

21st Century Criminology: A Reference Handbook

Human Trafficking

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[p. 599 ↓]

Chapter 70: Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is arguably one of the most profitable transnational crimes today. According to Farr (2005), the sale of human beings is believed to be a \$7 to \$12 billion industry and ranks third, after the sale of drugs and arms, as the most lucrative international and illegal enterprise. There are some scholars who contend, however, that human trafficking may eventually surpass the net profits yielded from the sale of drugs and weapons (Farr, 2005; Shelley, 2005). Because drugs and weapons have a finite usage while humans can be sold multiple times, profits for the sale of humans accrue seemingly infinitely depending on how many occasions a sale is made.

The sale of humans is also one of the most deplorable crimes. Yet, it is not only a 21st-century phenomenon. The exploitation of humans, including the mass transportation of people from Africa to the Americas during the 18th century, has a rich history in the United States (Bales, 2005; Gozdziaik & Collett, 2005).

Although slavery was abolished in the United States with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, the practice of selling and exploiting the will of humans continues to occur (Bales, 2005). In fact, the United States is ranked among the top five countries where human slaves are sold and exploited for labor or sexual purposes (Mizus, Moody, Privado, & Douglas, 2003). In 2000, the United States enacted legislation to stop the sale and exploitation of human beings. The law (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000) prohibits both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Sex trafficking involves the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act (e.g., a transaction where money or other items of value are exchanged for sexual services) in which the act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18. In contrast, labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (U.S. Department of State, 2008). While sex trafficking usually involves the forced

prostitution of men, women, or children, labor trafficking can include situations where men, women, or children are forced into servitude in virtually any type of occupation such as domestic service (e.g., maids), restaurant work, janitorial work, sweatshop or factory work, and agricultural work. In simple terms, human trafficking is the sale and enslavement of human beings where, after being bought and sold multiple times, they are forced to labor against their will.

Globally, 4 million people are believed to be victims of this crime each year (Farr, 2005). Nationally, the U.S. Department of State (2008) estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked into the United States annually. The size and scope of this worldwide concern is difficult to truly estimate. Trafficking in humans is generally a [p. 600 ↓] clandestine crime that tends to remain hidden from police authorities. Thus, scholars reason that more victims fall prey to this crime than is estimated by official government statistics (Laczko & Gozdzia, 2005). However, there is enough information to confirm that men, women, and children become vulnerable victims of this crime every day in virtually every country across the world.

There are many factors that contribute to this largescale and covert problem, most of which are felt across the globe, such as economic and political instability, massive worldwide poverty, and the disenfranchisement of groups of individuals (Bales, 2005; Farr, 2005; Scully, 2001; Shelley, 2005). However, individual motivation to engage in a highly lucrative criminal enterprise coupled with law enforcement's difficulty in identifying victims and offenders make this crime very appealing to criminals who contemplate tax-free rewards and the likelihood of apprehension. The purpose of this chapter is to present a historical and contemporary assessment of human trafficking as well as discuss ways in which victims are recruited by those who make it their livelihood to sell and enslave human beings. Factors that contribute to modern-day trafficking of humans as well as offender, victim, and consumer/customer characteristics will be identified. Finally, the difficulty in identifying victims of this crime will also be explored along with the criminal justice system's response to human trafficking.

Historical and Modern-Day Slavery

Although human trafficking is described as the modern-day form of slavery, the practice of selling and enslaving humans is not a new occurrence. Ancient Egypt, for instance, used slaves to build its immense pyramids. Portugal, during the 15th century, bought and sold slaves from Africa and Europe. In the 18th century, the Transatlantic Slave Trade between Europe, Africa, and the Americas facilitated the sale of humans sometimes in exchange for weapons and molasses (Bales, 2005). The history of the United States is also immersed in slavery. Prior to the Civil War, it was not uncommon for southern plantation owners to sell their slaves at public auction. Although not yielding large profits, the sale of slaves was an established business, since they were so desperately needed for the economic subsistence of the South. Slaves were considered an inexpensive and dependable source of labor, albeit a forced and exploitative one. The passing of the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865, finally put a stop to the physical and sexual abuse endured by slaves in the United States.

Kevin Bales, author of *Understanding Global Slavery* (2005), argues that historical examples of slavery in the United States pale in comparison to contemporary examples of human trafficking. Though he does not negate the fact that pre-Civil War slavery was appalling, he contends that at least southern slaves were considered valuable resources for plantation owners who were generally unwilling to quickly dispose of their revenue-making commodities. Thus, minimal steps were taken by slaveholders to maintain the existence of slaves, although with gross negligence. Today, victims that fall prey to human trafficking are usually considered disposable. Most victims are sold multiple times to multiple customers, and there is little attempt by traffickers or customers to maintain their well-being.

Though the above examples mainly demonstrate early instances of labor trafficking, sex trafficking also has an extensive history. Scully (2001) states that the history of human trafficking, particularly sex trafficking, can be divided into three distinct time periods: (1) the 1840s to the early 1890s, (2) the late 1890s to World War I, and (3) 1919 through World War II. During the first time period, the demand for indentured servitude around the world coupled with the mobilization and migration of non-Western males fueled the

trafficking of humans. Places such as India, Burma, and Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka, an island to the southeast of India) needed indentured slaves to help extract gold and diamonds from mines and for construction projects like railroads, while places such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and the cities of Shanghai and New Delhi became popular destinations for indigenous as well as foreign businessmen pursuing commercial endeavors. Poverty and economic depressions experienced by such locales as India, China, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Pacific Islands additionally created not only a willing supply of migrants traveling in search of employment opportunities but also criminal entrepreneurs eager to make a profit by facilitating the sale and transportation of the most vulnerable groups of humans. The convergence of these factors generated a transnational sex market.

In the late 1890s, prostitution migratory routes became more prominent throughout Asia, the Middle East, the Americas, and Europe. Prostitution rings also became more organized. However, sex markets were highly stratified. Factors such as the race, ethnicity, and nationality of prostitutes were elements that determined not only their market value but also the type of employment environment for which they could dispense their sexual services. American and European women, for example, commanded an elite status and thus tended to set up their own business ventures, whereas Chinese women were driven into brothels owned by organized criminal groups.

The stratification of prostitution, particularly for those not in the privileged status and not controlled by a criminal organization, forced prostitution onto the streets, making it more visible and controversial. As a result, various civil and social organizations formed coalitions to end prostitution, regardless of whether sexual services were sold in high-priced brothels or on the street. The London National Vigilance Association (LNVA), for instance, rallied against what it called the “white slave trade”—the [p. 601 ↓] coercion and forced prostitution of European women. Although some European women voluntarily chose such a profession and traveled across the world to establish bordellos, the LNVA sustained support from other coalitions in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and Austria. Support was so strong that an international agreement was signed in 1904 by several countries to address the white slave trade. The signatories of the agreement pledged to (a) establish a central repository to collect information on the number of European women forced into prostitution as well as share such information, (b) remain observant at ports of

entry by asking women to declare their nationality and reporting to authorities which European women were forced to travel to foreign countries to engage in prostitution, and (c) supervise brothels to ensure that European women were not employed in such establishments.

The 1904 international agreement had no provision declaring the sale, transportation, and forced prostitution of European women illegal. Accordingly, the agreement served only to call attention to the problem and to reveal a racial divide. As noted by Scully (2001), 99% of prostitutes were women of color, yet the agreement made no attempt to protect them. It was not until 1921 that women of color were included in international agreements to combat forced prostitution or trafficking. It was also in 1921 that a new international agreement was signed by the League of Nations (now known as the United Nations), advocating for the prosecution of any person who trafficked women or children; however, despite international agreements, little changed in terms of eradicating prostitution. Even though there was more vigilance of forced prostitution by antitrafficking coalitions, the demand for sex markets continued. Also, despite the universal consensus that no person should be coerced or forced into prostitution, there continued to be a lack of consensus around the world regarding the abolition of prostitution as a whole. There were some countries who opined that prostitution, so long as it involved the consensual exchange of services for money, should be legal.

Though the migration of prostitution was affected by the relocation of male businessmen (legitimate and illegitimate) throughout the world during the first and second time frames identified by Scully (2001), prostitution and sex trafficking were also affected by the deployment of troops. This was the case during World War I and also World War II. Farr (2005) notes that military troops have engaged in the rape of many women while deployed in foreign countries. In her book, *Sex Trafficking: The Global Market in Women and Children*, she writes that General Patton during World War II was believed to have told an aide that despite efforts to stop “wartime raping” (p. 165), it was an inevitable occurrence during warfare. The deployment of troops also contributed to establishment of brothels to provide the soldiers with access to prostitutes. Farr notes that some militaries around the globe, including that of the United States, often organize “recreational prostitution” sites to reduce wartime rape. In fact, from the 1950s to 1970s, the United States together with South Korea agreed to set up R&R (rest and relaxation) centers, which at times entailed prostitution. D. M. Hughes, Chon, and Ellerman (2007)

estimate that “over 1 million Korean women were used to service U.S. troops since World War II” (p. 904).

Today, the exploitation of humans for various types of labor and sex continues to thrive. Humans are used for a variety of servitude, including the following:

- Farm labor
- Domestic work and child care (domestic servitude)
- Begging/street peddling
- Restaurant work
- Construction work
- Carnival work
- Hotel housekeeping
- Criminal activities
- Any form of day labor

In the United States, prostitution is the most common form of trafficking, followed by agricultural work (U.S. Department of State, 2008). Prostitution is also the most common type of trafficking worldwide. Globally, as well as in the United States, women are most often victims of human trafficking followed by children, primarily girls (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2006). Children are most often used in sex tourism operations. Sex tourism involves the enticement to travel abroad for the sole purpose of engaging in sexual escapades, usually with minors. Mexico and Latin America have been locations where sex tourism, particularly with children, has been occurring. It is estimated that 2 million children are forced into prostitution for the purpose of providing services to foreign travelers (U.S. Department of State, 2008). Children are also used for organ trafficking. It is not uncommon in locales such as India for children to be abducted, nurtured, and then killed for the sole purpose of selling their organs to the highest bidder. However, the sale of organs is so lucrative that some adults around the world consent to sell their organs so that they may be shipped to other countries (N. Hughes, 2000).

It is important to note that although human trafficking is generally a transnational crime, the U.S. Department of State (2008) believes that thousands of children in the United States are trafficked within the borders of the country. Similarly, other countries

report incidences of internal or domestic human trafficking, where victims are sold and enslaved in their own country. For prosecution purposes in the United States, human trafficking is said to have occurred when a person is coerced or forced to labor against his or her will, regardless of the distance from where the victim was bought or sold to where he or she is eventually compelled to work. In fact, moving a person [p. 602 ↓] from one location to another is irrelevant to a determination of whether a crime of human trafficking has occurred. The only relevant factors are whether the person was coerced or forced to labor against his or her will and whether the person is allowed to leave or flee his or her place of employment.

Recruiting Victims of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is an elaborate crime that generally transpires over time. As will be discussed later, factors such as global political and economic instability in certain regions of the world, together with large-scale and epidemic instances of poverty and disenfranchisement of entire groups of people, contribute to making humans vulnerable victims of human trafficking. Because of these factors, it becomes too easy to trick individuals into believing that employment opportunities abroad will help alleviate their economic woes. Most victims of human trafficking are recruited and convinced to seek employment, usually in a foreign country (Farr, 2005). Recruiters are all too often acquaintances and friends from their town and sometimes even their spouse or significant other. Promises of a better life are used to deceive victims who already desperately long for a way to financially provide for themselves and usually for their families as well. At times, victims are recruited through advertisements in local newspapers. Again, the ads convey opportunities to work abroad as domestic servants, cooks, models, dancers, and anything else that would entice a person to answer such ads.

At first, those victims recruited for employment abroad are treated as valuable assets. The recruiter will usually take them to an established travel agency, and steps will be taken to prepare their visas for travel. Some victims may be asked for a down payment to aid in their travel, but most are told by the recruiter that a payment must be given after their first month of employment to cover the expenses of travel and the preparation of visas. Once the recruiter has finalized travel plans, another person in the trafficking

operation will accompany the victims to their respective places of destination. Little do the victims know that their chaperone is in fact simply protecting the human cargo and preventing their escape. After reaching the place of destination, the victims will be delivered into the hands of their employer who will conduct an inventory of the human goods and assign them to work in various types of employment. The employer will also ask victims for their passports, visas, and any other type of identification under the guise that he or she will place them in a safe location.

With passports and visas confiscated, victims begin to realize that their promise of legitimate employment and a better life was false. Their employers will be quick to inform them of their enslavement and conditions of their occupation, usually in the sex industry. Threats of physical violence and actual violence will be used to temper defiance. Victims will be told of an impending and accruing debt (e.g., rent, medical expenses, food, etc.), which they must pay through forced labor. Most victims will be sold, but their new employer will recount a similar tale of debt bondage and slavery. Although victims will be told that after paying their debt, freedom will be a reality, most will not be released. Most will also contract sexually transmitted diseases and turn to drugs and alcohol for comfort. Some will die trying to pay their debt or die trying to escape.

It is important to consider that in cases where victims are recruited through promises of a better life, some may consent to the initial offer to travel abroad, even if it means they will have to lie to authorities about their immigration status once they reach their country of destination. Some victims may pay for fraudulent documents. A few may also consent to work in the sex industry as exotic dancers and prostitutes. However, these victims do not consent to exploitation and forced labor. The U.S. law against trafficking states that consent is irrelevant to a determination of whether the crime of human trafficking has occurred.

Although most victims are recruited, some victims are abducted. Refugees and displaced individuals are prime targets. Most will be drugged and transported to faraway places. Nonetheless, they will soon realize that freedom is a distant reality and that forced labor is their destiny. Many children, after the Tsunami of 2004 in Indonesia, entered the human trafficking trade in this manner (U.S. Department of State, 2008).

Power and control of victims are keys to a successful trafficking enterprise. Violence and the threat of violence are essential, but psychological techniques are also powerful. Fear of retribution to the victim or family members quells attempts to escape and disobedience. Fear of deportation is also a way to maintain order, since victims are without passports and essentially at risk of being apprehended by authorities and sanctioned. It is not unusual, after months of enslavement, for victims to lose their will to even think about escape. “Stockholm syndrome” (loyalty to the hostage taker) will set in, and soon establishing compliance to the wishes of traffickers is an easy task (Aronowitz, 2001; Bales, 2005; Beeks & Amir, 2006; Farr, 2005).

Major Contributing Factors to Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is based on the simple economic principles of supply and demand (Shelley, 2003). Global poverty is one of the major contributors to human trafficking because it creates a vulnerable supply of victims. Conversely, the economic prosperity experienced by some countries over the last few decades has created vast wealth and exorbitant incomes for some individuals, with enough earnings to demand a market in the sale of humans (Farr, [p. 603 ↓] 2005). Globalization, political instability, civil unrest, culture, the disenfranchisement of certain groups, and of course the revenue to be made from selling humans are all factors that contribute to this global problem (Raymond & Hughes, 2001). Other reasons for its prevalence may be due to the belief that there is a relatively low risk of being apprehended and punished. Law enforcement preoccupation with stopping the sale of weapons and drugs and with terrorism leaves criminals with the impression that human trafficking laws will not be enforced and that their chances of being arrested and incarcerated are minimal at best (Shelley, 2005). Thus, this false sense of security also drives the willingness of traffickers to continue their economic venture.

Globalization is generally defined as the increased connectivity between countries around the world, so much so that changes in the economy of one country, or changes in any other area such as in government or government services, have the potential to affect all those who inhabit this world (Bales, 2005; Shelley, 2005). For instance,

the advent of the Internet, the ease of travel or transportation between countries, and the fusion of world markets are all factors that affect this connectivity, which means that globalization can be thought of as global interdependency. There are some scholars, such as Shelley (2005), who believe that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other such agreements that deregulated trade between countries contributed to an increase in transnational crime. Perhaps the first illegal business to profit was the sale of drugs, followed by the sale of weapons, and then the sale of humans. They believe so not only because these agreements facilitate the flow of goods (though not intentionally the flow of illegal good such as drugs, arms, and humans), but also because free trade agreements have a see-saw effect on global economies. Some countries will inevitably experience growth and economic prosperity as the result of open trade markets, while others will experience economic despair. For those countries in the latter category, illegal enterprises might be one solution to individuals' economic desperation. For others, economic desperation makes them vulnerable to human trafficking, since most victims fall prey to this crime out of a belief that the trafficker will provide them with a better life. In sum, free trade agreements economically marginalize some countries to a point where illegal activities seem to be one of the few constant methods to make a living.

Economic marginalization of countries tends to affect women more than men—a sort of disenfranchisement of women. A shortage in legitimate employment opportunities means that only a few will be able to work. Those few are usually men, which leaves women facing severe poverty and extreme vulnerability. Also, economic marginalization means that countries will not be able to sustain most governmental services such as educational opportunities for all. Women again will be left out of the only available chances to receive an education. With little hope of finding employment in their countries, some women decide to take their chances at finding occupations abroad. Also, with little or no education, these women have no awareness of the dangers of human trafficking. The economic despair that occurs for women due to globalization has been referred to by some scholars as the *feminization of poverty* (Shelley, 2003, 2005), a term coined by Diana Pearce in 1978.

However, there are other scholars, such as Aronowitz (2001), who are of the opinion that political instability contributes to human trafficking. The fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s is a prime example. Civil warfare in the region created people willing to sell

humans for profit and to fund their political ideologies as well as fund their need for arms. Civil warfare also created destitute individuals vulnerable to be trafficked. The inability of the tumultuous government to provide citizens with basic necessities created a spiraling feminization of poverty in the region. There were some who fled the country only to fall prey to human trafficking schemes in other countries. For instance, many people fled the crumbling Soviet Union to the newly independent states formed as the result of the collapse, only to find that places such as the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan are rife with human trafficking operations. Communism, according to some scholars, may have been beneficial to the citizens of the former Soviet Union because at least the government provided just enough resources to keep a large segment of the population from abject poverty and to keep the feminization of poverty from spinning out of control (Shelley, 2005).

Today, Indonesia and Cambodia are both undergoing political instability. Both have been identified by the U.S. Department of State (2008) as hot spots for human trafficking. China has also been identified as a country with significant threats to human dignity since it experiences a large influx of refugees from North Korea, Vietnam, and Burma. Most of the refugees are women and children in search of a better life and easily deceived into believing that economic prosperity awaits them in their destination country. Thousands of children are believed to be forced to labor against their will in China, and most are beaten by their employers to prevent escape.

As mentioned, political instability and civil war contribute to human trafficking because they also cause people to flee regions and countries. Refugees and people displaced from their homes, in general, are vulnerable to human trafficking usually because dreams of a better life cloud their judgment regarding employment opportunities (Farr, 2005). Of course, most of these individuals are deceived into believing that employment opportunities are legitimate. Natural disasters such as the Tsunami in 2004 that affected Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and India, contributed to substantial displacement of people. The unfortunate occurrence, however, created a perfect situation for traffickers. Reports indicated that a large percentage of children became victims of human trafficking as the result of this natural disaster (U.S. Department of State, 2008).

[p. 604 ↓]

Culture also plays a role in human trafficking. There are some countries in Africa that practice what is known as child fostering (Bales, 2005). This means that underprivileged families that cannot otherwise provide an education for their children send them to live with relatives in hopes that the children will be educated or at least learn a trade. Some parents may even send their children to stay with nonrelatives. Every so often, relatives or nonrelatives will sell the children because the burden of taking care of them has taken a toll on the economic livelihood of the family, or they will sell them simply to make a profit. In some developing countries, abject poverty coupled with the need to ensure that daughters marry for the sake of alleviating the economic burden on the family make daughters vulnerable to human trafficking. Farr (2005) reports that in Nepal, for example, this type of trafficking is common.

All of the above factors (poverty, globalization, economic marginalization, the feminization of poverty, political instability, civil war, natural disasters, and culture) are also referred to as the *push factors* of human trafficking because they all serve to push the most vulnerable individuals into positions where the likelihood of becoming a victim is high. However, human trafficking also has *pull factors*. These are the factors that contribute to the massive transportation of humans from one side of the globe to the other. Wealth, economic prosperity, and countries willing to look the other way regarding the hiring of illegal immigrants are just a few examples of pull factors. Germany, Greece, France, Belgium, Italy, and the United States are all top destination countries for human trafficking victims (Mizus et al., 2003).

Global Transportation Patterns

Because human trafficking is driven by the rudimentary principles underscoring supply and demand, certain parts of the globe have been found to serve as sites of origin, transit, and destination for victims. UNODC (2006) has determined that there are several notable worldwide trafficking patterns or routes through which victims are transported and then sold. The continent of Africa, for instance, has been identified as a place of origin for victims of human trafficking, which means that victims are recruited or abducted from locations such as Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, and Morocco. They are then shipped across the world to locations where the demand for cheap labor or sexual services exists. Africa, however, is also a transit and destination country, meaning

that although the countries listed above recruit many victims, they also serve as midpoint locations for traffickers whose distant and far-ranging transportation schemes necessitate a temporary rest stop as well as locations where victims finally learn their fate and are forced to labor against their will.

Asia also has been declared as a significant supplier of victims. Countries such as China and Thailand are considered core providers of trafficking victims as are countries such as Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. These countries, however, have also been identified as destination countries. Thus, Asia is a region of origin and a destination. Central and Southeastern Europe is predominately an origin subregion. Victims trafficked out of this subregion are sold to Western Europe. In particular, Albania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Romania are considered prime countries of origin, followed by the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, and Slovakia. On the other hand, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands, all countries in Western Europe, serve as destination sites for victims trafficked from Central and South Eastern Europe. Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Mexico, are also regions of origin.

Although all of the above-mentioned countries in Africa, Asia, Central and Southeastern Europe, as well as South America, are both origin and destination sites, most trafficking victims are supplied by Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. These countries are rarely places of destination for victims.

These trafficking routes exemplify that countries that supply victims of human trafficking are generally those undergoing political and economic instability, while the countries that demand the sale of humans are those experiencing modest or considerable wealth and prosperity.

Traffickers, Their Victims, and the People Who Buy Humans

Although worldwide data on offenders, victims, and customers are limited, the UNODC (2006) recently compiled a profile of both offenders and victims based on information provided by various law enforcement agencies, government reports, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), research reports, and media reports.

Offender Characteristics

A significant number of people who earn a living buying, transporting, and selling humans live and conduct their illegal business from the following list of countries (listed in descending order based on frequency of either criminal convictions or research findings from the sources listed above):

- Russian Federation
- Nigeria
- Ukraine
- Albania
- Thailand
- Turkey
- China
- Poland
- Bulgaria
- Germany
- Italy
- Lithuania
- Mexico
- Romania

Surprisingly, human trafficking operations are not exclusively male-operated. There are schemes operated by both men and women, and there are also men-only and women-

only operations. There are also husband-and-wife operations and sibling operations. It is not uncommon for traffickers to know their victims. In fact, most victims are deceived by the promise of a better life from acquaintances, neighbors, and even family members who then sell them into the sex trade. The U.S. Department of State (2008) indicates that recruitment of victims is sometimes done by spouses/boyfriends.

There is no requisite age to become a trafficker. Because of the large profits to be made, individuals as young as 15 years of age may be engaged in the sale of humans. In Latin and South America, for instance, it is not unusual for teens to set up an illegal business in the sale of other teens as well as children as young as 8 years of age. For older traffickers, it is quite common for them to have an extensive criminal past and diversify their illegal activities by also engaging in immigration fraud, money laundering, extortion, gambling, check forgery, child pornography, and drug trafficking.

In many cases, human trafficking can be linked to organized criminal syndicates such as the Russian Mafia and the Chinese Triads. Indeed, Finckenauer (2001), who has studied the link between human trafficking and organized crime, believes that all transnational crimes, such as the sale and transportation of humans across the globe, require a bit of planning, organization, skills, and other resources to carry out the criminal venture. Nonetheless, involvement in a specific and identifiable criminal organization is not necessary. All that is needed is a network of loosely organized individuals, all with specialized criminal skills. For instance, Farr (2005) notes that the network usually has the following types of personnel:

- 1. Recruiter: a person who finds vulnerable victims, usually from his or her own town or village
- 2. Travel agent: a person to facilitate travel for victims to other countries
- 3. Document thief/forgery: a person whose specialty is to steal or create false documentation
- 4. Employer: a person who initially purchases and then sells humans to customers
- 5. Enforcer: a person who protects the employer from police and who keeps victims from escaping

Scholars are of the opinion that a large portion of human trafficking is carried out by criminal networks or associates with no history of belonging to well-known criminal organizations (Finckenauer, 2001). These associates may live and engage in criminal activity in different parts of the world, but they coalesce to sale and transport humans around the globe.

Characteristics of Victims

The following are the most frequently mentioned countries of origin for victims (in descending order):

- Ukraine
- Russian Federation
- Nigeria
- Albania
- Romania
- Republic of Moldova
- Bulgaria
- China
- Thailand
- Czech Republic
- Lithuania
- Poland
- Belarus
- Latvia

From a regional perspective, the Commonwealth of Independent States (which consists of 12 countries formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, including Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan) is where the most victims are recruited or abducted globally.

Again, age does not seem to be a significant factor in determining who is more likely to become a trafficked victim. But, it is believed that most victims are adult women and minors, primarily girls younger than 17 years of age. Men comprise the smallest

category. It is important to note, however, that much less is known about male victims of human trafficking. Because trafficking is a clandestine crime that is underreported and because labor trafficking is not perceived to be a grave offense when compared to sex trafficking, male victims are often a forgotten population. Thus, even though statistical reports regard male victims as a small population, this may not be entirely accurate. In addition, in some countries human trafficking is a gendered crime, meaning that men who are exploited for sexual or labor purposes are not considered victims of this crime. This may be another reason for the limited information on male victims of human trafficking.

There are other common victim characteristics, including the following:

- Low level of education or no education
- Unemployment
- Limited employment opportunities in country of origin
- Dire economic circumstances
- Social and economic inequality in country of origin
- Armed conflict, military occupation, or regional conflict in country of origin

Although these are common characteristics, anyone can be a victim of human trafficking. Recruitment-by-abduction cases, although less common than recruitment-by-persuasion, do not require any of the above-mentioned characteristics to be present.

Characteristics of Customers or Consumers of Human Trafficking

Consumers of human trafficking exist in every part of the world, although certain locales, such as the United States, are ranked as top destination countries, or countries where humans are bought and forced into the commercial sex industry or into some form of forced labor. The profile of consumers is also diverse. Consumers can be men or women of varied ages. Occupations can range from the working class to professional men and women, some of whom are prominent businesspeople, doctors, lawyers, and politicians.

In 2000, a couple from Laredo, Texas, traveled to Veracruz, Mexico, on vacation. While in Veracruz, they befriended a family who begged them to take their 12-year-old daughter to the United States for a chance at a better life. The couple agreed to bring the girl to Texas to work as their maid. She was promised a bed, food, and wages. After smuggling the girl into the United States, the couple soon began to restrict her calls home. She was later not allowed to send money to her parents. Within weeks, the girl was kept outside the home where she slept and ate. She was later shackled to an old tire and beaten repeatedly ("Girl Reunited With Parents," 2001).

A recent news report exemplifies the wide-ranging profile of consumers. In Long Island, New York, a millionaire couple who owned and operated a perfume business was arrested for holding two Indonesian women captive for 5 years. The couple, a 35-year-old woman and a 51-year-old man, traveled to Indonesia and recruited these women to work as maids, promising them \$300 a month. The women were forced to sleep on mats, not allowed contact with anyone, and forced to labor for long hours. The women were also beaten by the alleged female offender, and their passports were confiscated to prevent escape ("Wealthy Long Island Couple Keeps Slaves," 2008).

In sum, consumers can be anybody willing to pay for the illegitimate services of another.

Why do Victims Remain Hidden from Authorities?

There are diverse reasons why victims seldom come to the attention of the police, the first of which is that their ability to leave their place of employment is generally forbidden or highly restricted (Farr, 2005). Victims are rarely left alone, not allowed to use the telephone, and are fearful of the ramifications if they try to escape or inform the police of their circumstances. Moreover, most victims do not speak the language in their new destination country, which impedes their ability to communicate with authorities. Also, victims are not trusting of police. In their home country, authorities (whether local police or immigration officials) were more likely than not to be involved in the scheme to sell them. Farr (2005) reports that human trafficking would not be possible without the help of corrupt authorities, whether that means they receive money to look the other way or

they receive money to actually facilitate the shipment of human cargo. Farr notes that in the United States, too, there is evidence that traffickers bribe border authorities in exchange for ease of entry into the country.

As mentioned, human trafficking is a physically and psychologically debilitating crime for victims; violence and the threat of violence quashes insubordination to a point where it breaks the human spirit and any attempts to escape or seek help. Victims are also frightened that their cries for help might be answered by a criminal conviction. The majority of victims are in their country of destination illegally and thus are apprehensive that talking to authorities may result in their arrest. In addition, traffickers continuously move victims to different locations to prevent police from uncovering the human trafficking enterprise.

The above reasons indicate that most victims will not disclose their status as trafficked victims to the police. It is up to police to proactively look for them. However, this also is problematic.

Victims remain hidden for several other reasons as well. As most victims work in the sex industry as prostitutes, and police have historically viewed prostitution as a victimless crime, the police inconsistently make arrests (Vago, 2006). The issue of consent is also problematic for police. Although consent is irrelevant with respect to rendering aid, police often believe that most trafficking victims consent to enter their destination country illegally and thus deserve to be arrested and deported. Consent also affects decisions to proactively look for victims (Kelly & Regan, 2000) as well as the way police classify this crime. Most classify trafficking cases as human smuggling and thus become complacent about launching investigations, since a special law enforcement branch of the government is charged with such investigations. The misclassification of human trafficking cases is common. Human trafficking and human smuggling are crimes that share common elements. For instance, victims of human trafficking sometimes consent to illegal travel as do individuals who pay to be smuggled into a country in which they are not a legal resident. However, human smuggling usually does not involve the force, fraud, or coercion of labor, and individuals who pay to be smuggled across international borders can return to their country of origin as opposed to being enslaved. It is important to mention that some human smuggling cases can quickly turn into cases of human trafficking if individuals are forced to labor against their will (Aronowitz, 2001).

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Another reason why victims remain hidden is because of the organized nature of human trafficking. As mentioned, the workload for these illegal schemes is diversified and determining the network of associates may involve investigations in several countries. Diversification, however, makes it difficult to pinpoint where to start looking. Also, police are not usually trained to investigate these cases. Thus, police may not know how to go about finding and identifying victims and may not have the staff and resources to proactively launch investigations.

The problematic nature associated with identifying victims of human trafficking makes it appealing to traffickers who weigh the benefits and consequences of committing this crime. Clearly, the benefits outweigh the consequences since risk of apprehension is low. If the benefits continue to overshadow the risks, human trafficking will continue to thrive. Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979) believe that motivated offenders can be dissuaded from engaging in crime if potential victims are better protected and if the community together with the police become more vigilant regarding such offenders. Cohen and Felson, in their discussion of routine activities theory, suggest that diminishing the suitability of a potential crime target or the potential for victimization is important. Although their theory is primarily applied to property-related crime, routine activities theory may be applicable to the crime of human trafficking. Current efforts are underway worldwide to prevent vulnerable individuals from becoming potential targets of human trafficking. In fact, the United States has been providing aid to the most vulnerable countries. It has also been trying to raise awareness of this crime worldwide. This latter element is crucial. As discussed by Cohen and Felson, it is not only important to diminish the vulnerability of potential victims but also to increase vigilance about possible offenders. In discussing what they call *capable guardians*, Cohen and Felson express that it is essential for the police as well as the community to help identify potential offenders in an effort to increase the risk of apprehension. Only then will the risk outweigh the gain of selling and trading humans, and the motivation to engage in this crime will diminish. Thus, it is imperative to increase awareness not only among the law enforcement or criminal justice community but also in the community at large. It will take a concerted effort by all to act as capable guardians.

Current U.S. Efforts to Stop the Sale of Humans

The United States is among many countries that have taken legislative action against human trafficking. Because of its prominent status as a world power, the United States has also been the leader in forcing others to do the same. Every year since 2000, the U.S. Department of State has published the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which details the extent of trafficking in the country as well as abroad. The report also contains a ranking system whereby the Department of State issues a passing or failing grade to other countries' efforts to stop human trafficking. Using the U.S. law as the benchmark of excellence, the State Department conducts an investigation into every country around the globe that receives financial or military assistance from the United States. After its investigation, it ranks the countries into four categories or tiers: Tier 1 (the equivalent to a grade of A), Tier 2 (the grade of B), Tier 2 Watch List (the grade of C), and Tier 3 (the grade of D). Tier 1 countries, such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom, are praised for their excellent achievement in trying to eradicate human trafficking in their respective countries. Tier 2 countries such as Afghanistan, Mexico, and Turkey are also applauded for their efforts, but also told that a little more needs to be done to combat human trafficking. The Tier 2 Watch List countries are at the brink of failing in their efforts to end this problem. Argentina, China, Guatemala, and Tanzania are among several countries that are trying to squash human trafficking but are not taking significant action to do so. Tier 3 countries such as Iran, Cuba, and North Korea are completely failing to deal with this crime. Again, it is important to consider that the United States uses its own law as the gold standard and does not include itself in this ranking system.

The U.S. law against trafficking is not without criticism. There are some who contend that the law is not victimcentered but rather revictimizes those who have suffered through the ordeal of being sold and enslaved (Beeks & Amir, 2006). For instance, in order for victims to qualify for any governmental services (such as psychological, medical, and employment benefits), after being rescued by police, they must undergo

a certification process in which they must petition the government for help. This petition requires victims to do the following:

- Write a personal narrative of their experience
- Prove that they would suffer extreme hardship if they were removed from the United States
- Comply with law enforcement investigation into the case
- Get the narrative certified by a law enforcement officer who must attest to the facts in the narrative
- Pay a processing fee (approximately \$200) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, together with fees for a picture ID (approximately \$10–\$20), fingerprints (approximately \$50), and so on

This is not an easy feat in light of the fact that most victims do not speak or write English, are apprehensive about police, and do not have an income to pay for such fees. This certification is meant to ensure that only “severe victims” of trafficking are given access to government aid. If and when they receive certification as a victim, they can also petition for a visa to stay in the United States. However, the U.S. government limits the number of visas [p. 608 ↓] it issues to trafficking victims each year to 5,000. From 2000–2006, the United States only issued 729 visas to victims of human trafficking.

Despite this disparagement, the United States has provided monetary assistance to foreign nations to try to tackle the *push* factors of human trafficking. Close to \$1 billion has been provided to help other countries raise awareness of the dangers of human trafficking, as well as establish vocational and technical training for the most vulnerable and provide them with an education. Also, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2006) indicates that 555 cases were investigated by the U.S. Attorney's Office from 2001–2005. This led to 78 criminal adjudications with a mean prison sentence of 70 months. Furthermore, the federal government has been providing more assistance to local, state, and federal authorities in the United States to better identify and help victims of human trafficking. It has also provided aid to NGOs to help them better assist trafficking victims.

Conclusion

Human trafficking is one of the most antiquated and unforgivable crimes. Yet, it is also a contemporary crime that has been growing exponentially over the past few decades. Millions of people, including children, fall victim to this crime each year. Although generally a transnational crime, there is evidence that human trafficking occurs within the borders of most countries, including the United States. It is also a crime that does not discriminate—victims can be of any race, ethnicity, age, or gender. However, most victims are women and children. Global trafficking patterns signify that this global crime is driven by factors such as political and economic instability in certain parts of the world as well as by globalization, the feminization of poverty, and culture. In sum, it is driven by push and pull factors or by supply and demand. Worldwide efforts have been launched to combat the sale and enslavement of humans, with the United States flexing its power to bring countries into compliance with measures to end this crime. However, the United States has drawn criticism over its treatment of victims while it is at the same time praised for its generous monetary donations to help bring awareness of human trafficking to the most vulnerable places.

Because of the lucrative nature of this crime, some suggest that efforts to stop human trafficking should focus more on those who supply victims and those who purchase them. If traffickers contemplate risks and rewards of engaging in this crime, more should be done to dissuade them from selling humans. Thus, some suggest that more funding should be used to train police authorities to identify these criminals, and more should be done to increase the punishment if offenders are caught trafficking. However, others suggest that efforts to stop human trafficking would be better placed on those who purchase the human cargo in destination countries. Currently, according to the U.S. law against trafficking, any person who sells or buys a human being can receive a sentence of 20 years in prison, or life in prison if the victim dies as a result of the torture endured at the hands of either the supplier or consumer. As mentioned, in the 78 criminal convictions of human trafficking between the years 2001–2005, the median prison sentence has been 70 months, or 5.8 years. Thus, perhaps the answer to stopping this crime is to tackle both the suppliers and the consumers, but tougher penalties are needed to deter the sale and consumption of forced labor.

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