Human Trafficking: An International Study

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Bio:

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Abstract:

My research investigated the factors contributing to human trafficking among the world's countries. Data compiled by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in the U.S. State Department were used. All countries with 100 or more victims a year, and for whom data were available, were included for 4 years – 2000 ($n = 79$), 2001 ($n = 84$), 2002 ($n = 115$), and 2003 ($n = 121$). The regression analysis revealed statistically significant negative effects of democracy, women's civil rights, and Gross National Product per capita on the strength of governments' efforts to limit human trafficking, and a significant positive effect of civil war. This research identified factors that the State Department can focus on to continue its efforts to reduce the international rates of human trafficking.

Introduction

This essay is motivated by the concern for victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking is an increasing problem around the world: an estimated 25,000 women and children are trafficked annually from Bangladesh; 15 million children have been sold into bonded labor in India; over 400,000 Ukrainian women have been trafficked in the past decade alone; and the list goes on (“Human Trafficking and Slavery,” 2004).

There is a general consensus among institutions that the increase in trafficked victims is substantial. However, the numbers provided by these various institutions differ tremendously. The U.S. State Department states that approximately 700,000 people are victims of trafficking annually, while the United Nations indicates that there are four million trafficked individuals (Asian Data Bank, 2003). There are multiple reasons for the vast discrepancy of data provided by these two bodies, some of them including the clandestine nature of trafficking, the lack of resources of some governments to pursue traffickers, and the corruption of some legal agencies within various countries. In this essay, I will discuss the existing literature on human trafficking issues, which is largely anecdotal and qualitative. As of yet there have been no efforts to study these problems using quantitative data.

Problem

In this study, I will analyze data that examines the implementation of current efforts to curtail human trafficking. In doing so, I will draw conclusions regarding the factors that would promote or hinder the cessation of human trafficking on a global basis.

Definitions

Trafficking in Persons involves the following:

1. The recruitment, transportation, purchase, sale, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons: by the threat or use of violence, abduction, force, fraud, deception or coercion (including the abuse of authority), or debt bondage, for the purpose of: 2. Placing or holding such person(s), whether for pay or not, in forced labor or slavery-like practices, in a community other than the one in which such person lived at the time of the original act described in 1 (Bishop, 2003, p. 219).

The term “trafficking in persons” includes multiple aspects involved in the trafficking of victims. The first stage is recruitment, in which an individual or an organization establishes the initial contact with susceptible victims. Various methods are used to “pull” or lure said persons, as I will discuss next. After obtaining the victims, the trafficker(s) and/or any hired help transport the victims either to the destination country/location or a transit country/location. The destination country is the final location where the victims are forced to carry out their specified task, and the transit country is where the victims are temporarily held either due to risk of discovery, a long journey, or to facilitate the transfer of the victims to another person(s). It is usually the case that the intermediary sells the victims to individuals or organizations within the destination country/location.

Smuggling- “involves the provision of a service, albeit illegal, to people who knowingly buy the service in order to get into a foreign country” (Troubnikoff, 2003, p. 3). Many advocates argue that the process of smuggling can be turned into trafficking. There have been cases where the individuals that have paid to be transported out of the country have been forced to work in other locations.

Review of Literature

The information provided within the researched literature tends to make generalizations using specific cases. The literature suggests several factors that should be considered in any effort to understand why human trafficking occurs and how the

problem can be dealt with more effectively. Factors that push individuals to become susceptible to trafficking include, but are not limited to, poverty, war, civil war, crisis, natural disaster, status of women (extremely patriarchal society), lack of dowry, globalization, high demand for cheap and exploitable labor, weak government, corruption of institutions, and governments with an organized black market (with regards to drugs and guns). Factors that pull individuals or lure victims into becoming susceptible to trafficking are kidnapping, deception, violence, threats, and debt bondage. The differing types of victims that are turned into slaves by traffickers include camel jockeys, field laborers, forced prostitutes, domestic servants, and factory workers (Asian Data Bank, 2003; Committee on International Relations, 2004; “Human Trafficking and Slavery, 2004; Mameli, 2002; “A Persisting Evil: The Global Problem of Slavery,” 2002; “Report of the Expert Group on Strategies for Combating the Trafficking of Women and Children, hereafter Report on Trafficking of Women and Children” 2003; Troubnikoff, 2003; Watanabe. 1995).

Poverty. With the world quickly moving towards exceeding the carrying capacity of human beings, human beings themselves become one of the most abundant exploitable resources. I hypothesize that countries with low Gross National Products (GNP) are more vulnerable to having their citizens being trafficked than those countries with high GNPs.

War, civil war, and natural disaster. These occurrences promulgate the trafficking of victims. Oftentimes the military increases the number of trafficked victims by forcing individuals to join the military. In the case of civil war, contending rebel groups will raid villages and force adults and even children to kill opposing factions. Some literature explores the notion that displaced individuals are much more likely to be

trafficked than rooted individuals. Yet there is no known concrete data to provide support for these hypotheses.

Status of women, lack of dowry. Scholars have observed that in extremely patriarchal societies where the contributions of women are not recognized or are not valued there is an increase in trafficked women. Countries that have an established dowry system, legal or illegal, regard women as a financial burden while placing a high value on the economic power of men; these countries tend to have a preference for sons. In many cases, poor families cannot afford to pay dowries. Facing such a circumstance, they sometimes willingly give their daughters away to “generous men” that will accept their daughter’s hand free of dowry. These families might even sell their daughters in the belief that they will be going to work in factories.

Globalization, increased demand. Globalization has destroyed the distance barrier between countries. Companies are able to outsource menial tasks to developing countries for little to no expense. Due to the increased amount of consumerism in developed nations, there has been a demand for cheap and exploitable labor. The economic principle of supply and demand is currently being used in terms of human beings. Instead of viewing human beings as people, we now view them as resources.

Weak government, corruption, highly developed organized crime. In order to stop the spread of occurrence, governments require access to numerous resources. However, not all governments have the infrastructure, technology, or manpower to decrease the amount of trafficking within their respective regions. Countries whose governments cannot maintain economic and/or political stability often find that this can lead to the proliferation of trafficking. Corruption of authority figures is one of the most daunting

obstacles in the path of combating trafficking. There is a high frequency of police officers that receive and accept bribes during “raids” for trafficking. There have even been occurrences when police officers are directly involved in the trafficking of victims (Binder, 2002). If traffickers get arrested in countries with weak government ordinances, they are often released. Another factor affecting the trafficking of persons is the establishment of organized crime. Human trafficking is seen as a source of income to complement the trading of drugs and guns. Currently the sales of human beings comprise the third largest illegal sector (Troubnikoff, 2003). Unlike the sales of drugs and guns, however, human slaves can be used to repeatedly turn a profit (Cockburn, 2003; “Report on Trafficking of Women and Children,” 2003.).

Methods used by traffickers vary. Some traffickers simply kidnap victims and force them into slavery, while other traffickers employ deception with the victims and their families. Some personal accounts state that traffickers often pretend to fall in love with the victims, describe enticing job opportunities abroad, or marry women and later sell them. In still other reported scenarios, traffickers beat people or threaten them with the use of violence against the life of a close relative to force them into submission. An additional technique utilized is a term referred to as “*debt bondage*”: the trafficked victims owe money to the traffickers, and because they have no available means to repay their “debt” the victims must work it off.

Other researched literature use personal narratives as a basis for their arguments. It is essential to try to understand the plight of trafficked victims, and one of the most effective ways to comprehend the viewpoints of the victims is to read their own personal accounts. Nevertheless, one must note that each case is an isolated event, and the

foundations for each individual argument do not take into consideration the numerous other cases involving trafficking. The literature involving personal narratives include an article published by CQ Researcher (“Report on human trafficking and slavery,” 2004), an article published by Off Our Backs (“Korean women forced into sex slavery,” 2004), a *National Geographic* article (Cockburn, 2003), and an article written by McClelland (2003).

Slaves are cheap and dispensable. A person can purchase a slave for less than \$100; by comparison, slaves were worth about \$40,000 in the 1850s. With such a large amount of cheap human resources, traffickers do little to take care of their “property” (“Human trafficking and slavery,” 2004; “A persisting evil,” 2002). Because traffickers hold little regard for the health of the victims, extreme human rights violations occur within these contexts.

The increased demand of human trafficking is mostly due to the large “sex tourism” market. Because of the increasing spread of sexually transmitted diseases, clients only want to sleep with virgins, thereby making children vulnerable to sexual slavery (Asian Development Bank, 2003; Flowers, 2001 “Human trafficking and slavery”, 2004; McClelland, 2003; Troubnikoff, 2003.). Girls as young as 5 or 6 years old girls are susceptible victims for the “sex tourism” market.

In order to properly assess the increasing number of trafficked victims, it is imperative to view the global patterns of trafficking from the available quantitative data. However, the available data from the Trafficking in Persons Report issued by the U.S. State Department has not been extensively analyzed. Questions have remained unanswered, including: What are the contributing factors that influence governments to

pass legislation discouraging trafficking? How much does each aforementioned independent variable affect the trafficking of victims? What kind of impact does the Victims of Trafficking and Protections Act of 2000, which was later reconstituted by the Bush administration in 2003, have on curtailing the spread of trafficking?

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (revised in 2003). The Trafficking of Victims Protections Act (TVPA) of 2000 was created under the Clinton administration in an attempt to curb the trafficking of people. The Act constructed the interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking (TFMCT), which was headed by the Secretary of State. Alongside the TFMCT, the Act created the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking with the responsibility to publish the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP). The TIP report categorizes the trafficking problems of nations into Tier 1, 2, or 3 (Troubnikoff, 2003). The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking rates only those countries with a significant number of victims (100 or more) who have experienced severe forms of trafficking.

The minimum standards set in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 include the following:

The government of the country should prohibit severe forms of trafficking in person and punish acts of such trafficking. The government of the country should prescribe punishment commensurate with that for grave crimes, such as forcible sexual assault. The government of country should prescribe punishment that is sufficiently stringent to deter and that adequately reflects the heinous nature of offense. The government of country should make serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons (Section 108, 1-4).

These criteria allow the State Department to measure the efforts used by countries and to use these measurements to determine which countries should be accountable for their actions. Tier 1 includes countries whose governments have a serious trafficking

problem but are complying with the said minimum standards. Tier 2 includes countries whose governments do not comply with the minimum standards but are making “significant efforts” to do so; tier 2 is by far the largest category in each report published by the State Department. The VTVPA has further divided the category into strong tier 2 and weak tier 2. Tier 3 is comprised of countries whose governments are not complying with the set criteria nor are they trying to do so. The VTVPA has also established a “watch list” for the Secretary of State, making it easier for him or her to decide on which countries to place or remove sanctions (Committee on International Relations, 2004; Troubnikoff, 2003). This watch list provides a much-needed source of data not yet exploited for the purpose of statistical analysis. Those data were created by the U.S. government, which benefits from knowledge gained from its network of missions and embassies all over the world that will give us an opportunity to learn about trafficking patterns.

Research Methodology

This project will use the pooled cross-sectional time series research design, also referred to as PANEL, to analyze the data published by the TIP report from the years 2000 to 2003. The data are gathered and then published a year later. This paper refers to the year that the data was gathered. My first goal is to describe the data; descriptive statistics are used to summarize and simplify the data. After conducting the descriptive analyses, I will then try to reach conclusions that are beyond the available data. This venture in inferential statistics will measure five independent variables against the dependent variable, human trafficking.

Descriptive Statistics

The capability of seeing the pattern of our global community's endeavor to combat trafficking allows for some clarity to this obscure problem. The descriptive analyses are designed to look at the composition of the tiers according to each year; this facilitates the reader's capacity to assess if countries are improving in their efforts to combat human trafficking.

Table 1 contains data for the year 2000, which consequently is the first year that the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking gathered data and rated 79 countries' efforts to reduce human trafficking. Most of those 79 countries, nearly 60%, are placed in the Tier 2 category. Two-thirds of the remaining 33 countries are categorized in Tier 3, meaning that approximately 28% of the global community with a significant trafficking problem does not even make an attempt to comply with the minimum standards delineated in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. There are twice as many countries situated in Tier 3 as in Tier 1. Tier 1 is the smallest category with only 11 countries that comply with the minimum standards.

Table 1. Trafficking in Persons Report 2000

Tiers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1	11	13.92	13.92
2	46	58.23	72.15
3	22	27.85	100.00
Total	79	100.00	

The data from 2001, shown in Table 2 below, included 5 more countries in the population from the year before, for a population of 84 nation-states. There are more occurrences in Tier 1, thereby closing the large gap between Tier 1 and 3. Twenty percent of nations are placed in Tier 1, and about 20% of nations are placed in Tier 3. Once again

we observe that most countries are located in the Tier 2 category, demonstrating that the vast majority of nations are exerting themselves in order to curtail modern-day slavery. When comparing the percentages of the differing years, there appears to be a gradual improvement.

Table 2. Trafficking in Persons Report 2001

Tiers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1	17	20.24	20.24
2	49	58.33	78.57
3	18	21.43	100.00
Total	84	100.00	

The data collected for the year 2002, presented in Table 3, covers 115 nations, which represents approximately 31 more countries than 2001. This year's data are unique because there is an 8% difference between the number of nations in Tier 1 and those in Tier 3. There are an increasing number of countries that are complying with the minimum standards, and those countries that are not making any attempt to curb human trafficking are diminishing. More than half of the nation-states are positioned in the Tier 2 category. Fourteen percent of the countries categorized are considered non-complying. When compared to 2000, there is a 13% decrease in the number of countries situated in Tier 3.

Table 3. Trafficking in Persons Report 2002

Tiers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1	25	21.74	21.74
2	74	64.35	86.09
3	16	13.91	100.00
Total		100.00	

For the 2003 data in Table 4, most of the countries are categorized at the Tier 2 level; there has been a 10% growth since 2002 in the number of countries complying with

some of the established minimum standards. Both Tier 1 and 3 have decreased in numbers from the previous year. It is important to notice that 6.6% is the lowest Tier 3 has been since the institution of the TVPA. The amount of countries placed in Tier 3 has been nearly cut in half since the preceding year.

Table 4. Trafficking in Persons Report 2003

Tiers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1	23	19.01	19.01
2	90	74.38	93.39
3	8	6.61	100.00
Total	121	100.00	

Table 5 shows that the majority of the countries, roughly 65%, are in Tier 2, mirroring trends displayed in the individual years. Tier 1 and Tier 3 are close together in percentages, with 19% of the countries set in Tier 1 and 16% placed in Tier 3. According to this table, there are many nations putting in the energy and time to try and achieve the minimum standards but for some reason they are not reaching their goals. One hypothesis presented by the officials from the State Department and various other intellectuals is that the nation-states do not have enough resources to effectively inhibit the growth of modern-day slavery; there is a need for more quantitative research to explore if this is the only reason.

Table 5. Trafficking in Persons Report for All Four Years

Tiers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1	76	19.05	19.05
2	259	64.91	83.96
3	64	16.04	100.00
Total	399	100.00	

Predictive Model

The selected four independent variables are status of women, war (both civil and international), economic well being, and democracy. Using these variables, I will apply the statistical methodology. This formula allows me to look at the effects of each of the five independent variables on policies towards human trafficking while controlling for the others. My model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{HUMAN TRAFFICKING POLICIES} = & a + b_1 \text{ Women's Status} + b_2 \\ & \text{International War} + b_3 \text{ Civil War} + b_4 \text{ Economic Well-Being} + b_5 \\ & \text{Democracy} + e \end{aligned}$$

The Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) Human Rights dataset uses measure of three human rights-related phenomena to measure a woman's status in society: political, economic, and social rights. A "1" is coded when a country does not grant any of the respective rights to a woman, and a "9" is coded when the government fully enforces the rights of women. The dataset that will be used for measuring Civil and International War is called the Uppsala War Measure, also commonly referred to, as "ucwar" and "uiwar" respectively. This measure is coded using a "dummy" variable; "0" indicates that there is no war occurring and "1" means that there is a war. A war, defined by this measure, constitutes more than 1000 battle deaths within each year the war has occurred. The Uppsala War Measure requires that at least one of the conflicting parties must be the government of the state.

Gross National Product per capita is the division of the GNP by the population of a nation. GNP per capita annually accounts for the monetary value of all the resources that passes through an individual's hands. This measure takes into consideration the price

differences among varying countries. This indicator is used by many different sources, including the World Bank, as an accurate measure of a nation's wealth.

The Polity IV Democracy Measure is a dataset that measures the level of democracy in a nation. This ordinal measure uses a numeric range between -10 and +10, where +10 is the most democratic nation and -10 is the least democratic nation. Polity IV is an institutional measure of democracy.

Table 6. Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Predictor Variables on Trafficking Ranking
Number of observations = 253 **R-squared** = 0.3115 **Probability F** = 0.0000

Trafficking in Persons	Beta coefficient	Standard error	t	P>t	95% Confidence	Interval
Democracy	-.0209609	.0063579	-3.30	0.001	-.0334835	-.0084383
Civil War	.1747837	.0911243	1.92	0.056	-.004696	.3542634
International War	-.0479616	.1939985	-0.25	0.805	-.430064	.3341407
Women's Rights	-.1842881	.0671277	-2.75	0.006	-.3165039	-.0520724
GNP per capita	-.0000165	3.00e-06	-5.50	0.000	-.0000224	-.0000106

In the set of analyses shown in Table 6, the relationship between democracy and a country's ability to curtail human trafficking indicates that there is a significant, but negligible, negative relationship, $B = .021$, $t = -3.30$, $p = .001$: the less democratic a nation is the more likely that nation will be a non-complying nation (Tier 3). This finding is consistent with my hypothesis that democracy does have an important role in the eradication of human trafficking. The occurrence of a civil war also has a significant

weak positive impact on a nation's powers to hinder human trafficking, $B = .175$, $t = 1.92$, $p = .056$. The occurrence of civil war places a country higher on the TIP scale. Table 6 reveals that international war does not have a statistically significant impact on a nation's capability to curb trafficking, $B = .048$, $t = .25$, $p = .806$. This suggests that internal problems that affect the population directly have a greater influence on a country's capacity to deal with its consequences. The status of women does have a significant, weak, negative effect on a nation's competence for dealing with human trafficking $B = -.184$, $t = -2.75$, $p = .006$; the less respect a nation gives to women, the more likely that nation is categorized in Tier 3. Economic development has a significant but negligible effect on human trafficking, $B = 0.000$, $t = -5.50$, $p = .000$. The wealthier a nation is, the less likely that nation is to have a high level of human trafficking.

In summary, we have found two variables have significant, non-negligible effects on human trafficking: internal civil war increases the amount of human trafficking in countries, while strong protection of women's rights decreased the amount of human trafficking.

Conclusions and Limitations

We are now able to distinguish the factors that can be used by the State Department to fight against modern-day slavery. With the inferential analysis, we have identified the variables that have the greatest impact on a nation's ability to resist and reduce human trafficking. This allows various actors to pinpoint the most influential variables, and then focus on improving those specific areas in order to eliminate the problem of human trafficking. We no longer have to solely rely on formulating conjectures, which makes tackling this issue easier.

There are several limitations that should be noted for this study. This is a first analysis, so there are many variables that are not included that could be considered. Also the variables chosen could have overlapping effects, which could be misleading when drawing final conclusions. Another caveat related to the development of the thesis is the limited data available regarding this subject. The only comprehensive quantifiable data available is the Trafficking in Persons report. Because there is no other standard of measure to test the outcome from the State Department report, one cannot check the potential bias of the TIP report. Future research should address these limitations in further studies of this important human rights issue.

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