

The Retail and Trafficking of Women throughout the European Union

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ABSTRACT

This paper displays the horrors and reality of human trafficking in our world. The paper focuses on the region of Europe and discussed how trafficking women is still a major issue today. This paper will discuss the reason there is still human trafficking, also referred to as commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), and how it affects the people.

Keywords: trafficking, women, sex

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout all of history the trafficking of women has been a threat to the lives of women. Human trafficking is the act in which people are sold, traded, or given as if they are an item of possession. Women are usually found to be victim to human trafficking, especially in third-world countries. Men of these lands trade and sell their women for a profit. These women are considered property and can be dealt with in any way that the owner sees appropriate. Murder, rape, neglect, malnourishment, incest, abuse, and several other negative factors all can come about through human trafficking. Africa and many other underprivileged countries are greatly affected by human trafficking, but not only do countries of poverty struggle with human trafficking, so do rich, prosperous nations. There are accounts of human trafficking in every land of this earth. It is the crime of all nations. Although the trafficking of women takes place all over the world, this paper will only focus on women trafficking in the European Union. Even though Europe has acquired so much technology and has been socialized through socialization, human trafficking is still a major issue throughout Europe. Human trafficking and prostitution has proved to be a prosperous industry; thought to gross \$7 billion in the European Union alone (Melrose & Barrett, 2006, pg 115).

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PART I: EUROPE: THE HISTORY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Throughout the course of history, Europe has been affiliated with the trafficking of women. Even back in the years of Christ there were women traffickers. Prostitution was a major industry at that time. Money in biblical times was tight and a living was made through hard work. There were few jobs that paid well that did not call for extensive labor. These jobs were the occupation of a tax collector and the service of prostitution. The women in prostitution did not make the high dollars; the men who sourced them out to others were the ones who would earn a large profit. Prostitution was easy and many jobs could be done at once. Prostitution made people into a 'human cash crop' (Sangera, 1998, cited from Melrose & Berrett, 2006, pg 112). The men could have several women that they owned and those women could do a number of jobs per day. This would bring forth a great money return for the owners. There were women who lived in poverty and would solicit themselves for extra money to live on. Prostitution was an easy means of money when economic times would get tough for the people.

Even today there is human trafficking. The phrase 'sex sells' has proven to be a true statement. There are exploiters taking advantage of others by trafficking and using them. It is a debatable issue, but even pornography, which has grown to be very evident today, is sometimes considered to be a form of human trafficking. Europe is becoming more liberal all the time; this has opened the door to pornography and the drug industry (*The Guardian*, 1999, cited in Melrose & Barrett, 2006, pg 112). Porn stars are being exploited and a profit is being made off of their exploitation.

Human trafficking is an illegal act that takes place when someone exploits another person for a profit. Women are usually the victims to trafficking and trafficking is usually done for

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sexual purposes. The women being exploited are usually living in fear and are too scared to stand up to their 'master' (Melrose & Berrett, 2006, pg 112). Another factor about human trafficking is that the women being exploited are regularly minors. It is expected that 20-50% of all the people in the sex trade are minors (Melrose & Berrett, 2006, pg 112).

PART II: REASONS WHY HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS HAPPENING

Human trafficking has been taking place for a long time and for many various reasons. These reasons include: poverty stricken areas, inequality issues, war and conflict, expansion of technology (pornography), and the subjugation of women (Melrose & Barrett, 2006, pg 115).

There are many areas of poverty in the Europe Union, even entire nations that are below the poverty line. Each EU countries put forth a certain amount of effort to comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). The countries that put forth the effort to comply is called a Tier 1 country. All of the EU countries are Tier 1 countries except for countries such as: Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. These countries are Tier 2 countries. This means that they make significant efforts to comply with TVPA, but fall a bit short compared to the Tier 1 countries. The people of these areas find it very difficult to make a living and find crime to be very prevalent in the cities. The drug market and other illicit doings thrive and become a primary means of money for some of the people. It is predicted by the European Union (EU) that the business of prostitution brings in a profit about \$7 billion each year within the UN (Melrose & Barrett, 2006, pg 115). It is predicted that globally, prostitution is thought to gross \$56 billion annually and some of the women involved make as much as \$100,000 a year

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from their pimps (Frederickson & Solomon, und., Economic, pg 3). Human trafficking is considered to be the third largest growing criminal activity to date (Melrose & Barrett, 2006, pg 155, as cited in WomanAid International, 2002). War can cause countries to become a land of poverty. War is very expensive and can cause a country to fall into debt very easily.

Even today, there remain issues concerning equality. In the year 1848 there was a movement that advocated for the rights of women. For many years different races and women have fought to be recognized as equal persons, but in some areas, equality has not been attained. Still today, women are said to make two-thirds the salary of a man. This is not a fair statistic. Women have proven themselves time and time again to be equal in stature to the fellow man.

Advancements in technology have also had a great impact on human trafficking. Pornography is human trafficking via online resources. Pornography causes the some of the same devastation as would actual trafficking. The women are still exposed and live under a contract for which they must expose themselves and degrade their bodies. The main difference is that porn stars do not have sex with all of their customers. They only perform for a visual display.

PART III: HOW EUROPE IS DEALING WITH HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Europe is infected with human trafficking. Stopping it is a monumental project; the only problem is too often the subject gets swept under the rug. People don't want to think about the atrocity that is going on in their very own backyard. The relief programs that are set up for these trafficked women barely even dent the huge amount of women affected by trafficking every

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year. The efficiency of these programs is very low, and these women are in desperate need of aid.

The fact is there are very few organizations that are set up to help these helpless victims. Girls that are found in Albania for example, have nowhere to go, as the Chief Police of Durres states, “At times we’ve had to keep the girls in prison because there’s nowhere else for them to go.” (Italy’s Sexual Slave Trade”, 2) In fact, there are many governments in Europe that actually support and maintain the prostitution in their country. Those governments that are opposed to organized prostitution either lack funds or are too small to handle the overwhelming number of women needing help. The Poppy Project, based in London, is an organization that takes these women in, educates them, helps them get out of the industry and then relocates them. It’s a very noble thing to do, but the Poppy Project could only take 25 women at one time while there were over 1400 women and children trafficked in the UK alone in 2005 (POPPY Project. http://www.eaves4women.co.uk/POPPY_Project/about_Us.php. Information about trafficking victims via statistics)

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, human trafficking is and has always been a major issue throughout the European Union. Even back in the years of Christ, human trafficking and prostitution were prevalent. The industry is a billion dollar one and is the income for many people. Today, the European Union has acknowledged this issue and has put forth effort to improve conditions. Special programs such as, The Poppy Project have been put into place to fight against trafficking

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crimes. The programs are not as successful as they should be; therefore there is still human trafficking taking place, but, an effort is being made. The European Union is a group of nations that are all Tier 1 with a few exceptions of Tier 2. Human trafficking is a terrible thing that the European Union will continue to fight against.

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