

Prostitute[d]:

Why Applying Global Anti-Trafficking Efforts to Local Sexual Exploitation is Necessary

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Abstract

This paper explores the phenomenon of sex trafficking, focusing on what must happen on the local level in order for change on the global level to occur. The paper makes use of a number of sources including documentaries, journals, books, and government documents to provide information on the current state of worldwide trafficking, academic strategies for anti-trafficking efforts, and local occurrences of sex trafficking. Because much of the sexual exploitation occurring on the local level (most often in the form of prostitution) meets the standard for sex trafficking, the protocol for fighting trafficking worldwide will be applied to the local level. The paper will then analyze the local fight against sexual exploitation and suggest more effective ways to eradicate the phenomenon, beginning with a societal shift in how we perceive prostitution.

Introduction

Slavery has existed in our world for all of recorded history. Since the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the international world has established that commercial exploitation is not only wrong, but also constitutes a crime against humanity. Although we traditionally think of slavery as a thing of the past, the shocking reality is that there are more slaves today than at any other time in human history (Free the Slaves 2013). We in America most often assume this is as a problem that exists “over there” (in Asia, Europe, and Africa). These assumptions, based on race, gender, and culture, represent a First and Third World divide. And although brutal sexual exploitation does indeed exist “over there,” it is also occurs daily within the United States.

While there has been a recent increase in the amount of attention the issue of sex slavery has been given by governments, religious groups, non-profit organizations, and even celebrities, that attention has mostly focused on trafficking on a global scale. Research has also been conducted to show the correlation between sex trafficking and prostitution. This paper will bring together those two topics of research and claim that the same protocol used globally in anti-trafficking efforts should be applied locally to the eradication of sexual exploitation.

Awareness on the global issue has increased over the past decade, and social programs have been initiated by non-profit organizations as well as by governments, but more needs to be done. In order to address the many issues both at the root of and stemming from prostitution and sex trafficking, governments on all levels must make social services more accessible and capable, as well as protect rather than prosecute the victims of trafficking and prostitution. Analyzing the problem of sex trafficking on the global scale

and the responses it has drawn will provide insight into the fundamental reasons sexual exploitation occurs so frequently. Proposed solutions to the global problem can then be applied on the national and local levels to create a grassroots effort aimed at changing societal perspectives of sexual exploitation to change and improve our approach to its eradication.

I will first focus on the current state of sex trafficking worldwide, why it succeeds and how it can be stopped according to some of the world's experts on human trafficking. The response of international governments will be discussed, as well as the response by the United States government. From there, I will overview sexual exploitation in the United States, showing the similarities and differences compared to trafficking on a global scale. Based on these similarities and differences, I will show that it is necessary to begin the fight against trafficking at the local level. Because of this necessity, I will discuss current anti-trafficking efforts in Columbus, Ohio and the ways in which these efforts must be improved for the future. I will conclude that the first and most imperative step in improving anti-trafficking efforts locally is a societal shift in the way we view and treat both sexual exploiters and sexually exploited people.

Trafficking Worldwide

With the rise of modernization in the second half of the twentieth century, which led to rapid globalization just before the peak of the 21st century, the world is now faced with new kinds of threats. Human trafficking, one of these major threats, is, in short, modern-day slavery. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime defines it as:

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” (What is Human Trafficking? 2012).

Commercial exploitation comes in many different forms, the most profitable and barbaric of which is sex trafficking, accounting for 79% of human exploitation (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013). Victims of sex trafficking are people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, and backgrounds. While it is impossible to calculate the number of victims of trafficking with absolute certainty, the Trafficking in Persons Report of 2006 conservatively estimates that “12.3 million people worldwide are in forced bonded labor, child labor, and sexual servitude” (Shelley 2010, p. 5).

Sex Trafficking Worldwide

The entire business of illicit trade has boomed in the globalized era, and human trafficking is no exception. In fact, human trafficking has been recognized by the United Nations as the fastest growing industry worldwide (U.N. Human Rights Council, 2010).

Traffickers now have fairly easy access to global communication and transportation, and with that comes expansion of business. Naim (2005) discusses the changes in organized crime with the rise of globalization. He quotes an FBI director, Maureen Baginski, who said “the specialization became the network itself, and its ability to procure, transport, and deliver illegal merchandise across countries. What the merchandise was became almost irrelevant” (p. 32). In our globalized world, processes can now be led by non-state actors who have a higher tendency to use dangerous and illicit types of trade in the global market for profit, leading to “women trafficked for sex work as an unforeseen outcome of global restructuring” (Bhattacharyya 2005, pp. 25-29). An entirely new industry has extended from these advances; an industry in which desperation and vulnerability are exploited, and the additional aspect of sex “confirms the less than human status of the trafficked” (Bhattacharyya 2005, p. 174). With globalization and the breakdown of traditional culture that has come with it, new forms of commerce such as the illicit trade of humans can capitalize on the interconnected world. In doing so, their profits have grown tremendously.

Louise Shelley (2010) also discusses the factors of globalization that have given rise to trafficking. These factors include: an increase in websites that advertise sex tourism and brides available for marriage (which are often a cover for sex trafficking), a decline in border controls (allowing for more cross-border movement of traffickers), as well as unequal development and large-scale corruption (pp. 41-46). The concept of transnational crime, which was once used to describe only the drug trade, is now ascribed to human trafficking. Shelley (2010) attributes the growth of the human trafficking industry to the fact that traffickers are acting on every continent and have “well established international logistics networks to move their victims across vast distances” and that they “succeed

because groups from different parts of the world cooperate...to obtain a profit” (p. 110). And quite a profit they have obtained: in 2007, human trafficking generated an estimated \$152.3 billion in revenue and \$91.2 billion in profit. This amounts to a global weighted average net profit margin of 70 percent (Kara 2009, p.19). Academics such as Louise Shelley and Siddharth Kara have become experts on the industry of sex trafficking. They both suggest an approach towards the eradication of sex slavery, based on careful analysis of the business.

Louise Shelley's Six-Pronged Approach

Louise Shelley is a leading U.S. expert on transnational crime and terrorism. She began studying the transnational nature of human trafficking in the Soviet Union, and from there she began researching the phenomenon across the rest of the globe. Shelley uses a historical and comparative perspective, demonstrating the varying nature of human trafficking. She concludes that human trafficking is an industry that will continue its rapid growth throughout the 21st century unless changes are made and emphasizes that it “undermines the principles of a democratic society, the rule of law, and respect for individual rights, particularly that of women and children” (p. 301). Shelley provides six areas that must be addressed to end growth in the industry. First, she suggests the focus needs to be shifted towards the consumers (p. 306). As will be discussed later, this approach is emerging in some cities in the United States in the form of educating the buyers of sex as to the nature of the product they are purchasing. Second, Shelley urges the business world, especially industries such as hospitality and tourism that often (mostly unknowingly) facilitate human trafficking, to get more involved (p. 308). Third, more

research and education are needed so we can outsmart the traffickers who, based on their business success, are currently outsmarting us (p. 316). Next, civil society must get involved—raising public awareness, forcing conversation on the issue, and putting pressure on governments to get more involved (p. 316). Stemming from this is the role of governments, which Shelley says is vital. Governments must implement efforts to coordinate civil society in responding to the issue. Beyond simply signing international agreements, they must work towards prevention while protecting and rescuing current victims (p. 319). Finally, Shelley says ending human trafficking depends on multilateral efforts. “Human trafficking continues to grow because state bureaucracies are no match for the flexible criminals” (p. 323); both governments and NGOs must coordinate in order for their efforts to succeed.

Siddharth Kara’s Four-Step Plan

With his book titled *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*, Siddharth Kara has become a leading expert on human trafficking. Using his background in finance, economics, and law, he provides an analysis of modern-day slavery and develops a four-step plan to eradicate the exploitation. Kara was unexpectedly introduced to the horrors of sex trafficking when he volunteered at a refugee camp in Slovenia in 1995. After learning of the trafficking occurring in Slovenia, he began researching its existence in other countries by travelling and speaking with hundreds of victims. *Sex Trafficking*, which he originally intended as a narrative of his travels, serves as a call to action to the world (Kara 2009, ix-xv).

Kara identifies four reasons why current efforts to combat worldwide trafficking remain insufficient. First, we do not fully understand it. Second, international organizations whose purposes are to combat sex trafficking are underfunded and uncoordinated. Third, anti-sex trafficking laws are inadequately enforced. And fourth, there has not been a systematic analysis conducted in order to plan an effective intervention (p. 200). Like Shelley, Kara views sex trafficking as a business complete with a product, a wholesaler, a retailer, and a consumer—an extremely successful business (in terms of profitability) because of the minimal risk involved. By analyzing the business aspect of trafficking, Kara was able to develop a plan for its eradication.

Kara's analysis begins by identifying short and long-term tactics. Short-term tactics include making the risk of trafficking more costly; this would be accomplished by reducing the demand for the "product" by inverting the risk-reward economics to lower profitability. For long-term success in eradication, Kara suggests that we focus on ameliorating the risk factors that can allow for trafficking, such as extreme poverty. To accomplish these short and long-term tactics, Kara's four-step plan begins with calculating the current risk involved in trafficking (for consumers and for sex slave owners/sellers). This calculation includes the probability of prosecution and conviction if caught, and the penalty involved according to the law (p. 206). After this has been calculated, the second step is to determine profitability, or "exploitative value." Kara provides a table of net exploitative value of a sex slave for various regions worldwide. Measured in 2006 U.S. dollars in what Kara considers a conservative calculation, the values range from 25,454 in Africa to 156,300 in Western Europe (p. 208). The third step is to increase the penalties of sex slavery, through higher prosecution and conviction rates, so that being caught would compromise profit (p. 209).

Kara's final step is the actual inversion of the risk-reward economics to reduce demand by both consumers and retailers (p. 2012). In what Kara refers to as the most important premise of his text, which stems from these four steps, he suggests that "the two measures most likely to invert the risk-reward economics of sex slavery, and thereby reduce aggregate demand for sex slaves, are raising the costs of being caught and shortening the average duration of enslavement" (p. 215). Below is a chart by Kara demonstrating the costs traffickers currently face if caught in various countries. This chart shows evidence of the extremely low risk involved in trafficking worldwide, leading to the high profitability. Kara uses an economic formula using variable costs and revenues with the average month of enslavement to generate an operating EV, or "exploitation value" of a sex slave. He compares this EV to the penalty for sex trafficking to calculate the profitability of the business.

Country	Max. Penalty Related to Sex Slavery	Estimated Prosecution Rate (percent)	Estimated Conviction Rate (percent)	Implied "Real" Penalty	Regional EV per Sex Slave	Penalty/EV (percent)	"Real" Penalty/EV (percent)
India ¹	2,222	0.6	36	5	28,278	7.9	0.002
Nepal	2,666	3.5	21	20	28,278	9.4	0.007
Italy	0	5.0	55	0	156,300	0.0	0.00
Netherlands	54,000	5.4	50	1,455	156,300	34.5	0.93
Moldova	2,500	6.2	19	29	78,604	3.2	0.04
Albania	80,000	5.6	20	904	78,604	101.8	1.15
Thailand	0	0.7	18	0	33,049	0.0	0.00
United States ²	150,000	4.1	39	2,400	135,075	111.0	1.78

¹ Assumes that the ITPA amendment to raise the penalty for a single count of owning a brothel to one hundred thousand rupees will eventually be passed.

² There is no maximum fine for the crime of sex trafficking in the United States, though fines have typically ranged from ten thousand to one hundred fifty thousand dollars per victim per trafficker.

(Kara 2009, p. 208)

Response from International Community and U.S. Government

The issue of trafficking on a global scale has become a concern for both government and non-government agencies and organizations worldwide. At the Palermo Convention in 2000, the United Nations adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (known simply as the Trafficking Protocol or Palermo Protocol). As of March 2013, the Palermo Protocol had been ratified by 117 countries and has 154 parties. This protocol identifies three critical components to human trafficking: the act, the means, and the purpose (each of these components can be seen in its definition). To address and fight against human trafficking effectively, the Palermo Protocol says that governments should respond according to the “3P” paradigm: prevention, criminal prosecution, and victim protection (The Palermo Protocol 2011).

In the same year of the Palermo Convention, the United States passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, or TVPA (which had subsequent reauthorizations in 2003, 2005, and 2008). TVPA is aimed at combating trafficking globally and nationally. In 2001, the United States government began releasing a Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report annually, which is intended to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. The report serves as a comprehensive resource for the global anti-trafficking movement. In this report, each country is placed on one of three tiers based on their anti-trafficking efforts, and details are given on the government’s compliance with standards set forth by TVPA and the Palermo Protocol. In the most recent TIP report (2012) the United States government placed itself on the top tier. The setbacks to progress in the United States acknowledged by the report include the challenges presented by the multi-faceted nature of the efforts since many programs and agencies are involved, a lack of resources and training, and inadequate

funding to provide proper long-term care to victims (Trafficking in Persons Report 2012, p. 359). The report, in focusing mostly on victims brought to the United States from outside countries, overlooks many of the sexual exploitation cases seen in the United States today. According to Joan A. Reid (2012) in her analysis of the prostitution of minors in the United States, “[w]hile using a tiered system to assess and sanction other countries based on their attempts to combat human trafficking, the United States is failing to combat trafficking in prostitution” (p. 1). If the report took these cases into consideration, the United States may not be placed on the top tier in terms of their eradication efforts.

As stated in the introduction to the TIP report of 2012, “if a law fails to protect all victims of trafficking under its provisions...certain victims may find themselves accused of violating other, non-trafficking laws for actions that are connected to their victimization” (Trafficking In Persons Report 2012, p. 14). Due to a fairly narrow definition of trafficking, victims can sometimes be arrested and incarcerated as criminals. The unjust incarceration of victims occurring in the United States is most often manifested in the form of prostitution.

Domestic Trafficking

According to U.S. laws, sex trafficking is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act is under the age of eighteen (18 U.S.C. 1591, 2000). This definition has led to some confusion, as it specifies “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining” which are all based on the actual movement of another individual. Kara suggests that perhaps this linguistic confusion is the reason that many programs and laws focus on the movement more than the actual exploitation, which should be the focus. To be clear, a victim need not be physically transported from one location for trafficking to occur; the exploitation is the crime, not the movement. Oxford Dictionary defines exploitation as “the action or fact of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work.” Prostitution, which is usually seen as a local, low-level street crime, meets the definition of sex trafficking in most cases. The general acceptance of this fact—a fact that may seem counterintuitive—is fundamental to ending sex slavery domestically.

Prostitution Cycle

Our society views prostitution as a victimless crime. Prostitutes are considered criminals nationwide (with the exception of some counties in Nevada), while those that are buying their services are rarely arrested and do not receive nearly the same social stigma (the societal reasons for which will be discussed later). While each case is unique, there are several vulnerabilities that can lead girls into a life of prostitution (and keep them trapped

in that life). These economic and emotional vulnerabilities include childhood sexual and physical abuse as well as dysfunctions in the home. In fact, it is estimated that 82% of prostituted persons have a history of sexual abuse and 75% have a history of physical abuse. Oftentimes these children run away from their homes to escape the abuse (McIntyre 1999, cited in National Institute of Justice 2012, p. 12). Runaways are extremely vulnerable to prostitution: the Minnesota Attorney General's Office found that runaway and homeless children are approached for sex within an average of 48 hours of leaving or losing their home (National Institute of Justice 2012, p. 12).

According to a report by Richard J. Estes and Neil Alan Weiner, cited by the U.S. Department of Justice, the average age that an American female prostitute begins her involvement in prostitution is between twelve and fourteen years old (2001, p. 92). Based on this statistic, it is obvious that many cases of prostitution in the United States meet the definition of sex trafficking solely based on the age of the victim. Additionally, studies estimate that between 75-90% of prostitutes in the United States are under the control of a pimp (Estes and Weiner 2001, p. 7). They, too, fit the definition of sex trafficking because of the exploitative nature of the coercion and force of a pimp over a prostitute.

Once in the life of prostitution, the lives of these girls are based solely on what their bodies can provide to men. Their former lives, whether dismal or bright, quickly become a blur; drug habits, which are often forced by the pimp, and intimidation keep them in the life. According to a report prepared for the National Institute of Justice, "[i]nteractions among prostitution, abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional), addiction, compromised health, diminished self-sufficiency skills, and other dysfunctions can send the lives of survivors in a downward spiral from which exit becomes progressively more difficult"

(2012, p. 15). The fact that society looks down upon these girls and women as dirty, whorish, and criminal only adds to that difficulty. This is how Anon, a survivor of sexual exploitation explains her experience:

“Most people don’t understand why we stay with a pimp. Many of us have been exploited by our peers, society, and often by the people that we trust. When we’re the most vulnerable, pimps attack, promising us stability, a family life, a future. They reel us in. He becomes our father, and our boyfriend, until we see what he really wants. Then he intimidates us and reminds us constantly about the consequences if we leave. Most tell us that they’ll find and kill us, no matter where we go. We’re afraid of being afraid. Resources are limited and many of us do not see a way out” (Girls Educational & Mentoring Service 2011).

When prostitutes are arrested, jailed, and eventually released, they are given no resources and feel that their only choice is to return to their previous lives. Oftentimes, their families have abandoned them and, even though being under the authority of their pimp is life threatening, it is the only life they know. Their pimps have manipulated them into believing what society says to them: that they are immoral and worthless. So they end up back with their pimps, just to be arrested again. This cycle is extremely unhealthy to the victims, and it also leaves taxpayers’ money supporting an inefficient system.

Pimp Life

In a documentary that interviews traffickers in the United States (Owens, 1999), a number of pimps tell how they got started in ‘the game’ and what their experiences have been. The majority of these stories had a hauntingly similar theme: the desire for money and power, coming from an upbringing with neither. One pimp recalled that when he first began, he was content with one woman, but that it blew out of proportion quickly.

This theme was repeated in an interview conducted by N. Conan (2011) with famous actor and rapper Ice-T (NPR News). Ice-T, who is also featured in the aforementioned documentary, told listeners that both his parents died when he was young and, after living with an alcoholic aunt for some time, he was completely on his own at the age of seventeen. His idols and role models as a kid were pimps (namely, famous pimp Iceberg Slim, from whom he received his nickname). These men embodied success for Ice-T and those in similar situations to him: they had flashy cars, clothes, and a lot of girls. Not only was entering 'the game' a quick way to make money and fulfill those desires that had been misconstrued as embodying success, but it gave Ice-T a home and an identity that he had been searching for his entire life. Naim (2005) reiterates this when he states that the basic driving force for entrance into any international illicit trade is the aspiration to find a better life (p. 107).

Just by listening to the most popular songs of the last decade, it is obvious the impact that the pimp culture has had on society. Song titles such as "Pimpin' All Over the World," "Pimp Juice," and "Big Pimpin'" have hit top 40 charts in recent years. This is not only a culture that young children dream of joining, but it is one that has dangerous consequences just from its impact on society. Each year in November, a "Pimp of the Year" is awarded at the Players Ball, located in Chicago, IL. A tradition since 1974, events like this have since spread to other cities (Players Ball, 2011). This event not only celebrates the phenomenon of human trafficking, but it acts as an incentive for individuals to either join 'the game' or to get better at 'the game.' Reading the celebrated stories of these pimps invokes many questions; most importantly, why do we as a society permit this to happen? And how do these men (both the pimps and the johns) justify their actions?

Moral Disengagement

Morality, the principles we adhere to concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior, can be viewed as a continuum, with concern for the utmost morality on one end and no concern for morality on the other. Because the actions and behaviors of traffickers stem solely from their desires, with no apparent consideration for what is right or wrong, traffickers are placed on the extreme un-moralist side of the continuum. This disregard for morality is evident through the language used by the pimps in Owens' documentary (1999). Statements such as "you make hoes; pimps are naturally born" and that "a pimp has to have his hand ready for the ho or she'll sneak off to the crack house" show the indifference of the traffickers to the well-being of their victims; this is because the 'hoes,' in this example, are the mere means to the desired ends of money, control, and power.

This same disregard for morality can be seen in court documents from sex trafficking cases. In one case, *United States v. Depaul Brooks* (2010), the trafficker (Brooks) met some young girls and automatically assumed the 'pimp' role, forcing them to change their appearance in order to be sold more readily, and giving them drugs to reduce the risk of the girls putting up a fight. In this case, the young girls were completely unknown to the trafficker, but the trafficker immediately saw that they were a means to his desired ends of power, dominance, and ultimately, more money.

According to Bandura (1990), humans use self-regulatory mechanisms in monitoring their actions and behaviors according to their moral principles. These mechanisms only operate when the individual activates them, and when these mechanisms

are not activated (in the cases of these trafficking examples), individuals disengage their moral reactions as a result. This disengagement comes in many different forms including disregarding or misrepresenting the consequences of actions and dehumanizing the victims (p. 161). Bandura details these disengagements and says “once dehumanized, the potential victims are no longer viewed as persons with feelings, hopes, and concerns, but as subhuman objects” (p. 181). Although their actions seem to be void of any sense of intrinsic thought, they require self-regulatory mechanisms as a way to internally justify their actions.

The fact that our society has allowed such grotesque exploitation to exist and thrive is a disturbing reality upon which we must act. A complete societal shift towards the nature of prostitution is imperative in the movement towards ending sex trafficking. This movement must start on the local level, for it is occurring in our own neighborhoods regularly. The essential perspective that must be embraced is that prostitutes are victims—they are individuals who have been and are being prostituted.

Applying the Palermo Protocol to Sexual Exploitation in the U.S.

Because most cases of prostitution fit the definition of sex trafficking used at the Palermo Conference, the strategies encouraged by the Palermo Protocol and TVPA should be applied towards efforts to stop it. Efforts to fight against forced prostitution, like those to fight against worldwide trafficking, should focus on prevention, criminal prosecution, and victim protection.

Prevention

A complete societal shift is necessary for the prevention of domestic sexual exploitation in the form of human trafficking or prostitution. The first step in this societal shift is putting the focus on the buyers and sellers of sex, as opposed to the women whose bodies are being used for the transaction. This transition has recently been implemented in some cities in America. In Chicago, for example, a campaign was started in 2009 called End Demand Illinois. The purpose of this campaign is to switch the focus onto the pimps, traffickers, and customers who are ultimately responsible for the sexual exploitation. Since its implementation, the goals of the campaign in preventing sexual exploitation has influenced legislation as well as protection services for victims (End Demand Illinois 2011). Part of this campaign, and also a new technique used in cities nationwide is “john shaming.” The purpose of the shaming technique is to force greater accountability on the buyers of sex. By making information about them public (on websites, billboards, newspapers, etc.), a greater risk exists in the decision to buy sex. This risk is relatively small, as it only becomes a factor if law enforcement is aware of the sex trade, but ideally it would force the sex

buyer to engage more fully on a moral level in the decision to buy sex. Disengaging moral triggers is not as easy when the consequences are increased.

Criminal Prosecution

The focus on the buyer of sex is not only important for preventative purposes, but also for prosecution. In fact, this is the area that needs the most improvement for the societal shift to occur in the United States. Treating prostitutes as victims instead of criminals, as is deemed necessary by TVPA, means the criminal focus needs to change to the buyers and sellers of prostitutes. Legalizing prostitution may be one way to see this shift occur; on the federal level we can look to Sweden to see the effects.

Sweden has been internationally recognized for its efforts in securing equal rights for women. The Global Gender Gap Report of 2010, which focuses on economics, health, politics, and education ranked Sweden as one of the world's leaders in equality (World Economic Forum 2010). As part of the effort towards equality, prostitution is nationally recognized as a form of sexual violence in Sweden. According to Gunilla Ekberg (2004), Sweden has been working hard over the last decade at the national and international level to eliminate prostitution and trafficking in order to create "a contemporary and democratic society where full gender equality is the norm" (p. 1188). After years of debate, the Swedish government enacted the Law That Prohibits the Purchase of Sexual Services. "In combination with public education, awareness-raising campaigns, and victim support, the Law and other legislation establish a zero tolerance policy for prostitution and trafficking in human beings" (Ekberg, p. 1187). Instead of prosecuting the prostitute, the purchaser and/or retailer is prosecuted. By criminalizing the buying of sex, Sweden has

seen the number of buyers diminish, thereby reducing prostitution and sex trafficking in the country.

Along with this legislation targeting the buyers instead of the so-called products, the government has “pledged money and assistance to women who are victims of male violence, including prostituted women” (Ekberg, p. 1192). The key to the success of Sweden has been that their movement is two-fold: first, work to end the demand and, second, provide resources for victims. “On a structural level, Sweden recognizes that to succeed in the campaign against sexual exploitation, the political, social, and economic conditions under which women and girls live must be ameliorated by introducing development measures of, for example, poverty reduction, sustainable development, and social programs focusing specifically on women” (Eckberg, p. 1189). Since the passing of the Law in 1999, the number of street prostitutes has decreased by 30% to 50% (Eckberg, p. 1193). The number of women being trafficked through Sweden has decreased as well, because traffickers do not want to deal with the added risk of the stricter laws (Eckberg, p. 1209).

Prostitution laws are made on the state level, but it is currently illegal in every state (with the exception of some counties in Nevada). Whether or not the Swedish model is adopted by the United States, our law enforcement officials need to do a better job of criminalizing johns, pimps, and traffickers. To do this, they need to be educated and given the necessary resources. Investigations of sex trafficking are expensive and timely. They most often include strategies such as street-level or web-based reverse stings or use of surveillance cameras in areas known for prostitution. Given the widespread prevalence of prostitution and sex trafficking cases, law enforcement teams need to find innovative ways to investigate.

Victim Protection

The third aspect necessary for societal change is improved victim protection. Victims of sexual exploitation have been dehumanized in a way that will never be completely reversed. Everything that makes these women human has been completely stripped after living at the mercy of someone who profits daily from the abuse of their bodies. They have been subjected to incredible physical, emotional, and mental abuse. Although they may never completely recover, it is essential that survivors are able to rebuild their lives, beginning by re-establishing their basic human rights. Basic needs such as food, water, and shelter must first be addressed; but after these initial needs are met, much more is needed before survivors of sexual exploitation are able to function healthily in society.

Because the average age of entry into the sex trade is 12-14, most survivors (even those well into adulthood) have never lived an independent life outside the life of a sex slave. Their home was wherever their pimp told them it was, and any sort of slight income received was at the discretion of their pimp. Resources need to be made available to help these women secure an apartment and job and learn about living productively in society. Additionally, the psychological effects from living as a slave need to be addressed. The only life these survivors know is one in which they were told and probably believed that they were worthless. Focusing on these psychological impacts plays an integral role in the healing process.

An example of the type of holistic care required for victim protection is Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS), which was founded in 1998 in New York by Rachel Lloyd, a survivor of sexual exploitation. GEMS is the only New York organization

that focuses on helping girls and young women who have experienced sexual exploitation exit the sex industry and reach their full potential. The organization seeks to do this by “changing individual lives, transforming public perception, and revolutionizing the systems and policies that impact sexually exploited youth” (Girls Educational & Mentoring Service 2011). GEMS provides comprehensive services including prevention and outreach and a multifaceted intervention program (incorporating education, supportive housing, and court advocacy). GEMS has won many awards and been recognized nationally for its success in providing victim protection. It should be used as a model for other communities as to the continuous and comprehensive services necessary to restore humanity in survivors of sexual exploitation.

Kara and Shelley’s academic frameworks for improvement in anti-trafficking efforts worldwide can also be applied on the local level. Prostitution is an extremely profitable business. The focus on ending it needs to begin with a detailed analysis on how the network is set up and why it succeeds as a business. From this analysis of what sexual exploitation consists of on the local level, we can begin to address the various ways in which it must be overcome from the bottom up.

Trafficking and Prostitution in Columbus, Ohio

The newly recognized fact that human trafficking exists everywhere, in cities big and small across America, shows that we must look to make improvements in our own neighborhoods prior to (or at least at the same time as) efforts in other cities or abroad. While it may appear differently than one would intuitively think, sex trafficking occurs daily here in Columbus, Ohio. Before finding ways to implement the strategies provided above, it is important to understand the history of anti-trafficking efforts in Columbus and what programs are currently in place.

In terms of geographical location and demographics, Columbus is a prime location for sex trafficking to exist and flourish. It has a large base of people and a mobile society, with many interstate highways. Columbus hosts a number of fairly large events, including the Arnold Classic. National events such as this attract traffickers because there is a high demand for sex. As a result of efforts started by former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray and continued by current Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Columbus has a number of established organizations and programs with anti-trafficking goals (Columbus Metropolitan Club 2013).

Central Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition

CORRC (Central Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition) is the most substantial local response to human trafficking. It was established in July 2007 under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to assist victims of human trafficking. It includes more than one hundred organizations and several hundred individuals with the common goal of eradicating human trafficking (for both labor and sex), beginning in Columbus. CORRC has

five committees, addressing different issues of human trafficking: legislation and lobbying, law enforcement, social services, public awareness, and demand reduction. The purpose of the larger coalition is to serve as an avenue for these subcommittees to work together towards improvement. To do this, they run a 24/7 hotline, execute rescues, provide services to survivors, train and coordinate volunteers, host speaking engagements around the community, lobby for anti-human trafficking law, and more. According to Michelle Hannan, MSW, LISW-S, the Director of Professional and Community Services for the Salvation Army Central Ohio, 246 survivors of trafficking have been served by CORRC as of January 2013. These women are brought into the system through various avenues: they may have called the 24/7 hotline, been identified by a citizen, or referred by a coalition member. Another avenue women are served by CORRC is through CATCH Court (Columbus Metropolitan Club 2013).

CATCH Court

Franklin County Municipal Court Judge Paul Herbert handles cases of domestic violence as well as prostitution. Judge Herbert recalls being in court, encountering many domestic violence cases that day, and in front of him was a woman charged with prostitution. This was far from Judge Herbert's first prostitution case, but it was the first time he looked at the defendant and saw a victim, comparable to the victims of domestic abuse he had seen that day. The Judge was bothered by this similarity and by the cyclical nature of prostitution cases; he began to do research and decided that prostitutes needed to be treated as victims as opposed to criminals. Thus, CATCH (Changing Actions to Change Habits) Court was created (Columbus Metropolitan Club 2013).

CATCH Court is a two-year probation program that connects prostituted women with the resources imperative to building a better life, helps with rehabilitation for substance abuse, and provides counseling for the psychological impact of their experience. This is a voluntary program for women arrested for prostitution, and it relies on a restorative-justice approach. Out of 125 women who were initially screened for the program, 60 were accepted and 40 committed to treatment. These 40 women all had the following in common: they had suffered from violent abuse, they had been raped an average of six times, 90% had been orphaned, 90% had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, they averaged thirteen arrests over a two-year span, and 100% were chemically dependent (CATCH Connection 2013). Judge Herbert announced in January of 2013 that 20% of the 100+ women who have been accepted into the program over the last few years have graduated and are living successfully by attending school or working, and oftentimes giving back to the community (Columbus Metropolitan Club 2013).

Applying the Palermo Protocol to Columbus

In order to end sex trafficking, the Palermo Protocol must be applied locally. Columbus is already pursuing prevention, criminal prosecution, and victim protection in many ways, but improvement needs to be made. CORRC serves as a basis for preventative measures, CATCH Court serves as a basis for victim protection, and the involvement of the Ohio Attorney General is a positive step towards more effective criminal prosecution.

A more unified system needs to be developed comprised of both governmental and non-governmental agents that work cooperatively towards ending sexual exploitation in Columbus. The first step towards local improvement from this unified system is to fund the research necessary to analyze the business model of the local pimping and trafficking network: Are the girls coming from here in Columbus or elsewhere? Where does the exploitation most often occur? Who are the local buyers of exploited sex? From what business model are the pimps and traffickers working? Answers to these questions and more are imperative to the rest of the eradication effort.

Also extremely important is the improvement of our state laws, which need to take the blame off of the prostituted person and place it on both the buyer and seller. According to Judge Herbert, Columbus typically arrests 1,000 women per year for prostitution and only 10 men (Columbus Metropolitan Club 2013). Even using conservative estimates of the number of men each woman solicits per year, it is clear that thousands and thousands of men in our community are purchasing and selling sex with no penalty, while the women being exploited are criminalized. Local law enforcement needs more incentive to go after the buyers. This begins with educating the law enforcement officials about the realities of prostitution. Additionally, more funding is needed to properly investigate and arrest pimps

and johns. The only real way to accomplish this is by reverse sting operations where a female officer dresses as a prostituted woman and hidden cameras are used to catch the customers: a timely and costly operation. With a bigger budget, broader education, and more innovative techniques, we can do a better job of criminalizing the exploiters of sex instead of the victims of that exploitation.

More funding is also needed for victim protection. While CATCH Court and the members of CORRC do their best in providing resources and care to survivors of sex trafficking, it is not yet enough for the holistic treatment necessary. Columbus does not yet have residential treatment options, creating a major gap in the rehabilitation process. While plans are in the works, the funding is simply not yet available. Further research is also needed in Columbus to get a better understanding of who is at risk for sexual exploitation and prostitution. If specific characteristics or vulnerabilities are identified, we will be better equipped to be proactive in efforts to stop trafficking as well as protect those who have been trafficked.

Conclusion

Effects of human trafficking are diverse and its costs to society are immense. While it is important that the United States government makes a strong effort towards ending the illicit business of worldwide sex trafficking, perspectives on the realities of sexual exploitation must first be changed. This starts on the local level by adopting the principles of the Palermo protocol and encouraging the public to become educated. Our current response to sexual exploitation (by the government as well as the general population) is narrow and inadequate. We know slavery is wrong. We know slavery exists. And while it is easy to pretend these issues are not affecting our local community, it is imperative that we overcome this temptation. Lives are at stake. Unless changes are made, the twenty-first century will be defined by the sexual exploitation that forced millions into slavery, and we will all be responsible for allowing it.

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