



United Nations Committee on the Status of Women

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COMMITTEE GUIDE

UNCSW

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1. Presidents' Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women (UNCSW)! We are Antonia Orjuela and Lucia Rodriguez. We are 11th-grade students from Colegio Bolivar and are really excited and honoured to be your presidents for this model. This is our fourth model as presidents together, and we are thrilled to have you as our delegates. We have participated in MUN since 5th grade as runners, 6th grade as delegates, and 9th and 10th grade as presidents. We have always been fantastic as a team because of our shared passion for debate, and we will work to the utmost of our capacity to ensure that the experience in the committee is enjoyable and an amazing learning opportunity.

We have thoroughly planned a dynamic committee where the topics can be debated to the fullest extent, and where you delegates will reach viable solutions while improving your public speaking and debate skills. We want delegates to use their newfound knowledge on the topics to bring it into their lives and those around them to create a more fair and just world in which the adversities that women face in their everyday lives can become a thing of the past.

For us, MUN is a prime example of how students can show their analytic, argumentative, public speaking, research, and leadership skills. In MUN, participants learn about politics, diplomacy, geography, conflicts, society, health, history, economics, and pretty much everything that affects our world. In the models, delegates can challenge themselves by defending ideals that may not align with their own, widening their perspectives to form complex opinions by analysing opposing views. Our expectations for you, delegates, are high. We carefully selected these topics because they are critical for today's world and will allow us to create a significant and engaging debate.

UNCSW is a committee dedicated to the protection and wellbeing of women all around the world. In this committee, we will be discussing vital issues regarding

the constant battle for gender equality. The challenges that women face range from the wage gap to reproductive rights to femicide, among many others. This is why it is so important for a committee to discuss these issues to their fullest extent, and to assure that women around the world have a safe and happy future.

We expect all of you to come prepared and with the best attitude to make this committee the best we can. We implore each delegate to bring forth their best ideas and draw upon their research and diplomacy to represent what the United Nations stands for. We are committed to helping you in any way we can, so please do not hesitate to contact us. There is no doubt in our minds that the UNCSW committee will be a beacon of excellence at this conference. May your discussions be profound, your resolutions innovative, and your diplomatic skills sharp and impactful!

We are looking forward to seeing you and cannot wait for the committee to start!

Your presidents,
Antonia and Lucia
UNCSW Chair

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Topic 1: Regulation of social media as a tool for online recruitment, trafficking, and control of women

I. History/Context

Since the internet was first created in 1983, approximately 7 billion people have had access to it. Although at the time no one could have guessed how much damage it could create, it is now a reality that social media is used as a tool to facilitate online recruitment and trafficking. Due to the anonymity and great reach of these platforms, traffickers are provided with unmatched access to vulnerable individuals, allowing them to manipulate, groom, and exploit their victims with alarming efficiency. Governments, tech companies, and society must take urgent actions and adopt a multifaceted approach in order to address this dark side of the digital era.

The mass adoption of social networking began with the launch of MySpace in 2003 and the emergence of Facebook in 2004, which rapidly gained attention worldwide. Traffickers started taking advantage of these platforms to find victims by the middle of the 2000s. Through the use of false profiles and deceptive methods, they were able to lure vulnerable individuals into believing they weren't in danger.

Social media's reach greatly increased in the early 2010s with the creation of smartphones and mobile internet access. Due to their enormous popularity, platforms like Instagram (launched in 2010), and Snapchat (launched in 2011), created new opportunities for human trafficking. Around this time, reports and studies began to document the important role that social media played in human trafficking. The increased attention from the media and law enforcement meant that it was a growing problem. Organisations such as the Polaris Project released comprehensive reports on the ways in which human traffickers exploited people on social media and the behaviours they presented. The number of suspected child sex trafficking cases involving social media had significantly increased by

According to a 2018 report by Thorn, roughly 45% of victims of human trafficking indicated that they met their trafficker in person, while the remaining 55% met the person via technology. This includes social media platforms, text messages, or deceptive websites.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to an increase in worldwide internet usage and online presence. Consequently, this period also saw a rise in online recruitment and trafficking activities. Online recruitment increased by 22%, while common recruitment tactics decreased - foster care by 70%, strip clubs by 46%, and schools by 38%. Also in 2020, there was a 125% increase in Facebook recruitment and a 95% increase in Instagram recruitment over the previous year (Polaris, 2020).

II. Current Situation

To understand the role that social media plays in the crime of human trafficking, it is important first to understand what human trafficking is. “Trafficking in persons”, “human trafficking” or “modern slavery” are umbrella terms referring to the coercion or fortitude and exploitation of a person to perform labour or engage in commercial sex. (About Human Trafficking - United States Department of State, 2023). This includes adults or children, but women and girls seem to be most affected. There are various forms of human trafficking these include but are not limited to: forced labour, sex labour, and domestic servitude. It is also differentiated when it involves children since it involves an entirely different industry.

Since human trafficking became a large industry, human traffickers have become experts in finding creative ways to recruit and trap victims. Over time, social media has become a vital part of our lives; it can provide job opportunities and help us meet romantic partners, among many other things that could be potentially beneficial to people’s lives. At the same time, social media can be invasive, toxic, and quite dangerous. Social media has become the perfect tool for

human traffickers to use. Many victims have fallen for various acts these professionals perform on numerous platforms. Instagram, Facebook, Tinder, and even Craigslist have become the perfect spaces to scout and contact victims. If human trafficking was a business, social media would be the headquarters.

According to a report by Polaris case data from January 2015 through to December 2017, 845 potential victims were recruited through social media apps.

- 250 potential victims recruited on Facebook,
- 120 recruited on a dating site,
- 78 recruited on Instagram,
- 489 were recruited on another type of Internet platform such as Craigslist, chat rooms, or a website that could not be identified during the hotline call. (Polaris, 2020)

Online recruiters have created various strategies that work to entrap potential victims of sex and labour trafficking. Recruiters tend to contact victims to establish a relationship. We have seen many cases of people meeting their romantic partners and even spouses through dating apps like Tinder and Grindr or even Instagram and Facebook, and this is why they are such good places to find victims. During the 2000s MySpace was one of the social media apps constantly used for human trafficking.

Traffickers may act like someone interested in getting involved with the victim, flirting, and eventually asking the potential victim to meet in person. This specific method caters to the vulnerability of women, catching them in their most emotional state, and then exploiting and manipulating them due to their hope for a romantic relationship. This is not the only method; fake job advertising is also a widespread clever way that traffickers use social media to fool people into sex and labour trafficking. By putting up ads for job opportunities on Craigslist or Facebook, traffickers target people who are desperate for better job opportunities and more wealth. Often these jobs are supposedly for modelling, but the victims end up in the sex industry. This method works because it takes advantage of

another very vulnerable facet of people, and that is their economic status. People will do almost anything to overcome their economic troubles, so it is very easy for them to fall for this ploy.



Figure 2: (Polaris, 2020)

The statistics that have come out from new data from different investigations have been shocking. A 2018 report by Thorn, an organization dedicated to defending children from sexual abuse, shows that 55% of victims said to have met their trafficker through social media or some type of online platform while the other 45% said to have them in person. Also shown in the Polaris report that uses data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline shows that in 2019 and 2020 the “regular” recruitment sites like foster homes, strip clubs, and bus stations suffered

a steep decline, while Facebook experienced a whopping 125% incline in human trafficking recruiters. Human trafficking is all about control; if traffickers get complete control over their victim, that victim will never be released, which is why social media is dangerous as it facilitates gaining that control.

Trafficking victims can be women, men, boys and girls

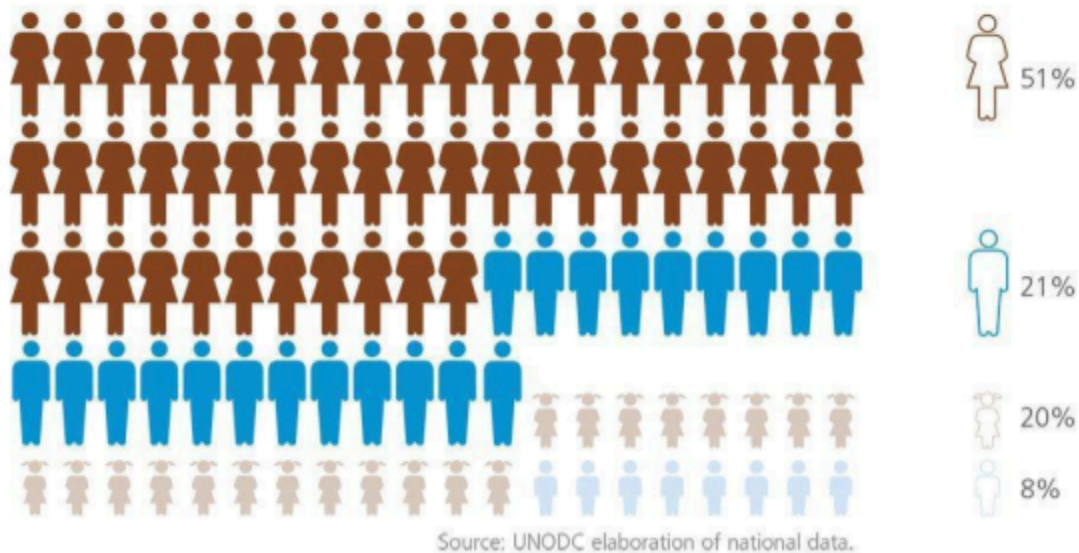


Figure 3: (Martin, 2018)

When discussing the effects of human trafficking, it is important to take into consideration the involvement of women. According to a 2018 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 71% of human trafficking victims are girls and women while 29% are made up of men and boys. There are various forms of human trafficking including; sex trafficking, labour trafficking, organ harvesting, and debt bondage. Those in precarious economic situations, poor education, and high debt are far more likely to fall prey to traffickers. Social media gives access to traffickers that they did not have before; young people are spending more time on social media and their naivety makes them more vulnerable to traffickers because of their likelihood to share personal information on these platforms.

According to the American Psychology Association (APA), the mental health effects that trafficking survivors, especially women, have can include: depression; anxiety; post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD); Stockholm syndrome (an emotional attachment to abusers); substance abuse; alcoholism; and addiction. There are also physical health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, traumatic brain injuries, and memory loss. (Novotney, 2017)

III. Key points of the debate

- Methods of human trafficking
- Laws and regulations regarding the use of social media
- The level of gravity within each delegation of the human trafficking situation
- The different ways that traffickers use social media to contact victims
- The involvement of social media companies when it comes to the prevention of human trafficking in social media platforms
- Preventative measures that can be taken
- Methods used to help victims overcome their trauma
- The prosecution of traffickers and the dismantling of human trafficking rings

IV. Guiding questions

1. How widely is social media used in your country?
2. What sort of social media bans or regulations are there in your country?

3. How does your country ensure that the human rights of women and girls are upheld in your country? Do they have the same rights as males?
4. How does your country combat human trafficking and protect women and girls from the sex trafficking industry?
5. How is your country affected by the problems of social media recruitment in the sex trafficking industry, if at all?
6. Have there been any bills, laws, treaties, or any solutions regarding the abuse of social media for exploitation in your country? If so what are they?
7. What are potential ways that social media can be restricted in order to protect women and girls from online exploitation? What else could be done in the fight against sex trafficking?

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Topic 2: Regulation of Surrogacy

I. History/Context

Surrogacy is a process that seems very new to our society, but when did it all begin? The first examples of surrogacy can be dated to Babylon, when couples used surrogacy to prevent divorce. Two stories in the Bible also mention surrogacy in order to help a couple where the woman is infertile. Women who could not conceive would ask their maids or other women to get impregnated by their husbands to have children through them. Much later on, during the 1770s, the first successful artificial insemination was done by Dr. John Hunter, who told his patient to inseminate his wife with a syringe which led to a successful pregnancy.

More officially, the surrogacy and sperm bank industry began to emerge in the United States in the 1970s, as a way to help single women and couples who were having trouble conceiving or had fertility problems. In 1976, the first official surrogacy agreement was written by attorney Noel Keane. This took place when a California couple published an ad for a woman to carry a child through artificial insemination; the woman who responded then asked for a \$7000 fee plus \$5000 for medical expenses. Soon enough the news had spread across the country and a Michigan couple asked Keane for a similar contract.

There were still no laws in the United States regarding surrogacy until 1986 during the Baby M case. In this case, a woman agreed to a traditional surrogacy and agreed to let the intended parents adopt the child, name it, and for the father to be on the birth certificate. When the baby was born, however, the woman decided to violate the agreement and put her husband's name on the birth certificate, giving the intended parents no parental rights. These parents went to court in New Jersey, where a judge denied the surrogate mother the parental rights to the child, as he saw that the contract was enforceable. She appealed and regained her parental rights but custody remained with the intended parents.

In 1980, a woman under the pseudonym 'Elizabeth Kane' was the first woman in the USA to get legal compensation for delivering a healthy baby for a couple - she was paid \$10,000.

The different advances in technology have created a different type of surrogacy called gestational surrogacy. This is when there is in-vitro fertilisation (done in a laboratory)

and an embryo is then transferred to the surrogate mother. This means that the baby will have its intended parents' DNA and the surrogate will only provide her uterus for the foetus to grow.



Figure 1: The first recorded paid surrogate mum(Daily News from New York, 1980)

A gestational carrier, or a surrogate is a woman who consents to give birth on behalf of another person who will become the child's parent after the birth. This adoption arrangement is frequently backed by a legal agreement. Surrogates are impregnated through the use of in-vitro fertilisation or IVF, a process in which a doctor creates an embryo by using eggs from the intended mother or egg donor and fertilising them with the sperm from the intended father or sperm donor. Since the surrogate is not the one who provides the egg, she is not genetically related to the child.

Who benefits from a surrogate mother?

- Women without a functioning uterus
- Women who have a high-risk pregnancy
- Women who have a history of miscarriages
- Heterosexual couples struggling with infertility
- Single fathers or mothers who wish to have a genetically related child
- Women who can't carry a child safely to term
- Homosexual male couples who wish to have a genetically related child

Methods of surrogacy

Traditional surrogacy: *“Traditional (genetic/partial/straight) surrogacy is the result of artificial insemination of the surrogate mother with the intended father or donor’s sperm, making her a genetic parent, possibly with the intended father”* (Patel, 2018). The insemination of the surrogate can be either through sex (natural insemination) or artificial insemination.

Gestational surrogacy: (host or full surrogacy): The surrogate is not related to the child because her eggs are not used in the insemination process. In gestational surrogacy, the intended parents are genetically related to the child. The embryo is created through in-vitro fertilisation.

Risks of surrogacy

Pre Implementation of embryo: IVF therapy and all of its components go hand in hand with surrogacy. Superovulation, egg retrieval, fertilisation methods, embryo culture, embryo selection, embryo transfer, and maybe cryopreservation are all part of an IVF surrogacy cycle. It is clear that regardless of the cause of infertility, surrogacy cycles need IVF procedures. The fact that these embryos were produced using an IVF system would allow for additional embryo manipulation. After that, these embryos might undergo Preimplantation Genetic Screening (PGS), a type of genetic testing. PGS may be used to ensure that the embryo has a balanced chromosomal complement to secure a healthy pregnancy for the child.

In a surrogate cycle, intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) is often chosen as the preferred method to improve fertilisation rates. ICSI tends to have higher success rates than traditional IVF, which makes it popular with both patients and doctors. However, since ICSI is a more invasive technique, it can sometimes cause additional damage to embryos. Unlike traditional IVF, ICSI bypasses natural selection processes during fertilisation, such as the acrosome reaction. Research on mice has also shown that male offspring conceived through ICSI with damaged sperm DNA may have lower fertility.

Embryo manipulation: One of the most crucial parts of surrogacy is the transfer of the euploid embryo (embryo that contains a normal number of chromosomes) to the surrogate mother. By doing this, miscarriage, pregnancy loss or live birth associated with a compatible gestation disease risks could be reduced. PGD/PGS or Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis explores monogenic diseases and chromosomal abnormalities in order to optimise embryo selection in the case these abnormalities are present. Surrogacy is frequently suggested as the best course of action in place of PGD/PGS treatment for people who have a history of autoimmune loss of pregnancy or repeated miscarriages.

Gestation and the foetus: Surrogate pregnancies may have an elevated risk of postnatal problems, which defies common notions. Children conceived using donor eggs and carried by surrogates have increased adverse perinatal outcomes - including preterm birth, low birth weight, maternal gestational diabetes, hypertension, and placenta previa - than those conceived by the same women using her own eggs in traditional pregnancies.

Surrogate mother: The usage of a donor's eggs in surrogate pregnancies makes the surrogate mother and offspring face a much greater risk of harm.

In a report entitled "Clinical and immunologic aspects of egg donation pregnancies: a systematic review," (van der Hoorn et al., 2010) for example, based on 79 research papers and authored by a team of scholars from leading medical institutions from around the world, the following conclusions were reached:

- Egg-donor pregnancies, as compared to both 'spontaneous' pregnancies and standard IVF pregnancies, are at higher risk of bleeding complications; preterm labour; preeclampsia; protracted labour requiring Caesarean section delivery; and postpartum haemorrhage.
- There is a 3-fold increased incidence of hypertension complications in egg donor pregnancies compared with standard IVF pregnancies.

- The literature conclusively demonstrates an increased risk of significant health complications in pregnancies involving the use of donor eggs.

In a report published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology entitled “Risk of Severe Maternal Morbidity by Maternal Fertility Status: a U.S. Study in Eight States”(Luke et al., 2019) based on a sample size of 1,477,522 pregnancies and births, the following conclusions were reached:

- Women with IVF pregnancies that used donors’ eggs had the highest rates of hypertension/high blood pressure for the whole duration of the pregnancy (both pregestational and gestational hypertension).
- Women with IVF pregnancies that used donors’ eggs were more likely to require an unplanned hysterectomy.
- Women with IVF pregnancies that used donors’ eggs had the highest rates of admission to the hospital’s general intensive care unit, and children conceived by IVF from donors’ eggs had the highest rates of admission to the newborn intensive care unit.

II. Current Situation

Surrogacy is a very tough subject to regulate as there are differing points of view about its legality. For example, in some US states, like Michigan and Indiana, surrogacy agreements are null and void and cannot be enforced, and paying compensation for carrying a surrogate child is regarded as a crime since it is considered to be selling a child. In other US states like California, it is legal to pay compensation to surrogate mothers. Even though surrogacy has a long history in the United States there are still no federal laws regulating or fully allowing said practice, and throughout the world surrogacy laws are still matter for debate and unclear.

The United States was the pioneer of surrogacy since it was the country that had widespread use of sperm banks and legal cases that would later turn into

legislation. Historically, there have been incidents of international surrogacy, using surrogate mothers from other countries with no real agreements. These women may also be victims of human trafficking. Surrogate mothers may simply decide to keep their babies rather than hand them over to the parents. In 2014, for example, a surrogate mother in Thailand had twins, but decided that she wanted to keep the boy, who had Down's Syndrome. The Australian couple had to leave the country with only the girl because there were problems of civil unrest at the time. They were accused of abandoning the boy, which was not the case. Now the girl lives in Australia and her twin brother lives in Thailand. (ABC News, 2016)

The debate about surrogacy is considered controversial as it involves different variables like religion, human rights, bodily autonomy, and ethics, among others. Accordingly there have been various international conventions that have discussed whether or not surrogacy should be allowed. Most recently, in 2023, the Casablanca convention was held in Morocco where 100 experts from 75 different nationalities got together to advocate for the abolition of surrogacy. In the end, it is up to each country to set the rules and regulations they see fit taking into account the different values the delegation follows.

Commercial Surrogacy

Surrogacy may be altruistic or gestational carriers may be paid for the process, which is called "commercial" or "compensated" surrogacy. In commercial surrogacy, surrogate mothers are compensated for their services beyond the already paid sum for medical expenses. This is the opposite of an altruistic surrogacy, where the surrogate mother volunteers to carry the pregnancy to term without any type of financial compensation. Typically, commercial surrogacy is gestational surrogacy.

Internationally recognized surrogacy regulations do not safeguard intended parents, surrogate mothers, or their offspring. Certain nations such as France,

Germany, Italy, and Spain forbid surrogacy in any form, while others only permit altruistic surrogacy or forbid foreigners from using surrogates.

The global commercial surrogacy industry grew to an estimated \$14 billion in 2022. By 2032, that figure is forecast to rise to \$129 billion.

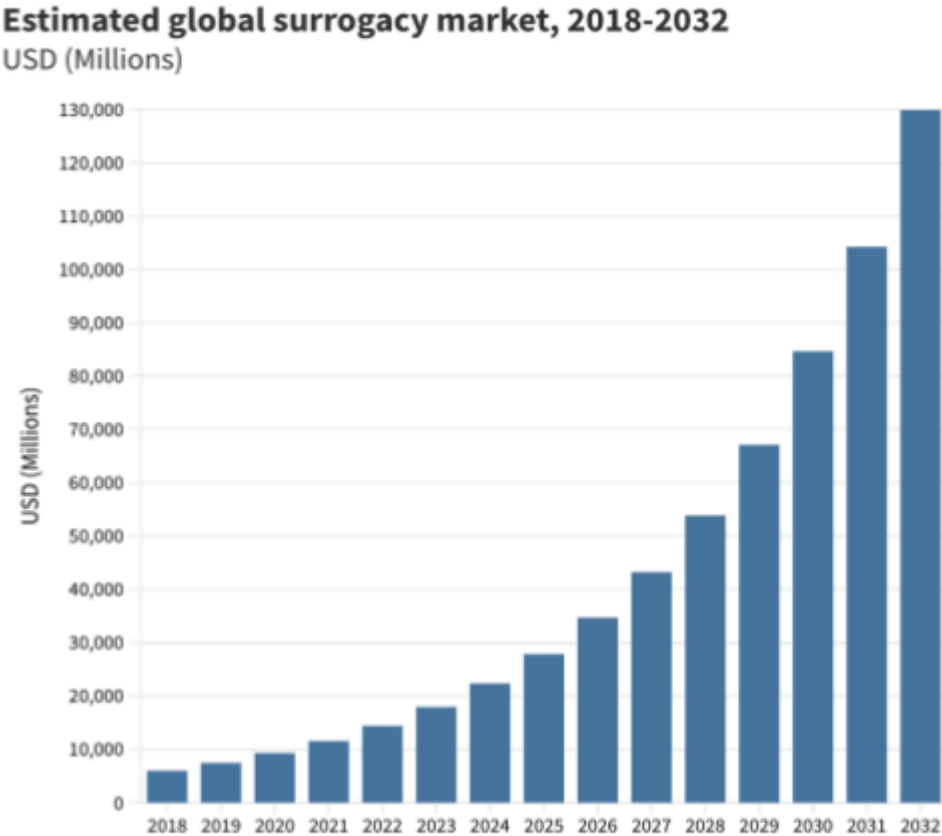


Figure 2: Estimated global surrogacy market (Bache, 2018)

Ethical concerns of commercial surrogacy

There are two big opposing views when it comes to the discussion of surrogacy; those who believe surrogacy is a consensual and fair agreement, and those who view it as a form of exploitation.

In favour:

Surrogacy has become a very viable option for people who wish to become parents but are reproductively-challenged, or do not wish to get pregnant. People believe that surrogacy can be deemed a legitimate job, and the compensation they are getting is worth their time and effort. While pregnancy can be a long hard process that affects women's bodies permanently, various other jobs do the same. If we look at a ballerina, or an astronaut these are very demanding jobs when it comes to people's bodies. A professional ballerina throughout her career may suffer from irreparable injuries that will affect her for the rest of her life; not only this but other factors like diet, and weight gain are difficult to manage and are very strict in this profession. It is also said that it is part of a woman's bodily autonomy to choose to become a surrogate mother. Some feminists believe that it is part of a woman's human rights to make choices about motherhood, whether that is to have an abortion, become a mother, or be a surrogate. While there are ethical concerns of exploitation, many people believe that if it is a consensual agreement between the surrogate and the person planning on adopting the baby then there should not be a problem with commercial surrogacy.

Through compensation, there is a recognition of the physical and mental labour involved in the service of surrogacy. It values the contribution of the surrogate in helping others achieve parenthood. This compensation also provides financial stability for the surrogate, which allows them to support their living conditions, help their families, and even pursue some type of education.

Compensation encourages other women to participate in the surrogate world. Many of those in favour of commercial surrogacy fear that if there were no compensation involved, there would be a dangerously low number of women willing to serve as a surrogate. Finally, compensation can also be viewed as a fair exchange for the challenges of pregnancy and childbirth. Due to the high risk of pregnancy, many view a big economic compensation as the only way to properly reward the surrogate who went through the process of delivering the intended parent's child.

Against:



Figure 3: Wombs for sale (TOONPOOL, 2020)

Through the idea that surrogacy is a form of exploitation, women may be regarded as a “way to conception” and the children as mere products of said conception. It is a reality that there is often socioeconomic inequality between surrogate mothers and intended parents. The demand for surrogacy is greater in western nations and carried out in developing countries.

Teresa Ulloa Ziaurriz, regional director at the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women and Girls in Latin America and the Caribbean (CATWLAC) said: *“This is not a good industry for women. For me, they are victims”*. (Gilchrist, 2023)

Financial compensation is a way to exploit economically disadvantaged women who may feel forced by their financial need into becoming surrogates, which could compromise their decision-making. Furthermore, it could perpetuate social and economic inequalities primarily by targeting women from marginalised countries or communities due to their lack of other economic opportunities. This brings attention to the fairness in the recruitment of surrogates. Financial incentives can cloud the surrogates ability to give fully informed and voluntary consent.

Another risk arises, which is the commodification of reproduction, which is viewing childbirth and pregnancy as a commodity. Paying for surrogacy can lead to this because it reduces the intimate experience of pregnancy into a mere commercial transaction. Critics also argue that financial compensation threatens reproductive rights which can undermine the value of human life and family relationships.

In an unregulated or a highly unregulated market, there is a much higher risk of exploitation. In the case of surrogacy, exploitation is manifested in cases where

surrogates may not receive fair or any compensation, or the proper healthcare. Proper healthcare includes situations where surrogate mothers may face health risks due to the nature of pregnancy without adequate support.

Corruption and involvement of illegal groups in international surrogacy

The lucrative gains that can be made from the surrogacy market mean that there are often illegal activities surrounding the trade. In certain countries, such as Thailand and Nepal, the governments closed their borders to foreigners looking for surrogate mothers. However, there is always another country where the laws are not well defined, and where governments turn a blind eye to the trade or are even part of the corruption. In this case, Ukraine stepped in to take over the trade. One company, Subrogalia, was accused of baby trafficking. (OCCRP, 2023)

In India, gangs go to search for poor women in the countryside to be surrogates, and once the baby is born, nobody cares about the health of the surrogate mother (Kamalapathi Rao H, 2017). Migrant women are often exploited and forced into surrogacy; they may already be in the country, having moved to look for a better life, or they may be moved to the country for the sole purpose of surrogacy, spending their pregnancy alone in the foreign country.

Effects on Children

Children of surrogate parents may also face problems, for example, in cases where the parents reject the child and abandon it with the surrogate mother, or when they do not have any idea of their biological identity due to inaccurate record-keeping. *“In one case in Kenya, the British parents of twins (born through surrogacy) and named as the parents on their birth certificate, could not register them in Britain which regarded the surrogate as the “mother”.”* (Broughton, 2019) If the child was born in another country, when the parents try to register the child as their own back home, they can find that the law does not recognise the child as their own.

Prohibition of commercial surrogacy

Commercial surrogacy is illegal in the European Union, as article 3 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states that, *“In the fields of medicine and biology, the following must be respected in particular: {...} the prohibition on making the human body and its parts such a source of financial gain”*. Furthermore, the Oviedo Convention, ratified by 30 countries, states at Article 21, “Prohibition of financial gain” that: *“The human body and its parts shall not, as such, give rise to financial gain”*. Below are some examples of the regulations in different parts of the world:

- Australia: Allows for altruistic surrogacy. Commercial surrogacy is a criminal offence (imprisonment for up to one year in Australian Capital Territory, up to two years imprisonment in New South Wales and up to three years imprisonment in Queensland).
- Brazil: Altruistic allowed. Commercial banned (reports of it still being done illegally regardless).
- Canada: Only altruistic.
- China: All forms of surrogacy are forbidden. Punishable by fees but not criminal liabilities. In reality, surrogacy agreements are widespread in Mainland China, where an unofficial commercial surrogacy sector was estimated to include 400–500 agencies in 2012.
- Colombia: No clear rules about surrogacy (loopholes may be found).
- Cuba: Only altruistic
- Czech Republic: Not legally regulated, so considered legal.
- Finland: All forms of surrogacy are illegal.
- France: Surrogacy is illegal.
- Germany: All forms of surrogacy are illegal.
- Georgia: Surrogacy is legally permitted.
- Greece: Surrogacy is legally permitted

- Iceland: All forms of surrogacy are illegally
- India: Only a married couple of 5 years can opt for surrogacy. Between an Indian man (between 26 to 55 years of age) and woman (between 23 to 50 years of age). The couple also can't have a child of their own. Single woman can become a surrogate but she has to be a widow or divorcee between the age of 35 and 45. Single men are not eligible.
- Ireland: No law for surrogacy
- Israel: First country to implement state-controlled surrogacy in 1996 (allows gestational surrogacy under the Embryo Carrying Agreements Law). Every contract must be approved directly by the state.
- Iran: All forms of surrogacy are legal
- Italy: All forms of surrogacy are illegal
- Japan: Unregulated (proposed ban)
- Kenya: No regulations
- Mexico: All forms of surrogacy are legal
- Belgium: Not legally regulated, often practised
- New Zealand: Altruistic surrogacy is legal.
- Nigeria: Unregulated
- Philippines: Unregulated
- Poland: Unregulated
- Portugal: Allowed surrogacy for heterosexual and lesbian couples
- Russia: All forms of surrogacy are legal
- Saudi Arabia: Illegal
- Serbia: All forms of surrogacy are illegal
- South Africa: All parties concerned must enter into a written surrogate motherhood agreement that must be confirmed by the High Court
- South Korea: Mostly unregulated



- Spain: All forms of surrogacy are illegal but intended parents are allowed to look for surrogates somewhere else.
- Sweden: Illegal in Swedish healthcare but unregulated
- Switzerland: Illegal
- Thailand: Only heterosexual married couples and only because the woman cannot physically carry the pregnancy. Other than necessary medical expenses there cannot be compensation for the surrogate mother.
- Ukraine: Legal. Major international surrogacy destination because of its very liberal laws and affordable prices.
- United Kingdom: Altruistic is allowed
- United States: Falls under states jurisdiction (legal in some)
- Allowed (under certain circumstances)

Religious considerations

The Catholic Church is strongly against all forms of assisted conception, therefore against surrogacy. The Anglican Church is more flexible and doesn't condemn it. Surrogacy is not forbidden in the Jewish religion. The Islamic view is strong and absolute: it does not allow surrogacy, since pregnancy should be the fruit of a legitimate marriage. Buddhism does not ban surrogacy.

Market Dynamics

The increasing amount of infertility is the driving force behind the demand for surrogacy. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in four couples in developing countries experience infertility.

Key data:

- The global surrogacy market was valued at USD \$175.79 million in 2022. It has a projected reach of USD \$305.35 million by 2031.
- The gestational surrogacy segment of the global surrogacy market is the highest contributor to it.
- The IVF and ICSI segment is the highest contributor to the market.
- North America is the highest contributor to the market.

“On Jan. 8 2024, the Pope called for an international ban on surrogacy, describing it as *“a grave violation of the dignity of the woman and the child, based on the exploitation of situations of the mother’s material needs. A child is always a gift and never the basis of a commercial contract.”*” (Cai, 2024) There are many factors involved in surrogacy concerning the rights of the potential parents, the surrogate mother and the child itself. It is important that nations have clear guidelines about this practice, and that they develop clear international guidelines about what may or may not be allowed in terms of transnational agreements between potential parents and surrogate mothers.

III. Key points of the debate

- The growth of the surrogacy industry
- Ethical concerns surrounding surrogacy
- The payment of compensation to surrogate mothers
- The possible abuse and exploitation of surrogate mothers
- The mental and physical health effects of pregnancy on surrogate mothers
- The existing laws and regulations regarding surrogacy

- The legitimacy of surrogate agreements
- The parental rights of surrogate mothers and intended parents
- International law when the surrogate mother lives in a different country

IV. Guiding questions

1. What regulations are in place in your country with respect to surrogacy? Is surrogacy considered to be a human right or a violation of one in your country?
2. Is your country a major client or provider of this service globally?
3. Is surrogacy a fair exchange to both parties, or is it a form of exploitation?
4. What are the ethical concerns surrounding surrogacy, especially the rights of the surrogate mother and the intended parents?
5. Should there be international regulations about cross-border surrogacy arrangements?

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