

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE SWEDISH AND ITALIAN ANTI-TRAFFICKING SYSTEMS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this paper, we compare the Swedish and Italian anti-trafficking systems, with specific attention to measures addressing women who were trafficked for sexual exploitation. It is based on empirical qualitative data collected through the interdisciplinary EU project *INSigHT – Building Capacity to Deal with Human Trafficking and Transit Routes in Nigeria, Italy, Sweden*. We describe the respective systems, including their strengths and weaknesses. While both systems are largely based on a humanitarian governance model of support targeting “deserving victims of human trafficking”, they promote different visions of migrants’ inclusion. The Swedish system is characterized by short-term support measures, most of which are tied to migrants’ participation in criminal proceedings. The ultimate step in Sweden’s mechanism for the referral of trafficking victims is to return them to their country of origin. Conversely, in the Italian system we find long-term support measures, including residence permits and integration projects, which migrants can access without collaborating with law enforcement. Whereas the ultimate goal of the Swedish system is to prosecute crimes and have migrants leave the country, the Italian system acknowledges migrants’ wish and need to stay in Italy. These differences, we argue, are connected to the genesis of anti-trafficking policy in each country: while the Swedish system evolved from a top-down approach, in Italy it was grassroots efforts that paved the way to protection measures. Despite these differences, both systems fail to promote the full inclusion of women. They fail to recognize their agency and involve them in the definition and delivery of support measures. There is also an evident tension between institutional times (ex. resident permit validity and project duration) and biographical times (ex. women’s ability to tell their stories and collaborate in investigations).

**Keywords:** anti-trafficking, Sweden, Italy, victim referral, sexual exploitation

### **Authors’ biography:**

Michela Sempredon, Researcher and Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Parma, Italy. Michela was the Coordinator and Principal Investigator of the research activities of the *INSigHT* project (for more info, see: <https://www.insightproject.net/>). Michela’s research focuses on local policies for

the inclusion of migrants and reception systems, urban security policies, housing policies, human trafficking (in particular from Nigeria) and severe exploitation, movements and autonomy of migrants, legal protection and paths of unaccompanied foreign minors.

Isabelle Johansson, Lecturer in Sociology with specialization in Criminology at Kristianstad University and PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology at Lund University, Sweden. Isabelle was involved as a researcher in the *INSigHT* project and gathered the empirical data on the Swedish anti-trafficking system. Isabelle's research focuses on sexuality, social norms, public attitudes, sex work and other sex trade related issues, as well as topics such as rights, migration and human trafficking.