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History 105 Section 17

### Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking occurs when people are forced or coerced into the commercial sex trade against their will. Sex traffickers are not the only ones that force people into the industry but when they do they usually target vulnerable people with histories of abuse and then use that same kind of abuse to control and manipulate the victims so they stay in the industry. When we look at the causes of sex trafficking, violence while women and children are in the trade, and the long-term consequences in international sex trafficking, we see that sex trafficking ....

Much like drugs and weapon trafficking, human trafficking is a market-driven criminal industry that is based on the principles of supply and demand. Many factors make women and children vulnerable to human trafficking. However, human trafficking does not exist only because those people are vulnerable to exploitation.<sup>1</sup> If people weren't participating in sex tourism, traveling around the world to different countries to spend money for sexual purposes then there would be no need for sex trafficking.<sup>2</sup> Human trafficking is fueled by a demand for cheap labor or services, or for commercial sex acts, which makes it, sex trafficking. The criminals

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<sup>1</sup> "Polaris Project: For A World Without Slavery," accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview/why-trafficking-exists>  
<sup>2</sup> Singh, Shalini. "Sex Tourism." In Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World. : Oxford University Press, 2008. accessed September 4, 2013, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195176322.001.0001/acref-9780195176322-e-1435>.

that traffic these helpless people are those who victimize others in their desire to profit from the existing demand.<sup>3</sup>

With that being said, as long as poverty still exists so will sex trafficking. Just like when whites took over Africa and turned millions of free people into slaves, that is what is happening with sex trafficking. Out of 27 million modern day slaves around the world there is about 800,000 people trafficked across international borders each year. These are the people who make this worldwide business a profit of \$7 to \$12 billion dollars annually and rarely get a share of that money.<sup>4</sup> Ironically, the people that get coerced into the industry are usually very poor and think that they will make enough money to be able to support their families and in end up just being pons for the people in charge helping them make a huge profit.

Addiction is also a tragic reason people get put into sex trafficking. It is understood that some family members in order to feed their addictions for drugs and alcohol trade their daughters to get money.<sup>5</sup> The reason for it being their daughters is the same reason that 66% of trafficking victims are women, because there is a higher demand for women especially young women.<sup>6</sup> Clients will pay more for a young girl, more specifically, young virgin girls. There are also family members with no addictions that just need the money to support their families and survive

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<sup>3</sup> "Polaris Project: For A World Without Slavery"

<sup>4</sup> "F.A.W.C.O: Sex Trafficking Short Fact Sheet," accessed December 8, 2013, [http://www.fawco.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1037:sex-trafficking-short-fact-sheet&Itemid=628](http://www.fawco.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1037:sex-trafficking-short-fact-sheet&Itemid=628)

<sup>5</sup> Don Butler, "Family aids human trafficking: study; 'Complicating' factor in exploiting aboriginal females," National Post (Canada), August 20, 2013, accessed September 4, 2013, <http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu:2052/hottopics/lnacademic/>.

<sup>6</sup> "F.A.W.C.O: Sex Trafficking Short Fact Sheet"

and would willingly put themselves in the sex trafficking industry instead of their daughters or sisters but they know that clients don't pay as much for older women.

When you are put into the sex trafficking industry, it is a given that you will be a victim of some type of violence. Sex trafficking itself is one of the worst forms of violence towards women but there is also a lot of violence that happens on top of the actual cause.<sup>7</sup> Most sex trafficked victims are not willingly going into this business so they are most likely not going to willingly participate in the sexual acts that clients are paying for. Since the victims are not usually willing participants in the sexual encounters you will see a lot of drugged up victims that have suffered extreme physical and mental abuse, including rape, imprisonment, forced abortions and physical brutality with injuries such as broken bones, concussions, and bruises and burns while in the hands of their so-called "owners".<sup>8</sup> For the victims who have dealt with this abuse for a long time their injuries could start to look consistent with victims of prolonged torture.<sup>9</sup>

Memey, a twenty-eight year old Indonesian woman who came from a very poor family was lured under false promises of employment and then imprisoned, beaten, threatened and then forced into the commercial sex trade. At the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Memey explained how her experience was once she realized that she was tricked into joining the sex

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<sup>7</sup> "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime," accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2009/November/human-trafficking-fuels-violence-against-women.html>

<sup>8</sup> "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime"

<sup>9</sup> "Trafficking in Women: Explore the Issue," accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/svaw/trafficking/explore/4effects.htm>

trade. She describes how the women and children were always watched closely so that there was no opportunity to escape, also how all their forms of identification were taken away and they had no access to a phone, which makes sense because the people in charge don't want their illegal activities to be known or worst for their hostages to find someone to come rescue them. Memey chose not to try and run away because she saw what happened to the other women who tried "they were beaten and threatened" and she was too afraid to go through all of that again on top of all the torture she was already dealing with. Fortunately, Memey was finally able to get away because she met a client that was different, he gave her a cell phone and she was able to call her family in Indonesia and eventually be rescued. Memey suffered a great amount of physical violence and sexual assault that left her with the long-term consequence of HIV.<sup>10</sup>

Sex and human trafficking is a fundamental violation of human rights since it is basically a form of slavery.<sup>11</sup> Most of the people who are tricked, put in by family members, volunteer, or even abducted to be in the sex industry don't expect to be in it as a long career. Some women and children are fortunate enough to get rescued by law enforcement or possibly an undercover client like in Memey's case, but a large percentage of the hostages are not as fortunate. Even some of the victims that are not in the trade for as long as others can leave with long-term diseases that will

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<sup>10</sup> "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: Put Yourself in My Shoes," accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2012/November/put-yourself-in-my-in-my-shoes-a-human-trafficking-victim-speaks-out.html>

<sup>11</sup> "Quick Facts about Human Trafficking"

always remind them of what they have been through<sup>12</sup>. Victims not only end up with having physical abuse but they can also be left to suffer with emotional and psychological issues such as the fear that something could happen to their families at any time because of the endless threats from their owners.<sup>13</sup> A lot of times hostages end up dying in the industry because of terrible conditions, exhaustion, and starvation.<sup>14</sup> It is unfortunate, but in some cases the victims might prefer this to being freed because for those who escape or get rescued, the suffering continues because when they return home the victims are often stigmatized, especially if they have been trafficked for sexual purposes.

The long-term consequences don't just affect the individual victims. Sex trafficking also greatly affects communities and countries. Once sex trafficking or any type of trafficking takes footing in a community and is seen as an acceptable way of making money, it becomes boundless.<sup>15</sup> Sex trafficking promotes social breakdown by removing women and children from their families and communities, and also burdens the public health system because of all the diseases that are contracted. Trafficking also fuels organized crime groups who most likely also participate in many other illegal activities, such as drug and weapon trafficking which has a greater legal consequence than trafficking humans. Trafficking also negatively impacts the local and national labor markets that actually supply legal

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<sup>12</sup> "Soroptimist: Sex Slavery/Trafficking," accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.soroptimist.org/trafficking/faq.html>

<sup>13</sup> "Quick Facts about Human Trafficking"

<sup>14</sup> "Trafficking in Women: Explore the Issue"

<sup>15</sup> "Quick Facts about Human Trafficking"

work and jobs for people, due to the loss of human resources.<sup>16</sup> Lastly, trafficking can greatly impact a country because it undermines good governance, democracy, and also the economy. “It can also have an impact on the reputation of the military and security forces, including peacekeepers, as research has shown that they fuel the demand for forced prostitution in war zones.”<sup>17</sup>

To ultimately solve the problem of human trafficking we need to be able to understand it.<sup>18</sup> For example, we need to understand why women and children in particular are more vulnerable to trafficking and how the traffickers operate. We should also think back to the days of slavery, and remember how that has torn apart our countries and realize that sex trafficking is just a more modern version of that. After all that has been figured out, we need to be provided with the necessary legal and technical assistance to ensure that effective countermeasures are in place so that this crime can eventually be stopped.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “Soroptimist: Sex Slavery/Trafficking”

<sup>17</sup> “Quick Facts about Human Trafficking”

<sup>18</sup> “Polaris Project: For A World Without Slavery”

<sup>19</sup> “United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime”

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