Fighting Human Trafficking: The Roles of Empirical Research & Citizen Activism

TRAFFICKING AND CIVIL SOCIETY: DENIAL, DISTRESS, DANGER

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Objectives

1. Present groundbreaking empirical research on the health effects of human trafficking
2. Emphasize the vital role of citizen activism in fighting human trafficking
   - A call to action
Two Caveats

- An emphasis on *international* human trafficking for the purpose of *sexual* exploitation
- The lack of consensus concerning the nature and scale of human trafficking

*From Zhang, 2009*
Spheres of Vulnerability

- Trafficked Women
- Migrant Women
- Exploited Women Laborers
- Women Experiencing Domestic Violence, Rape, Torture

Women Sex Workers
Farley et al., 2004

Adapted from Zimmerman & Watts, 2003
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zimmerman et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Surveyed ~200 European women who had been trafficked and sexually exploited</td>
<td>Mental health effects, Physical health effects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tsutsumi et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Explored the health status of 164 trafficked women supported by NGOs in Nepal</td>
<td>More severe symptoms in sex workers vs. women exploited in other venues</td>
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<td>Silverman et al. (2008)</td>
<td>STIs in sex trafficked Nepali women</td>
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The Importance of Public Awareness

- Virtually every report on trafficking calls for increased awareness
- Lusk & Lucas (2009) cite public awareness as the fundamental preventative strategy

- Wilson & Dalton (2008) researched responses to trafficking in the Ohio cities of Columbus and Toledo
  - A model program: “Helping Victims of Prostitution & Trafficking: It Takes a Community”
Think Global, Act Local

**Ohio Organizations**
- Central Ohio Rescue & Restore Coalition (Columbus)
- Rahab’s Hideaway (Columbus)
- Gracehaven (Dublin)
- Second Chance (Toledo)
  - Special FBI task force; premier recruitment city for underage girls

**My own line of research**
- To date, there has never been an experimental study on attitudes and empathy towards trafficked persons in the United States, and there is no empirical data on citizen awareness of trafficking.
References