Human Trafficking: Narrowing Impacts on the Globe, Nation, State, and Lodging Industry

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By

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Human trafficking activity is on the rise, which is a direct result of a growing number of traffickers frequently exploiting innocent victims for sex and labor. The underlying causes of human trafficking can be traced back to national economic, political, and socio-cultural climates and the harmful effects on world populations. The business of selling human beings for profit penetrates every level of society, from the global populace to American citizens to residents of the state of Indiana. Within these social structures, one of the most traffic-prone industries is the lodging industry. The convenient hotel locations, anonymous registration process, and all-inclusive services provide an ideal setting for trafficking activity to transpire. In order to prevent the prevalence of human trafficking in the industry from increasing further, lodging companies must actively adopt appropriate anti-trafficking programs and invest in employee training and overall awareness. The following document is a thorough analysis of the issue of human trafficking and how it negatively affects populations and the environment in which they live.

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Part I: Human Trafficking Overview

Introduction

Human trafficking is a critical issue that has affected the world for centuries, and it has created a significant impact on the economic, socio-cultural, and political sectors of society. According to the International Labor Organization, approximately 20.9 million people are victims of forced labor, which includes trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation, globally ("Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012" 1). Human trafficking is defined by the United Nations as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, or fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes the prostitution of persons or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. (Aronowitz 1)

Essentially, human trafficking occurs when an individual is taken advantage of by a more powerful individual and treated as a commodity for the financial benefit of the trafficker. Victims are often promised employment in a foreign country, transported far from their homes, and then sold to customers for services such as sex or labor. The act of trafficking must be comprised of an action such as recruitment or transportation, a means of threat, force, coercion, and goals for exploitation. One element from each of the three categories must be present in order for trafficking to occur in compliance with the legal definition (Aronowitz 1-2).
There are many different categories of trafficking; including adoption, soldiering, marriage, and organs, but the main focus of the paper is going to be on the two most common types, sex trafficking and forced labor trafficking. Sex trafficking is a modern day form of slavery in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years ("Fact Sheet: Sex Trafficking"). Victims of sex trafficking can be women or men, young girls or boys, but the majority are women and girls. The victims are often coerced or tricked into believing that they have been granted a job in a foreign country, so they travel away from their homes only to find that the offer was a scam. Other methods sex traffickers use to entrap victims are false marriage proposals, kidnapping, and buying them from relatives who sell their loved ones for the profit ("Fact Sheet: Sex Trafficking"). According to the United Nations Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation accounts for 58 percent of all trafficking cases detected globally (7). Furthermore, there are nearly two million children currently enslaved by the commercial sex trade ("Sex Trafficking"). Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation has become the most widespread type of human trafficking globally and the number of victims continues to increase.

The second most common form of trafficking is forced labor. Forced labor is the use of deception, threats or violence to compel someone to labor without pay or for no pay beyond the substance necessary to continue the labor. It is called by many names, including debt bondage and forced labor, and is a form of modern slavery ("Forced Labor Slavery"). Those who have been enslaved are often unable to escape from their traffickers due to the use of a method called debt bondage. In this illegal scheme, the trafficker or employer offers a small loan to the laborer, who accepts it under the impression that it will be paid off quickly through hours worked.
However, the employer manages to control the victim by refusing to pay for work completed and charging overwhelming interest rates on the original loan amount. The trafficker now owns the laborer and will not release them from their work obligations until all of the surmounting debt has been paid ("Forced Labor Slavery"). The trafficker ensures that the debt will never be completely gone and he/she continues to force the victims to work for him/her. Victims are granted no pay or paid an hourly wage far below the minimum wage standard. They are often deprived of the freedom of movement and prohibited to leave the property where they are forced to work ("Forced Labor Slavery").

The individuals who are wrongfully recruited, coerced, and exploited are referred to as human trafficking victims. They are often led to believe that traffickers have their best interests in mind only to be used for their bodies in sex and slave labor markets. Deeply rooted social values and practices create vulnerabilities that make these victims into easy targets for traffickers. Groups of men, women, and children have all become subject to the control and exploitation of traffickers, who are able to recruit these vulnerable individuals with little risk of detection. The most vulnerable group out of the three listed is children, for they are neither mature enough nor legally able to make their own life decisions. Because they are dependent on adult guardians to be their advocates, the lack of supervision and the tendency for children to quickly trust others can lead to exploitation. Following behind children in the profile of victims is women, who are less empowered than men in societies around the world. Many regions have demeaned women, refusing to give them equal rights and deeming them unfit for proper employment. These factors, in combination with their general lack of physical strength, make them easy targets for traffickers to abuse. Another group that is considered vulnerable is that of migrants. They travel to foreign countries in search of opportunities for employment and
improved quality of life. Immigrants often have no connections in the unfamiliar country and they are under pressure to find work quickly, so traffickers take advantage of their need for connections and money. Other potential victims are adolescents, people with disabilities, and refugees ("Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012"). The victims of human trafficking have little control over their bondage situation, for they have been forced into vulnerable positions by society. They lack support systems and authority, so it is easier for traffickers to take advantage of their isolation and exploit their bodies for profit.

The traffickers themselves, the majority of which are men, often gain power through the use of financial and social resources that can be used to earn revenue. A typical trafficker utilizes networks of businesses and social circles in order to support their criminal actions. With the financial resources and appropriate social networks, these criminals are able to grant themselves the power needed to organize human trafficking activities ("Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012"). The control that the trafficker exercises over members of the society in which they operate is translated into dominance over the victims that are trafficked through these criminal networks. They are able to manage their resources carefully and with little chance of being caught, for the traffickers’ societal influence keeps officials quiet and victims illegally enslaved.

**Trafficking on a Global Scale**

The staggering number of human trafficking victims cannot be measured precisely due to the extensive nature of global trafficking as well as the uncooperative attitude of many nations when it comes to acknowledging the grave issue. However, the United Nations and other organizations have conducted extensive research on the worldwide trafficking conditions and as
a result, they have compiled a large amount of accurate information that puts the issue into perspective.

Some of the general global statistics that were found by researching organizations involve estimates of the labor breakdown by type of exploitation and by the genders exploited. By breaking trafficking cases down into the two major categories, the United Nations claims that trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitations accounts for 58 percent of all trafficking cases detected globally, while trafficking for forced labor accounts for 36 percent. Furthermore, the share of detected cases of trafficking for forced labor has doubled over the past four years, but trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation remains the most documented form ("Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012"). Global human trafficking victims can be further categorized by their gender and age, with some individuals being more attractive to traffickers than others. Women account for 55-60 percent of all trafficking victims detected globally, but that percentage has been decreasing due to the rise in the number of girl victims. 27 percent of those 20.9 million detected victims are children, with every two out of three being girls. Many regions such as Africa and the Middle East have reported a significant increase in the percentage of cases that involve child trafficking, other regions such as Europe or Central America have reported no change or a decrease in the exploitation of children. The number of enslaved men has remained stable or increased slightly over the period between 2007 and 2010, constituting 15-20 percent of the total number of known victims ("Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012"). By identifying the type of trafficking taking place as well as gender and age of victims, it is easier to identify the global trends and to gain perspective of the large scope of human trafficking.
Even though global statistics on the issue of human trafficking are readily available, it is difficult to provide overarching figures characterizing victims due to extreme variation between regions and countries. Trafficking in persons is a global crime affecting nearly all countries in every region of the world. Between 2007 and 2010, victims of 136 different nationalities were detected in 118 countries across the world. Even more countries were affected by the approximately 460 trafficking flows, which are links between two countries or two places within the same country with at least five officially detected victims having been trafficked from the origin to the destination country. The majority of these trafficking flows are intraregional, with almost half of detected victims being exploited from a country in the same region as the country of destination (“Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012”). It takes less effort on the behalf of traffickers to obtain victims from a region nearby, while the victims are still miles away from their home country. In general, victims are trafficked from relatively poorer areas to more affluent areas within their country of origin or across borders. This broad pattern can be found in many regions and sub regions worldwide, with specific countries playing the roles of both trafficking origins and trafficking destinations. Countries in South and East Asia and the Pacific, as well as in Africa and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, detect almost exclusively victims from within the region, while several other countries in the Middle East, North America and Western and Central Europe have a relatively high proportion of victims from other regions or sub regions (“Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012”). Being aware of trafficking flows and the nationalities of victims allows for more accurate enforcement practices and provides informational support for applicable prevention measures.
**Trafficking within the United States**

Even though trafficking within the United States is not nearly as prevalent as it may be in other countries, it is still a critical issue that cannot be ignored. As defined under U.S. federal law, victims of human trafficking include children involved in the sex trade, adults age 18 or over who are coerced or deceived into commercial sex acts, and anyone forced into different forms of labor or services, such as domestic workers held in a home, or farm workers forced into labor against their will (“Human Trafficking”). Compared to the definition developed by the United Nations, this definition of human trafficking focuses more on the age of the victims rather than the act of trafficking itself.

The U.S. is one of the top 10 destinations for human trafficking, with tens of thousands of people trafficked into the country each year (Hepburn, and Simon 1-26). According to a 2005 report from the U.S. State Department, between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year (“CNN Freedom Project: Modern Day Slavery”). However, due to the discrete nature of the crime, the number of total victims both trafficked into and trafficked from the country is largely unknown (“Human Trafficking”). According to the 2011 National Human Trafficking Resource Center Report, cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 U.S. states (“End Child Trafficking”) with reports documented within 90 cities (Hepburn, and Simon 1-26). The United States has been identified as a destination for trafficking activity as well as a source of victims who are exploited within their own country for labor or sexual favors. As these statistics show, the United States is not immune to the criminal activity of human trafficking and the region has become a prominent center for severe trafficking victimization.

Victims of human trafficking in the United States include U.S. citizens or foreign nationals, adults or minors, and men and women (“Human Trafficking”). Most victims detected
in the broader Americas are female and children. Approximately 100,000 to 300,000 children are
estimated to be in the United States sex trade alone ("Human Trafficking"). These victims are
subject to the will of their captors, being forced to work for little to nothing in the sex industry or
in jobs with physical labor. Trafficking for forced labor is common in the Americas, accounting
for 44 percent of cases of detected victims with sexual exploitation also being involved in
slightly more than half of detected cases ("Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012").
Common places where forced labor has been found in the United States include domestic
servitude and small-scale mom and pop labor operations, to more large-scale operations such as
farms and factories. Sex trafficking, the second form of exploitation within the country, occurs
within numerous venues in the broader sex industry and is commonly found in street prostitution,
online escort services, residential brothels, and brothels disguised as massage businesses
("Human Trafficking").

Most trafficking flows that exist within the North American region remain within the
region, with victims originating mainly from North and Central America ("Global Report on
Trafficking in Persons 2012"). However, persons are also trafficked from Mexico, Central
America, East Asia, South Asia, Africa, and Europe for the purposes of forced labor and
commercial sexual exploitation. In fact, the U.S. is the most frequent destination for victims
trafficked from Latin America and the Caribbean, and one of the top three destinations for
persons trafficked from Asia (other than Asian nations) (Hepburn, and Simon 1-26). In terms of
interregional flows, victims from South and East Asia were widely detected in the United States,
accounting for about 28 percent of victims trafficked into the country ("Global Report on
Trafficking in Persons 2012"). The United States has become a destination for the hosting of
human trafficking victims from foreign countries as well as victims from within the borders and such criminal activity has a significant impact on the health of society.

**Trafficking within Indiana**

Human trafficking is an issue that is not only present in foreign countries or other American states, but it can be found within Indiana communities. There is little information about how many victims are actually exploited within the state, but from 2005 until the present, there have been a total of 102 trafficking cases in Indiana and 412 detected in the greater Midwest region of the United States (Zoeller). From the period of January 1, 2013 to June 30, 2013, there were a total of 128 calls received through the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) for the state of Indiana. Of these 128 total calls, 26 were classified as high or moderate relevance to human trafficking activity. The trafficking cases reported to the NHTRC were identified as sex (20), labor (5), and other (1) (“National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Data Breakdown Indiana State Report”). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), about 8 in 10 of suspected incidents of human trafficking from 2008 to 2010 were classified as sex trafficking, making it one of the most prevalent forms in the state (Ortiz). Victims can be trafficked for sex through industries involving brothels, truck stops, pornography, and hotels and they may be trafficked for labor through restaurant/food service, peddling, and agriculture (“National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Data Breakdown Indiana State Report”). Indiana may not be the most popular location for human trafficking activity, but the state has detected several trafficking cases within the past year alone and actions must be taken in order to prevent such heinous crimes from continuing.
One of the most recent events that have brought the issue of human trafficking to light in Indiana is the 2012 Super Bowl game in Indianapolis. Hundreds of thousands of fans travelled to Indianapolis from across the country and globe to enjoy the game and festivities offered by the state. Studies have shown that there is an increase in the demand for commercial sex services surrounding large sporting events or conventions, indicating that the risk for trafficking activity increases when there are more customers to be served (Zoeller). As a result of the Super Bowl game being held in the capital city, human trafficking activity rose significantly. For example, a study conducted by KlaasKids Foundation, which is dedicated to the protection of children, found increases in the amount of escort ads that were featured in the classified section of newspapers leading up to the 2012 football event (Zoeller). The increase in advertisements indicate the seriousness of the issue, for traffickers are confident that sports fans will pay for the services of a prostitute or sex slave. Judging from the 130 arrests made in Texas as a result of the 2011 Super Bowl game, Indiana was prepared to combat the criminal activity that follow such large events. A 10-day anti-trafficking effort was launched in order to combat the projected illegal activity and the operation resulted in a total of 556 arrests for offenses such as sex solicitation, prostitution, and human trafficking (Williams 9). Within the 10-day period, 69 commercial sex arrests were made a few days before and on the date of the 2012 Super Bowl (Zoeller). Even though Indiana has taken action against human trafficking during peak event season, it is important to continue to promote awareness and eliminate the growing amount of human trafficking activity within the state.
Part II: The Role of the Lodging Industry in Human Trafficking

Introduction

The lodging industry plays a large part in perpetuating the issue of human trafficking due to their accessibility and inexperience with signs of illegal trafficking activity. The problem has grown so large that approximately 8 out of 10 human trafficking arrests occur in or around a hotel (Keating). Traffickers utilize all available resources or venues, including hotels and motels, in order to promote their crimes. They take advantage of the privacy and anonymity offered by lodging properties and they are able to operate with low risk when the staff and community members are unaware of the problem at hand (“Human Trafficking in Hotels and Motels: Victim and Location Indicators”). A prime trafficking hotel location is not just restricted to urban areas, for these activities may occur within any available property. Lodging facilities within the mid-scale price range are the most attractive to traffickers because they are provided with amenities such as free continental breakfasts for the victims, access to Wi-Fi to advertise their trade, and free parking, in addition to the room (Keating).

Hotels and motels are used to supplement both sex and labor trafficking activities, with the property as the meeting location for victims and customers in the sex trade and the hotel management as employer for labor slaves. Sex trafficking in hotels occurs when victims are forced to provide commercial sex to paying customers. Victims are often forced to stay at a lodging location where customers are able to easily come to them, or they are required to visit rooms that have been rented out by customers. Victims and their traffickers often stay in hotels and motels when moving to different cities or states in attempts to keep their activities out of the public eye (“Human Trafficking in Hotels and Motels: Victim and Location Indicators”).

In addition to sex trafficking activities, labor trafficking also occurs in many properties that do not pay their employees for the time worked. Victims are often forced to work in hotels
or motels as unpaid employees by dishonest subcontracting companies. There have been several instances of hotel franchise owners directly participating in criminal trafficking activity by recruiting workers from foreign countries and exploiting them within their property ("Human Trafficking in Hotels and Motels: Victim and Location Indicators"). According to Sandi D. Mitchell, a travel technology manager who oversees employee training to counter trafficking, "there is no one way that [trafficking] happens...Some [victims] are abducted, some are wooed, some believe they are coming to America for a better life.” These victims are manipulated into believing that they have secured a decent position within the lodging industry, when in reality, they are being set up for servitude. Victims of labor trafficking are often hidden from detection by hotel management through third-party suppliers of janitorial, housekeeping, landscaping or other services (Mohn).

One such case involving labor trafficking in a hotel setting was reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center through their human trafficking hotline. While working at a hotel cleaning rooms and performing general maintenance, a woman was offered a position at another hotel in a different city. Her employer informed her that she would not be required to clean any guest rooms and that the pay was much better than in her current position. When the woman arrived at the new location, she was expected to work extremely long hours cleaning rooms and she was inconsistently paid small amounts for her labor. Because she was far from her hometown and had little savings, she was afraid to leave her abusive employment situation, for the threat of homelessness loomed over her head. When she gathered the courage to voice her concerns to her employers, they threatened to fire her if she continued to complain ("Hospitality Industry"). Cases like this one occur within lodging properties worldwide and affect innocent people who are simply hoping for a better employment situation.
Many lodging companies have denied the presence of human trafficking in the industry, refusing to take action against such a serious problem. From the perspective of some lodging company executives, investing in trafficking prevention admits that illegal activities are occurring on the premises. This is the mentality that has crippled so many hotels, stunting the growth of anti-trafficking training programs for industry employees. Ultimately, the decision to maintain ignorance on the concern of human trafficking has led to continued use of the lodging industry as a haven for traffickers worldwide.

Prevention

In order for progress to be made in the prevention of illegal human trafficking activities, lodging properties must be proactive against the threat of these crimes. One of the ways that they may prevent trafficking is by adopting The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, also known simply as the Code. The Code is an initiative founded by the United Nation’s Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and supported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It was founded in Sweden in 2002 and has grown into a global anti-trafficking initiative around the world (Higgins). The Code is an industry driven program that provides awareness, tools, and support to the tourism and travel industries in order to combat the exploitation of children in tourism settings. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to come alongside travel and tourism companies and combat the crime of human trafficking (“About The Code”). Even though the policies outlined in the curriculum are directed toward children who are exploited sexually, it is a starting point for more extensive policies in hotels and other industries related to tourism. The Code outlines six criteria that must be adopted by any property or company once they join the initiative: to establish a policy and procedures
against sexual exploitation of children, to train employees on prevention and reporting, to integrate a zero tolerance policy, to provide information to travelers, to engage stakeholders in prevention, and to report their progress annually ("About the Code"). The hotel properties that agree to adopt The Code must adhere to these criteria and provide regular feedback about the effectiveness of preventative actions. The program is currently implemented globally in 66 countries with 1,305 member tourism associations employing 6,782 trained staff members ("About the Code").

In addition to adopting anti-trafficking policies like The Code, lodging properties must invest heavily in proper training for employees. A hotel may be a member of as many anti-trafficking programs as possible, however, without proper application, the illegal activities will continue to occur. According to literature published by the Polaris Project, there are key indicators that trafficking activities may be occurring within a hotel property. Some indicators suggesting that a young child could be a victim of sex trafficking that hotel management and staff must be aware of the presence of an overly controlling male figure, injuries or signs of physical abuse, lack of identification documents, and few or no personal possessions. Potential victims may also exhibit signs of fear, anxiety, depression, or nervousness, appear to be malnourished, or claim to be an adult although appearance would suggest a younger age (Manley). Indicators such as these are often subtle and easily overlooked, so it is important that lodging staff be trained in the detection of trafficking activity as well as the actions taken in response.
Risks for Hotel Properties

If hoteliers refuse to take action against illegal criminal activities occurring on their property, they will suffer the dire consequences. The first critical result of trafficking ignorance is the jeopardization of the safety of both guests and staff. Trafficking is often connected to gang activity and violent assaults that can place guests and staff in danger. The second risk that owners take is that of the hotel property reputation, for if customers are aware or suspicious of illegal activities, they will be less likely to come back. The public’s opinion on the operation could be negatively altered if they witness police cars, helicopters, and news stories concerning the hotel. Bad publicity associated with trafficking can harm the reputation of a property indefinitely, so owners must take precautions against human trafficking in their hotels. The third result of lack of awareness is financial risk. Damages to a reputation often result in severe blows to the bottom line. In addition to the lowered guest traffic, the hotel may be charged with additional legal fees and property damage associated with trafficking activity. The final risk that may become crippling for a lodging property is the legal consequences. Various state and municipal laws could hold an owner liable for any trafficking that occurs under their jurisdiction. (Mayock). These risk factors should encourage hotel companies to put necessary programs in place in order to prevent human trafficking activities and avoid the negative consequences associated with unawareness.
Part III: Economic, Political, and Socio-Cultural Causes of Human Trafficking

Economic Causes

The economic status throughout the world has had a staggering impact on the prevalence of human trafficking activities, for these illegal acts thrive off of the laws of supply and demand. Human trafficking is the fastest growing business of organized crime and the third largest criminal enterprise in the world (Walker-Rodriguez, and Hill). The estimated global annual profits made from the exploitation of all trafficked forced labor are $31.6 billion. The largest portion of this total, adding up to $15.5 billion, is generated in industrialized economies, such as the United States. The second highest dollar amount from human trafficking, totaling $9.7 billion, is generated in Asia and the Pacific regions. The remaining $6.4 billion is created from trafficking activities in regions such as Latin America, the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East (“Human Trafficking: The Facts”). Profit drives every aspect of the trafficking industry from the perspective of the traffickers, so as long as they are securing a profit, they will continue to exploit human beings (Cameron and Newton). These statistics show that the business of selling human beings for sex and labor is thriving and is only increasing as the demand is met with a plentiful supply of victims.

By the year 2020, it is predicted that human trafficking will surpass drug and arms dealing in its frequency, cost to human quality of life, and profitability to criminals (Wheaton, Schauer, and Galli). This increasing frequency of trafficking activity is the result of the increasing demand for underpaid, overworked individuals. The trafficking system follows the most basic economic rule of supply and demand, with customers desiring a product that is then provided. The supply refers to the services provided by individuals trafficked for both forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. The demand refers to the customers who are paying for the sexual favors and the employers who are forcing victims to work for little or no monetary
compensation. In the market of human trafficking, the consumers are employers or customers paying for exploited labor and the products are human beings (Wheaton, Schauer, and Galli). Human traffickers simply capitalize on the demand for exploited human services by connecting the customers to the products (victims) that they have to offer.

Human traffickers can be characterized as business people who carefully monitor the demands of the market and respond with the supply of human labor. The traffickers act as intermediaries to provide the employers who utilize the victims with the desired type of worker. A successful trafficker will know the target market and adapt as populations become vulnerable and as the desires of customers change (Wheaton, Schauer, and Galli). The process is similar to how business might be conducted in a free market setting, with traffickers serving as the middlemen who connect the customer with a requested product or service. Like the average business-oriented person, traffickers must compare the risks and the rewards associated with engaging in illegal trafficking activities. However, the industry is driven by low risk and high profits, so it is very attractive to human traffickers. The risk remains low because the surrounding community is often unaware of the issue at hand, government entities are not prepared to respond, and law enforcement often does not follow up on reports of these criminal activities. The profits are often high due to the fact that individuals are willing to pay for the services of trafficked persons, so traffickers are able to deliver the service in demand with minimal production costs ("Why Trafficking Exists"). The potential for maximum profits, in combination with minimal risk, creates an attractive business venture that attracts traffickers and encourages these criminals to continue coercing and exploiting victims.

Cameron and Newton argue that economic need is the central driving force that creates vulnerable victims that can then be easily recruited by traffickers. They are more apt to fall into
the harmful cycle of deception, coercion, and exploitation due to their poor economic standing. In addition to a poor economic standing, other economic factors such as globalization, extreme poverty, and economic downturns sustain the increasing human trafficking trend (Cameron and Newton). In particular, increasing globalization has made a significant impact on human trafficking activity around the world. The opening of national boarders has led to a simplified process of allowing for goods and immigrants to cross boundaries into foreign countries (Chuang). Even though this may appear to be a positive shift, it only perpetuates the issue of human trafficking. The global economy creates wealth inequalities between the developed nations and those that are still developing. The citizens who live in these poor countries are finding that there are few opportunities for employment within their native area, so they are forced to travel to foreign countries to make a living. Traffickers see this as a chance to turn a profit, so they subsequently take advantage of these vulnerable immigrants (Chuang). Poverty and severe economic downturns are closely related to globalization in its role in the continuation of human trafficking activities. The failing economies in developing countries often lead to the citizens acting in desperation in order to provide for their families. Traffickers capitalize on this desperation when people from poor countries leave their homes to look for employment in other nations or sell themselves and/or their loved ones in order to gain some sort of income. However, the victim is often unaware of what they have agreed to when they come to a trafficker for “employment.” The economic climate drives the business of human trafficking, which thrives off of poor communities producing susceptible victims.
Political Causes

The entities that govern nations have a profound impact on the health of the citizens that are under their control. Because of the all-powerful nature of these governments, the actions of officials often determine the prevalence of human trafficking. Political factors such as government instability, militarism, civil unrest, and internal armed conflict may result in an increase in trafficking activities. Furthermore, the presence of corrupt government officials and the limited capacity of law enforcement to control the movement between borders only intensifies the seriousness of the human trafficking situation. Many nations lack anti-trafficking laws and government officials are unwilling to support and enforce existing legislation ("Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons" 454-456). With widespread government inactivity, corruption, and weakness, illegal human trafficking activities continue to thrive in countries around the world.

One of the most significant political factors in the perpetuation of human trafficking is the strength of the governing body within a country or state entity. Individuals are impacted directly through laws, policies, and programs that increase or decrease vulnerability to trafficking as well as indirectly through the effective (or ineffective) monitoring of broader social conditions (Cameron and Newton). Many governing bodies have taken steps toward the elimination of human trafficking through specific legislation, such as the Trafficking in Persons Report, which has been published by the U.S. Department of State and the Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, which is a global initiative. Even though many countries have signed the anti-trafficking protocol, some lack the political will or capability to create domestic laws, policies, and programs to ensure that the overarching goals are reached (Cameron and Newton). Officials
realize the severity of the human trafficking issue, but they are unable to slow its growth because of government weakness in bureaucracy and lack of financial resources.

In addition to the inability of unstable governments to implement anti-trafficking legislation, political turmoil and conflict have increased the incidence of human trafficking activity. When governing bodies exist in a state of confusion or agitation, citizens are tempted to relocate to a country or region that is at peace. Many leave their homes in order to ensure their own safety and search for reliable employment (Cameron and Newton). The combination of migration and no way to make a living often results in desperation for individuals or families living through the political confusion. Desperation creates vulnerability and increases the likelihood of human traffickers taking advantage of fleeing citizens and enticing them with promises of employment. Therefore, the instability of the political climate directly relates to the increasing amount of people falling victim to the evils of human trafficking.

The deeper causes of human trafficking have gone unnoticed by the governing bodies that have been charged with the well being of its citizens. Governments have been reluctant to view trafficking as an issue related to migration, poverty, and discrimination, for these factors stem from government failure (Chuang). Instead, they choose to criminalize trafficking in an attempt to address the complex societal issues through law and order. This criminalizing process places the power in the hands of the police and government officials, which increases the likelihood for corruption (Cameron and Newton). The presence of corrupt authority in society allows for illegal activities to continue despite efforts to eliminate trafficking through legislation and programs. Data from the Council of Europe suggest that corruption is one of the most important cost factors for human traffickers (Aronowitz).
Corruption allows the trafficking process to remain protected from prosecution and facilitates the victimization of innocent people. Corruption assists the victim’s movements within a country and across borders. When trafficking is discovered, corruption results in laws and judicial processes being disregarded. Corruption undoes institutional safeguards…that should legally protect the victim. Corruption also helps criminals and their accomplices to hide the profits generated by human trafficking. ("Corruption and Human Trafficking" 2)

Without the presence of dishonest law enforcement, border guards, police, diplomats, lawyers, and security, the trade of human beings could not prosper (Aronowitz). The authorities entrusted with the safety of individuals across the globe have the power to either enforce anti-trafficking laws or abandon obligations for more enticing offers for personal gain. When they chose to turn a blind eye or participate in these illegal activities, corruption occurs and human trafficking continues to increase.

Socio-Cultural Causes

Social and cultural norms play a significant role in the lives of people around the world, for they ultimately determine their value to the nation’s majority. In some countries, these social and cultural practices are a major cause of trafficking. One of the most influential social constructs that creates vulnerability to exploitation is the devaluation of women and girls ("Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons"). Even though both men and women are victims of human trafficking, most of the illegal activity targets women because of their lower standing in society. Because gender encompasses the social and cultural perception of human beings, it often determines the expectations and capabilities associated with the male and female genders.
Many world societies place a lower value on the female gender, which creates more vulnerability to trafficking activity. This devaluation of women suggests that women have access to fewer resources, are less likely to secure desired employment, and have fewer educational opportunities. As a result, the majority of the world’s poor are women, they are viewed as vulnerable, and they are often trafficked for sex and domestic labor (Cameron and Newman). Women and girls are automatically at a disadvantage because of the gender constructs that have been established in society. Due to the fact that they are often denied the privileges of education and high-paying employment, they are forced to find alternative means of income. Human traffickers are aware of these unfavorable cultural and societal factors and they take advantage of vulnerable women and girls in such societies.

Aside from the socio-cultural causes related to gender, human trafficking activity is fueled by racial and ethnic discrimination within a region. These individual characteristics contribute to an individual’s susceptibility to trafficking. Discrimination creates a barrier between populations and employment in their native countries (Cameron and Newman). Employers may be unwilling to offer secure positions to individuals who are members of an ethnic group or caste that is discriminated against, so individuals are forced to move elsewhere for regular income. Not only is finding employment an issue in their home countries, but it may also affect their marketability in the destination country. Even though the job market may appear more promising in developed nations, employers may still be reluctant to hire minorities or individuals from foreign countries. They are unable to escape the stereotypes that are placed on them by their native society or by the society to which they are migrating (Cameron and Newman). As a result, many migrants who are actively searching for ways to generate income are driven away from traditional employment and into the grasp of human traffickers. These
deceiving business people present enticing offers of secure, respectable employment with sufficient income, but the reality of the situation is much different. The parties that are ethnically discriminated against are easy targets for such “employment” proposals, so traffickers take advantage of the need for income and exploit these individuals for sex and labor.
Part IV: Recommendations

Introduction

The economic, political, and socio-cultural causes of human trafficking have a lasting impact on the health of the greater societal structure as well as the prevalence of illegal trafficking activities within communities. Within global communities, the lodging industry has been infiltrated by these trafficking activities and often serves as hosts for victims that have been exploited sexually and employers of labor trafficking victims. Because of the anonymity and commodities offered by hotels, human traffickers use convenient lodging properties as centers for temporarily housing themselves, housing victims, and selling their services to customers. Some hotel owners engage in trafficking activities themselves by using victims for labor, paying them little to nothing and forcing them to work long hours in housekeeping, maintenance, and for other physical tasks. In order to combat the crime of human trafficking in the lodging industry, hotel companies must make strategic decisions and implement preventative programs. After researching human trafficking and its effect on lodging properties, I would personally recommend that companies adopt The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism and invest in extensive training that promotes awareness to staff and guests.

Adopt The Code

As I mentioned previously, The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism is a compilation of anti-trafficking resources for industries related to tourism. Because the lodging industry plays a significant role in travel and tourism, The Code is a relevant and helpful program that each hotel company should adopt and
put into practice. Carlson, owner of the Radisson hotel brand and other chains, was the first U.S.
hospitality company to sign The Code. Other prominent lodging companies such as Wyndham
Worldwide Corporation, Hilton Worldwide, and the Real Hospitality Group, which manages
hotels across the east coast, have adopted the regulations as well (Stevens). Even though these
companies that own and manage hotels have made the decision to adhere to The Code, there are
many others that have not yet implemented any form of anti-trafficking program. In order to
progress toward a completely trafficking-free community, all lodging companies must admit that
these illegal actions do occur in the industry and may even occur within their properties. Once
they realize that the threat of human trafficking is present, it is important to take action. The
Code has simplified the process of implementing anti-trafficking procedures, for it provides
valuable tools and professional support to interested companies. The program provides tools
needed for detection, awareness, and training, has been adopted by many reputable lodging
companies, and provides a solid starting point for future action. Therefore, I would recommend
that hotels proactively procure information about The Code and begin to incorporate the
requirements into everyday operations.

Staff Training

Training is one of the six aspects included in the execution of The Code, but I believe that
this section should be expanded with the staff members of lodging companies and their
individual properties. The employees that work within hotel properties are most likely to come in
contact with the guests most frequently through the check-in process, cleaning the rooms, and
providing service. Therefore, it is crucial to foster staff awareness of the possibility of human
trafficking within the lodging industry. Employees must be trained to recognize the signs
associated with trafficking activity, such as a younger child with a significantly older male, signs of injuries, no personal possessions, and excessive amounts of cash used ("Human Trafficking in Hotels and Motels: Victim and Location Indicators"), as well as the correct actions to take when witnessing possible trafficking. Employees must also be aware of the possibility of individuals trafficked for labor working within the hotel. If the front desk staff, housekeeping staff, dining employees, and other hotel staff members are trained properly, they will be able to take action to stop human trafficking from thriving within the hotel setting. Without relevant information about the issue and the proper training to prevent it, employees will remain ignorant and ineffective in the fight against trafficking. I would strongly encourage lodging companies to invest time and financial resources into a quality training program that will be implemented in all owned and franchised properties. Ideally, the training program would be modeled off of The Code, taking the elements outlined in the curriculum and applying them to the property. The successful design and implementation of an anti-trafficking training program would better prepare employees for human trafficking issues that may arise and would ultimately create a line of defense against these illegal activities from continuing in the lodging industry.
Works Cited


