The Global Impact of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking, which is defined by the Department of Justice, as “a crime that involves exploiting a person for labor, services, or commercial sex (Justice.gov) is a multi-facet and often times, multi-jurisdictional business that effects the entire globe. While decades of domestic and international laws have been implemented to combat this form of modern day slavery, traffickers across the world have remained operational and continue to increase their revenue at the expense of countless victims. Human trafficking not only violates human rights, but presents a global health concern in both developing and wealthy nations; however, due to its low risk and high profitability, this lucrative industry has steadily transitioned from operating in the shadows, to now becoming interconnected within mainstream society.

Because of its complexity, human traffickers operate undetected, and those who are victimized, rarely self-report; therefore, law enforcement and non-profit organizations (NPOs) are unable to collect copious amounts data and effectively analyze this global problem. According to PolarisProject.org, the International Labour Organization estimates that there are 40.3 million victims of human trafficking globally, which is assessed to be worth $150 billion annually. Although this information only accounts for known instances, limited data that has been collected, allows for agencies and organizations to focus resources and efforts to combat human trafficking both domestic and internationally. For example, data indicates victims of human trafficking have been found in nearly every industry, with domestic service, hospitality, mining, oil fields, manufacturing, agriculture, construction and commercial sex being the main establishments prone to human trafficking. By incorporating this information with a statistical
analysis written by Amana Malik and M. Tariq Majeed, in their article titled *Selling Souls: An Empirical Analysis of Human Trafficking and Globalization*, we can effectively utilize resources accordingly to combat human trafficking in countries designated by illicit organizations as source of supply or the destination. As human trafficking continues to expand globally, it is critical for both law enforcement and the public to obtain necessary resources and training to become aware of the problem by identifying and reporting events that are indicative of human trafficking.

Although the demand for cheap labor and prostitution has been present since the colonial slave trade, substantial limitations in our understanding of the illicit activity still exists. Consequently, this lack of understanding leads to misconceptions by the public regarding the victim’s motives. For instance, people tend to use the terms prostitution and sex workers, synonymously. While the services provided are at times identical, the motives that drive these people to conduct this type of business are not. As such, the debate to legalize sex work as a form of labor, has been a topic of discussion since its inception. Due to the increase in sex work, people believe that it should be normalized as the consent for voluntary sex in exchange for monetary value was agreed between the worker and their customer. The notion that criminalizing sex work, which has already been embraced by various countries and the state of Nevada, is a step backwards and only impedes on people’s freedom. According to Marshall Frank, a retired Police Captain, “[i]n Germany, and other countries, prostitution is legal and taxed. They turn the 'crime' into an economic plus. In other countries like the United States, we create the 'crime,' which turns the behavior into an economic negative. And, it's still a thriving business, law or no law” (Procon.org). As more people begin to view sex work as a moral issue rather than a legal
matter, society is likely to accept the debated form of labor based on the perception that legalization could impact the illicit market.

While it may appear legalizing sex work as a form of labor can promote economic growth and diminish the demand for illegal sex, human traffickers would then have a conduit in which their illicit business can operate legally. For example, although some massage parlors operate lawfully and focus on promoting wellness, a substantial amount of information can be obtained by analyzing the correlation between human trafficking and massage establishments. PolarisProject.org states, “[m]any victims are recruited with promises of employment. However, once they arrive, they are controlled by means of debts, threats of violence, blackmail, confinement, psychological manipulation, and in some cases, physical violence. Almost every aspect of their life is controlled — where they live, what they eat, where they go, what they look like, and who they are allowed to talk to” (Illicit Massage). This type of control is standard not only in illegitimate massage parlors, but across all forced labor businesses and is rarely known by the public or its consumers because traffickers leverage their knowledge of the laws and utilize threats of deportation and legal actions as a mean of coercion for their victims to remain compliant throughout the duration of their imprisonment.

Each year, countless people from all walks of life throughout the world, fall victim to human trafficking. This global phenomenon separates endless families, devastates victim’s lives, generates billions in illegal revenue and leaves countries vulnerable to being exploited. Trafficked victims aren’t treated as humans, instead, they are treated as “commodities that can be bought, used, and sold—usually not just once, but over and over” (Williams P625). Traffickers have an innate ability to identify vulnerable victims throughout the world, but specifically in countries, states and regions that lack employment opportunities and are overwhelmed with high
poverty rates. Traffickers use this opportunity to prey on the weak and trap them into being trafficked through deceptive employment opportunities and promises of a better future. Once these victims have been persuaded, they are then held captive and forced to work under poor living conditions while enduring “horrific psychological and physical abuse” (Williams 625). Williams also notes many trafficking cases involve the use of narcotics, in which the traffickers target drug addicted women and use the narcotics to keep them subservient. Even though narcotics are a contributing factor of human trafficking targets, victims originate from all walks of life due to traffickers preying on individuals who are vulnerable to deceit or susceptible to being kidnapped.

These victims of are not only deprived of basic human rights by their captors, but by society as well. Society stigmatizes these people, especially sex workers and views them as less than equal. When anti-human trafficking operations are executed by law enforcement that lack proper training and knowledge, victims are prosecuted instead of being rescued and offered resources. As a result, these victims are criminalized, which prevents them from obtaining adequate employment due to their criminal record, thus leading to an endless cycle of being prostituted and reincarcerated. With sufficient training and necessary resources, sex workers will have the opportunity to be treated as victims instead of criminals. In 2000, the federal government implemented the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), to combat human trafficking in three ways. The first is a victim-centered approach, which is a collaborative effort between law enforcement, NPOs and victim’s advocates that are able to provide victims with both short-term and long-term resources such as medical access, housing, food, job training and counseling. The TVPA “focuses on prevention through public awareness programs, both domestically and abroad, and prosecution through new federal criminal statutes” (FBI.gov) The
TVPA also provides assistance to foreign victims of human trafficking by allowing victims to become eligible for permanent residency after three years, in addition to requiring traffickers to pay restitution to the victims they exploited. Through the implementation of effective laws and modifications to legislation, law enforcement, prosecutors and victim’s advocates will have an arsenal of resources to aid victims and prevent further exploitation by these organizations.

Unlike most crimes, human trafficking is multi-layered and is conducted in conjunction with other offenses. Until now, human trafficking has been discussed as a single crime. However, when analyzing human trafficking, it is evident that trafficking of a person is a process, not just a single offense. In order for human trafficking to take place, a person must first be abducted or recruited by various means. Once a person is obtained, they are then transported to another location, which usually crosses multiple borders and jurisdictions. And in order for a trafficker to transport a person across borders, false documentation must be provided for the victim to be able to evade law enforcement detection. Additionally, in some cases, corrupt officials and/or law enforcement receive payments for assisting in the transportation process. Lastly, once a person arrives to their destination, they are then exploited, where the victim is forced into labor, sexual servitude or other forms of exploitation. Depending on the type of organization affiliated with the human trafficking process, money laundering and tax evasion of the illicit proceeds will take place, which is an auxiliary crime, but critical to sustain operations. During the exploitation of sexual acts, victims are often forcefully inebriated via illicit drugs, pharmaceuticals or alcohol by their captors to ensure compliance when requested to preform services. While under the control of their pimp or organization, victims often endure aggravated sexual assault and torture when acceptable revenue isn’t generated or the victim is uncompliant. As described by care-net.org, victims of human trafficking are forced to preform unprotected
sex, but what is more disturbing, when these victims become pregnant, they are forced to undergo abortions via conventional or unconventional means. By understanding these overlapping crimes associated with human trafficking, prosecutors and law enforcement can enhance sentencing for traffickers and affiliates who assist with the facilitation and sustainment of operations.

By analyzing data that has been complied by various agencies and NPOs, we can provide substantial information to decision makers and society on the implications associated with human trafficking. Through this information, we can formulate course of actions to combat human trafficking in countries that are susceptible to exploitation and provide resources to states and countries that are in dire need of assistance. Furthermore, as trafficking networks remaining hidden and adaptive to enforced laws, it is imperative that law enforcement and analyst remain fluid in order to provide relevant information and assessments on the totality of human trafficking.

Through open source intelligence, I was able to gather sufficient information that captured data for reported human trafficking cases. Although the information analyzed only covers known and/or reported cases, it assists in understanding the philosophy of human trafficking. Each year, Polarisproject.org consolidates and analyzes data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline. From January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received information from 10,615 survivors, which provides insight on the methods traffickers used to capture specific types of victims to fund their organizations. Of the 10,615 cases, we are able to identify the top two types of trafficking, which are sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Sex trafficking remains the most prominent type of trafficking with 7,255 cases reported, followed by 1,979 cases of labor trafficking, 542 cases of sex and labor
traffic and 838 of cases where the type of trafficking was not specified. By analyzing the information provided via Polaris Project, we can then categorize how these survivors were recruited into sex trafficking. Statistical analysis of the data indicates intimate partners and marriage propositions remain the highest tactic, followed by familial relations, job offers and false promises. Out of the 10,615 cases, female survivors encompassed 8,561, followed by males totaling 1,454, gender minorities equaling 59 and 541 of unknown survivors. More alarming is the fact that survivors of sex and labor trafficking reported being exploited from the time of birth, to the age of 48 years old. On average, the age of 19 years old was determined to be the most common age of exploitation. Whereas Polaris Project collects data for human trafficking cases specifically in the United States, the CIA analyzes patterns throughout the world. As such, the CIA has provided an assessment for nearly every country and their role in human trafficking, whether they have been identified as source of supply, transit countries, destination countries or a combination of all three, such as Cambodia, which “is a source, transit and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking” (CIA.gov).

Combating human trafficking will require several changes to fully maximize the effectiveness of dismantling trafficking operations. For instance, revisions to legislation and international policies are an integral part and should be the first step in the fight against human trafficking. Joseph A. Colquitt, highlights the need of uniformity in laws within his article, *Attacking Human Trafficking Through Legislative Change*. By adopting his analysis and recommendations, the United States would then have consistency in laws and the prosecution of offenders nationwide. Additionally, through identical laws, both child and adult victims would have the necessary resources to help them along their recovery process and reintegration into society, such as; medical and psychological treatment, housing, financial support, protection and
restitution for the labor they were forced to perform while held captive. To fully combat human trafficking on a global scale, changes to policies would also be required on an international level as well. Through the CIA’s human trafficking threat assessment, the United States, NATO and supporting nations can target specific countries to promote a collaborative effort for stopping human trafficking at the source.

Historically, Congress and the Department of Justices have empowered the United States when combating human trafficking by enacting comprehensive bills intended to allow the federal government the ability to enhance punishments associated with human trafficking. One of the most notable is The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (TVPRA 2003). After the TVPRA was implemented, prosecutors have been able to charge trafficking organizations with Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) offenses as a means to increase sentences for each member associated with the illicit organization, regardless of their role. Between 2003 and 2015, congress enacted several revisions and various Trafficking Acts, but in 2015, Congress passed The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (JVTA), which is aimed to fight human trafficking utilizing a different approach. Part of the JVTA adopted a customer-centered approach that targeted clienteles of sex trafficking victims by charging consumers with patronizing and solicitation charges. This technique focused on reducing the demand of human trafficking as a method to diminish the supply of victimized humans.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of these laws rely substantially on all levels of law enforcement who implement enacted legislation. Federal agencies such as DHS, FBI, CIA and Department of State, have achieved international partnerships through Attaché offices in collaboration with host countries law enforcement entities. Through these overseas offices, federal agencies have
partnered to conduct international training, multi-country operations and combine resources to maximize their effort. While these U.S. agencies focus efforts internationally, their support state side has led to national partnerships between state, local and tribal agencies. The U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and Department of Transportation have partnered with state task forces to effectively deny freedom of movement for international traffickers who operate within the United States, along with providing training and awareness of human trafficking to truckers, transit and cruise staff. In order to facilitate and maintain state human trafficking task forces, the federal government has delegated responsibility to each state’s Attorney General’s Office, whose responsible for training, statistical reporting and allocation of resources of federal grants. As a result, each state has the capability and resources needed to assist in the fight against human trafficking.

While critics may oppose changes to international policies and relations due to financial constraints developing countries will endure, the United States, NATO and partnering countries will be able to provide monetary support to less developed countries. Not only will this help strengthen international relations, it will allow victimized countries to promote economic development as their citizens would no longer be persuaded by false employment opportunities and routine kidnapping. The United Nation’s Interregional Crime Research Institute, estimates the annual net worth of human trafficking to be roughly $7 billion (Malik P453). By ignoring a humanitarian issue of such magnitude, the illicit revenue generated by traffickers is assessed to increase, which will substantially affect third world countries from developing. More so, through international policies, the United States will then be able to identify countries that fail to combat human trafficking and place economic sanctions until said countries are in compliance with this global effort.
Another implication associated with combating human trafficking is the need for training. While Serving as the Department of Justice Assistant Attorney General, Beth Williams noted several methods that have impacted human trafficking operations within her area of responsibility. Williams discusses the benefit of Anti-Trafficking Coordination Team (ACTeam) initiatives and Tasks Forces, whose sole purpose is to dismantle human trafficking organizations and rescue victims. Through these initiatives, Williams noted a “114% increase in human trafficking cases filed” (Williams P628). Although critics may argue some agencies and departments would face financial constraints, the methods utilized in Williams paper, were grant funded through the federal government. As a result, this method would shift the financial burden from individual departments to the federal government who would then be responsible for providing guidance on the allocation of resources and training. Additionally, with federal grants, departments would be able to staff more positions to ensure personnel from other initiatives aren’t re-tasked, along with increasing their overall man power. More so, through these grants, collaboration between state, local, federal and international agencies is achieved and will showcase the importance of information sharing and joint operations between all levels of law enforcement.

Furthermore, training for doctors, first responders and the community will aid in the identification and reporting of human trafficking occurrences. Agencies such as The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), are at the forefront in educating the public. Through its Blue Campaign, DHS provides educational videos and information that serves multiple purposes. First, they strive to provide victim-centered investigations, prosecution of offenders and free training for law enforcement. Second, they provide awareness and education “to recognize human trafficking and
report suspected instances” (Blue Campaign). NCMEC’s mission solely focuses on locating missing children, combat child sexual exploitation and prevent child victimization. Through their online resources, the public is able to obtain vital information on how children are enticed online and exploited via sextortion and/or kidnapping. As the use of technology increases and becomes incorporated into our everyday lives, it is imperative for parents, teachers and children to realize how predators are able to target youth by gaining personal information found on the web and easily communicating with children. NCMEC also provides best practices for online safety along with informing kids on how to say no to strangers and report events to adults. Lastly, NCMEC provides free training and resources to all law enforcement agencies that are willing to adopt child sexual exploitation cases.

It is evident that human trafficking is an issue no country is immune from. However, through education, changes to legislation and collaborative efforts, the world will successfully stop human trafficking. Currently, human trafficking poses a low risk for the traffickers, as their victims are apprehended and processed through the legal system for the crimes they were forced to perform. Through the implementation of strict laws, the world can increase the risks associated with trafficking and hold people accountable for their actions. In order to do so, we will need to combat human trafficking at the source by providing financial support and training to countries targeted by traffickers. By doing so, these vulnerable countries can create Anti-Human Trafficking Task Forces that will effectively and relentlessly dismantle trafficking operations. Simultaneously, the United States can target established trafficking organizations to deny their existence and rescue individuals who are continuously victimized. Community based training and public awareness will be vital to ensure these methods are successful, as the community is the first line of defense due to their interactions with establishments and people
who are being trafficked. Although contesting human trafficking will require significant changes and collaboration, through determination and implementation of recommended actions, everyone is able to contribute to end human trafficking. Until then, human trafficking will continue to flourish with countless individuals being exploited daily.
Annotated Bibliography

Websites


The Blue Campaign website, discusses DHS’s efforts to combat human trafficking. Through this website, DHS provides resources for victims and law enforcement for reporting and opposing human trafficking. Additionally, DHS offers training for both civilians and law enforcement to help fight human trafficking and rescuing victims.


This website documents the trends and patterns of each country by categorizing countries as source of supply, transit countries or destination. Through this information, we can understand what type of labor each country is predominantly susceptible to and how governments are either working to combat the issue or refusing to protect their citizens from being victimized.


Care.net discusses the correlation between sex traffickers and abortions. Though this information, we can see how profitable sex trafficking is, but only at the expense of people who are victimized. Additionally, this website lists interviews of victims, which describes their experiences while held captive and forced to perform sexual acts.


The FBI created their website to inform the public on what they believe to be the third-largest criminal activity in the world. Within their information, they discuss an overview of human trafficking and the effectiveness of Human Trafficking Task Forces, via proactive investigations. As many of the other websites have done, the FBI provides a list of available resources and victim identification training to assist the community in identifying human trafficking and reporting occurrences.


This website, provides an overview of what Human Trafficking is, along with a detailed description for contributing factors of victims and human traffickers. The website also provides information on the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and how the federal government prosecutes offenders.
“Illicit Massage Businesses.” Polaris, polarisproject.org/initiatives/illicit-massage-businesses.

Polaris Project collected information and provided an analysis on illicit massage parlors. As such, Polaris Project identifies the problem and provides solutions and resources for both law enforcement and victims. This website also distinguishes between illicit massage parlors and establishments that operate legally to promote wellness.


This website provides insight from a retired Captain with the Metro-Dade Police Department. Controversially, this retired Officer agrees with the legalization of sex work as a form of labor. Through his and other interviewees’ personal opinions, the readers are able to gain an understanding of conflicting beliefs on sex work as a form of labor. Society has become torn on the issue and an increase in popularity and support for sex work has continuously gain momentum.

Books


The Author of this Article analyzes legislation and individual state laws to identify shortcomings that fail victims of human trafficking. The Author provides solutions to address deficiencies between state laws that impact how cases are prosecuted differently throughout the nation and the importance of federal laws already implemented to successfully prosecute said offenses.


This book discusses human trafficking from a historical, legal and political prospective. The Author compiles information from various countries and analyzes the overarching issues that have led to the influx in human trafficking. Lee also identifies how trafficking can be fought by countries and the entire globe to help end the growing issue.


This Article highlights the importance of federal grants, which allow states and agencies to assist in combating human trafficking. Due to budget cuts and financial constraints, agencies have been hindered in combating human trafficking. However, through the Author’s recommendations, states and agencies have a solution to address their lack of support to fight human trafficking.
Additionally, the Author stresses the importance of collaborative efforts through all levels of law enforcement and international alliances.