

Matt culp

Sociology, Slavery



Matt Culp Professor Sheridan Criminology 11 December 2012 Human Sex Trafficking in the United States When people think of slavery, they most often imagine the 1800's and The Civil War. Some think of the Romans or Greeks taking slaves for work after winning battles. For the most part, we don't believe that slavery still exists today. Most would be surprised to hear that it is still going on, and it occurs right in our own neighborhoods. The type of slavery I'm talking about is human sex trafficking. The sex-slave trade has been in the United States for as long as we have been a nation and is a growing concern for Law Enforcement agencies around the country. Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan, as quoted in our textbook, states that, " Human trafficking is the third-largest illegal-income source in America today, [only] behind drugs and gunrunning. The dark side of human trafficking is that, unlike drugs, human beings can be resold and reused, thus making them a more profitable commodity" (374). In a bulletin released by the FBI, they say that " it [human sex trafficking] is the fastest-growing business of organized crime and the third-largest criminal enterprise in the world" (Walker-Rodriguez, and Hill). What exactly is human trafficking? According the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, it is defined as, " All acts involved in the transport, harboring, or sale of persons within national or across international borders through coercion, force, kidnaping, deception or fraud, for purposes of placing persons in situations of forced labor or services, such as forced prostitution, domestic servitude, debt bondage or other slavery-like practices" (Pub. L. 106-386). This is a big problem not just in the United States, but globally. The U. S. State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report 2012 confirmed there are at least

12. 5 million slaves in the world today, where 8 out of every 10 incidents were classified as sex trafficking (Clinton, and CdeBaca). There are several factors that have contributed to the increase in sex slavery both in the United States and abroad. The changes to our world over the past decade have increased the need and desire to for people to move around the world. The internet and computer age has significantly increased the speed and ease it is for people to move across borders and travel the globe. Criminal enterprises have taken advantage of these new technologies and use them to grow and expand their reach. One of the factors is simple: gender. Some nations around the world still prefer sons who bear the family name and bring economic value to the family. They view daughters as an economic burden and thus, sell them to brothels or traffickers to avoid the problems they may bring. Another important reason has to do with communist Russia and the fall of the Berlin Wall. With the fall and the collapse of their central government, criminals began to rule the land. Marie Ragab, as quoted in our textbook, says, " Once the Soviet Union collapsed, organized crime took over and there was a new market. Suddenly there were all of these western-looking girls on the market" (375). The collapse also brought on tough economic times and many women were seeking work abroad. Many women were lured by great sounding opportunities only to end up being kidnapped and sold into the sex slave trade. Another important reason is the lack of international awareness to this issue. In countries all over the world, trafficking is downplayed and is seen as a harmless crime. In some nations, police even take bribes and assist the traffickers by helping them acquire new people to be sold on the market. The following image depicts nations

who do not comply with U. S. trafficking laws and nations where sex slaves come from. [pic] In my opinion, the worst part of this revolting practice is the people who these traffickers specifically target. Christine Dolan, a freelance journalist, spent some time working with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). She spent time working in Europe, mainly around the Balkans and southeast Europe. What she finds most shocking is the age at which these children are being taken and sent into slavery. Dolan is quoted in our textbook saying, " what's nearly impossible for people to understand [is] toddlers and infants are being kidnapped and sexually molested" (375). Bob Mosier, an International Justice Mission investigator is quoted in our book saying, " a virgin can cost a customer more than \$10,000" (375). Why would someone want to steal a child or infant and send them into slavery? It all has to do with the outbreak of HIV/AIDS. Ernie Allen, the president of NCMEC says, " we have seen kids exploited and in the stream of child trafficking as young as 3 or 4 years old. This is not just a by-product of pedophilia or some sort of sexual attraction to younger kids. Part of this is that because of the AIDS epidemic there is a demand for younger and younger kids because of the thought that they would be less likely to be HIV-positive" (Glick and Miller, 376). How would someone even begin to put an end to human trafficking? Well the good news is that the U. S. had enacted laws and is cracking down with the U. N. to work with countries where human trafficking is a big issue. It started with, The Trafficking & Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). It has been updated several times, most recently in 2008. This act created much stronger penalties for those convicted of human trafficking and it also set forth a clear definition. It labels

countries that do or do not comply with international sanctions and puts nations on a watch list. Since the creation of this act, the U. S. also created a Trafficking in Persons Report every year and examines the issue and what progress is being made in the war on trafficking. I believe that we are headed in the right direction with these measures. The FBI, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services also have various offices that deal solely with the issue of human trafficking. Even local police and military members receive classes on human sex trafficking and how to spot and deal with victims and offenders. Before my first and second deployments, I received extensive training on the subject. Human sex trafficking has even been popularized in the movies. The hit movie Taken portrayed the inner working of the business and how they operate. In my opinion, I believe that we are doing more now than we ever have in the past. We are moving forward with this issue and we will continue to combat this disgusting practice. With worldwide support and awareness, we can end all forms of slavery for good. Works Cited Clinton, Hillary, and Luis CdeBaca. United States. Department of State. Trafficking in Persons Report 2012. Washington D. C.: , 2012. Web. . Glick, L., and J. M. Miller. Criminology. 2. 374-377. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2008. Print. Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. Pub. L. 106-386. 114 Stat. 1464. 28 October 2000. Web. 11 December 2012 from . Walker-Rodriguez, Amanda, and Rodney Hill. " Human Sex Trafficking." FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011. Web. Web. 11 Dec. 2012. .