

Sex slavery: a new look at the world's oldest profession

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ABSTRACT

Prostitution is often quoted as being the world's oldest profession. There is no doubt that prostitution has been around since the first recordings of history. One of the oldest recordings of prostitution is found in the Bible which dates back over 2,000 years ago. The history of the Bible is backed up by many ancient documents from that era. Prostitution has always been a very controversial issue and will always be socially and politically divisive. There are legitimate arguments for both the legalization of prostitution and for the criminalization of prostitution. The balance seems to be in favor of criminalizing prostitution. There are 109 countries worldwide where prostitution is illegal and 77 countries where it is legal. Even in places known for prostitution, such as Thailand, it is not entirely legal, though it is tolerated and regulated to some extent. This paper will research how the illegal sex slave business thrives in countries where prostitution is illegal. The paper will look into the hidden costs of the sex slave business from a moral position, the cost in dollars, and from a world view that has allowed human sex slavery to thrive today. There will be a comparison of legalized prostitution as a business versus illegal prostitution as a business.

Keywords: human trafficking, sex slavery, legal prostitution, illegal prostitution

INTRODUCTION

Sex slavery and the business of prostitution is not a new concern. In fact, many people would say that prostitution is not the problem and the legalization of prostitution would prevent sex slavery. Clearly there are arguments on both sides of this issue with solid opinions supporting both views. According to proponents for the legalization of prostitution, benefits would include "better access to health care, protection from violent customers and protection from exploitation" (Unigwe, 2013). Other reasons often stated for the legalizing prostitution are that rape would decrease, STD's would be better controlled, human trafficking for sex would be decreased, business tax, fewer sex crimes, and there is no way to stop people from engaging in prostitution even if it is illegal (Debate.org). On the other side of the fence are those that believe prostitution should remain illegal. Most of the arguments on this side are based on moral reasons, but not all of them. Clearly the number one reason for keeping prostitution illegal is for moral reasons. If having sex outside of marriage is considered wrong, wouldn't prostitution encourage such acts? Another argument against the legalization of prostitution is that prostitution puts women in the place of being "merchandise" for sale. Clearly this could be very demeaning to women in general as even those women not engaged in prostitution would be faced with the reality that many men would still be looking at them as objects to satisfy their sexual desires and not as person of worth. Of course each one of the reasons given for the legalization of prostitution is debatable just as the reasons for keeping prostitution illegal are debatable. If it weren't so, clearly prostitution would either be legal or illegal worldwide. Those differences of opinion will remain very strong simply because the real main difference between the two sides is based more on morality than any other factor. Most people are very imbedded with their own idea of what is moral and what is not and other factors play a minimal role in their decision on this issue.

The one issue that both sides would probably agree on is that the sex slavery industry is not good for anyone other than those profiting from the business. By definition "sex slavery" is not a choice on the part of those being enslaved, whether female or male or adult or children. Evil and criminal enterprises are making a profit through enslaving humans to subject them to other peoples sexual desires. Whether the legalization of prostitution would help minimize the potential for this growing industry does not take away from the fact that the only people profiting from this business have a very low standard of morality when it comes to human rights and how human beings should be treated. The sex slave industry is not a debatable problem in the same way that the legalization of prostitution is. Arguments can be made supporting both sides of that issue. What argument can be made in support of sex slavery?

LITERATURE REVIEW

History has shown that since the beginning of man prostitution has been a thriving business. Prostitution is commonly known as the "the oldest profession" for good reason. In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, there is a reference to a shrine prostitute (Genesis 38: 21, New International Version) walking the road at Enaim. It would be difficult to ignore the similarity of today's street prostitute walking the streets of our cities advertising sex for sale. It was also common practice in biblical times that the victors of wars would enslave the conquered people and many of the women would serve as concubines to their masters. King Solomon, who

was considered a righteous man, had 700 concubines (1 Kings 11:3), leaving no doubt that this was a common practice during this period of history.

Rosemary Regello in her article, *A Short History of Sexual Slavery*, confirms that sex slavery has its roots in ancient history. Both the Greeks and the Romans made a practice of forcing captured young women to be consigned to a life of servitude as concubines or domestic servants. The 13th century African slave trade was not limited to slaves for servants, agriculture, or the labor industry. Women received a higher price in this industry than men, primarily because of the sexual appetites of their owners. In 1910, the U.S. Congress passed the White Slave Traffic Act, commonly known as the Mann Act (Regello, 2007). The primary purpose of this act was to address the human trafficking problem which was for the most part the result of prostitution. This act also had the moral characteristic to it as at the time it was viewed as immoral to transport someone between the states for the purpose of prostitution.

The lack of government involvement was clear in the 1900's as many feminists brought attention to the fact that many governments were implicated in sex slave schemes. It is common knowledge that the Japanese army enslaved up to 200,000 women and girls that were forced into sexual slavery. Known as "Comfort Women", most of them were from Korea, Japan, and the Dutch East Indies. This is still considered one of the world's largest cases of human trafficking. Until recently, most of these victims kept silent about their enslavement because of fear and shame and threats from the Japanese military. The Japanese government has continued to refuse any legal liability (Amnesty International, 2009).

The problem is not about to go away. A recent article from the Center for Court Innovation, *Identifying and Responding to Sex Trafficking: A Guide for the Courts*, estimates that between 300,000 to 2 million people are victims of human trafficking each year in the United States. According to this article the potential red flags for sex trafficking are prostitution, chronic running away, homelessness, shoplifting, substance abuse, domestic violence, and loitering. Involvement in any of the above needs to be recognized by the courts so that potential victims can be identified and given proper services to treat the problem. According to the article courts should take the following steps:

- Step 1: Understanding the Victim-Defendant Paradigm in Sex Trafficking Cases
- Step 2: Developing the Capacity to Identify Trafficking Victims
- Step 3: Strategies for Courts: Enhancing Response to Trafficking Victims

By following the guidelines, courts have the opportunity to be leaders in identifying and connecting victims to the proper resources (Center for Court Innovation, 2014).

HOW THE ILLEGAL SEX SLAVE BUSINESS THRIVES

For any business to thrive there must be a market for the product. The theory of supply and demand dictate the pricing for the product and how successful and competitive the product will be. Selling ice cubes at the North Pole would be no more successful than selling heaters along the equator. There must be a demand for the product and someone willing to supply the product. This is especially so in the sex slave business as the supplier must take the risk of criminal prosecution where the product is illegal. The key to the thriving of any illegal business is the risk-benefit ratio; the ratio of the risk of an action to its potential benefit. If the risk is very high and the benefit very low, the illegal activity is not likely to continue. And of course the

opposite is also true. If the risk is minimal the benefit high, the illegal activity will more than likely continue. This is where the role of government plays an important part. If governments take a lackadaisical approach to the illegal sex slave industry, the same government that declares the activity illegal, may actually be encouraging the illegal activity. This is often the case where it comes to the sex slave business. One only needs to keep minimally informed to know that government officials are often caught in scandalous sexual activity. If the very officials involved in enacting laws preventing the activity they themselves are engaging in, why would there be any pressure to prosecute the illegal activity?

When the government shows indifference to certain crimes, those crimes are going to thrive. Organized Crime is always waiting in the wings to determine what criminal enterprise is lucrative to become involved in. The fact that the enterprise is illegal drastically reduces the competition. Law abiding business entrepreneurs may not get involved in an illegal enterprise simply because their conscience won't allow it. Those that have thin conscience still may not get involved because of the risk-benefit ratio. Even though the benefit in profits could be enormous, they are limited to the activity for fear of damage to their reputation or the embarrassment of being caught. An example of government indifference is Thailand. During the Viet Nam war numerous American went to Bangkok, Thailand for their rest and recuperation leave (R & R). Those that served in Viet Nam knew the reason for this was because prostitution was readily available and very inexpensive when purchased with the American dollar. Prostitution was not strictly legal in Thailand during that time just as it is not entirely legal today. Prostitution in Thailand is tolerated and only partly regulated. And therein lies the problem. When governments make it known that there will not be any repercussions for those involved in certain illegal activities, those activities will thrive so long as there is a demand for the activity. An editorial in the Bangkok Post (Bangkok Post, 2006) the author points out that Thailand has historically been indifferent towards the modern day slave trade.

As stated in an article by Devin Brewer (Brewer, 2009) the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates there are 2.4 billion people worldwide involved in forced labor and subject to exploitation. The ILO also estimates that the global profits from trafficking amount to approximately \$32 billion. This clearly is a worldwide problem. The profit also helps make clear why this "illegal" industry survives. As Brewer points out, it is simply a matter of supply and demand that such an abhorrent industry survives. Although this industry as a whole includes all human trafficking, a great number of the slaves end up in the sex business.

HIDDEN COST OF THE SEX SLAVE INDUSTRY

The Moral Dilemma

There is no doubt that the sex industry has a hidden cost in morality issues. The issue of morality may be from an individual perspective or from a nations perspective. It is often said that governments cannot regulate morality. This of course is not true because all governments regulate morality. What is really being said is that governments cannot pass regulations that will *change* an individual's moral views. This is the dilemma when it comes to the sex slave industry. The argument for or against the legalization of prostitution will never be resolved. Both sides claim their views are based on morality. Those for the legalization of prostitution claim it is immoral to limit the freedom of choice to engage in sex for money. They will point out that sex between consenting adults should not be regulated in any way. Those against the legalization of

prostitution also base their opinions on morality. They will claim that it is immoral for even consensual sex outside of marriage. It would be unfair to judge the moral convictions of another individual, for moral convictions are the most personal of convictions a person might have.

The Cost of Sex Slavery

The cost of the sex slavery industry is most difficult to measure. The cost is more than just dollars being spent on sex. It must also include the damage done to individuals. No matter the arguments, there are countless "victims" that find no alternative to their problems but to engage in prostitution. Many are runaway young girls that pimps have taken to "help" them. They will intentionally provide the girls with drugs so they become addicted. The girls now find that there is no other way to be provided with the drugs they need other than prostituting themselves for their pimps. Many of these young girls are psychologically damaged into believing their pimps are actually their friends and often lovers.

Along with the cost to the individual comes the crime that goes with prostitution. Often prostitutes will be raped by customers who take the sex without paying, knowing that most prostitutes will not report the crime to the police. Prostitutes are both victims and offenders of robbery and theft. Often the customer is robbed and will not report the crime to the police because of the embarrassment of their actions. Prostitutes often don't report when they have been robbed because they believe the police will be unsympathetic towards them and will look at the offense as being "civil", not a crime. After all, that would be part of doing business.

There is also the cost in both physical and mental health with sex slavery. Self esteem of sex slaves has to be extremely low. It is not uncommon that they will have sex with a dozen or more customers a day. The act is no longer one of pleasure or one of emotions. It becomes just another business proposition. Most men would be surprised to find out that the sex act with the prostitute is not enjoyed by the prostitute as they believe it is. In fact many prostitutes naturally become embittered towards men as their primary reaction with them is sex only. The damage is also physical in that sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) are common and protection is often neglected. Rampant drug use is also a cause for physical diseases. Needles are shared and living conditions are not conducive to healthy living. The sex slaves also often suffer physical harm from being beat up by both their customers and their pimps.

The World View

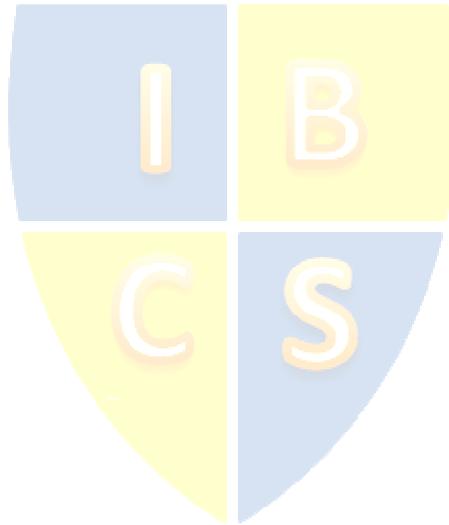
The world view of prostitution can only be measured by the nations that have legalized prostitution. As far as the world view of the sex slave industry, that would be even more difficult to measure. It is clear that many governments turn a blind eye away from the sex trade in general and this leads to apathy in enforcing laws against sex slaves. Corrupt government officials in third world countries are easily bribed to look away and do nothing to enforce the laws that do exist. Even in modern industrialized countries government officials are often engaging in the very acts that they have legislated as being illegal. With that in mind, serious prosecution of these offenses is highly unlikely.

LEGALIZED PROSTITUTION VERSUS ILLEGAL PROSTITUTION

Legalized Prostitution as a Business

According to ProCon.org (ProCon.org, 2014), 49 of the worlds 100 reporting countries have legalized prostitution. Twelve of those countries have limited legal prostitution, including the United States. The United States falls into this category because of the very limited legalization of prostitution in Nevada. In counties of fewer than 400,000 in population, prostitution is legal in Nevada. Interestingly, most of the prostitution in Nevada takes place where it is illegal. The reason for this is because both Las Vegas and Reno are huge gambling destinations, which is good for prostitution, legal or not.

Sex tourism is another draw for legalized prostitution. In the 1970's, according to Rosemary Regello (Regello, 2007), the U. S. military became involved in the sex trade. Under Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, the military made arrangements for thousands of American servicemen to have prostitutes available to them in Thailand when they went on R & R from the Viet Nam war. The arrangements for these prostitutes was not as sex slaves, but rather as willing participants in the legal sex trade business at state sanctioned brothels. Thailand has remained one of the worlds hot spot for sex tourism, which is designed to entice men into their country and to help the debtor nations to pay back loans to the international banks.



Illegal Prostitution as a Business

It is quite interesting that in Nevada, where prostitution is legal, that illegal prostitution is more popular. Part of the reason is that prostitution is not allowed in heavily populated counties and those are the counties where the tourists are. Prostitutes in Reno and Las Vegas are not going to miss out on the opportunity that awaits in those cities, even if it is illegal. Illegal prostitution brings tourist dollars to the city and probably isn't seriously enforced for that very reason. And it isn't just happening in Nevada. Prostitution and illegal drugs has boosted the British economy by an estimated 11 billion pounds (Saul, 2014). The 11 billion dollar figure is from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). Of this figure, the ONS estimated 4.3£ is contributed from illegal prostitution.

According to *The Economist* (*The Economist*, 2004) many nations are cracking down on prostitution and the trend has went so far as to criminalize prostitution where it was once legal. One of the main reasons for the trend is human trafficking and forced prostitution. The sex trade clearly assists in the victimization of prostitutes and some governments solutions to this problem is to criminalize all prostitution. Countries such as France and Sweden that were once tolerant of prostitution are now taking it seriously.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The first step in combating the illegal sex slave industry is educating the public in the true harm and dangers that this industry is causing worldwide. This effort can only be accomplished if the problem is looked at through a worldwide perspective, which in fact is what it is. In the United States there seems to be an awareness on the part of the government in that this topic is frequently discussed by State Attorney Generals and by the U. S. Department of Justice. But clearly talking about the problem amongst the law enforcement community is not enough. There needs to be public awareness campaigns, and the public awareness must go beyond the borders of the United States. There needs to be an International Coalition by world governments to address this problem, and not just private organizations.

In an interview by Debra Whitcomb and Keely McCarthy, according to Karol V. Mason, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), the federal government has the opportunity to play an important role on combating sex trafficking and slavery. She states, "That the Department of Justice had a moral stature, even beyond its recognized legal power, that allowed it to shape policy," and that "OJP in particular, through its strong ties with states, communities, and tribes, was well-positioned to bring fairness and equity to the administration of justice—and improve public safety in the process." (Whitcomb & McCarthy, 2014). Clearly governments in of all nations need to get involved to help minimize the victims of sex slavery. Governments are policy makers and they determine what problems get the priority for funding and community involvement. Many local governments and communities simply do not have the money or resources to address the problem of worldwide sex trafficking. They answer to the people in their own communities whose priorities probably aren't the sex trade industry. With federal government aid and support, the communities can legitimately become involved and help prevent the spread of sex slaves and human trafficking. Usually the first step in solving any criminal and social issues began with the local communities. Without their support, the problem will continue.

Immigration officials also need to get involved. Many of the sex slaves in the U. S. are smuggled in from other countries. People seek to better their lives by going to America where they believe the opportunities are endless. The problem is that they often are deceived by human traffickers. They pay large sums of money to smugglers for help in getting to the United States illegally. Once they arrive they become slaves to the smugglers to pay off the debt. Many of them are forced into prostitution and discover that the debt is never paid off. They are afraid to report their status to law enforcement as they have been told by the smugglers that if they turn themselves in they will be imprisoned for the rest of their lives. It is not infrequent that the news will cover stories of numerous undocumented aliens discovered in huge sea containers. Often times they are barely surviving and many die in the conditions they have been subjected to. And it doesn't stop with the deception to get them in debt to the smugglers. Many young girls are kidnapped and forced into prostitution. And this isn't just from Asian countries. Kidnapping young girls from Eastern Europe is a thriving business. According to an article by Ron Synovitz (Synovitz, 2005) "Trafficking from the region for sexual exploitation has become so common since the early 1990s that it is considered by experts as a distinct wave in the global sex trade". The U. S. State Department estimates the over 800,000 people are trafficked across borders each year (Wylar & Siskin, 2010).

As recommended by Center for Court Innovation, getting the courts and the justice system involved is also an important step in the right direction. The more potential victims of sex trafficking identified, the fewer the victims. Law enforcement needs to be a part of the process. They are often the first to contact victims and potential victims of sex trafficking. Educating law enforcement to the "red flags" of behavior or involvement of certain activities would be another step to combat the problem.

The Coalition Against Trafficking In Women is considered the world's first organization to fight human trafficking internationally. They work with world governments to encourage the enacting of legislation to help combat this worldwide problem. Recently they worked with the the Northern Ireland Assembly which officially passed the groundbreaking Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill. The landmark legislation not only provides support services for victims of trafficking, but also aspires to curb sex trafficking by penalizing the purchase of sex and decriminalizing individuals who are prostituted (CATW, 2014). This organization is clearly helping the cause to eliminate the problem with human trafficking for the sex trade industry, but they cannot do this on their own. World governments need to set aside their political differences and organize a formal program that would have the force of governments to intervene on the behalf of the victims of this illicit industry.

CONCLUSION

The business of sex will continue to be a thriving industry so long as men and women seek to satisfy their sexual desires outside of marital relationships. It is non-committable, comes with no strings attached emotionally, and is made readily available. If only for these reasons, the sex industry will continue to thrive. The problem society faces should not be to try and eliminate something that is impossible to eliminate, but rather to eliminate, or at least minimize, the evil part of the prostitution industry; sex slavery. The more time spent in battle against individuals ideas of morality, the more time not spent in battle against the sex slave industry. People in all nations must be educated to the dark side of the sex industry and the leading economic powers of the world need to take the lead in doing so.

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