

Human Trafficking: A Deep Dive into Modern Slavery

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PO 400: Senior Thesis

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24 April 2019

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## Abstract

Human Trafficking can be described as one of the most complex and intricate crimes that exists in the global community. It is rife with human rights violations and can be understood to mean modern slavery. More importantly, it is incredibly prevalent in every country and in every form imaginable. This thesis attempts to offer a consolidation of what human trafficking is along with how it has become such an impenetrable force and how it is conducted all over the world. It also examines who the actors are at the different levels and where specific types of trafficking occur. It also examines the motivations behind the industry and how it has woven its way into modern society. Lastly, the paper visits current solutions and offers prescriptions to hopefully improve upon how the industry is combatted. This paper aims to define, examine and illustrate the complex issue of human trafficking in order to bring it further into the public eye. Most importantly, this thesis aims to educate the public on this issue and hopefully motivate them to do something to change the horrific realities of it.

## Introduction

Slavery is defined as a social or economic relationship in which an individual is controlled against their will, by the use of threats or violence, or by economic exploitation.<sup>1</sup> While slavery in the traditional sense is long gone, it persists today in the form of the incredibly complicated world of human trafficking which consists of everything from labor communities in India to sex trafficking rings in the US. The one thing they all have in common is the fact that these individuals are acting against their will and that they are in some basic way exploited. However, trafficking becomes a complex concept because the line of moral repugnance is sometimes blurred or rationalized by its perpetrators, leaving those at its whim in a moral limbo at the least. Trafficking affects millions of individuals worldwide but feels as if it exists in a far away third world country when it is often in our own backyards. In order to correctly understand this widespread issue the complexities, approaches, and explanations must be fully explored and to do that every avenue needs to be studied. In order to create a proper profile on a subject, it must be looked at in an objective light because western ideals are not what govern societies worldwide. This explorational profile is not an argument for trafficking or even against it, but instead an attempt to explain the nuanced issues that surround such a subject from the rationalizations of the perpetrators to the issue from the point of view of those labeled victim.

Human Trafficking is too complex an issue to have one succinct definition and this profile will mirror the sheer volume of issues that fall under the umbrella of this subject. At its best trafficking sustains a community of Indian untouchables as they work under a single

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<sup>1</sup> Choi-Fitzpatrick, Austin. *What Slaveholders Think: How Contemporary Perpetrators Rationalize What They Do*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

Brahim<sup>2</sup> and at its worst it entails the repeated forced selling of sexual favors by underage girls.<sup>3</sup> One thing to always remember is that no matter where it is or what it is locally called, these are all modern forms of slavery, some of which have existed for centuries. It is important to understand the perspectives of those involved, but more importantly, to empathize with their situations as difficult as it may be. Trafficking is a beast that switches between broad daylight and secluded existence, but it is always slavery and it is always widespread. This subject needs to not only be understood at a conceptual level but also as a human rights issue because it is only in this context that it will be most beneficial to victims, perpetrators and the world as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

Each source researched provided unique and important research on the subject matter as a whole. *What Slaveholders Think*, *From Human Trafficking to Human Rights*, and *Data and Research* serve as the three central books that provided the most substantive material for the thesis as a whole. Each of these provided basic research, perspectives, and information that surrounds Human Trafficking as a nuanced subject in modern society. Other sources included provided specific background knowledge to certain topics within the broader scope of trafficking as a worldwide issue. Human trafficking is a complex and complicated issue that spans continents, decades and cultures. In order to fully understand the breadth of the issue in its entirety complex research must be used to better frame the global issue included when understanding the gravity of trafficking. At the very least, these books and sources allowed for education on the issue and framing of the narrative. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to better understand the subject and to fully grasp the importance of studying the issue in its entirety. These sources are what allowed for this deep study to come to fruition.

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<sup>2</sup> Choi-Fitzpatrick

<sup>3</sup> I am Jane Doe

<sup>4</sup> Choi-Fitzpatrick, 24

## Background

### *What is Human Trafficking?*

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), a recently enacted US law, defines trafficking as something that fulfills one of two descriptions<sup>5</sup>: 1) the sex trafficking which is constituted by sex acts induced by force, fraud or coercion or if the one induced into the act is under eighteen; or 2) “The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery”.<sup>6</sup> Human trafficking is difficult to put in one category purely because it appears in many different forms and is carried out in countless ways making it difficult to understand and define. In many parts of the world trafficking also serves as a chief form of income for many citizens and even the government. Because of the influx of migrants in many parts of the world, the vulnerable population is rising and with it the incidents of trafficking.<sup>7</sup> Trafficking, as explained later in this paper occurs very differently in different regions and countries of the world.

Trafficking has also been described by many as modern-day slavery in which people are enslaved through the methods listed above in plain sight. It is understood to be especially horrendous because it hides among normal society and fuels a great segment of the overall economic system. Because human trafficking is so complex it is defined as more of an ideal and named modern day slavery which only begins to capture the complexities and nuances of the industry.

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<sup>5</sup>“Trafficking Victims Protection Act: Minimum Standards for the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons.” U.S. Department of State. Accessed February 03, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> TVPA

<sup>7</sup> Laczko, Frank, and Elżbieta M. Goździak. *Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2005.

The most common way people understand trafficking is that of sex trafficking, but worldwide this is only a small percentage of trafficking overall. Labor trafficking makes up more than half of global human trafficking, but it often goes unnoticed because it is either integrated into the social structure of the community or is hidden in plain sight. Because the definition is so broad it is difficult to understand the scope of the issue and therefore solve the problem. The definition based upon the fact that human trafficking depends on the condition of bondage or forced labor leaves a lot of these crimes open to interpretation and the individuals caught up in them in an unnecessary limbo where their lives and liberty are at stake.

### *Where is Human Trafficking?*

Trafficking happens on every continent, in every region of the world in countless forms. While it is more recognized to be an issue in developing countries because of the lack of infrastructure, it is certainly still an issue in developed countries but is simply not understood to the same extent. Human trafficking in developed countries is just as prominent but disguises itself making it even more difficult to identify. Any country with industry has human trafficking under the surface. Whether it's accepted or not it is often the backbone of at least certain facets of an economy.

### *Where? Africa*

Africa has a higher incidence of child labor trafficking and sex trafficking of women in and out of the region<sup>8</sup> than other regions in the world. Up to seventy percent of the population in African countries acknowledge that trafficking is a problem, but because of limited resources and insufficient government control none of the countries meet TVPA minimum standards. The TVPA minimum standards for migrants' originating countries are: 1) the government should

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<sup>8</sup> Adepoju, Aderanti. Review of Research and Data on Human Trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa.

prohibit severe forms of trafficking and punish these acts; 2) if the country is aware of crimes regarded as sex trafficking they should promptly punish those individuals; 3) governments should punish heinous acts of trafficking as a deterrent for further trafficking; 4) make serious efforts to eliminate extreme forms of trafficking.<sup>9</sup> African countries as a whole tend not to follow these rules and the governments do not do enough to fight the issues. South Africa is a major hub and point of transfer for trafficked Europeans and Africans. Officials in some African countries have agreed to pioneer basic level support systems for individuals who fall victim to these services, but it is overall not enough. Data and research are still rather preliminary and there is a great need for information sharing and cooperation amongst entities.<sup>10</sup> Africa has incredibly intricate and complicated networks of trafficking meaning that in order to tackle it effectively the response must be coordinated and effective which is far from where they are today. A positive aspect to these statistics is that African countries are beginning to create more legislation to prevent such crimes, but these countries are often unequipped to deal with the volume and horror of these crimes rendering the legislation useless without proper enforcement. Africa remains a continent rife with conflict and poverty, but human trafficking somehow continues to exist out of the international eye and because of this it remains easy to perform. Individual communities have begun to band together, but more importantly, there needs to be a unilateral effort in order to correctly fight this battle. Grassroots organizations are only effective if they work and more often than not coordinated resources and practices need to be present in order to facilitate progress.

#### *Where? North America*

While many see Africa as a place where these isolated instances occur, they happen worldwide on every inhabited continent in different capacities and often with different

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<sup>9</sup> TVPA

<sup>10</sup> Adepaju

motivations. North America is far from an exception when it comes to trafficking and it has only been recent developments in the apprehension of perpetrators and the escape of victims that has allowed proper research to be conducted regarding the topic.<sup>11</sup> Trafficking first came into the US public sphere under the label “white slavery”<sup>12</sup> in the late nineteenth century, but was mostly ignored until the twentieth century and only then was feared as the phenomenon of the white slave trade. The first agreement against white slavery, signed in 1902, addressed the fraudulent or abusive recruitment of women for prostitution to another country, but later included boys in 1910.<sup>13</sup> 1933 saw another international convention signed which was reiterated in 1949, bringing these crimes into the international sphere. The attention to trafficking lost popularity but eventually reappeared in the mid-1990s with new resolutions focusing on ending these practices and a new focus for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to create practices to discourage such crimes. However, such awareness has had adverse effects on the complicated image of sex workers, failing to differentiate between those in this profession by choice and those coerced by outside factors. This has led to controversy surrounding the United States’ handling of sex crimes and demonizing the workers themselves.

While the TVPA was codified as American law in 2000, there was a dramatic battle surrounding the definition of trafficking and consent prior to this decision between the Human Rights Caucus (HRC) supporting sex workers and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) which was vehemently against any form of sex work voluntary or forced.<sup>14</sup> A preliminary protocol defines trafficking as having to involve recruitment, transfer or harboring of

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<sup>11</sup> Collett, Elizabeth A. and Gozdzia, Elzbieta M. Research on Human Trafficking in North America: A Review of Literature

<sup>12</sup> Collett

<sup>13</sup> Collett

<sup>14</sup> Collett

persons under a condition of coercion which included the payment of an individual for the consent of sex, demonizing sex workers as a whole.<sup>15</sup> The US did not sign off on the protocol even though it was an import precursor to the TVPA. The difference between these two often conflates statistics and turns Americans to the wrong issue, yet it routinely happens in the US. It is also important to note that the US as a whole does not view labor trafficking with the same disdain as sex trafficking meaning that those trafficked in this manner often go unnoticed or simply ignored in the US system. Trafficking happens in North America, but by far the US is the nation with the most issues regarding recognizing it as a crime. Until the issue is fully accepted nothing will improve.

Aside from this, the tradition of corporate protection in the US has begun to negatively affect those involved in trafficking as laws protecting corporations have been used to defend their role in trafficking as well. Sites such as Backpage.com were allowed to retain passive roles regarding sex trafficking occurring on their site by third parties because of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act<sup>16</sup> which states that “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider”<sup>17</sup> meaning that websites are not liable for what third parties post using their domain. This protection was penned to protect websites from frivolous lawsuits by consumers but has been distorted to protect websites like Backpage from liability for trafficking. *I am Jane Doe* follows a harrowing series of lawsuits against the website for their part in trafficking of the plaintiffs' young daughters, but at every level of court they ruled in favor of the website, protecting them from liability. Finally, after three years the Department of

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<sup>15</sup> Collett

<sup>16</sup> *I Am Jane Doe*. Directed by Mary Mazzio. Netflix. 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Electronic Frontier Foundation. Accessed February 03, 2019.

Justice seized the website based on the recommendations of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children, but this was after they had already received incredible protection including the continuance of their website where they coached perpetrators on how to post trafficking ads to not be detected.<sup>18</sup> Eventually, Congress passed bipartisan legislation to hold websites accountable, but not before the owners and proprietors of Backpage were able to make an astronomical profit along with countless traffickers. The US's history of free speech protection has worked against victims of this despicable trade and still has a long way to go before it is able to reflect the US's stance on this hybrid crime genre. It is important to have the laws reflect the concerns of these individuals because without that there is no ammunition against the perpetrators and they often go free.

#### *Where? Latin America and The Caribbean*

Compared to its international counterparts, Latin America has probably just as much human trafficking, but the various political leaders tend to not fully realize the threat it poses to the citizens at risk. Law enforcement in these countries also tends to have limited resources meaning that traffickers can always remain one step ahead with greater resources and complicated networks.<sup>19</sup> These factors not only interfere with the efforts by law enforcement but also with the overall awareness of the issue as people in these countries including the governments believe the issue to be much less apparent than in reality. The efforts are also not made here to decipher between coercion and willing participation in the sex trade resulting in the opposite effect from North America happening here where true victims are often overlooked as they are all seen as the same in the eyes of the law. The fight against servitude and labor

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<sup>18</sup> I Am Jane Doe.

<sup>19</sup> Langberg, Laura. A Review of Recent OAS Research on Human Trafficking in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

trafficking is also routinely overlooked, hiding the real pervasiveness of the issue in many of these societies and instead the attention is turned to sex workers whether they were trafficked or not, creating a misfortunate analysis of the issue as a whole.

Trafficking in these countries happens at the intersection of “poverty, political and social violence, inequality and general indifference toward women and children”.<sup>20</sup> There also is a lack of differentiation between migrant smuggling and human trafficking. It also has been exacerbated by the ease of movement of people due to globalization and liberal borders. These factors together create a hotbed for trafficking without ways to prevent it as pertinent policies in legislation are not in place or simply not enforced. The reasons behind trafficking in these countries vary from that of the previous regions as often young women fell victim due to economic necessity and a lack of other decent opportunities coupled with low self-esteem. The demand for sex services including that of sex tourism fuels these illegal trades and coercion of women into these practices. The low value for women held in a lot of these political establishments only fuels the toxicity that accompanies the issues as a whole.

South America is also characterized by tragically ill-prepared police forces which tend to have much lower resources than the organized crime units that operate in their jurisdictions. They also lack specialized units to deal with sex crimes including gender specialized forces to focus on crimes against women. Overall, health and human service systems in these countries tend to be run inadequately and even if they are run well they are not aware of how to look out for these issues and signs of trafficking. Most of the systems involved in fighting this epidemic on this continent are not running well or not aware of the issues to stop them. Overall, South American and Caribbean countries endure an epidemic of both sex and labor trafficking but the

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<sup>20</sup> Langberg

sex trafficking poses a greater threat to women as it goes more unnoticed and tends to create more political issues than solve individual turmoil. While the governments have gotten better dealing with these issues they are still woefully ill-equipped and left without the proper resources to deal with this, the issue will only continue to get worse with victims growing in numbers and the intensity of what they endure. South America's human trafficking with its network of domestic and international trafficking only adds to the problem, endangering more lives every day.

### *Where? South Asia*

One of the regions most rife with human trafficking is South Asia because of the many trafficking networks that originate and operate there as well as an economy that sometimes depends on the industry. Both women and men are often trafficked through this part of the world due to the low employment prospects and lack of opportunities. Cultural factors also play a role as these industries have a main role in society and women are also devalued. When they are left on their own for whatever reason migration is often the only answer. It is only after they get to their destination that they realize their debts to what are revealed to be traffickers and by then it is too late for them to get out.<sup>21</sup> Globalization has also made modern transportation available to these perpetrators making it easier for them to traffick women in replacement of traditional income means which have been eliminated, forcing the inhabitants to migrate. Competition between Asian economies also promotes the necessity of low-cost labor which leads to bonded labor and other forms of trafficking. Forced labor is used to keep production costs down, allowing goods to be sold cheaply to conglomerates like “Costco, Tesco, Walmart and

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<sup>21</sup>Ali, A.K.M. Masud. Treading along a Treacherous Trail: Research on Trafficking in Persons in South Asia.

Carrefour”<sup>22</sup> all at the expense of these underpaid, exploited and voiceless workers. This, of course, happens all around the world, but these countries whose economies rely on these basic level sales often house the most individuals subjected to labor trafficking.

Any situation where people are displaced such as natural disasters also contributes to the vulnerability of some to traffickers, making it easier for them to be targeted and ultimately trafficked in one capacity or another. Natural disasters also offer the opportunity for traffickers to bring migrant workers to a new country to aid in reconstruction efforts in some devastated areas such as after Hurricane Katrina. Natural disasters in the home countries of those trafficked cause heartache, helplessness and most importantly a feeling of disparity which leaves many of these individuals vulnerable to false labor or migration claims used to prey on them to make an easy dollar for the trafficker. In destination countries, individuals are often victimized to improve the lives of those affected in developed countries. Trafficking exists where the people have been forgotten and especially in these South Asian countries the people are far too often overlooked during a time of need, especially one where they are now far more vulnerable to these crimes.

India acts as a transitional hub for women and boys trafficked between the Middle East and countries like Nepal and Bangladesh. These countries all play a role in the trafficking industry in this region and all benefit in some way from the continuance of the practice. Because certain populations in these countries are viewed as inferior due to social mores they are devalued in certain sectors of society. This means that people may be aware of these conditions, but do not do anything about it because it is just viewed as how society runs. It also illustrates that any research and understanding of the problem is most likely inaccurate because of the unwillingness to identify situations by both onlookers and the trafficked people themselves. They

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<sup>22</sup>Thrupkaew, Noy. Human Trafficking Is All around You. Performed by Noy Thrupkaew. Youtube. July 13, 2015.

are often part of societies as illustrated in *What Slaveholders Think* which complicates the idea of objective morality. Furthermore, it makes it quite difficult to solve the problem because the few resources they do have to fight the problem would not want to disrupt social order, but this leaves the trafficked individuals hanging in the balance in societies that overlook their conditions and their right to liberty.

Migration also plays a large role in trafficking in this region as many of the individuals who migrate from this area are given fraudulent hopes of good employment and a better life only to find a debt that requires years of unpaid labor and often physical or sexual abuse. These people live in fear of being deported or detained so they often go without reporting such crimes. Many of these individuals migrate to countries like the United States in search of a better life<sup>23</sup> but only find themselves subject to trafficking once they arrive on the soil of a country that preaches freedom, but practices hate. The perpetuation of the idea that these people are just paying their debts only harms the situation as some bystanders justify the behavior, but more often people are unaware of how their family members or colleagues are being treated. Human trafficking in South Asia is complex because it really spans the globe, but overall it is bred by poverty, poor migration policy and a global community which continues to benefit. Trafficking here is as complicated as it is anywhere else, but has a deep connection to the world around it and only through global change can it be reformed.

#### Where? *East Asia*

Like many other countries around the world, trafficking is a significant issue in the nations in East Asia, but unlike some of the others, it is not widely studied. Many of the countries have a far more significant problem than people realize such as Japan<sup>24</sup> which houses a

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<sup>23</sup>Thrupkaew

<sup>24</sup> Lee, June JH. Human Trafficking in East Asia: Current Trends, Data Collection, and Knowledge Gaps.

large sex industry partially promoted with trafficking. This area of the world is characterized by “rapid growth of market-driven”<sup>25</sup> economies which were promptly followed by a labor shortage. Many East Asian countries also have incredibly strict migration laws in reference to unskilled laborers specifically meaning that the private sector often gained control of these immigration practices. “Trafficking in women and children is considered to be increasing in the region”<sup>26</sup> with the number of female migrants as a whole is also continually rising. However, like trafficking all over the world the difficulty to specifically define and identify trafficking has skewed data making research in this realm increasingly more difficult, leaving other victims potentially invisible. Even with UN conventions and an effort to complete meaningful research, the numbers are still vastly inaccurate from this region.

Both women and men are often transported, recruited and possibly exploited both at “countries of origin and destination”.<sup>27</sup> In regions like East Asia, “the difficulties of separating trafficking from other forms of migration becomes even more problematic”<sup>28</sup> due to the prevalence of child brides and adopted children who are often taken from their own countries. These situations also make it difficult to find a steady pattern of migration because it is unclear which methods are committed by force and how they are necessarily conducted. Trafficking differs from smuggling as the trafficker exploits the individual once they arrive at their destination while smugglers do not. East Asian trafficking differs greatly in what it exactly entails because different individuals are trafficked in different manners and this means that like in other places, it can take many different faces in this region and it is incredibly hard to fight. The increase of ease of movement and the industrialization of the international system also

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<sup>25</sup> Lee

<sup>26</sup> Lee

<sup>27</sup> Lee

<sup>28</sup> Lee

facilitates these traffickers to become more efficient and stay hidden, skewing the number of individuals who are actually caught in this trade. Overwhelmingly, women are trafficked for sex and children for adoption, but it is still rather hard to combat because it is difficult to identify how exactly this happens and how to stop these acts. This is rife with human trafficking and like all other areas of the world has its own brand of trafficking that differs greatly from the rest of the world making unilateral actions increasingly difficult and nearly impossible.

#### *Where? South East Asia*

“The largest number of children and women trafficked are said to be within or from Asia”<sup>29</sup> meaning that as a whole this region is looked at as a human trafficking capital and often is seen in a negative light. It also correctly frames the situation as one that often affects women and children, especially in these poorer areas. The research in this area like most of the others is, of course, inadequate, but there is a recognized problem and many anti-trafficking groups focus their energy on this region. Yet it is unclear how much this is actually helping those affected. It is difficult to obtain accurate statistics to accurately understand this phenomenon and because of this, it has been increasingly difficult to combat trafficking as a whole in this region. Acknowledging there is a problem is a good first step which hopefully offers hope of progress for those caught in these industries.

Economic prosperity in South Eastern Asia as a whole tends to negatively affect migrant workers as “increased competition and increasingly higher costs”<sup>30</sup> make migrants pocket less money and have to continue to work for less. This also prolonged their condition as migrant workers with little rights and offered no way out. Economic conditions in destination countries

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<sup>29</sup> Piper, Nicola. A Problem by a Different Name? A Review of Research on Trafficking in South-East Asia and Oceania.

<sup>30</sup> Piper

also affect this as the value of these workers fluctuates with these changes making it more difficult to get them into these countries or to get a good price for the individuals once they are there. Because of the difficulty often associated with legal migration “most labor migration within Asia is arranged through the medium of brokers or recruiters”<sup>31</sup> leaving the fate of these migrants in the hands of their traders and the methods of how they traffick them. This type of migration also complicates the trafficking world as these individuals often operate under “different degrees of consent and complicity”<sup>32</sup>, blurring the line between coercion and smuggling.

In addition, the issue is often worsened by the fact that forms of trafficking have changed leading to trafficking being surrounded among domestic and physical labor in addition to the sex industry with which it is often associated. Because of the quality of life disparities often associated with this area, a large number of these individuals are some for who there is confusion regarding their legal condition. The worst thing is that this makes it difficult to identify those who have not been smuggled voluntarily in order to help them escape these conditions. It also is socially accepted to coerce these individuals because it is often seen as them rightfully paying off their debts and is normally socially acceptable. There is more research in this region, but consistent with the rest of the world it is often difficult to identify all the victims involved and to really understand their plights. There is an effort to do more research, but it will be difficult to understand the full problem because it tends to be so difficult to define. South East Asia is often described as a trafficking hub and is not far from this, but because of the vast differences among the methods of trafficking and the actions actually done it is often difficult to counteract these offenders and help those caught in the crossfire of trafficking.

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<sup>31</sup> Piper

<sup>32</sup> Piper

### *Where? Europe*

Europe is a vastly geographically and culturally diverse area complete with its many different types of human trafficking and ways to approach the issue. This area of the world has issues regarding the definition of trafficking as a crime and what constitutes the specific conditions. The UN provides a basis for the definition, but many countries feel that they must define it beyond this baseline causing discrepancies in the definition and action against these practices. Global trafficking has been proven to grow with global industrialization, but “the strongest flows are within Europe”<sup>33</sup> meaning that the issues are often much closer to home than many people think. The issue of illegal migration is also conflated in many of these communities which can often demonize those flowing through borders illegally where it is by choice or not, making it difficult to fight the issue as a whole. With the trend of the global economy and the steady growth of population European countries have become both hubs and ending points for traffickers, increasing their ease within the continent. These practices often still go relatively undetected and are able to act in multiple countries without consequence.

Many European states also become stops on journeys for trafficked individuals between Baltic states and North Africa, making it a much more popular area for people to be trafficked. Aside from these conditions which often consist of labor trafficking, there is also a relatively ample sex trafficking industry in the continent. The sex industry is growing and in order to supplement need, women are often coerced into sexual labor or otherwise blackmailed for this purpose. While there are plenty of voluntary sex workers, much of the commerce tends to simply be “sexual slavery”<sup>34</sup> with little or no liberty for those being traded. There is also a vast

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<sup>33</sup> Kelly, Liz. “You Can Find Anything You Want”: A Critical Reflection on Research on Trafficking in Persons within and into Europe.

<sup>34</sup> Kelly

population of trafficked individuals meaning that they range from children trafficked for sex or labor to women continuously sex trafficked. The issue of child trafficking specifically has been overlooked in years past and even though sex with children is becoming more taboo, the industry still exists and tends to focus on adolescent girls in European countries. Many of those trafficked are women and aside from sex trafficking, it tends to be domestic or agricultural labor trafficking. Trafficking is so well hidden that it has often remained out of the public eye and with this it has lost the importance of being combatted. The lack of research surrounding the issue has only contributed to the inadequacies of the fight and the misunderstandings of how to combat the issue as a whole. Like many other places in the world, the phenomenon of trafficking has been further linked to cultural practices and attitudes which make it difficult to combat. As a whole, Europe is making worthwhile strides towards fighting this problem, but still has a long way to go regarding identifying issues and how to fix them. Trafficking is as much an issue in Europe as it is in other parts of the world and the biggest misconception is that these developed nations are without issue when in reality they have just as many fall victim to trafficking as other regions around the world, they are simply much more hidden within the developed society.

#### *Where? The Middle East*

Migration issues in the Middle East are often overlooked by Western media due to the fact that most of the time these outlets are preoccupied with oil interests, military conflicts or other issues pertaining to themselves. Even though it is not well covered, migration is still a very prominent issue in this part of the world, especially concerning the illegal aspect of this practice that can take the role of human trafficking. While there is often coverage of foreign nationals being wrongfully imprisoned or killed in this region, “less reported was a new pattern of migrant

trafficking that emerged”<sup>35</sup> which often targeted East Asian individuals who were promised work opportunities with a certain price, but were “taken across the border to the Iraqi desert and left there to fend for themselves”.<sup>36</sup> They often attempt to get back to Jordan where they were promised work, but have no resources or travel documents and end up in a survivalist limbo. Many of these people are able to be brought in due to the lax immigration requirements following Middle East conflict and are often left once entering the area. Migration in this area like all others is unique because of the geography and history, but it is also possibly the most overlooked place where illegal migration occurs.

The Middle East is not only a destination for many people often falsely told they have an opportunity for better work, but it is also a transition site for trafficking based around sexual exploitation. They are often lured through similar channels that advertise false promises for a better life through movement to these countries. This leads to routes between Northern Africa and parts of Europe for the sex trafficking of women from all over the world who will sometimes end up in the Middle East as well. Because of the strict borders of countries like Israel, the trafficking industry has moved to use Egypt and other countries with more open borders, congesting these areas and making it more difficult to track individuals trafficked and those facilitating these actions. Often, there is also the issue regarding the fine line between voluntary prostitution and coerced sex trafficking. They are unaware of the terrible conditions in which they will live or the fact that they will have to sell their bodies as well. Like many other areas they do not find out until they arrive at their destination and are left to live a life of exploitation in legal limbo.

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<sup>35</sup> Calandruccio, Giuseppe. A Review of Recent Research on Human Trafficking in the Middle East.

<sup>36</sup> Calandruccio

There also is a high rate of the “abuse of domestic workers and other guest workers engaged in menial work”<sup>37</sup> throughout the region. These abuses can be as commonplace as verbal abuse or as severe as the trauma which surrounds sexual attacks. Because many of these people are illegal they are more susceptible to these issues, but the legal migrants are also in threat of these conditions. The recruiters often keep a hold on these individuals stopping them from gaining independence and working on their own for decent wages, effectively trapping them in these conditions. Child trafficking is also prominent in these areas “for employment as jockeys in the popular camel races”<sup>38</sup> as well as other forms of bonded labor and forced marriage. These children are often sold by their own families who are bound by poverty.

While many of these countries have signed on to protocols that prevent such crimes, it was difficult to prevent as these perpetrators simply find new ways around the tougher laws. However, law enforcement has begun to offer a safe haven for these trafficked individuals when they find themselves in these impossible situations. Some countries have also made their migration policies for young women more stringent in order to make such trafficking more difficult. These may seem like small steps but are currently what these countries are able to most constructively do to combat this overarching issue. Considering many more of these regions have not made any worthwhile strides these efforts are helpful and developing further to hopefully better combat trafficking in its different forms.

### *How?*

Human trafficking continues to be a pervasive global problem, but it can be hard to understand how it remains isolated from law enforcement when it exists everywhere. The most important thing to remember when approaching trafficking is that “traffickers act as businessmen

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<sup>37</sup> Calandruccio

<sup>38</sup> Calandruccio

and are savvy in their tactics”<sup>39</sup> meaning that for every development in law enforcement there are ten more in the trafficking industry which help these individuals and organizations stay hidden. Their networks often include individuals employed in multiple trades such as shipping and transportation in order to secure victims when they are in the public sphere. This model of trafficking is often seen in developed countries because law enforcement is more vigilant, but they often are still unsure of what the signs are and where to find them. Both sex and labor trafficking are common in these areas because sex traffickers can operate unnoticed in the public sphere and labor traffickers often rely on migrant debts to supply them with workers. In some countries, trafficking has become such a lucrative industry many organizations have more resources than the government resulting in their innovations always being one step ahead. This is what trafficking looks like in developed countries as they have found innovative ways to skirt law enforcement and conduct their practices with little or no detection from the general public.

In many developing nations, labor trafficking is actually incorporated into the economic system through castes or bonded labor. In these areas, the traffickers do not need to hide from authorities because their actions are socially accepted under the guise of class status. In these communities traffickers, referenced to in Choi-Fitzpatrick’s book as slaveholders, are “respected members of their community”<sup>40</sup> making it difficult to fight such a crime when it is supported by social mores. This model often applies to labor trafficking which includes men, women, and children who are working to pay off debts or to fulfill their role in the social strata but are not necessarily abused. In one situation Choi-Fitzpatrick interviewed an Indian owner of a gravel production quarry named Aanan. Aanan discusses how in his line of work it is important to ensure that his workers are fed and content with their situation in order to maintain productivity.

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<sup>39</sup> Laczko

<sup>40</sup> Choi-Fitzpatrick

While he is still very much maintaining control over these individuals, Aanan maintained that they have good working conditions and are not slaves in the general sense. This is how trafficking is allowed to happen in many countries because individuals are simply coerced into labor based on personal debts, inadequate wages or social systems. Choi-Fitzpatrick explains that this is what trafficking looks like in many parts of the world because it is socially accepted in their communities. This exemplifies the modern forms of slavery because often onlookers are perfectly fine with the treatment of these individuals and even if the workers are unhappy they have no forum to voice their complaints. This is the second side of modern day slavery and how it is conducted in today's societies.

It also is often tied to migration to Western nations such as France, the UK, and the US where the victims are not even aware of their bonded condition until they reach their destination where they are then forced to work for a number of years without pay at constant risk of being deported. If they try to resist they can be reported and because their visas are tied to their employment<sup>41</sup> losing their job would often result in them losing their migrant status or simply being one of the thousands of undocumented individuals in these countries left to the whims of law enforcement who often punish them to the full extent of the law. Trafficking is allowable in some cultures, but just well hidden in others. It is everywhere from salons to construction sites and is woven into the fabric of everyday society keeping prices low and production high at the expense of hundreds of thousands of workers forced into labor. Human trafficking does not survive because it lurks in the dark underbelly of our society, it survives because it has ingrained itself into the global economy with consumers not realizing which allows the perpetrators to benefit while many more individuals are thrust into this life. Trafficking happens because the

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<sup>41</sup> Thrupkaew

global society and economy allow it to and there is often nothing done to remedy the situation or obtain labor through other means. Most people in developed economies have purchased goods or services produced in some way through human trafficking without understanding where these goods originate. This lack of accountability only allows for traffickers to continue and fill their necessary place in society without any public outcry for wrongdoing. Human trafficking happens easily.

Trafficking is also often the last resort for families but can become their only choice for survival. As Kaysie Kyler, a recent NGO volunteer said in her interview: “a lot of these people choose to be here, but they don’t really *choose* it. It’s either participate in this industry or die”.<sup>42</sup> This gives a sobering look at trafficking and what it really means. Often, people are coerced into bonded labor and sexual favors because it is the only option they have to stay alive and support their families. Bonded labor, forced prostitution and working under threat is never a choice people want to make, but when living in a lot of these societies it is the only one they can. They rarely have other sources of income or other viable options for survival and giving their child a better life sounds like a great solution. It is only because they have to that a lot of these people sell their children or themselves to traffickers; it is for survival. Kaysie’s husband Lee interjects that “the governments are so corrupt, they benefit”<sup>43</sup> from sex tourism, labor trafficking and other forms of exploited labor so they are complicit and do nothing about these actions. Trafficking is bred by poverty and corruption, two things that are very plentiful not only in impoverished regions but in the world as a whole. Those benefiting do not want to give up their power or surrender any monetary gains so the people being trafficked are forced to continue.

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<sup>42</sup> Kyler, Lee, and Kaysie Kyler. "Interview with NGO Volunteers." Telephone interview by author. February 21, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Kyler

There is often no way out for these people who have had to make an impossible choice and even no economic security on the other side. Human trafficking is something that people can ‘willingly’ go into, but “it is never really their choice”<sup>44</sup> because they either do the unimaginable or die trying. Trafficking goes beyond the individual and even the network, it is rooted in a global economy which values capital over human lives and leaves the impoverished only the most horrific options to survive.

Lastly, trafficking has been allowed to flourish under the conditions of a global capitalist system which values economic gain above humanitarian security. The reason these companies keep using bonded and forced labor is because they are able to produce products at a low cost and sell them to conglomerate corporations for a higher profit. This leads to the low cost of consumer goods in developed countries around the globe and to the satisfaction of consumers who are able to buy more for less money. These values have provided the rationale for human trafficking as it allows the business owner or operator to rise to the top of the socioeconomic ladder while allowing for consumers in their own country to get their goods at the lowest cost possible. Human trafficking goes beyond the basic assumption that it is isolated in third world nations, these networks play a large role in the major global system as they are often the suppliers that large companies depend on to get low prices. The exploitation of the people at the bottom of the socioeconomic system is built into the structure of the current capitalist motivation. Without the support of the overall system, trafficking would not have reached the high levels it has today. Isolated factors in different regions provide the rationale for the different iterations of trafficking, but the underlying motivation is attributed to the monetary based

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<sup>44</sup> Kyler

motivation which promotes the lowest cost possible for business owners by any means necessary.

### *Who?*

Human trafficking is, of course, an action directly carried out by the perpetrators in order to further their financial and personal gain, but it is so much more than that. Human trafficking is a humanitarian blunder that has been allowed to persist under the toxic industry in which our global economy and culture occur. The global community has allowed this to happen, making many goods and services at least partially produced with extremely cheap labor which often means bonded or forced labor resulting in “modern-day slavery”.<sup>45</sup> These practices are what keeps Italy “one of the world’s top tomato producers”<sup>46</sup> and Thailand “leading the world in seafood”<sup>47</sup> only at the cost of human lives and liberty. These individuals are forced to work “7 days a week, 12 hours a day with little to no wages”<sup>48</sup> to keep prices on goods so incredibly low. It ranges from handbags to “shrimp from Costco”<sup>49</sup> making it virtually unavoidable in our modern economy. The most chilling thing about this phenomenon is that it is intertwined in our society and often benefits large companies, everyday individuals and developing nations so it has become necessary to the fabric of the global system. Humans as a race have allowed commodities to outweigh the value of human lives making it more difficult to argue for human rights since these exploitations are paramount within our system. The mentality that “it’s not personal, it’s just business”<sup>50</sup> has taken a new form in this system as it strictly places product

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<sup>45</sup> Kyler

<sup>46</sup> Al Jazeera. GCC News | Al Jazeera. March 03, 2018. Accessed February 22, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Al Jazeera

<sup>48</sup> Al Jazeera

<sup>49</sup> Thrupkaew

<sup>50</sup> Al Jazeera

value and low prices above human lives. Traffickers are directly to blame as they carry out the actions that result in the forced labor and modern slavery of thousands of individuals, but it is a multigenerational system that perpetuates the ability for this industry to thrive.

Human trafficking was born of unfettered capitalism and sustained on individual and corporate greed. It was maintained by the idea that business does not have to be responsible, only successful. It was bred by the notion that certain people can rise to the top through any means necessary only to keep climbing. It has remained through the fact that people perpetuate this idea that everyone can succeed and make it to the top at any cost, but that is incredibly untrue. People can only reach immense stages of wealth on the unwilling backs of others and human trafficking in all its forms is a painful reminder of this fact. It exists because people allowed it to and more importantly wanted it to exist. Because this burden was felt by other unseen groups it was never truly addressed as an issue. Human trafficking is a result of a capitalistic system wrought with greed and selfishness, one that has no room for human rights and allows anything in exchange for more profitable business and low prices for the consumer.

## Understanding Perspectives

### *Rationalizations of the Perpetrators*

The biggest misconception about human trafficking is that there is a definitive good and evil like seen in kidnapping movies or framed in many narratives, but often these individuals are facets of their community who are attempting to maintain a livable lifestyle for themselves and their families. While trafficking can occur in many instances, the most understandable instance for a perpetrator comes in the form of bonded labor in locations such as India where it is built into the culture and the caste system. These slaveholders maintain that the bonded laborers and

the landowners need each other “the same”<sup>51</sup> amount as one needs work and the other needs workers. Bonded laborers are often found in vulnerable situations with families, debt or an unfortunately low caste and are forced to take on this lifestyle. The difference between these laborers and others is that they often do have a decent relationship with their masters. One master explains that to keep a group of laborers properly motivated and productive “they have to be provided with food and clothes”<sup>52</sup> and other necessities which will keep them healthy and able to work. This is a positive side of trafficking as it usually results in laborers leading livable lives with an end to their captivity in sight. The slaveholders often see their laborers as facets in their community and even family members and sometimes treat them as such. In this manner, slavery is not glorified but is present in its most humane form. These slaveholders do it because their society forces them to, but they do it in a way that also values the laborers which is far from the same in many other methods of slavery.

Worldwide, perpetrators have far less innocent intentions which revolve around monetary gain and the lack of value of human lives especially those of transient lower class individuals who are often seen as disposable to those in power. These perpetrators continue their practices because they are lucrative and effective to their practice, whether morally correct (or legal) or not. However, these perpetrators do not operate in a vacuum and are able to sustain these practices due to the high rate of goods produced through trafficked labor as well as the occurrence of sex tourism globally. Like any other business practice, these slaveholders are motivated by high product margins which result in larger monetary gains and all of this comes at the expense of human rights and humanitarian practices. Their actions are egregious, but their motivations are understandable. Even with the advent of trafficking consciousness on the part of

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<sup>51</sup> Choi-Fitzpatrick

<sup>52</sup> Choi-Fitzpatrick

consumers, retailers like “Walmart”<sup>53</sup> and other corporations gain countless goods including “shrimp”<sup>54</sup> from unsavory sources. Other goods produced this way including “bamboo, cocoa, tobacco, garments, meat, nails, copper, zinc”<sup>55</sup>, and countless other goods in addition to many services. These people continue to hold slaves because it is both profitable and possible for them to do this in the global economic system. Vulnerable individuals are also very accessible as people attempt to find better lives for themselves and their families both within and outside their home countries.

Slaveholders rationalize their activity as a benefit to themselves whether they treat the laborers with respect or not. This has been made possible by a self-centered, monetary-focused economic system which thrives on the survival of the fittest. Traffickers commit terrible acts every single day that go far beyond the basic violation of human rights and they often do it from a position of power. Traffickers are undeniably horrendous actors in the international system, but they are facilitated by corporations and ultimately consumers who will participate in the purchase of the goods and services produced by those coerced into such production. Perpetrators of human trafficking do not always need a rationale because they are seen as normal actors in their culture or are acting in the capitalistic mindset of the global system. Traffickers are able to continue because there is a market which craves their product at low prices without caring about the human cost behind the production of such goods. Traffickers go beyond the small scale farmer with a few laborers in India, they manifest in multilevel, multinational networks that span multiple industries in order to turn a profit. The motivation is simple and the results are atrocious.

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<sup>53</sup> Thrupkaew

<sup>54</sup> Thrupkaew

<sup>55</sup> US Department of Labor

### *Crossing International Lines*

A large aspect of the trafficking industry is migration due to conditions in one's home country such as unemployment, social stratification, and low education. These are often motivators to look for a better life which can require moving to another country where these individuals are targeted by traffickers. A point of contention among the analyzers of cross-border trafficking revolves around "the distinction between smuggling and trafficking"<sup>56</sup> which can at times become blurred and difficult to detect. Trafficking, of course, depends on the fact that an individual is smuggled "by the use of force, coercion, fraud, or deception for purposes of exploitation".<sup>57</sup> The second a person stops consenting to the action itself or the manner in which it is occurring they become trafficked. The difficulty here is that these individuals are already engaging in illegal activity, leading them to be included in the population of undocumented immigrants in their destination country. This results in stronger immigration laws from these countries which sometimes can result in the demonization and even prosecution of those who have been trafficked over the border.

In many western countries "the individual's illegal status superced[s] any abuses"<sup>58</sup> they may have endured during their journey across the border. This turns these individuals into criminals rather than victims and only further places them in a vulnerable position under the eyes of the law as they now exist as criminals. This phenomenon also discourages individuals from seeking the help they need as they fear being prosecuted or deported. While countries like the US have finally begun to pull back from the migration approach, these provisions often conflict with their criminal justice motivations and can cause contradictions within the singular system. It also

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<sup>56</sup> *From Human Trafficking*

<sup>57</sup> *From Human Trafficking*

<sup>58</sup> *From Human Trafficking*

complicates illegal immigration as the defining difference between smuggling and trafficking can take many forms. Depending on the individual, geographical location and the trafficker these exploitations can be incredibly different.

Human Trafficking also tends to have wide links to organized crime because of its global ties and cultural significance. Similar to a drug smuggling empire these perpetrators often employ a network of criminals with different roles at different steps in the process. There also are the people benefitting from such crimes through direct purchase of individuals or corporations purchasing goods produced with this form of labor. The UN has recognized human trafficking as a significant source of organized crime and issued a protocol describing it in this manner, but with little power to enforce and unequivocally weak language when dealing with victims, these protocols have not done much to assist the international community. They provide a baseline for domestic law which many countries have adopted, but without the agreement of states, there is nothing the UN can do to aid the cause. Framing the continual trafficking of individuals over borders as organized crime forces law enforcement to view it in a different light and adopt different approaches, but this process is relatively new and has little prescriptions for the victims themselves. Migration serves as a large part of trafficking as a whole and combating it through different and unique measures is what can be used to hopefully curtail such crimes.

### *The Toxic Notion of “The Western Hero”*

Slavery has been an issue throughout human history but was thought to be eradicated at least in the US after the Civil War. This was far from the case as slavery in the form of labor and sex trafficking has persisted for centuries. It was not brought back into the public eye until “white slavery”<sup>59</sup> as seen in movies like *Gone Girl* was realized by the general American public.

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<sup>59</sup> *From Human Trafficking*

This is because it posed a threat to those in power who had never worried about this peril previously. For better or for worse white slavery is what made Western countries finally pay attention to the issue, but it also isolated victims of different backgrounds from the help they need. Aid at all levels now generally focused on women and girls from good standing households who had been kidnapped and brought into the sex trade. The aid provided to these women was fantastic and helped them escape this life, but it did not trickle down to women at all levels. These women were able to recover from these fringes of society because they had the means to do so, but women not as fortunate did not have that opportunity. Furthermore, western countries are far less likely to aid women who have been brought into the country illegally or who are low profile victims. This has created a toxic notion of heroism for these countries and law enforcement officials who help women involved in white slavery, but not in other forms. It also skews the amount of human trafficking that actually occurs as it paints all individuals in the industry as helpless girls stolen from the street when the real story may be very different. White slavery has dominated the conversation around human trafficking when it is such a small part of the actual crime industry, damaging the potential aid and betterment of life for thousands of other individuals involved who do not fit this description.

Beyond a general fear of white slavery, western countries also tend to frame themselves as heroes in developing countries susceptible to this activity, but this often does more harm than good. History has shown that US interventions have not gone well for the countries in which the US is entering. In recent years it is seen in the Middle East with the implosion of any stability that existed and those that suffer most are general citizens of these countries. Human trafficking poses a unique and delicate problem to these similar circumstances as damaging intervention could not only cause communal destruction but also alert the traffickers into hiding. By nature

the industry operates in plain sight with mechanisms to keep it hidden from the public eye and foreign intervention done incorrectly could give traffickers the foresight to go back into hiding. Furthermore, the notion of the western hero frames these countries as helpless nations who need to be fixed when they are often operating in the best way they can with values that differ from the western exchange of ideas. Inserting foreign aid into these situations can destabilize the areas, but also harm the victims. In many of these societies, these people are only trying to find a better life and framing them as helpless victims will only set up the rest of their life for failure. Aid in this situation has to be done in a graceful way which understands the cultural complexities of the area which can only be realized through organizations and individuals who originate in these areas. In order to create sustainable and reliable change, it must be done by those who occupy these communities through grassroots activism. Any other mechanism would be temporary and prone to failure, eventually allowing for the perpetrators to resurface and recapture those susceptible. Instead, western nations need to understand how to provide aid without intervention, by providing resources. Resources for the betterment of communities is what people need to actually aid themselves and in the long run, this would actually help the area. The notion of the Western Hero is antiquated and toxic, but the Western Assistant while less glamorous is what can provide more effective sociocultural change for the promotion of humanitarian values at the global level and most importantly sustainable aid to those in the most vulnerable positions.

### *A Complex Human Rights Approach*

“Reframing labor, migrant and sex-worker rights as human rights grants greater access to existing organizations and greater legitimacy and accountability vis a vis host governments”.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *From Human Trafficking to Human Rights: Reframing Contemporary Slavery*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Univ Of Pennsylvania Pr, 2013.

The most important thing to do when viewing human trafficking at a global scale is to remember that these are innocent human lives that have been exploited. Too often these people are seen as the evil in the world because of the acts they may be forced to perform and that is not a beneficial way to view these already hurting populations. It is most important to remember that these people are not waiting to be rescued or threats to national security or subject of jurisdictional limbo, but they are people who have a foundational predisposition to these rights that are granted to them. Trafficking can be rationalized and reframed in order to mean something different, but it always is about people and communities in which they are involved and because they are people they are subject to rights. Choi-Fitzpatrick suggests that in order to truly solve the issue of human trafficking the individuals must be given the opportunity to self-define their role and differentiate between worker and victim. People do this through incremental social change and a reframing of their situation, but this is all built on a foundation of human rights. Slavery in US history was once rationalized as the norm, but it was the reframing of its place in our society and the separation of the worker and the victim that ultimately presented the reprehensible moral wrongdoing. It serves the same for human trafficking of today. Only after slave workers are able to fully realize their position and outsiders value their lives that change will occur. Because sex workers are overlooked and migrant laborers are accepted as a facet to multiple societies nothing will ever change, but if the world begins to understand that these people also have an entitlement to human rights, trafficking would be a much less harmful epidemic.

Furthermore, Choi-Fitzpatrick argues that the notion of human rights needs to be understood on a community level as well as the individual because in many of these places the culture that allows this treatment of people is rooted in communities. It is necessary also for the

community to choose its own morals. Trafficking has become such a delicate issue as it is often the center of cultural differences and promotion of different moral values. Trafficking is understood to be morally wrong, but in some cultures, it is socially accepted because it serves a role in their societies. But how is this combatted? Regime building and the notion of manifest destiny invades state sovereignty so incremental cultural change must be made from within in order to ensure that the rights of these individuals are realized and eventually protected. This exemplifies the basic root of the complexities of trafficking because it is not only a definite analysis of right and wrong, it is an interconnected network of moral and cultural proceedings which together fulfill a community. A human rights approach allows for change to happen organically and from the society itself. But is it morally correct to let these communities continue exploiting these individuals because it is their definition of decent?

Human rights do at times seem to be definite things and concrete rights, but once trafficking is further examined it is understood why these rights are not always so paramount. The most beneficial way for outsiders to see these individuals is as rights-bearing people who not only deserve human rights but are also allowed to promote them for themselves in order to rightfully discover and defend their place in society. Viewing these people as equal to ourselves is also the way that we learn to empathize with them rather than pity them and it is empathy that supplies the world with the tools for meaningful and lasting change. Human rights allow for these people to declare themselves worthy of more than their current lives, but the question of moral duty versus respect of territorial and cultural boundaries persists. It is important to view these individuals as possessing human rights, but is it still beneficial if we are not allowed to do anything to promote those rights or is it better to frame them as a removed group of people and continue on with our own societies? This is the most important thing expressed in Choi-

Fitzpatrick's essay as he alerts the reader that it is necessary to treat all individuals as people with rights and that this is the only way to accurately make any changes in the viewing of these people as victims or rights-bearing individuals.

## Interview

*Lee and Kaysie Kyler, NGO volunteers*

Lee and Kaysie Kyler are a married couple living in Western New York with their children, but they also spent much of their lives traveling and aiding in humanitarian crises. They got involved with the human trafficking crisis after Kaysie watched an informative documentary which exposed the volatile and interwoven nature of the New York City sex trafficking industry. Kaysie explained how this video sparked her interest in the topic resulting in research that led her to *Little Princes*, a book describing a non-profit organization in Nepal which aimed to fight trafficking in all its forms. They then decided to go to Nepal to fight trafficking themselves and spent five weeks with this organization and subsequently went to Cambodia and Thailand to work with other organizations attempting to reach similar goals. They went to the latter places with the religious youth group they lead and made meaningful connections with individuals in the area, but their experience in Nepal was less successful. "Regular people wanting to volunteer to teach English isn't great because they don't know the local language and the organization doesn't help to teach them"<sup>61</sup> relays Kaysie, "we felt like we weren't doing anything to truly help the situation at hand".<sup>62</sup> Their explanation of their experience begs a larger question: how can individuals be most effective truly approaching this problem?

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<sup>61</sup> Kyler

<sup>62</sup> Kyler

The belief behind the Umbrella Organization, the non-profit in Nepal, was to teach individuals in the area English which would offer them more opportunities beyond trafficking, but as they said this was a failed effort. Spending five weeks in an area where the foreigners are unaware of the culture and language will not help, it may even exacerbate the issue and amongst all this trafficking continues. “The governments are corrupt, they often are benefitting from the large amount of sex tourism and trafficking that happens in their countries”,<sup>63</sup> Lee explains, “they won’t do anything to stop it because they are benefitting”.<sup>64</sup> This directly relates to the notion that trafficking permeates through society and exists as a condition that is too large to overcome. “These are sociocultural issues, the whole country would need to change”<sup>65</sup> and it is obvious that it would need to change from those within these communities rather than foreigners traveling across the world to fulfill a personal goal of changing the world. Like all other sources encountered they express that the most important tool is the worthwhile and purposeful education in order to raise awareness of the issue worldwide. If people in general are aware of the issue at hand it will allow for the global community to come together and find solutions in their own communities through grassroots organizations. Lee and Kaysie said time and time again that awareness and education was the key. They found that the programs in Cambodia and Thailand were the most helpful because they focused on empowering community members rather than having the foreigners acting as the saviors from the outside. “We live in a world which is fueled with these programs”<sup>66</sup> and the only way to correctly combat it is to form grassroots organizations which empower individuals in their own communities. Kaysie and Lee explained what can go wrong when programs are achieving the wrong ends and how it can

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<sup>63</sup> Kyler

<sup>64</sup> Kyler

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<sup>66</sup> Kyler

negatively affect not only the people in these local communities but also the people who are caught in the trafficking rings in these regions.

## A Systemic Change in How We View Trafficking and its Solutions

### *Current Solutions and Where They Go Wrong*

With an issue as complex as human trafficking there needs to be solutions that are just as complex in order to fully address the problem. Currently, there are solutions that graze the surface such as support for individuals who are able to escape sex trafficking or international organizations that work to advocate for those taken from the system and their civil rights, but there needs to be more done before that point. Because human trafficking as a global issue has not gained a high profile in the international system it is difficult to have encompassing solutions. The TVPA, passed by the US, was only written into law in 2000 and has been revised many times since and it only focuses on defining the crime to make it easier to detect. This act was incredibly important as it allowed for law enforcement at every level in most countries to be able to better detect this crime in all of its iterations and its evolution through time, but now that the definition has been established it is important to focus on helping those in need. The TVPA has put in place precedential guidelines in action all over the world which were even noticed and referenced in the UN's resolution against Human Trafficking. The TVPA was an immensely important step in the right direction for combatting and controlling this phenomenon.

Aside from legislation, many organizations have made it their mission to aid those entangled in human trafficking and eventually end the horrific acts that occur under the umbrella of this crime. Organizations such as Polaris<sup>67</sup> are extremely victim-centered, offering helplines,

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<sup>67</sup> Polaris

training, reporting tools and advocacy for legislation. They also have worked to take action in situations where trafficking is identified and have begun to work with high-risk areas such as hotels to detect signs of trafficking. Other organizations such as End Slavery Now<sup>68</sup> are aimed at the general public to raise awareness, offer public resources and offer sustainable consumer options that do not rely on trafficking. Organizations like this one are important because they begin to confront the larger issue: the fact that the global capitalist system depends on the human trafficking industry. These organizations provide a necessary combination of reactive and proactive resources but could be expanded upon and brought further into the public eye.

#### *How Can We Better Serve This Community?*

“Awareness is huge”<sup>69</sup> because it is what will mobilize individuals to understand that trafficking is not only wrong but that it is in every part of our society. Many people living everyday lives are simply unaware of the fact that trafficking exists and has become so incredibly widespread. It happens everywhere in all forms and it will never get better if we as a whole do nothing about it. The first step to change is awareness. The problem cannot change if people are unaware that it exists. Education is everything and it is the driving force that will enable us as a global community to eventually combat this problem. The world has unwittingly built an empire on the backs of people finding themselves in destitute situations which lead to forced labor and this needs to change. In order to create a global culture of holding people accountable for obscene business practices, there needs to be an awareness among the public. This industry touches the global system at every level: large corporation, federal governments and the daily purchases of individuals, but it does not need to remain the center of the global system. It has been allowed to remain this way because people allow it to, but demands of

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<sup>68</sup> Resources to end Human Trafficking

<sup>69</sup> Kyler

change can forever put this issue in the past. The first step to large-scale systematic change is awareness and education around the issue at hand. Nothing will ever change if people do not want it to change and to want it they have to understand the gravity of the issue. Many goods and services are produced through the means of forced labor, but this can be cut down if people begin to not accept these practices as normal. People need to voice that trafficking is a violation of basic human rights and of the altruistic nature and duty of humankind. They need to first understand the problem. Trafficking is widespread and deeply woven into the fabric of society, but that can change. People can make it change beginning with the understanding and awareness of the gravity of the issue. A number of companies and organizations have begun to speak out about human trafficking and offer trafficking-free solutions to consumer products.

Awareness is the most important thing when dealing with large scale issues because it is bound to empower and mobilize groups of people who care deeply about the issue. For the general public, people are encouraged to research into where their goods and services originate and how they are produced. If it is difficult or unclear to retrieve these answers as they may be unsavory ones. Education and action are the tools that the everyday person has to change these customs. Making the effort to shop slave-free and focus on those companies that manufacture goods in a fair and humane way will put the pressure on other companies to change their patterns and hopefully drive them away from human trafficking. Because it is so ingrained in our system it can seem ominous and overwhelming, but small changes on even a moderate scale can make a large difference and this is an issue that can be universally recognized.

### *What's the Answer?*

There is no singular correct way to go about eradicating human trafficking purely because there is no simple way to understand its existent forms. Instead, there would need to be a

worldwide economic and cultural change to frame overall human rights as more important than personal gain. This issue is larger than helping a few women escape forced prostitution or giving some children a chance at a real childhood, it is characterized by the global system and can only be fully dealt with at this level. It is no small request to change a decades-old global culture which promotes self-betterment and hope of personal growth, but does it really offer that? A system which is supposed to beautifully allow for competition to drive the best competitors to the top all whilst allowing the consumer to enjoy the best deal has resulted in thousands of people subjected to forced labor, prostitution, and migration. If this is how the perfect system works it may not be perfect. The system itself might need a change.

It is naive to believe that people will always wish to do the correct thing or even the decent thing when their own personal success is at stake because above all else humans as a species value self-preservation, but it could be both. The values of those in power would need to change to become more human-centered rather than monetary-centered, but it could happen. If it did there would be a far better chance that society would flourish surrounded around the things that all people value and need most: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If this is what we as a people are striving toward, why has it been so elusive? If success is out of reach for millions the system is failing and we need to fight against it. If a world without human trafficking is truly plausible it would have to be a world centered around new values, ones that value human lives and basic necessities, one that values others. An altruistic society where it is more important for everyone to have basic rights than to have unbridled personal growth.

Empowerment also lies at the heart of the solution to the problem. In order to correctly fight the global issue, it must be fought in individual communities through grassroots activism. It is difficult to fully understand the cultural and linguistic complexities surrounding different

regions of the world, but for the people that live in these communities, they fully understand the best way to help and have the most access to the people and areas that need the help in the region. If these people are allocated education and resources through systematic coordination of worldwide organizations the situation will more likely be changed. It is through grassroots activism that people contribute to their own communities which will allow for global change. People are more willing to change their ways and find new ways to create revenue if it is motivated by people in their own communities. People do not want to live this way, but they have no other choice and they are forced into this lifestyle in order to achieve some level of survival. These individuals need to be able to create a better life for themselves and their children and in order to fully understand the potential, societal change needs to be made at the local level. This will not happen overnight, but it is the most effective vehicle for change as it will aim at the root of the problem and attempt to solve the issues from the bottom-up, approaching those who understand the everyday culture and the nuances of the crimes around them.

Human trafficking was born and bred through the corrupt motivations asserted in pure capitalism and can only be reversed through widespread societal change. It all starts with awareness and education. If people are aware of the issue they will hopefully begin to fight against it and the entities that allow it to continue. If people were able to understand how woven it is into our society they would hopefully wish to rip out those stitches and start again. If it was understood that no matter where in the world a person lives they have most likely passed someone being trafficked on the street, things would change. It is a reality that it is everywhere and it could easily be you or your family or your community that is harmed by this insatiable disaster, but it does not have to stay this way. We as a people can work to change the mentality that people living in poverty do not matter and should have to fend for themselves at all costs.

We can stop irresponsible business practices where people are working for little to no wages under violent threats. We can halt the bonded migration of women and children who cross the world only to learn they must pay off their debt in free labor or prostitution. We as a people can stop this, but it will take time and effort. It begins with the awareness and acceptance of a problem, it continues with a motivated movement and it ends with policy and cultural change to withstand the test of time. It can be done, but it all starts with the understanding and value of the issue at hand which can only begin if every person is alerted of the problem.

### Conclusion

“We live in a place fueled by this industry”<sup>70</sup> and we are the ones who benefit from it remaining active. Human trafficking goes beyond the idea of an individual in a third world country or the runaway girl living in the US who was mixed with the wrong crowd, it permeates into every facet of our society. Companies, criminals and everyday people benefit from the exploitation of human labor in exchange for low market prices and high profit margins. The global economic system revolves around people making it to the top by any means, which can often mean on the backs of others. This system needs to change, but it will never change if those who benefit from it - us - do not want it to change. Every American has the right to “life liberty and the pursuit of happiness”<sup>71</sup>, derived from John Locke who felt this should apply to all people in every facet of life. Human trafficking takes this liberty and sometimes life away from people who were in the wrong socioeconomic position and are routinely punished. Human trafficking thrives on the idea that the people in these situations are worth less than the average citizen and that their losses are our gains, but these are also our losses. Human trafficking is a deeply

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<sup>70</sup> Kyler

<sup>71</sup> Declaration of Independence

complicated and societally supported practice that has interwoven itself into the very fabric of some communities and countless business practices, but it is still slavery. These individuals are still being forced into labor and sex through exploitation, low wages, threats, and isolation. They are still living lives that should never have to be lived. Human trafficking is at the fault of the global system, but more importantly of the individuals who participate in this system and promote the economic practices which thrive on this type of labor.

The end to trafficking begins with the knowledge that it exists and small actions against it. The most important thing to remember is that it is everywhere and affects every kind of person, but more importantly, the average person has most likely purchased a good or service that has been produced in some way with human trafficking. The global capitalist system we have created has allowed for human trafficking to become the norm because it depends on large profit margins and promoting self-centered means to reach the top. A system based on unsavory beginnings cannot possibly sustain itself forever because the humanitarian violations will outweigh the economic costs, but it has beaten the odds thus far. Tackling such a large system goes beyond individual governments, UN organizations and small social movements. It can only be combated with a coordinated change in every facet of life. To change an overwhelming system, there must be an overwhelming response. Grassroots organizations can change their own communities which will, in turn, change the world, but this all starts with the realization of a problem and the willingness to fix it.

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/upfront/2018/03/modern-slavery-blame-180302101559816.html>.

This is a short video which focuses on the global impact of human trafficking in our modern economy. It explains that in many industries the people at the basic harvesting or manufacturing level are working in bonded or forced labor conditions. The video sheds light on the fact that people's lack of knowledge of supply chains behind goods allows for this industry to continue.

Choi-Fitzpatrick, Austin. *What Slaveholders Think: How Contemporary Perpetrators Rationalize What They Do*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

The author is exploring modern slaveholders around the world and examining how their actions fair in their own societies as they are often in line with social norms even though they are considered morally abhorrent by many other cultures. This brings up the question of state sovereignty as different cultures and even governments respect these actions and can even depend on them. He examines the issues of the problem: holding workers, lack of equality, places in society and possible emancipation, but he expresses these from the point of view of the trafficker. He makes a point of illustrating how complex this industry can become in many parts of the world where their economies are not as stable as the west and these traffickers have to run these work locations in order to sustain themselves and often their communities. The author understands that what they are doing is wrong, but attempts to show the other side as he humanizes the perpetrators. He specifically talks about debt bondage in southeast Asia which predominantly focuses on the trafficking of workers.

Electronic Frontier Foundation. Accessed February 03, 2019.

<https://www.eff.org/issues/cda230>.

This site contains the Communications Decency Act which contains section 230 that was used to defend Backpage.com in *I am Jane Doe*. The site was used to quote the act in order to properly understand the video and its implications.

*From Human Trafficking to Human Rights: Reframing Contemporary Slavery*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Univ Of Pennsylvania Pr, 2013.

This text aims to close the gap between traffickers and the general public as well as further the awareness of the issue as a whole. It also provides a great amount of description, statistics, and information to establish exactly what trafficking is in the modern global economy. This book serves mainly as the substantive background regarding theories, approaches, and understandings of human trafficking as a phenomenon. It was most helpful to understand this level of information which set the basis for the rest of the research.

*I Am Jane Doe*. Directed by Mary Mazzio. Netflix. 2018.

This documentary follows stories of young girls caught in the sex trafficking industry in America. It highlights the issue specifically in this country and to what degree it is often practiced and protected. This documentary was used in this paper to exemplify the issue in the United States.

Kyler, Lee, and Kaysie Kyler. "Interview with NGO Volunteers." Telephone interview by author. February 21, 2019.

This phone interview was of Lee and Kaysie Kyler, a married couple who has done a great deal of traveling and humanitarian work which also includes participating in international NGOs in Nepal, Thailand, and Cambodia. This interview was aimed to understand the issue from the point of view of people who have experienced it first hand and seen the horrible actions associated with this widespread practice. They also shed light on the most important things people need to realize about trafficking and what constitutes such behavior.

Laczko, Frank, and Elżbieta M. Goździak. *Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2005.

Essays:

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Calandruccio, Giuseppe. *A Review of Recent Research on Human Trafficking in the Middle East*.

Collett, Elizabeth A. and Gozdzia, Elzbieta M. *Research on Human Trafficking in North America: A Review of Literature*

Kelly, Liz. "You Can Find Anything You Want": *A Critical Reflection on Research on Trafficking in Persons within and into Europe*.

Langberg, Laura. A Review of Recent OAS Research on Human Trafficking in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

Lee, June JH. Human Trafficking in East Asia: Current Trends, Data Collection, and Knowledge Gaps.

Piper, Nicola. A Problem by a Different Name? A Review of Research on Trafficking in South-East Asia and Oceania.

A selection of articles and research journals dedicated to understanding the intricacies of human trafficking. This is the chief research done by the UN organization dedicated to migration into the issue to fully understand its severity. This consists of a compilation of research journals regarding the topic all over the world and its implications in different countries and communities. This book is the chief source for regional data as well as the methodology of studies in those areas and faults in the research itself.

"Polaris." Polaris. Accessed March 17, 2019. <https://polarisproject.org/>.

Polaris is one of the leading non-profit organizations that focuses on aiding victims of human trafficking to get out of their exploitative situations. This organization serves as an international lifeline as well as a direct resource for those caught in human trafficking conditions or those who feel they have witnessed such a situation. This website was used to better understand such organizations and how they help those in need that are in these situations.

"Resources to End Human Trafficking." End Slavery Now. Accessed March 17, 2019.

<http://www.endslaverynow.org/>.

End Slavery Now is a nonprofit organization which focuses on what the general public can do in order to help in the fight against human trafficking. The website provides resources to

understand the gravity of the issue and to advocate on behalf of those caught in its path. It also provides information such as how to shop slave-free to promote sustainable solutions to the problem. This site was used to research this organization and understand further how the general public can help fight human trafficking.

Thrupkaew, Noy. Human Trafficking Is All around You. Performed by Noy Thrupkaew. Youtube. July 13, 2015.

This video is a TED Talk by Noy Thrupkaew on the realities of human trafficking and how it appears in our everyday lives. She explains that human trafficking comes in many more forms than sex trafficking and specifically that labor trafficking plays a huge role in the global economy because it is what leads to prices at large retailers being so low. Her video also talks about the fact that these people need solidarity, not pity and that in order to truly help them the world as a whole needs to strive to change its societal and economic attitudes.

"Trafficking Victims Protection Act: Minimum Standards for the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons." U.S. Department of State. Accessed February 03, 2019. <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164236.htm>.

This webpage contains the full language of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act which aims to aid in stopping the trafficking industry within US law. This source was used to gain direct quotes and understand the exact language of this Act.

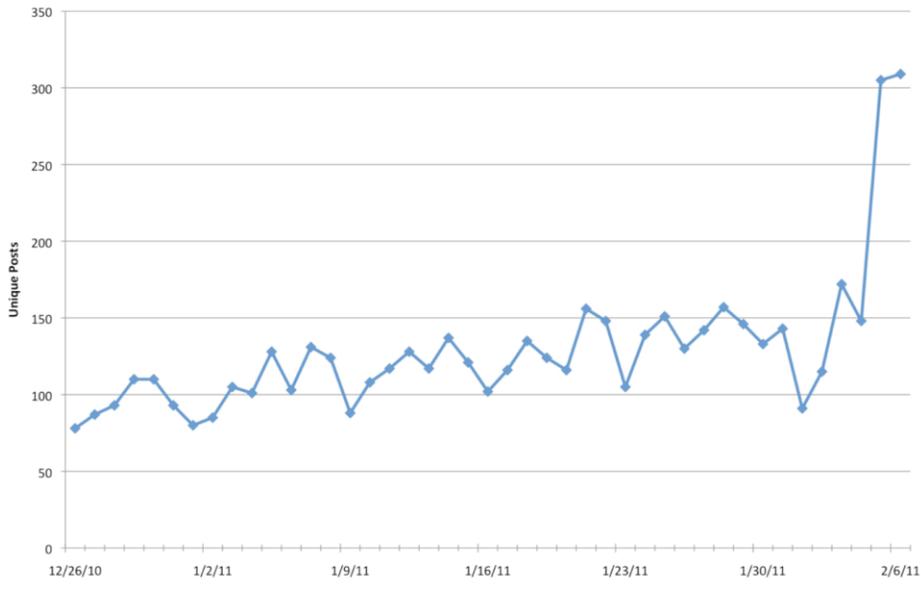
"U.S. Department of Labor." Home. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://www.dol.gov/>.

The US Department of Labor as a whole has provided a wide range of statistics regarding labor trafficking both within the country and around the world. It is important to have these statistics and data compiled from an organization because it is the only effective way to truly understand the issue as a whole. These figures were used in this paper to support the qualitative research surrounding the issue.

## Appendix

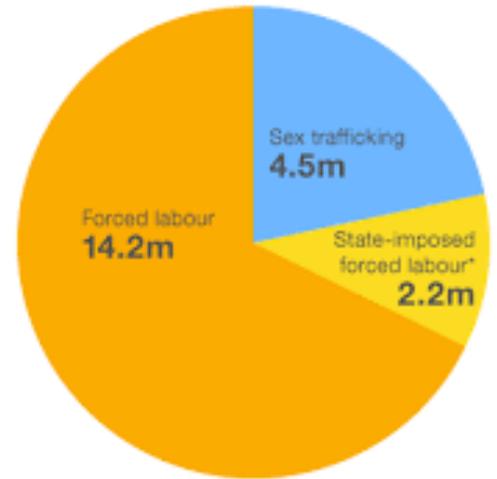
## Appendix

Backpage.com (Dallas) Female Escort Ad Posts in Run-up to Super Bowl XLV



Types of 'modern slavery'

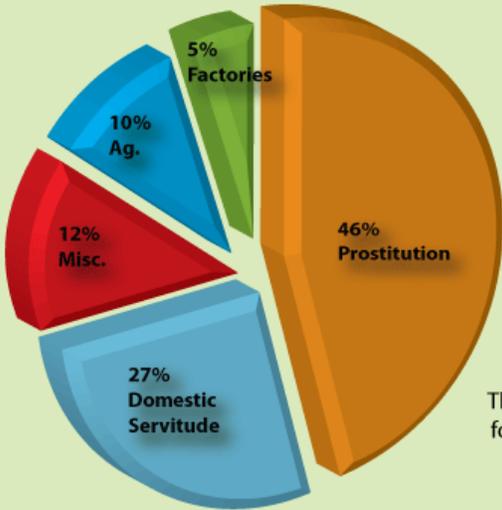
20.9 million victims worldwide



\*Such as prison labour or work imposed by armed forces

Source: International Labor Organization

### World Wide Human Trafficking Statistics



14,500-17,500: Estimated number of people trafficked in the United States each year.

50% of people trafficked into the United States each year are children.

800,000 people are trafficked worldwide each year.

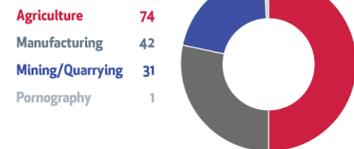
The East Asia/Pacific region accounts for the greatest number of trafficked persons into the United States.

Sources: U.S. DHHS, U.S. DOJ, Free The Slaves

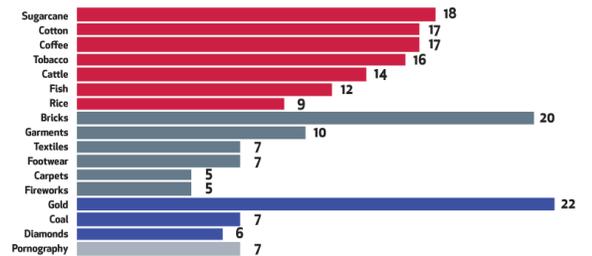
### The List in Numbers

**148** goods      **76** countries      **418** line items

Number of Goods Produced Globally by Child Labor or Forced Labor, by Production Sector



### Goods with Most Child Labor and Forced Labor Listings by Number of Countries



Source: Based on research by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs

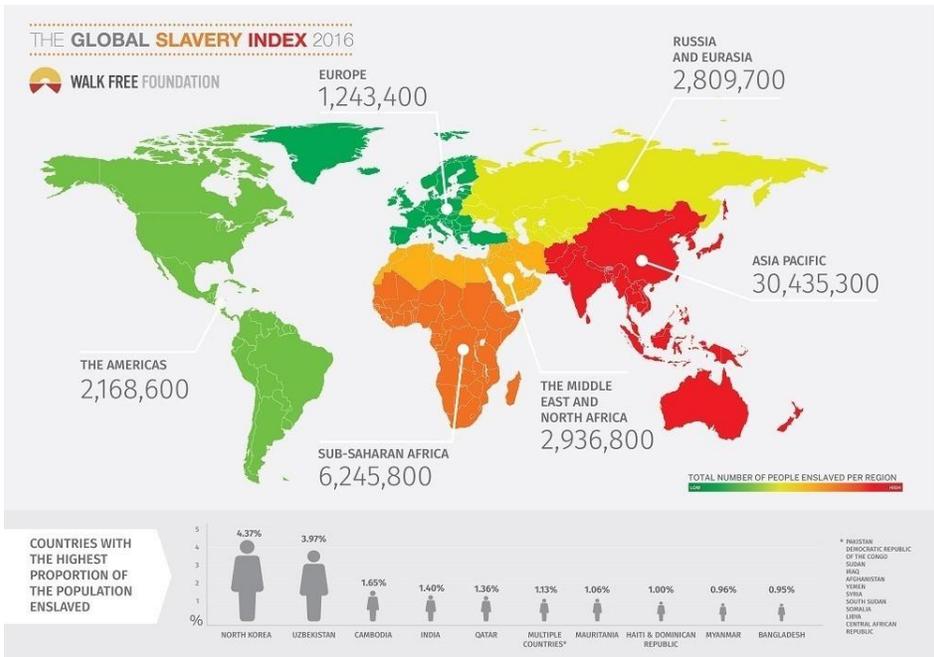


FIGURE 1  
**How slave labor feeds the seafood supply chain**

Some fishing vessels operating in foreign waters employ slave labor to artificially reduce costs. A fish caught with slave labor enters the complex global supply chain, where it mingles with or is fed to legal seafood products and ends up on American plates.

