

Sex trafficking

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



Sex Trafficking Sex trafficking is a problem around the world. The United States State Department estimates that roughly 700, 000 to 2 million women and girls are smuggled across borders every year. Eastern Europe is where much of the initial selling occurs. This black market's sales are comparable to the slave trade in United States history, and is equivalent to the sale of cattle. Sex trafficking refers to the movement of women and children for purposes of prostitution or some other form of sexual slavery. According to Interpol, it includes " the recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, or deception. [Also used is] the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of one person having control over another, for the purpose of exploitation." Women and children are trafficked for sex or sexually related things. How does this happen? If the women who become victims of this crime knew what their fate would entail, they would be less than willing to pursue such a career. Trickery and manipulation lands them in this position. These girls are promised an abundant and fulfilling life if they leave their families and travel to other countries. These girls are lured by job offers such as that of an au pair, a model, a dancer, a domestic worker, etc. (Miko, 3). These jobs, in conjunction with a potential marriage opportunity, are advertised in local newspapers (4). The girls' parents are more than willing to allow this because their daughters will help the family survive. Substantial pay is promised and the girls are granted return as soon as they can repay the travel expenses to their sender. They are in his debt until that is accomplished. Widespread depravation allows this form of labor to exist.

The family becomes ecstatic with their daughter's willingness and ability to help provide for the family's need. Organized crime thrives on this dependency. These people have run out of options to support and sustain their family's well being. The United Nations Population Fund performed a recent study, which revealed the precise timing of the criminals. " Traffickers turn up in a rural community during a drought or before a harvest, when food is scarce, and persuade poor couples to sell their daughters for small amounts of money," (Lives Together, Worlds Apart, Lee, 1). The couples see no better option. Traffickers make good money in their line of work because the demand for their product is high. " Traffickers are encouraged by large tax-free profits and continuing income from the same victims at very low risk," (Miko, 2). With willing but unknowing victims, the traffickers have little trouble supplying their customers with the objects of their desires. In a world like today's, where sex is not only talked about openly in social circles, but also displayed in song lyrics and shown in the media, men crave more. A desperate man will pay desperate money to fulfill a desire for pleasure. In places like the Philippines, it is said that, " The Filipino culture allows men to ' be men'-the worn-out notion that men are naturally polygamous and promiscuous. This explains the utter lack of moral restraint among many men to satisfy their sexual needs at the expense of other women, often times even children. The Filipino male thinks of sex as a rite of passage, that before boys become men, they must test their manhood first. Because of the belief that sex with a virgin restores virility, this notion creates a higher demand for younger women and children to fall prey to the wiles of the trafficker and the sex trade (Jurado, 2)." Not all girls are manipulatively

stolen from their parents. Traffickers raid orphanages to find willing candidates as well. Many women, both orphans and daughters, are lured into the trap with the promise of work, income, and visas (Lee, 1). A passport is provided to each candidate as long as the price is paid back to the sellers. These promises are not found; not in the way they were intended. The women's passports become a source of constant debt even though it is of little cost to the traffickers. Once a woman uses the passport, it is recycled. The traffickers put it back into the hands of another innocent, manipulated young girl only to rip her future from her as well. Research was done by a crew at 48 Hours for CBS News in Moscow, Russia where some of their reporters went undercover to unveil an actual occurrence of this dreadful reality. Members of the crew posed as traffickers at the trade. It was much harder than they thought to act as though the women were no more than possessions. The crew met one woman in particular. The intention was to set this captive free of this horrible existence. Olga had been a sex slave for a while when they met her. She was to be re-auctioned. Rashkovsky, her trafficker, assured her that life in America would be the best thing for her. The only thing that I knew: that America is really secure – a person has rights, says Olga. And everywhere would be pretty much safer than being in Moscow, (Van Sant, 3). Rashkovsky willingly buys Olga from the traders and assures her that there is no way she can retract from this obligation without facing death... or worse. And then the harsh reality sets in. There are threats. And that's where the person realizes, 'I'm trapped. And there is nothing I can do.' He spent the money on Olga's plane ticket and she knew where she was to go. If anybody try to run away, he's not going to deal with you, says Olga.

'I'm just going to cut your head off,' (Van Sant, 3). Once on the airplane, Olga and four other Russian girls became personal property of this international slave trader. Before landing in the United States, Rashkovsky landed in Mexico to pick up other women and smuggle them across the unwatched border. Many of the girls trafficked in Mexico are put to work in strip clubs; girls such as Rosaria who remembered such occasions. They had me working overnights. It was worse than prison. No freedom. Doing things I had never done before. It was like hell on earth, (3). Aside from being beaten, Rosaria said, They just looked at me and told me to go to work. I was so scared of being killed, I did everything they wanted me to. One of the key tools that modern day slaveholders today use is to break the person's will as soon as possible, says Smith, an executive director of the Free the Slaves Foundation. The sooner the will is broken, in many cases, it's easier to transport that person. It's easier to force that person to work (3). These girls had no life outside of this hell. They came from a life of poverty, a life of nothing else. As long as their trafficker reminded them of what that was like and instilled a need for himself in their lives, they could not leave him. Their whole lives these women are made to feel insignificant and worthless for anything but sex. So that is what they do... sex. In some Mexican towns, on any given day or night, dozens of girls are found, parading slowly in circles as clients stand by ready to make a purchase. This attracts a crowd. Vendors sell snacks. When a man finds a girl worthy of his cash, one to satisfy his craving, she brings him into a warehouse-like building. Sex takes place "inside filthy curtained cubicles." They threaten the girls. They say, ' If you leave, I will kill your family. I will kill you and cut you to pieces,'" (Van Sant,

4). So the girls do as they say. Whatever the man wants, he gets. This scene is not uncommon in this business. Men flock to the auction with enough money to fulfill their desires. You can buy ten girls in one night, if you want to. You can say I want a thirteen-, a sixteen-, a seventeen-, and a twenty-one-year-old, and you can buy them all like that, says Iana Matei, who runs a shelter for trafficking victims outside Bucharest (Van Sant, 1). A nineteen-year old Moldovan woman recalls her experience as much of the same. "When [I] wasn't with up to ten men a night, [I] was kept against [my] will in a dark cellar with several other women sex slaves, sleeping on the floor or on tables. For an entire month, [I] never saw daylight," (Lee, 2). Lust makes money after all, and those who know this have become successful. Much of this activity goes unnoticed by the governments. Little to their knowledge, 48 Hours caught this footage on hidden camera. This disgusting criminal activity is a reality for thousands of women like Olga around the world. Thanks to the 48 Hours' crew, Olga was released and set free. When crossing the Mexican-United States border, she escaped from the vehicle with the other captives. With a rough road ahead of her, she possessed the courage that proved to be detrimental to her freedom. With a work visa, Olga now holds a steady job in the United States, but she will never be cured of the despair and devaluation she encountered for the promise of a better life. Aside from being a spectacle in warehouses for men with money, the Internet has become a medium for increased trafficking activity. "Multiple forms of sexual exploitation, such as prostitution, sex tours, bride trafficking, pornography, live sex shows, and rape videos for sexual entertainment are promoted," (Hughes, 1). The scope, volume and content of the material is

unprecedented. This type of entertainment will leave the viewer unfulfilled and thirsty for more; thus leading to the purchase of his own woman. After making a video, women can be further dehumanized and resold for greater profit. By this point, the woman has lost her identity and is no more than an object to be exploited. While action is being taken to fight the trafficking of women and children, the problem escalates. Criminal activity such as this feeds on poverty, despair, war, crisis and ignorance (Miko, 2). Women all over the world are seen as less than men. When an opportunity arises for a woman to be employed, to give something back to her family, poor families entertain the possibility. Not only are their daughters making money, but the fathers have also postponed the payments necessary for the daughter's dowry. In countries like the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a new government does not provide the people with a tangible solution to a new and better life. The transition between political systems sometimes leaves the people in worse conditions than they originally had. Although this may be temporary, families in poverty capitalize on the opportunity for their daughters to better their lives in another country. The government does nothing to catch the traffickers because it is concerned with its own functions; it must be stable before it can be influential to its people. In some cases, governments are simply disinterested in such activity. The plight of the activity and the scope of the problem are downplayed. Government officials accept bribes from traffickers or go as far as to sell them fake documentation to allow for free shipment of the slaves. Local police are not equipped to overthrow gangs in the area so they in turn deny the existence of the problem all together (Miko, 4). Is there any way to solve this problem?

A conference, the Catch-Wise-Consortium Against Trafficking of Children and Women in Sexual Exploitation, was held in the Philippines to discuss this very thing. The Philippines ranks fourth among nine nations with 60, 000 to 100, 000 children involved in prostitution (Jurado, 1). The people are aware of the devastation this issue creates so they are taking steps toward reform. The conference decided to solve the continuance of sex trafficking " on a global scale defining the Demand, Supply and Impunity and how it thrives within a background of poverty and a breakdown of a moral and social values (Jurado). Each year, roughly 50, 000 to 100, 000 women and children are smuggled into the United States. This goes undetected because the women are here illegally and cannot seek police protections or else they will be sent back to the men who sent them to that place. Their identification has been stripped of them so they have no proof of citizenship or visas to confirm that they are here for work. If the women were to report what they have been through, the United States courts would treat them as criminals rather than the victims of abuse that they are (Lee, 2). When authorities crack down, it is not on the traffickers but on the prostitutes themselves. A man trafficking drugs or guns will suffer a greater consequence than that of a man who traffics human beings (Miko, 3). This problem is ever increasing with little to no steps toward a solution being made. In the Philippines, the implementation of solutions was bogged down because the government had no money to invest in the cause (Jurado, 2). This has been the case in other countries as well. The people must be aware of the authenticity of this problem. Slavery still exists and is thriving. As more people become aware of the problem, more thought will be directed to reform. Governments should

develop and implement educational programs on the harm of trafficking as well as investigate communications over the Internet that promote sex trafficking, prostitution, sex tourism, bride trafficking and rape (Hughes, 3). Instead of treating the victims of sex trafficking as criminals, they should be given options other than deportation. A safe haven should be allowed for these women. Traffickers themselves should endure harsher punishments than the women whose lives they impounded should. Sex trafficking should not be allowed. References: " Children and Human Trafficking." Interpol April 15, 2005. Hughes, Donna M. " Resolution Misuse of the Internet for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation." The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women: Geneva, Switzerland, 1999. Jurado, Delia. " Wising up on sexual trafficking of women and children." The Fair and Fearless Freeman (February 2005). Lederer, Dr. Laura. " Global Sexual Trafficking." Salvation Army (2005). Lee, Martin A. " Women and Children for Sale: The Globalization of Sexual Slavery." Common Dreams News Center: San Francisco Bay Guardian, March 5, 2001. < <http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0305-06.htm>> Miko, Francis T., Grace Park. " Trafficking in Women and Children: The U. S. and International Response." CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service. March 18, 2002. Thompson, Lisa. " What is the Initiative Against Sexual Trafficking?" IAST. Alexandria, VA (2004). < <http://www.iast.net/>> Van Sant, Peter. " Rescued From Sex Slavery." 48 Hours: CBS News, February 2005.