

Human trafficking and greed essay

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Greece, as represented within the epic poems of Homer, and probably existed within the earliest minds of the human race. The ancient Greeks also have records that they had an institution of slavery in place as well. Both of these conceptions, greed and slavery, are ancient yet they still exist in our society today despite the progression of our civilization.

Greed has expanded in terms of the magnitude of excessive wealth one can desire while slavery has morphed into what we now call human trafficking. This modern era of slavery has infected a number of different industries around our globe. The widespread infection makes sense when the immense profit to be made in human trafficking is examined. As this problem worsens in our society, so does the effort to offer solutions that will reduce the magnitude of human trafficking.

In order to stop or dramatically slow the progress of this heinous criminal activity, I believe that the root cause of greed that drives this business must be dealt with. Contrary to popular belief, a mass variety of industries around the world are involved in human trafficking. Before the class discussion on human trafficking I, and many others, had redundantly only heard about sex trafficking in the media. Even the "I Have a Name" exhibit, sponsored by Cape Fear Community College, primarily focused on how sex trafficking has affected its victims. David Feinting discredits popular belief in his article "Human Trafficking" when he states, "Worldwide, less than half of all trafficked victims are part of the sex trade" (397).

Despite the fact sex trafficking makes up less than half of the human trafficking business based on victims, it is again the only form of trafficking

heard about in our media. Furthermore, human trafficking exists elsewhere as the result of those pursuing the path of greed. These individuals realize that they can exploit victims in a number of ways that aren't limited to sex slavery to achieve their goals of excessive wealth. Accordingly, if sex slavery is less than half the pie that is human trafficking, then what are the other pieces that make up this pie? In Standards Sara's article "Supply and Demand: Human Trafficking in the Global Economy" he lists a number of industries to illustrate just how diverse the problem of human trafficking is, Victims of modern-day slave trading are exploited in countless industries...

Whether for commercial sex, construction, domestic work, carpet weaving, agriculture, tea and coffee, shrimp, fish, minerals, dimensional stones, gems, or numerous other industries... " (403). The different trades listed vary a lot in market types, demand, and production but share the commonality of having to deal with the cost of labor.

This suggests a correlation between slavery and labor cost. Thus, it can be inferred that slaves are used to decrease production costs therefore raising profits for their greedy owners and benefactors. As I indicated earlier, I had heard about trafficking through media but only scarcely when compared to other topics covered in the news and on the internet. Moreover, I knew that the "I Have a Name" exhibit had the goal of trying to raise awareness of the issue in Wilmington, NC (Wilma). Lastly, I was taught during high-school that slavery was illegal virtually everywhere on Earth. It was the combination of these three things that consequently led me to believe that human trafficking was not that big of an issue.

This view was debunked in Katie Acanthus's presentation "Expose It To End It" when she gave two imperative statistics stating, "The Transatlantic slave trade from West Africa to the Americas transported 12 to 13 million victims of human trafficking over nearly four centuries while today, an estimated 21 million people are in bondage across the globe. The quantity of slaves today is 75% greater than the collected quantity of slaves in the Transatlantic slave trade during a 400 year time span. This alarming statistic displays the growth of human trafficking which accordingly shows the gar of greed as well. This growth in greed is probably from a combination of increasing need within the individual who partakes in exploiting people for personal gain and the quantity of people who are doing so. With the growth of greed in the individual comes the enlargement of the mammon of wealth and status that will satisfy them. Human trafficking provides the opportunity to easily obtain this satisfaction.

The modern slaves of today are more valuable of an investment than they were a few centuries ago. Kara makes this comparison illustrating that slaves in 1850 could be purchased for about \$11,000 (adjusted for inflation) and generated 15 to 20 percent in annual return on investment while today's slaves sell for \$420 and generate 300 to 500 percent in annual return on investment (406). This business is immensely more profitable than it ever has been in the past. Thus, the pursuit of greed is that much easier to obtain making it more desirable as well. Kara also explains how transportation plays a role in the amount of profit to be made stating "Today's victims of human trafficking can be transported from one side of the planet to the other in a few days or less, a nominal cost of doing business even when airfare is

involved," (405). The movement of slaves to wherever they are needed is cheap and fast. For the greedy traffickers this is great because they can move their laborers to needed locations with their goals of excessive wealth being affected very little.

The evidence examined thus far has examined the variety of industries that human trafficking is in, just how large of a business this actually is and the profitability of this criminal activity. The trend that this gathered evidence shows is that maximizing profit is the primary goal of human traffickers. As I came to a conclusion about human trafficking I deemed this trend to be the key to stopping the slave trade. Kara gives a solution with a very similar perspective to my own and explains why this solution will work, "Attack the profitability human traffickers enjoy. An attack on profitability will reduce aggregate demand for slave labor because slave owners will be forced to accept a lower-profit (hence less desirable) business, or they will pass the increased costs to the consumer by elevating retail price, which will in turn reduce consumer demand" (408).

Lowering the potential of profit to be made decreases desirability while trying to maintain current gains with the new costs put in place will decrease demand. Greed works against the human trafficker in this case because lower profits makes gaining a satisfying amount of excess wealth more difficult which will in turn cause traffickers to fulfill their greed in other business pursuits. Also, if they remain greedy with the increased cost of business then their consumers will become fewer in number thus backfiring on the human traffickers completely. The efforts to obtain this goal of stopping slavery would have to be on a grand scale to be effective.

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