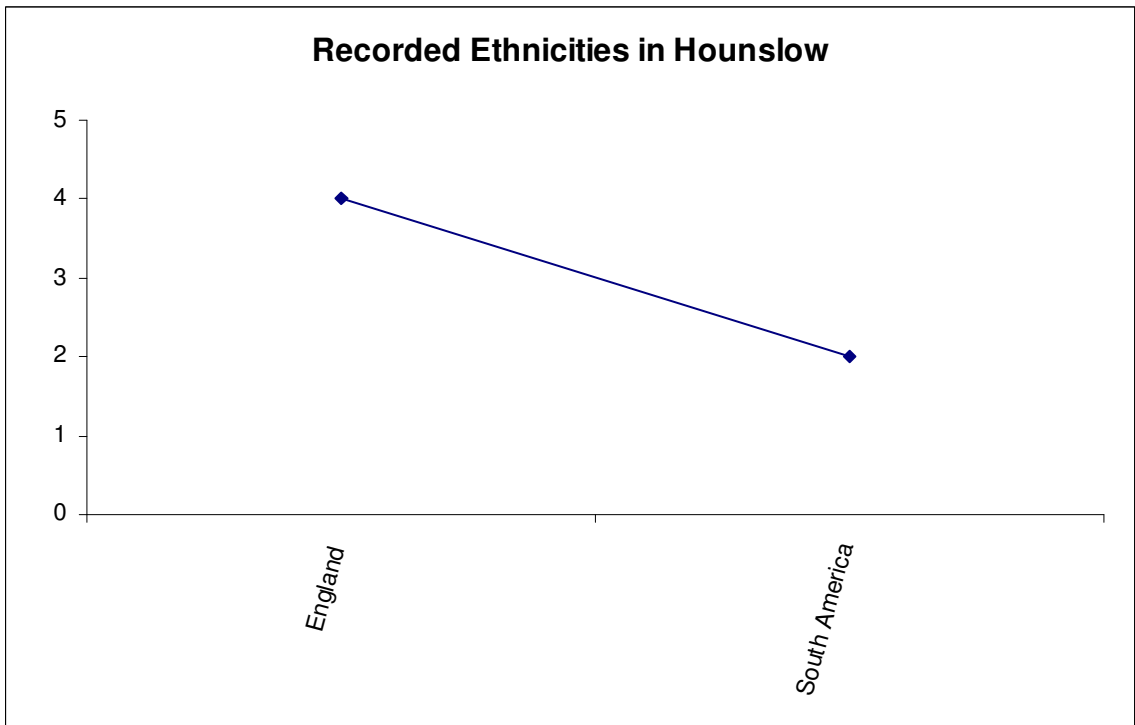
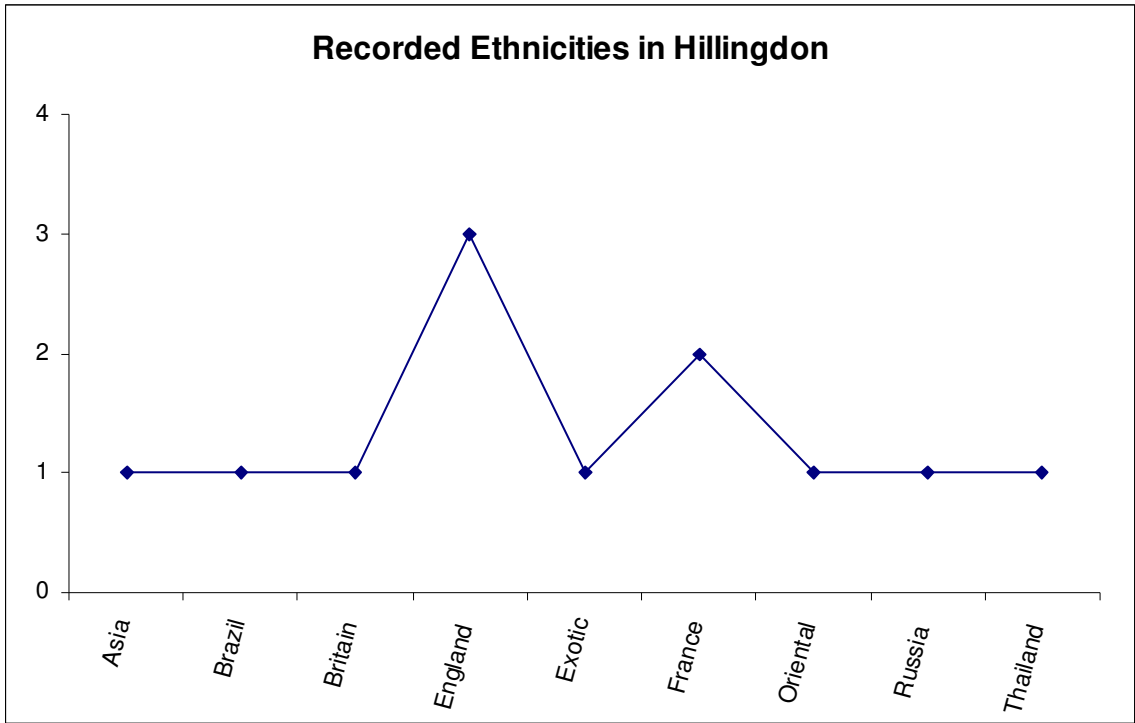
Recorded Ethnicities in Hammersmith and Fulham

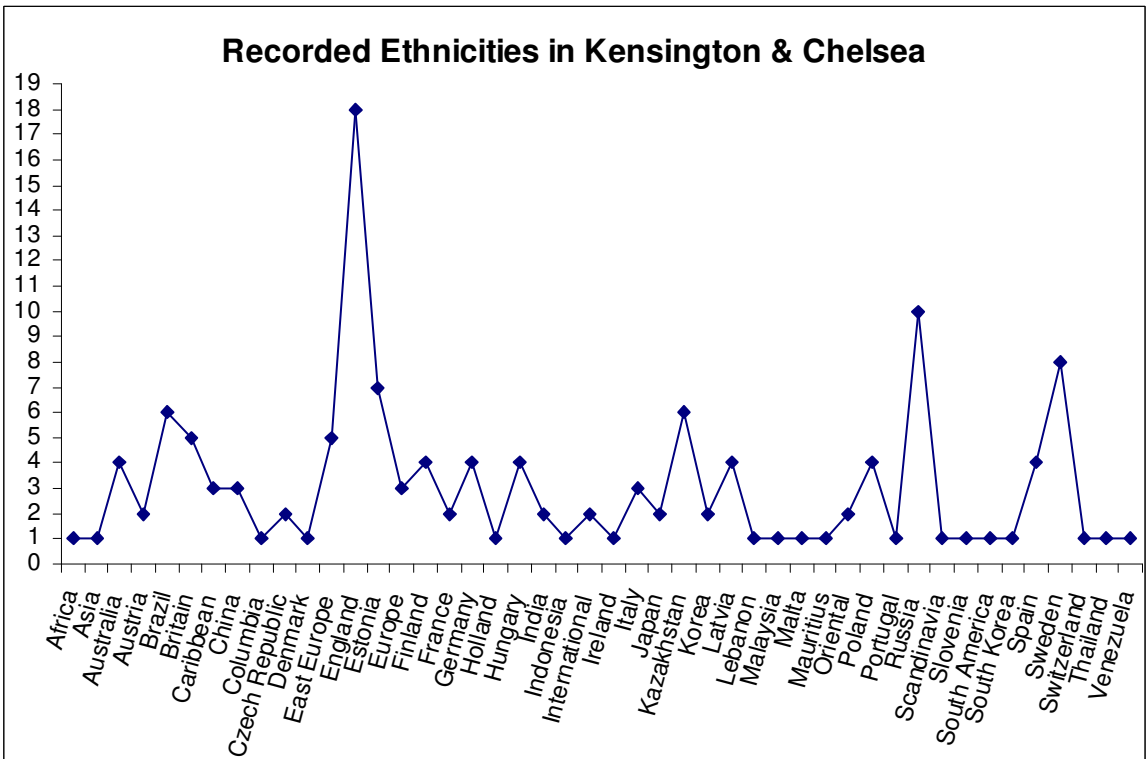
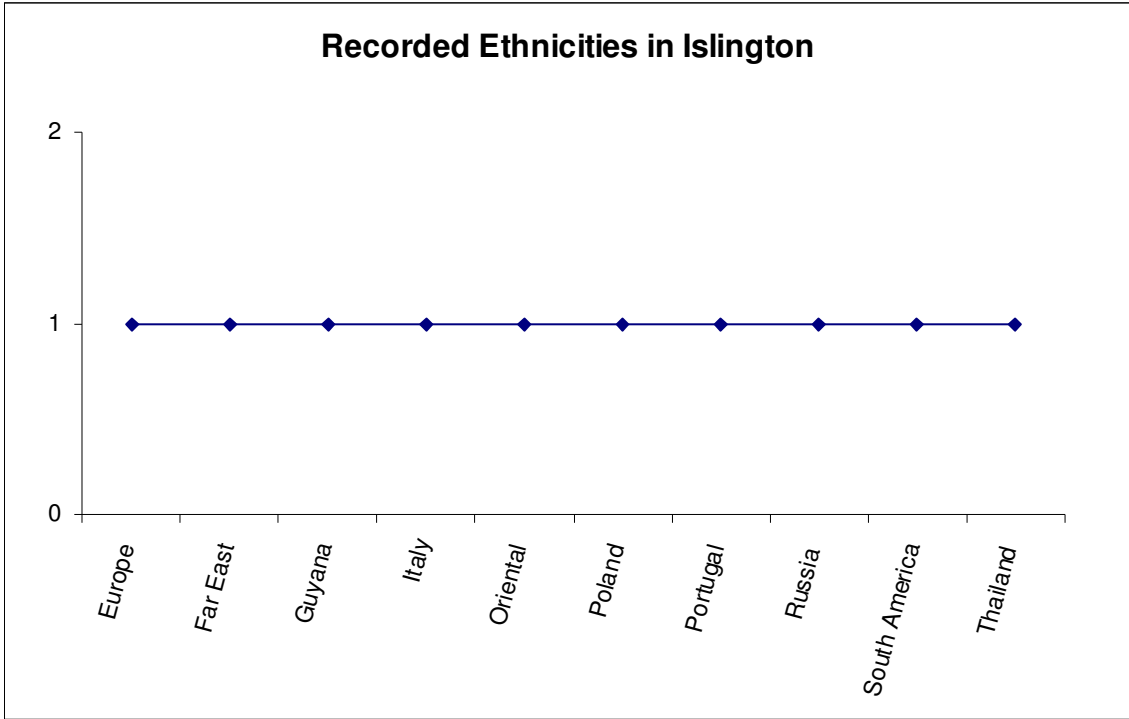


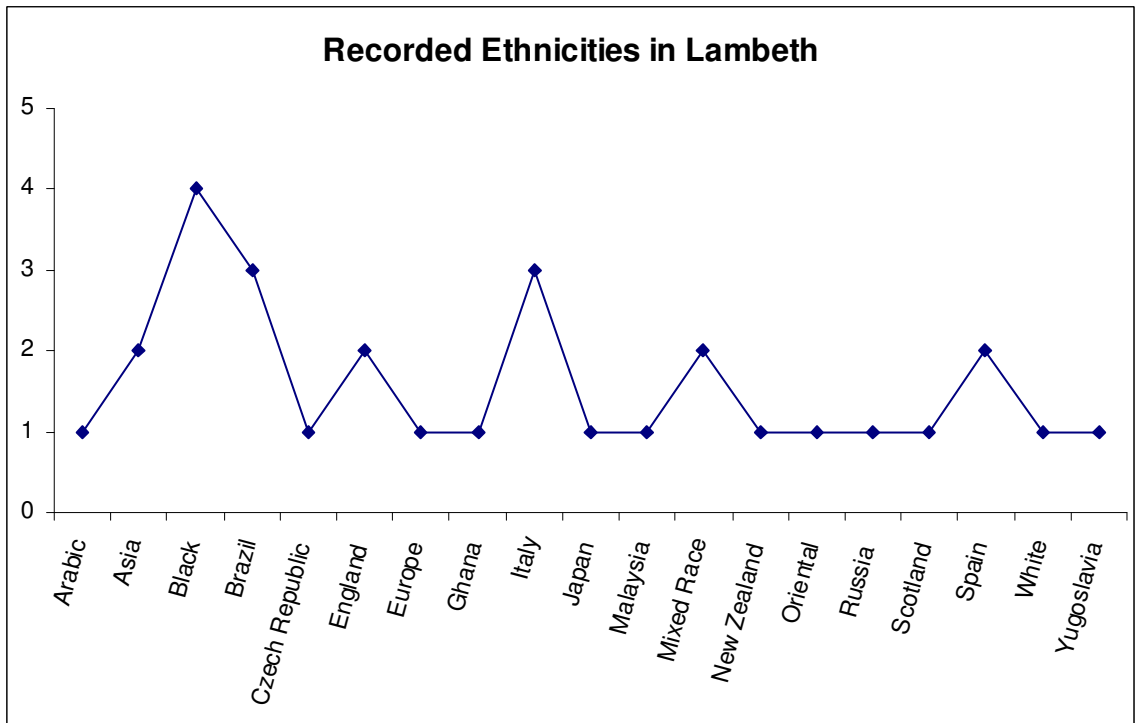
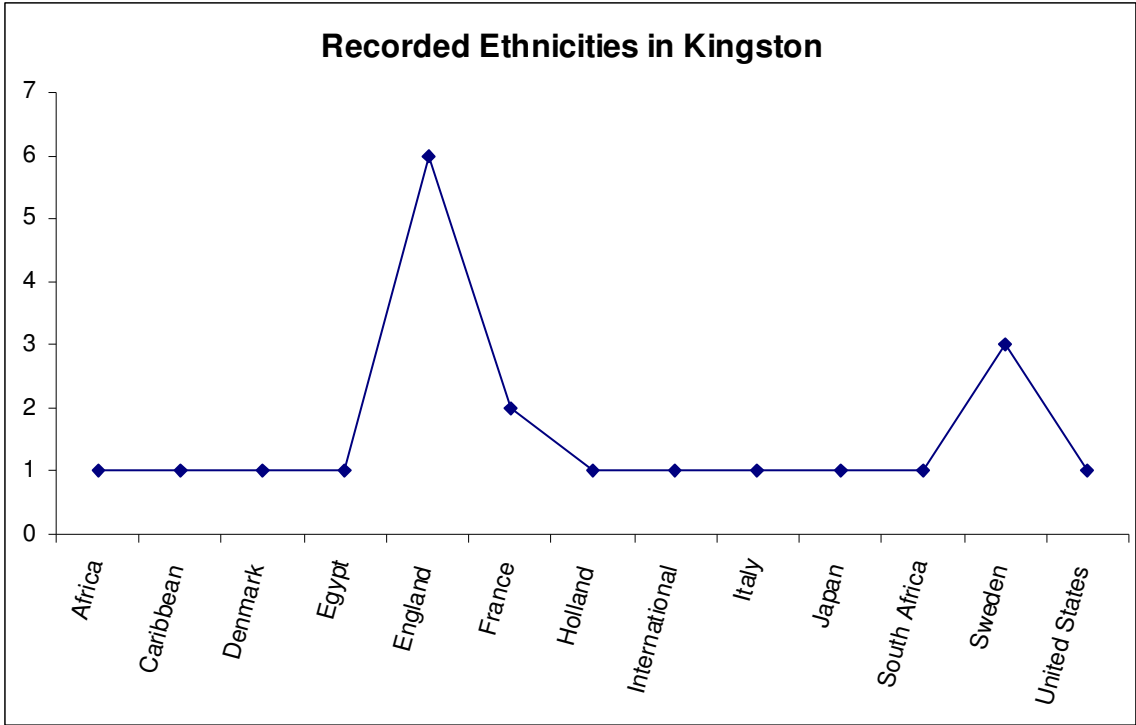
Recorded Ethnicities in Haringey

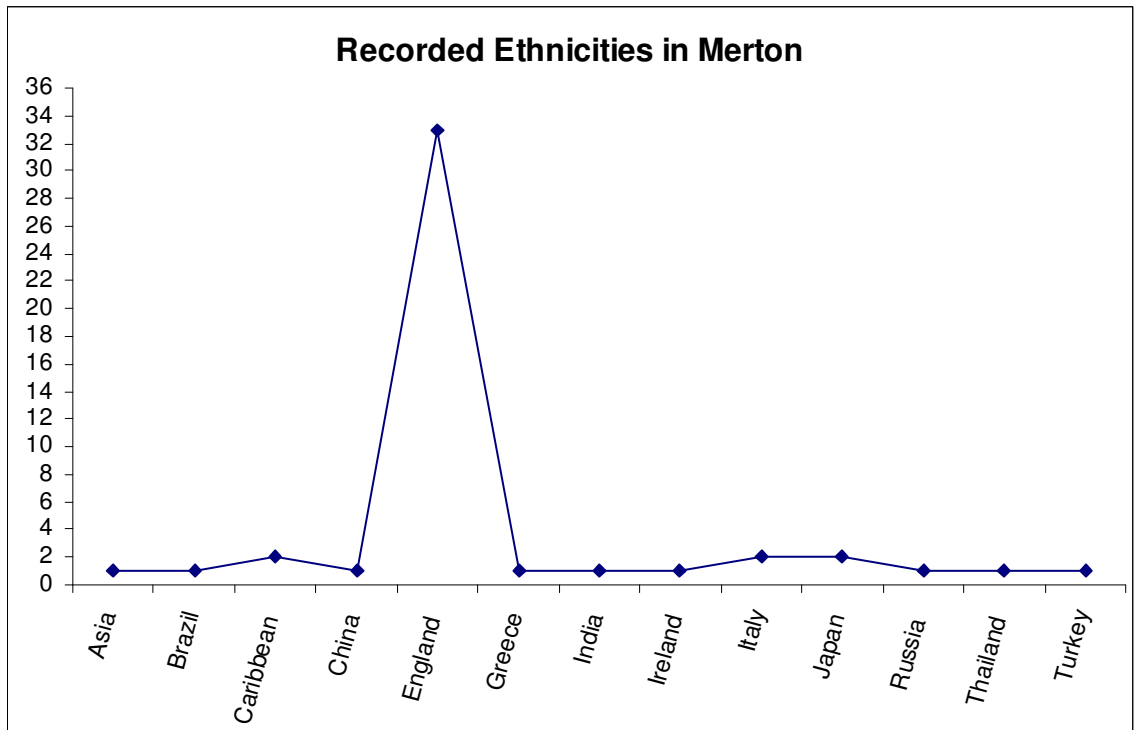
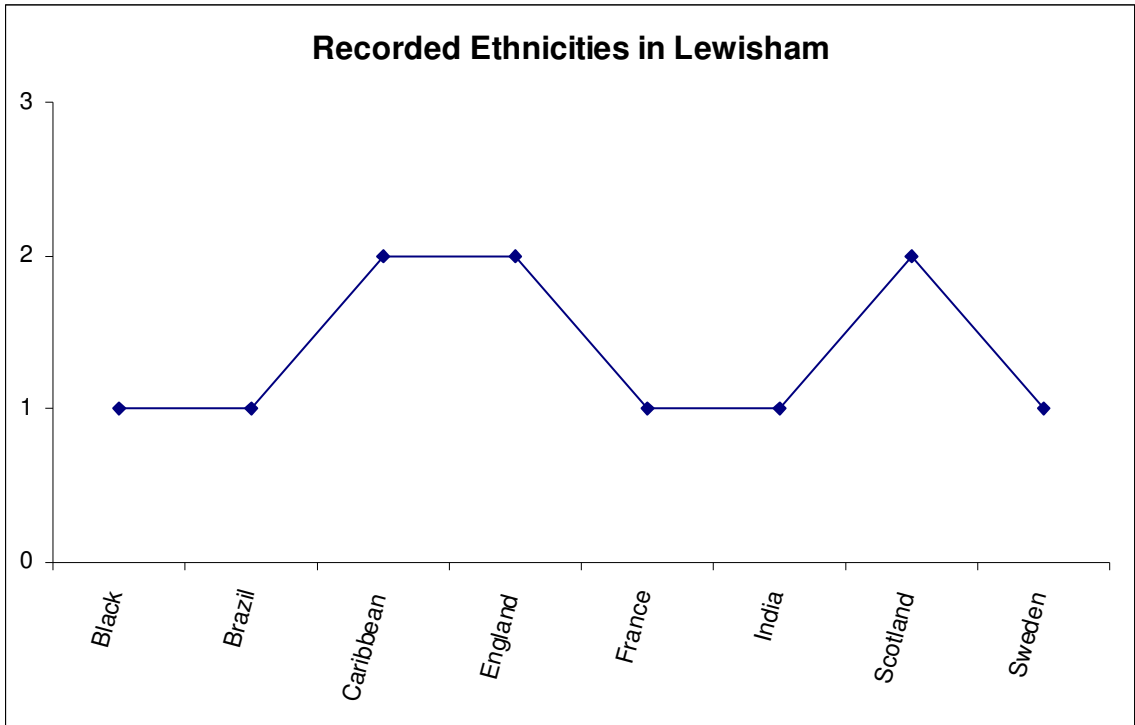


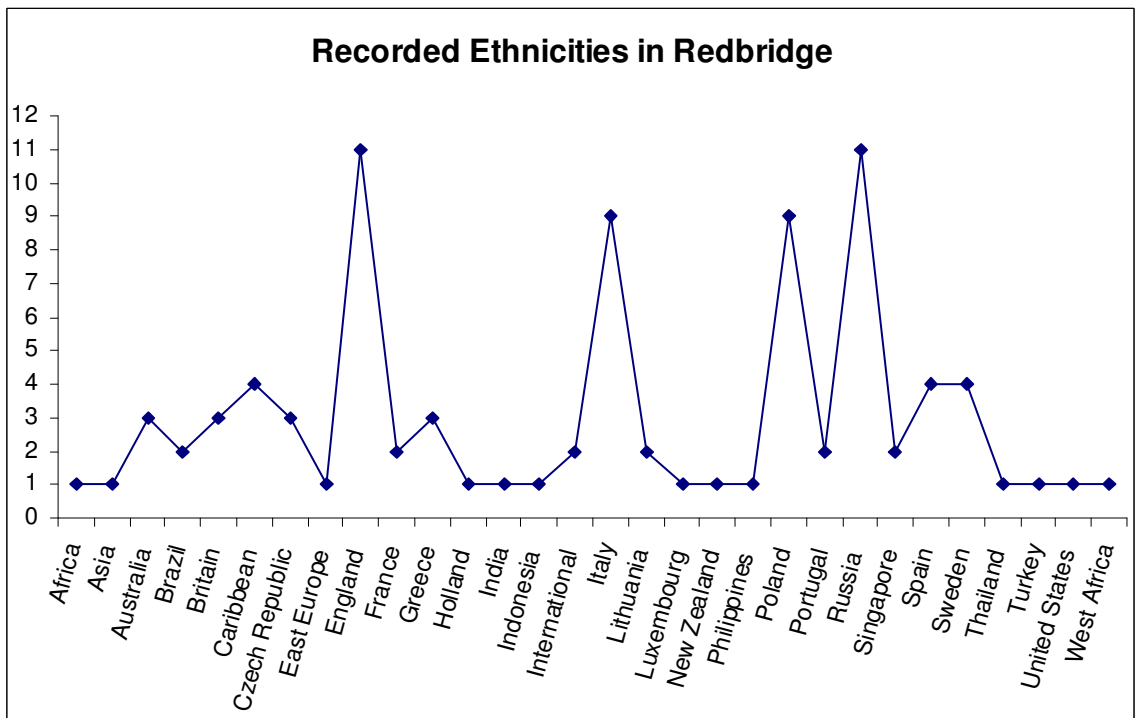
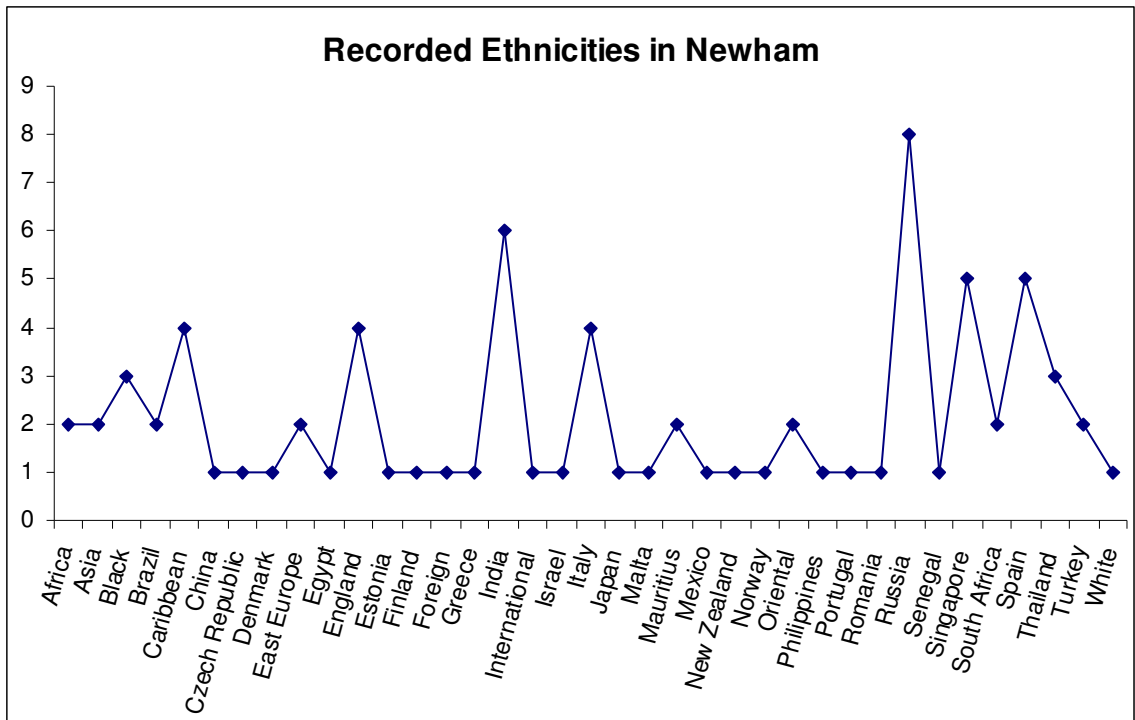


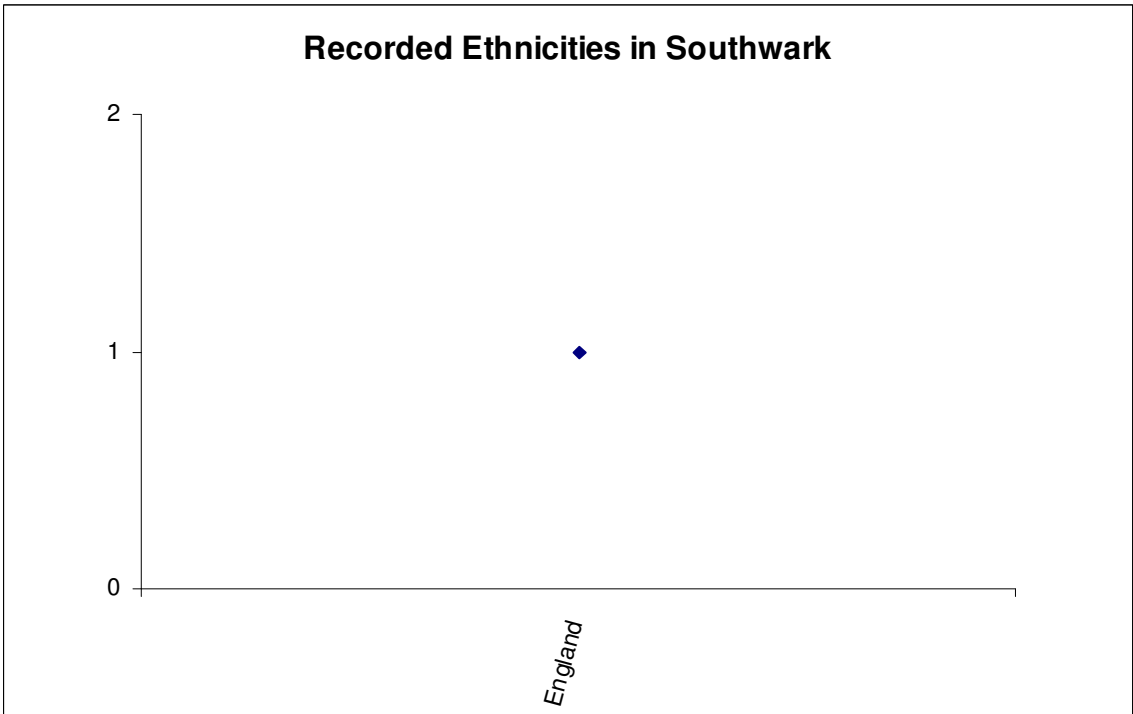
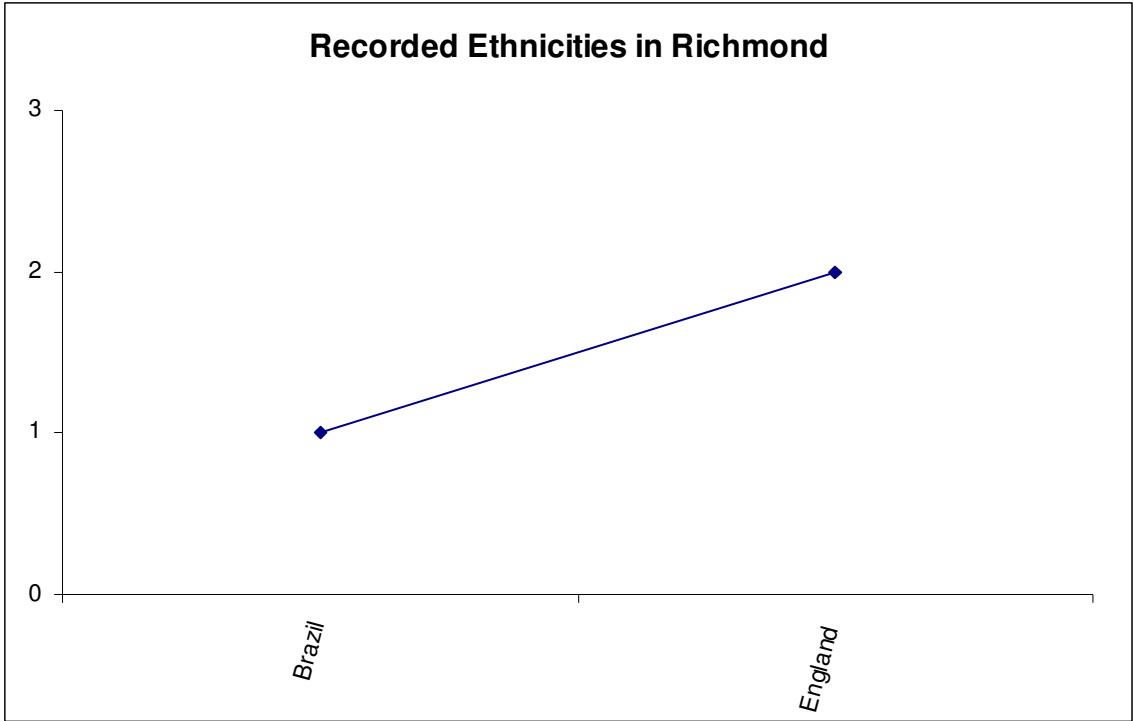


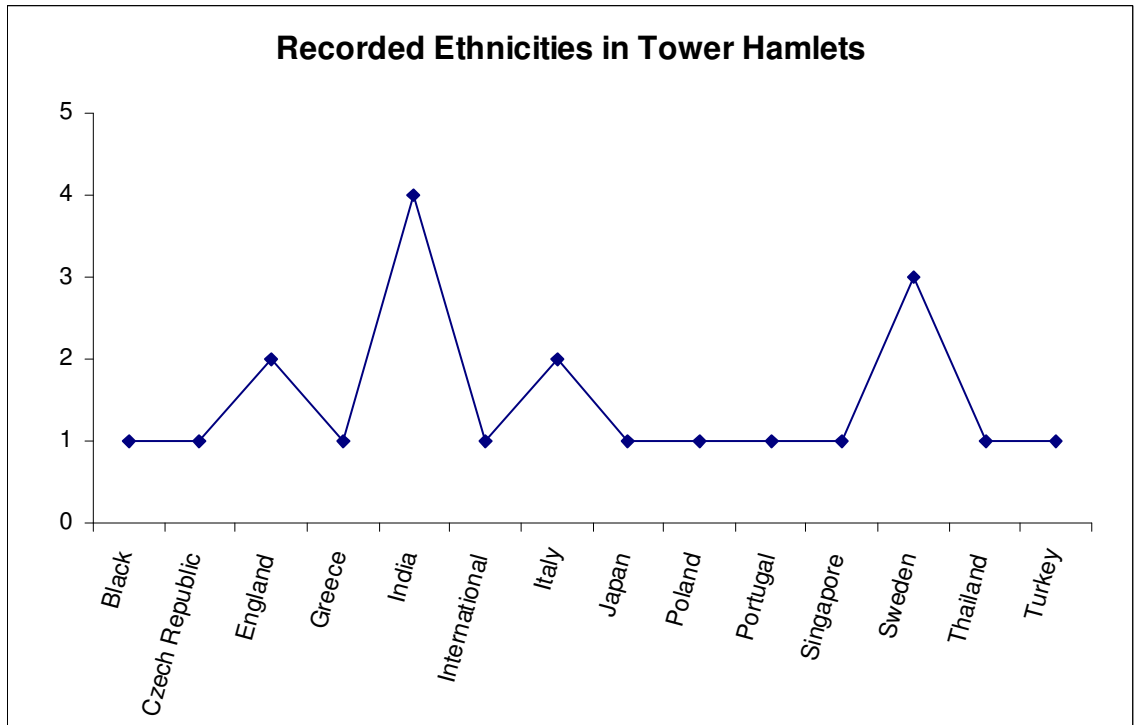
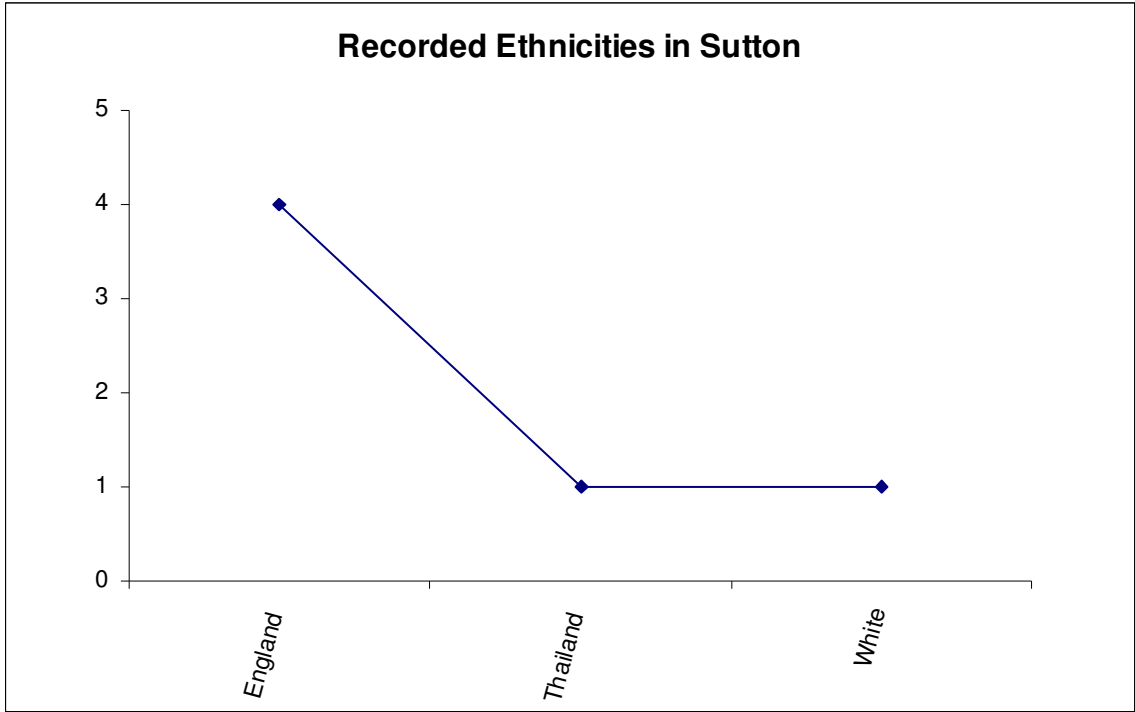


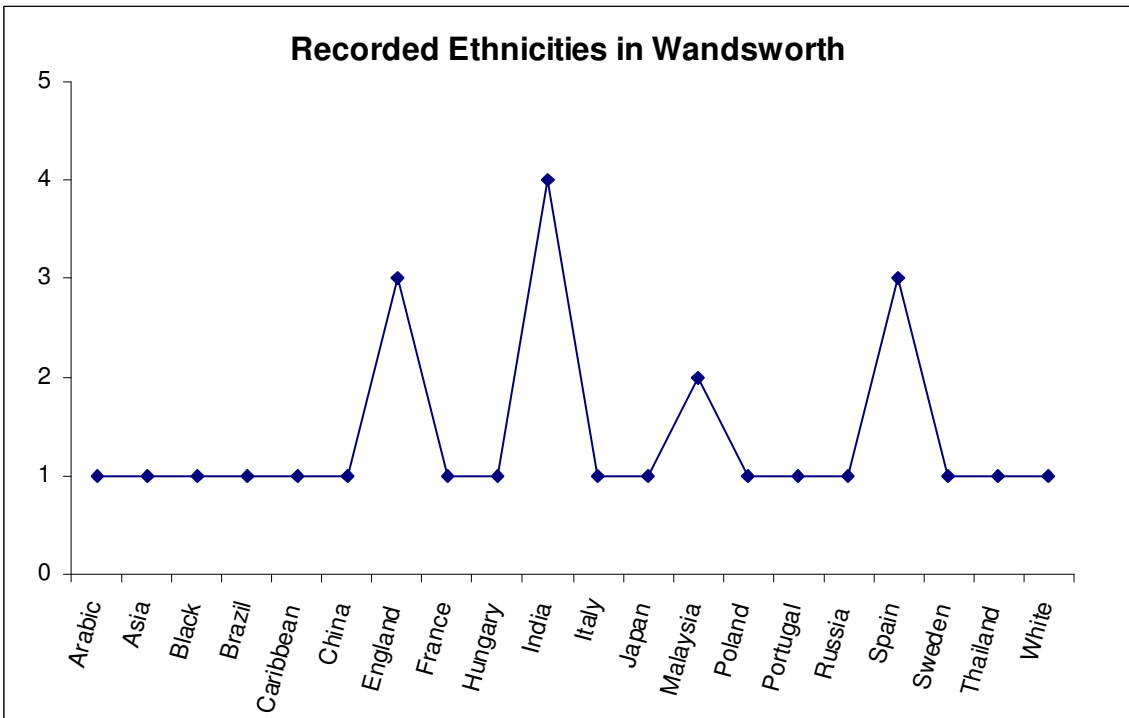
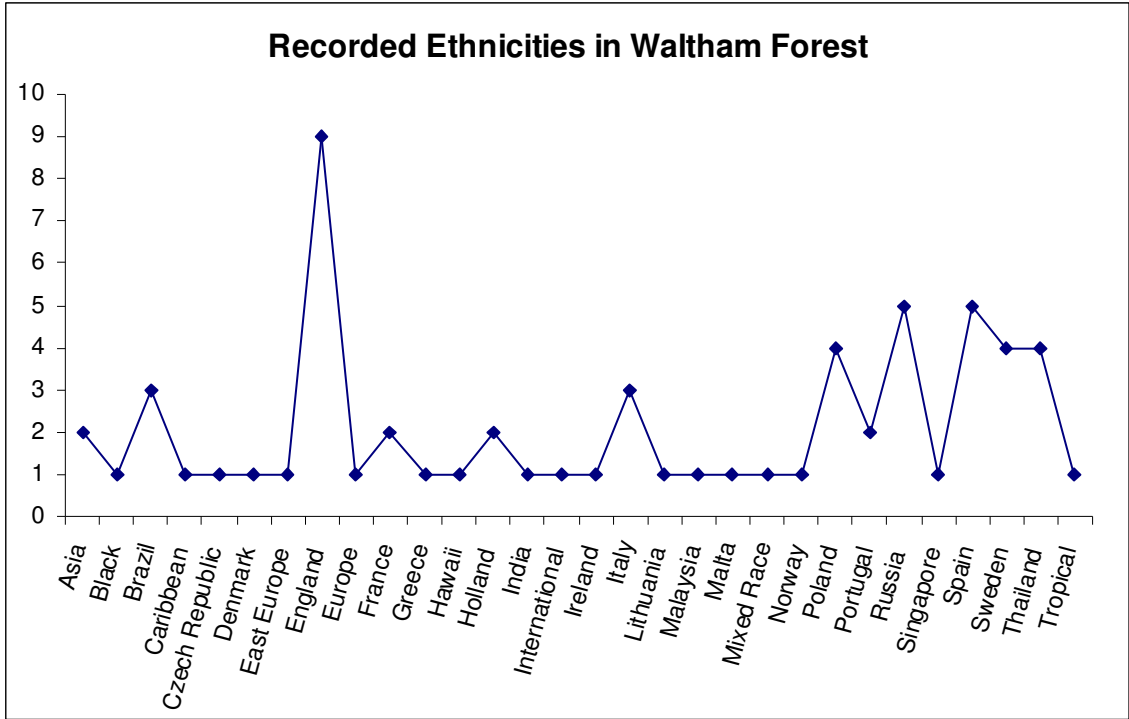




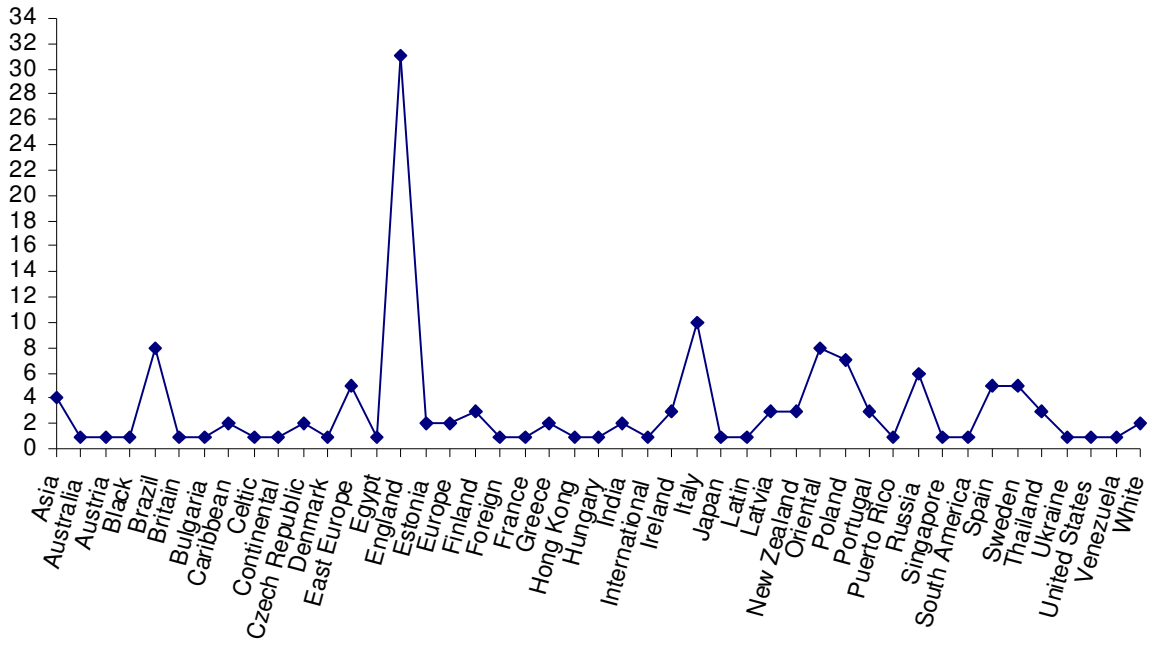








Recorded Ethnicities in Westminster



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Barking and Dagenham Post	Kingston Borough Guardian
Barnet and Potters Bar Times	Newham Recorder
Camden New Journal	News Shopper Bexleyheath and Welling
Croydon Advertiser	News Shopper Bromley and Hayes
Croydon Guardian	News Shopper Greenwich and Charlton
Ealing Leader	News Shopper Sidcup and Bexley
Ealing Times	Paddington Times
East London Advertiser	Richmond Borough Guardian
Enfield Independent	Southwark News
Hackney Gazette	Streatham/Clapham/Dulwich Guardian
Hammersmith and Fulham Informer	Sutton Borough Guardian
Haringey Independent	The Mercury (Greenwich)
Harrow Times	The Post Croydon Borough
Hillingdon and Uxbridge Times	Waltham Forest Independent
Hounslow, Brentford and Isleworth Guardian	Wandsworth Borough Guardian
Islington Gazette	Wembley Observer
Kensington and Chelsea News	Wimbledon/Mitcham/Morden Guardian
Kensington and Chelsea Informer	
Kilburn Times	

Sex Guide Internet sites visited July – November 2003⁷⁴:

<http://www.acementage.net/london/london.html>
http://www.atsexuk.com/escort_agencies/agencies_london_agency.php
<http://www.eros-london.com/eros.htm>
<http://www.exfactory.co.uk/directory/index.php?cat=42&page=1>
<http://www.firstclasslondon.com/autorank/index.html>
<http://members.lycos.co.uk/psduk/index.html>
<http://www.PunterNet.com/>
http://www.punterlink.co.uk/escort_directories.htm
<http://www.sexpertlondon.com/>
<http://uk.sexyescortads.com/>

⁷⁴ Given the illegal activities these websites are marketing, and on occasion, very explicitly marketing, it is extremely likely that these addresses will change quite rapidly over time.

Internet sites visited July – November 2003⁷⁵:

1st Choice Executive Escorts - <http://www.executive-escorts.com/>
1st Choice Girls - <http://www.1stchoicegirls.com/>
1st Omega Escorts - <http://www.1stomegaescorts.com/index.phtml>
1st Select - <http://www.select1.co.uk/galleries.htm>
AAA Gal Escorts - <http://www.aaa-gal.com/main.html>
Academy Girls - <http://www.academy-girls.co.uk/>
Adam's Temptation - <http://www.adamstemptation.com/home.htm>
Adorable Babes - <http://www.adorablebabes.co.uk/>
Agency EEB - <http://www.agency-eeb.com/>
Agency Provocateur - <http://www.aprov.com/index.htm>
Agency Touch of Class - <http://www.agencytouchofclass.co.uk/index.htm>
Alluring Escorts - <http://www.alluring-escorts.net/>
Alphababes - <http://www.alphababes.co.uk/homepage.html>
Amourette Escorts - <http://www.amouretteescorts.com/index1.html>
Asian Dream Girls - <http://www.asiandreamgirlslondon.com/>
Asian Escorts - <http://www.asian-escorts-london.com/index.htm>
Babesland - <http://www.babesland.co.uk/home.htm>
Belle Escorts - <http://belle-escorts.com/intro.htm>
Bentleys of London - <http://www.bentleysoflondon.com/>
Blue Sapphire - <http://www.bluesapphires.net/start.shtml>
City Entertainments - <http://www.cityentertainments.co.uk/index.html>
Classy Kim - <http://www.classy-kim.co.uk/>
Confidential Models - <http://www.confidentialmodels.com/home.htm>
Coyote Babes - <http://www.coyotebabes.com/>
Debbie's Massage - <http://www.debbiesmassage.com/>
Directors-Escorts - http://www.directors-escorts.com/home_frame.html
Diva - <http://www.divaescort.com/>
Fantasy Oriental Escorts London - <http://www.fantasy-oriental.co.uk/frames.htm>
Fashion Escorts - <http://fashionescorts.com/>
Fine Date - <http://www.finedate.co.uk/>
Golden Apple - <http://www.goldenapple.co.uk/home.htm>
Knightsbridge Selection - <http://www.knightsbridge-selection-worldwide.com/>
Krystal - <http://krystalblackescort.no-ip.com/PunterNet.htm>
Ladybelles - <http://www.ladybelles.co.uk/>
Lap Dance London - <http://www.lapdancelondon.co.uk/venuepostcode.htm>
Les Girls - <http://www.lesgirls.co.uk/>
London Beauties - <http://www.london-beauties-escort.com/pics.htm>
London International Escorts - <http://www.london-internationalescorts.com/index.html>
London Pleasure Dome - <http://www.londonpleasuredome.com/>
London-Rome Private Escort Service - http://www.london-rome-escort-service.com/1024_index.html
London Pearls - <http://www.londonpearls.com/>
Marcia Pleasurezone - <http://www.marcia-pleasurezone.com/mainframe.htm>
Minx Escorts - <http://www.minx-escorts.com/>
New Stars - <http://www.new-stars.co.uk/index.php?module=gallery&func=view>
Oriental Angels - http://www.orientalangels-london.com/London_Escort_Agency.htm
Oriental Escorts - <http://www.oriental-escort-services.com/>

⁷⁵ These addresses include Flats/Parlours/Saunas, and agencies mapped as Escort Agencies.

Pasha Escorts and Companions - <http://www.executiveescorts.com/pasha/index.html>
Perfect Petals - <http://perfectpetals-escorts.co.uk/>
Priority Girl - <http://www.prioritygirl.com/>
Ritz Girls - <http://www.ritzescorts.com/>
Samantha's Escorts - <http://www.samanthasescorts.com/page2.html>
Saucy London - <http://www.saucylondon.com/>
Sauna 2K - <http://www.sauna2k.com/>
Scandal Babes - <http://www.scandalbabes.co.uk/>
South East Raven - <http://www.xtremebbw.com/introduction.htm>
The Gallery - <http://www.the-gallery.co.uk/home.php>
Trash City - <http://www.trashcity.org/STRIP/RESOURCE/LINKS.HTM>
UK Oriental - <http://ukoriental.com/welcome.htm>
Velvets - <http://home.freeuk.com/velvetz/start.htm>
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Agencies

The POPPY Project would like to thank these agencies for providing information.

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Praed Street Project

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