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Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Human trafficking is a very interesting, dangerous, and unique topic to study. Sometimes people do not even believe that it actually exists and happens throughout the world. It is evident that this issue is a problem and needs to be brought to attention."



Erika Lynn Dangler

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Introduction

Human trafficking is a very interesting, dangerous, and unique topic to study. Sometimes people do not even believe that it actually exists and happens throughout the world. It is evident that this issue is a problem and needs to be brought to attention.

The purpose of this paper is to bring the issue of human trafficking to attention and to begin to figure out some appropriate ways to go about rectifying the situation. Our goal is to have more people aware of this issue. This topic needs to be taken seriously and not overlooked; no one should believe it is a problem of the past.

The first main point that will be discussed in this essay is how prevalent this evil is and who is mostly being targeted. The second point that will be explored is the most common forms of human trafficking. Lastly, the kind of evil that human trafficking is will be discussed and suggestions will be offered on how to confront it.

Nonexistent? Think Again

Human Trafficking is known as, according to The United Nations Organization (or UNO,) “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or the receipt of persons by means of threat, the use of force or other forms of coercion, fraud, deception, or the abuse of power, position or vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payment or benefits to achieve the concept

of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation” (Basil, 2). In other words, it is an illegal business of transferring people by deception or false pretenses, using force or manipulation, to make a profit. “Every year, approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims of trafficking are bought, sold, or forced across international borders. Trafficking is the third largest criminal industry in the world, with revenues totaling \$9.5 billion annually, and is expected to soon surpass the two largest criminal industries, narcotics and firearms” (Remedying, 2,574). This modern-day form of enslavement over groups of people is more profitable than it was over a hundred years ago. Nowadays slaves that are trafficked sell for a global weight average of \$420,000 versus \$9,500 or \$11,000. They can create 300 to 500 percent or more in annual returns on investments (Cf. Kara, 2). Unfortunately, human trafficking is seen as a near risk-free opportunity to make a profit. This is the main reason why human trafficking is so prevalent in the United States as well as throughout the world. It is seen as a business, not as enslaving members of a society. In the United States alone there is estimated to be 45,000 to 50,000 individuals trafficked annually. In addition, “recent reports estimate that 14,500 to 17,500 trafficking victims enter the country each year” (Remedying, 2,574). This is not a situation to take lightly. People are being forced against their will to withstand severe amounts of torture and exploitation every day of their lives, starting from when they are captured. Because of human trafficking’s “clandestine nature most bodies concerned with the problem admit it is impossible to know how many victims of trafficking there are” (Gabhan, 528). This is also due to the fact that human trafficking is an underground activity. This means that the already shocking and disturbing figures of 600,000 to 800,000 annual victims could be even higher.

Realistically, human trafficking affects people of every age, gender, race, and color considering that “every continent and most countries of the world are impacted, with people

being trafficked within and across national borders” (Gabhan, 529). However, the individuals that seem to be trafficked the most are women and children; this is not saying that men are not victims of human trafficking, but for certain reasons women and young children are targeted the most. “Women may be kidnapped from their homes and then drugged or forced through psychological coercion or the use of threat of violence to accompany their traffickers” (Remedy, 2,576). Most of the time women do not have a choice. They are physically taken and forced to oblige with anything that the traffickers demand from them. Also, when economic or societal collapses occur, women are the first to suffer. “With little chance of economic survival for themselves or their families at home women are now taking untold risks to try to find employment abroad” (Gabhan, 531). Because women feel the need to take care of their families, they are willing to put their own lives in danger. This is the leading cause why women are trafficked more often than men. Women usually have someone else to provide for. With women taking risky and dangerous job offers in different countries, their family and children are also at risk. This is how children are the second most common group of people to be trafficked victims. Another leading cause to women being trafficked more often is the lack of information they have on migration and finding secure job positions. “Women from Eastern bloc countries seeking jobs often have much less access to information about migration, recruitment procedures and rights and are at higher risk of being trafficked than men” (Gabhan, 531). Therefore, women are seen as easy targets and, to the criminals more importantly, easy profit. Special organizations are trying to help protect women and children from becoming victims; however it may not be helping at all. “Other legal efforts to protect women from trafficking have had the perverse effect of making them more vulnerable” (Feingold, 27). For example, some women from Burmese are not allowed to visit border areas unless they are accompanied by a husband or a parent. This

might increase the chances for women to become trafficked because they have to be dependent on a facilitator to move them from place to place. “The CEACR had considered cases of indigenous people, children, women as well as men, and concluded that ‘women and children are the key target group for traffickers’” (Bakirci, 2).

Labor, Sexual Exploitation, Abuse.

“Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs” (Bakirci, 1).

Trafficking is considered to be comprised of two categories: forced labor trafficking and sexual exploitation. Forced or compulsory labor makes the headlines almost daily when concerning issues with trafficking. Forced labor has been defined, according to the International Labor Organization, as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily” (Bakirci, 2). Forced labor, with regards to trafficking, is not just simply the low wages and poor working conditions that individuals are obliged to work in. It is a tragic violation of persons’ human rights and the restriction of their personal freedom, which every citizen should be entitled to. These victims work in environments such as “sweatshops, factories, plantations, entertainment, brothels and as domestic servants in private houses” (Bakirci, 2). In the United States forced labor is most prevalent in five areas. The five areas in the economy are “prostitution and sex work, domestic service, agriculture, sweatshops and factories, and restaurants and hotels” (Remedying, 2,577).

There are several actions taken by the traffickers to undermine the security of their workers. For example, forced labor victims are subjected to extreme physical violence or restraint. In addition, they receive death threats addressed to their family members or to themselves. Some employers even require workers to hand over their identification papers and

threaten to destroy them if the workers even think of escaping. Unfortunately, “many victims enter forced labor situations initially of their own accord, albeit through fraud and deception, only to discover later that they are not free to withdraw their labor. They are subsequently unable to leave their work owing to legal, physical or psychological coercion” (Bakirci, 2). Sometimes the victim’s initial consent is not considered valid due to the deception and fraud that was used to obtain their work in the first place. The victims are not allowed to terminate employment contracts; hence the reason why it is called forced labor.

“The most lucrative part of trafficking involves sex trafficking, and the trafficking in women and children for the sex trade has emerged as an issue of global concern which is facilitated by porous borders and advanced communication technologies and is becoming increasingly transnational in scope” (Bakirci, 3). Of the sex trafficking victims, some are forced into these particular situations: forced pornography, stripping or exotic dancing, mail order brides, and massage parlors. Without their consent, women and children are forced to provide sex or sexual gestures for pay. In addition, the money they receive from performing the requests goes straight to the traffickers. Men that have a disposable income have a greater incentive to buy sexual services. Therefore, the “ultimate consumers of trafficked and prostituted women are men who use them for entertainment, sexual gratification, and acts of violence” (Gabhan, 532). Sex trafficking needs to be interpreted and recognized as a gendered phenomenon involving, mostly, the exploitation of economically marginalized women for sex by men (Cf. Goodey, 27). There have been many attempts to dissect the true nature of the reasons why sex trafficking happens and why women mostly, as well as some children, are subjected to such evil. It is understood that the reason is “how gender-based discrimination, patriarchal values and attitudes, the low status of women in many societies and the constant demand for sexual services on the

part of men in every region are among the basic causes for the growth of the sex industry and sex trafficking” (Gabhan, 532). In addition to the negative trauma women and children have to face when being trafficked, they also, if able to escape, experience being stigmatized by their families when they return home. However, they try to take up a normal life/ lifestyle.

Characterized Evil

Forced labor and sexual exploitation, regarding human trafficking, is a combination of two evils, physical and moral evil. “Physical evil includes all that causes harm to man, whether by bodily injury, by thwarting his natural desires, or by preventing the full development of his powers, either in the order of nature directly, or through various social conditions under which mankind naturally exists” (Sharpe, 1). Physical evil relates to both forced labor as well as sexual exploitation due to the fact that victims of both kinds of trafficking suffer physical harm to their bodies and do not have full development or access to express their freedom or power. In forced labor cases, most victims are exposed to dangerous equipment which makes it easy to sever or lose a limb completely. Also, considering the long hours the victims are entitled to work for, when exhaustion sets in, it only increases the chance of a mistake or accident to occur. Sexual exploitation victims are subjected to physical assault, rape, forced prostitution, captivity, beatings, and various sexually transmitted diseases because their body is being used and tortured by at least twenty different people each day. Some of the most common health issues include “post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), panic attacks, depression, HIV, STDs, malnutrition, sterility, and the effects of repeated physical trauma” (Doctors At War, 1). “Moral evil is thus conceptually a subset of moral wrong and refers to those acts, such as sadistically torturing and killing children, which are beyond the pale of ‘normal’ wrongdoing” (Formosa, 58). Moral evil is an act of torture on its victims and their prolonged suffering. The perpetrators who initiate the

actions are aware of the evil and pain they are causing the individuals, but continue nonetheless. This is why it is characterized as moral evil. “These crimes go beyond mere selfishness and greed; they demand a total searing of conscience, a heart of stone, and a giving of the perpetrator’s self over to evil” (Doctors At War, 1). No morally valued human being would be willing to cause so much harm and suffering on any individual, not matter the situation.

“No one now disputes that trafficking today has reached alarming proportions, the magnitude of which affects many countries, such as countries of origin, transit and destination points” (Davidson, 5). It is challenging to think of how this problem can truly be confronted so that the severely high numbers of victims can be dramatically decreased. Awareness and providing actual incidents of human trafficking cases is a huge difficulty considering that this crime industry is a large underground network. “Governments, civil society and Churches all have a role to play and need to pool their resources. Awareness is the first condition for prevention” (Gabhan, 534). If more people were versed in the knowledge and steps that traffickers take to reel people in as bait, there could be thousands of people saved just by the warning signs of a trafficker. There are many people that believe in the goodness of God and want to see Churches reach out and extend their hands to the victims of these crimes. People are hoping that victims will be able to find and create a new life journey with God. Therefore, individuals think that the “Church must increase awareness of the issue among its members, among religious congregations, lay movements, institutions and associations so that they give more pastoral care to women who are being exploited” (Gabhan, 535). The new programs that will help women cope with their trauma will acknowledge the role women religious have played in this area. These roles will include shelters and safe houses, training and education, as well as outreach groups.

Other possible solutions to help decrease the individuals being taken as modern day slaves would be to increase the potential danger for the traffickers. This means that the “most effective way to attack profitability is to elevate real risk. An increase in penalties should elevate the real risk and cost of human trafficking to an economically detrimental level. Put in criminal law terms, we are trying to elevate the deterrent and retributive value of the real penalty associated with the commission of slave-related crimes to a far more effective level” (Kara, 3). Hopefully, this will scare traffickers from becoming convicted of this crime. In addition, the United States Congress enacted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act or TVPA. This act seeks to “combat trafficking through prosecution of traffickers, protection and support for victims, and prevention of trafficking on a global level” (Remedying, 2,575). It is important that countries have begun or are beginning to create laws and acts to help combat this serious problem of modern day societies.

Conclusion

“Evil acts strike us, by their very nature, as not only horrifying and reprehensible, but also as deeply puzzling. No doubt for reasons like this, evil has often been seen as mysterious, demonic and beyond our human powers of understanding” (Formosa, 57). There will never truly be an answer to why evil actions happen. This is hard for many individuals in the world to grasp, as well as to accept. Therefore, it is necessary that individuals spend their time on trying to prevent or confront evil actions, rather than worrying about why they happen. Evil is always going to be present; the key however, is to know how to overcome the evil actions that are perpetrated on innocent people in our world. Then, society will be able to move forward, one step at a time.

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Aftermath of Nemo
(Photo by Dr. Linda MacCammon)