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Human Trafficking and Potential Solutions in the Russian Federation

ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is problematic all over the world. Lately, however, Eastern Europe has proven to be a haven for human traffickers. This paper elucidates the nuances of human trafficking, and the methods and mechanisms by which traffickers function, and people are trafficked. Then, it looks at the history of slavery in Russia, considers the problem of human trafficking in the present day. Finally, this paper presents three potential solutions to the problems of human trafficking and slavery in Russia.

Years ago, there was a 19 year old woman named Marika. Marika lived in Kharkiv, Ukraine where she was absolutely destitute. She had a desperately ill mother, an unemployed father with an alcohol addiction, and no means of support for her two sisters and herself. For these reasons, when she was offered what seemed like a dream job, she jumped at the opportunity. She was approached by a woman who supposedly worked in a recruitment agency. The woman offered Marika a waitress job in Tel Aviv. Although Marika was excited at the prospect of earning enough to keep her sisters and herself above water, she was also apprehensive. She had heard stories of women who were offered jobs, but ended up being mistreated and forced to work for no pay. However, the recruiter was very convincing. She swore that this would not be Marika's experience.

Just days later, Marika was on her way to Tel Aviv. She boarded a plane to Cairo under the impression that she would be driven from there to Tel Aviv. She got through customs with almost no trouble at all, and was soon in the arrivals area, where she was met by a large man. After confirming that she was, indeed, the woman that had been sent for the waitressing job, he aggressively

grasped her arm and guided her to a battered jeep. She was shoved into the jeep, where she found three young women who were offered similar opportunities. One of the women had been sent from Russia, while the other two were from Moldova.

After two days of constant travel in the cramped jeep, the Russian and the four young women arrived at a small village. They were met by two men who briefly spoke with the Russian, before the Russian returned to the jeep. The women were told to get out of the vehicle and to join the other men. Upon realizing the perilous nature of her situation, Marika voiced her dissent. She said that she wanted to return to her home. She was struck by the Russian and told to shut up. The Russian then drove away, and the women were left with the two men. Marika recalls that “the men were eerie figures, wrapped in tawny robes and scarves with rifles slung over their shoulders and long, curved daggers dangling from their waists.” The men climbed up onto camels and began to ride. The women were told to follow on foot.

After two days of nonstop walking, with very little food and water, they stopped to sleep while one of the men went on alone. The man came back in the morning in a pickup truck along with two men from Israel. The women were loaded into the truck and taken to a house and locked in an empty room. They were all starving and dehydrated, but were given no water or food.

The next day, the girls were visited by two men who told the girls to undress. Marika and the Russian woman were selected by the men, and were taken to an apartment in Tel Aviv. In the apartment, Marika and the Russian

joined two Ukrainian women and a woman from Moldova. There were multiple heavy locks on the door. As if this wasn't enough, a large Israeli man stood guard in the hallway outside of the apartment. The women were told to wash up, and then don cheap lingerie.

Soon after, they were herded into the living room. There, the women first met their new boss. Their boss, "Ba'al Bayith," (owner of the house) immediately informed the women that he had purchased them each for \$10,000 USD, and that he would own the women until each of them brought in \$20,000 USD. The women would accomplish this feat by prostituting themselves. Their owner also informed them that any dissent would be met with pain.

Marika tried to escape. She begged clients to help her. She was forced to provide service to all manner of men. She had husbands, soldiers, and orthodox religious men. Although most would assume a religious man or a soldier would take pity, none did. According to Marika, they only complained if she did not perform to their specifications. For this she was beaten¹.

Upon hearing Marika's story, most would have a reaction of disbelief. They might think that this is something of fiction, something out of a movie starring Liam Neeson. However, as Wylie and McRedmond tell us, experiences like this are all too common:

The United States State Department puts the number of people trafficked across national borders every year at about 800,000.

¹ Wylie, Gillian, and Penny McRedmond. "A Business of Supply and Demand: The Trafficking of Women and Girls From Russia and Ukraine." *Human Trafficking in Europe: Character, Causes and Consequences*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. N. pag. Print.

Approximately eighty percent of these transnational victims are women and girls, many of whom are from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.²

Furthermore, Wylie et al. also tell us that about 50,000 of the Eastern European women trafficked each year are of Russian descent.³ Recent estimates indicate that the trade in human beings produced a revenue of \$44.3 billion USD.⁴ While there are a plethora of factors to which we could attribute the problem of human trafficking in Eastern Europe, a handful of factors will be considered in this study. These are the most pressing in trying to reduce or eliminate the prevalence of human trafficking. Furthermore, these causes can be divided into two categories: push factors and pull factors. The push factors are poverty, underemployment, unemployment, lack of education, globalization of labor, market diversity, and countrywide conflict. The pull factors are a high demand for bodies in unskilled labor and the sex industry, and the fact that trafficking in human beings is very profitable, and carries very little risk. Moreover, these causes are exacerbated by external factors like corruption. Victims are then

² Wylie, Gillian, and Penny McRedmond. "A Business of Supply and Demand: The Trafficking of Women and Girls From Russia and Ukraine." *Human Trafficking in Europe: Character, Causes and Consequences*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. N. pag. Print.

³ Wylie, Gillian, and Penny McRedmond. "A Business of Supply and Demand: The Trafficking of Women and Girls From Russia and Ukraine." *Human Trafficking in Europe: Character, Causes and Consequences*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. N. pag. Print.

⁴ Hepburn, Stephanie, and Rita J. Simon. *Human Trafficking around the World: Hidden in Plain Sight*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

further victimized by outdated immigration laws and unsympathetic police forces and government officials.

In this study, I will elucidate the world of human trafficking by explaining these push and pull factors. I will then present a brief history of slavery and social issues in Russia. Finally, I will discuss methods that could be used by the international community to eradicate, or at least diminish the amount of human trafficking and slavery present in around the world. However, before delving into the situation in Eastern Europe, we must consider the different definitions of human trafficking and slavery, study the history of human trafficking and slavery, and look at the environment in which human traffickers function in the present day.

DEFINITIONS

There are many different definitions of human trafficking and slavery. For example, we will consider Gillian Wylie et al.'s conception of human trafficking and slavery:

...trafficking involves moving people within and across local or national borders for the explicit purpose of sexual exploitation (Hughes, 2001: 12). This movement may be the result of 'force, coercion, manipulation, deception, abuse of authority, initial consent, family pressure, past and present family and community violence, [or] economic deprivation concerning women and children (Hughes, 2001: 9). The definition given above recognizes that trafficking is a phenomenon that occurs within the borders of a country as well as internationally. Frequently, women are recruited and exploited in local sex industries before they are trafficked abroad. This definition would permit trafficking to occur even if the woman initially consents. This would be consistent with the 1949 United Nations Convention on the Suppression of Traffic in Persons

and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (Ditmore, 2006: 63).⁵

As we can see, Wylie et al.'s definition of human trafficking is fairly overarching. It labels any woman who is moved across borders using any form of coercion as a trafficking victim. Therefore, if trafficking laws and support systems meant to protect victims are utilized correctly and to the fullest extent possible, they could be applied to a wider group of people. However, this definition does fall short in that it does not take into account individuals who are trafficked for the purposes of "agriculture or horticulture, construction, garments and textiles under sweatshop conditions, catering and restaurants, domestic work, [and] entertainment."⁶

Another definition we can consider is that put forward by the widely respected scholar of human trafficking and modern slavery, Silvia Scarpa. Scarpa uses the definition conceived by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC). As Scarpa tells us, this protocol was "opened for signature by UN Member states

⁵ Wylie, Gillian, and Penny McRedmond. "A Business of Supply and Demand: The Trafficking of Women and Girls From Russia and Ukraine." *Human Trafficking in Europe: Character, Causes and Consequences*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. N. pag. Print.

⁶ "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime." FAQs. N.p., n.d. Web. 31 Jan. 2016

at the High Level Political Conference convened in Palermo on 12-15 December 2000.”⁷ The definition is as follows:

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a 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 shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.⁸

It is evident that although Scarpa’s definition shares features with Wylie et al.’s definition, there are some fairly important differences to consider. The most substantial difference is the fact that while Wylie et al.’s definition only pertains to women trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and prostitution, Scarpa’s goes farther. Scarpa includes other facets of human trafficking, such as slavery, forced labor, servitude, and the more rare (but still prevalent) forced harvest of organs. Much the same as Wylie et al.’s definition, Scarpa’s overarching view of human trafficking allows more individuals to be classified as trafficking victims, and would require providing a larger range of legal, emotional, and social support to them.

Additionally, Scarpa mentions the second part of her chosen definition in order to consider an issue that is largely related to trafficking for the purposes of

⁷ Scarpa, Silvia. *Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

⁸ Scarpa, Silvia. *Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

sexual exploitation, but also important to other forms of slavery and servitude as well. This issue is that of consent. In order to elucidate the role played by consent, Scarpa uses Article 3(b) of the aforementioned protocol:

Article 3(b) further specifies that if one of the means set forth in Article 3(a) is used, it is irrelevant whether the person expressed her/his consent or not.

By disqualifying any possibility of consent within the world of human trafficking, Scarpa unequivocally and effectively makes the prosecution of traffickers and the assistance of trafficking victims much more simple and straightforward.

Following her argument a law enforcement entity does not have to take into account whether an individual was trafficked willingly, or actively engaged in his/her own exploitation as a means of supporting themselves. Using a definition such as this would be conducive to a law enforcement approach, where the trafficker is prosecuted without jeopardizing the victims' safety or opening up the victims to criminal prosecution.

In order to properly define human trafficking in a way that will be most beneficial and useful for this study, I will be drawing on the definition laid out by Wylie et al. Therefore, human trafficking will be defined as the unlawful movement of individuals across borders, national or international, with the purpose being servitude (usually sexual). This movement may be a result of force, manipulation, poverty, dishonesty, economic strife, or necessity to support oneself or one's family. If any of the prior factors are present, consent does not matter. In other words, even if a woman knowingly takes a job offer that might be

dubious and ends up in a brothel against her will, it would still be considered human trafficking.

Additionally, considering the fact that slavery is almost always the result of human trafficking, it would be prudent to define slavery as well. In order to define slavery in a way that will be most useful to this study, I will be using two different definitions put forward by the scholar, Kevin Bales:

Slaves have lost free will, are under violent control, are economically exploited, and are paid nothing. They may be kidnapped or captured, tricked, or born into slavery, and the contextual explanation of why they end up in a state of violent control may be political, racial, religious, mythological, gender-based, ethnic, or combinations of these, but the essence of slavery is controlling people through violence and using them to make money.⁹

We might think slavery is a matter of ownership, but that depends on what we mean by *ownership*. In the past, slavery entailed one person legally owning another person, but modern slavery is different. Today slavery is illegal everywhere, and there is no more *legal* ownership of human beings. When people buy slaves today they don't ask for a receipt or ownership papers, but they do gain *control*—and they use violence to maintain this control.¹⁰

Using this definition, I will define slavery as any situation in which an individual loses free will at the hands of another individual. This loss of free will could be the result of kidnapping, deception, ethnic factors, religious factors, or anything else. Furthermore, this loss of free will is maintained using violence. A slave

⁹ Bales, Kevin, Zoe Trodd, and Alex Kent. Williamson. *Modern Slavery: The Secret World of 27 Million People*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2009. Print.

¹⁰ Seidman, Gay W., and Kevin Bales. "Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy." *Contemporary Sociology* 29.2 (2000): 355. Web.

may be compensated in a minor way, but is still held and forced to work against his/her will.

THE CAUSES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

As was made evident before, there are many factors that cause the trafficking of individuals. These factors, labeled push and pull factors by Silvia Scarpa, are present in almost every documented case of human trafficking to date. In order to properly understand the world of human trafficking, and why the young women of Eastern Europe fall into the hands of human traffickers, I will now list the relevant push and pull factors.

The first push factors laid out by Scarpa are largely considered social issues, which are largely the result of cultural attitudes and lack of a social safety net:

It is widely accepted that poverty, lack of education, of employment, of resources and of opportunities in the countries of origin are push-factors and they are among the major causes of human trafficking. Moreover, gender inequality determines a specific vulnerability of women and girls to be trafficked; in many countries of the world it is impossible for them to have access to major resources such as land and credit and to inherit, thus contributing to their marginalization and to the feminization of poverty.¹¹

As we can see, these push factors are largely involved with each other.

Trafficking victims are often undereducated. As a result of the lack of education, victims are unable to attain jobs and careers that are considered skilled labor.

¹¹ Scarpa, Silvia. *Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

Therefore, they have far fewer opportunities than individuals who have been educated, and eventually become impoverished. As a result of the poverty, victims are forced to accept jobs and positions that may not be safe or legitimate, with the hope that they will get lucky and become able to support themselves and their families.

Furthermore, as Scarpa tells us, women are more likely to be trafficked because they do not have the resources or opportunities that are available to men. In less developed countries (countries with a high export rate of human cargo), gender inequality is still fairly pronounced and commonplace. As a result, women are less likely to inherit land or money, and become more likely to fall into poverty. After becoming impoverished, the same process of accepting an illegitimate job offer may apply.

The fact that gender inequality plays a large role in whether or not an individual is trafficked is confirmed by Hepburn and Simon in their book, *Human Trafficking Around the World*. They say:

Gender bias is also a factor in the trafficking calculus. In nations where women are not on equal footing with men, they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including human trafficking. Not surprisingly, in the post-trafficking experience women often continue to face unequal treatment.¹²

As we can see, gender inequality plays a large role in human trafficking. As was stated before, gender inequality can lead to economic strife and poverty, which can force a women into accepted a job offer that might not be on the up and up.

¹²Hepburn, Stephanie, and Rita J. Simon. *Human Trafficking around the World: Hidden in Plain Sight*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Furthermore, because of gender inequality, women who survive the trafficking experience are largely stigmatized, and are unable to obtain the social services and assistance that they need to deal with their experience.

In addition to the social factors, we are also told that there are simply more women on the global market as a result of the rate of female migration in the present day:

At the same time, the percentage of women in the migration flows has recently increased so that they constitute nearly half of the international migrants worldwide; this is due to a variety of factors, including the possibility of women to travel independently for work purposes. Thus, the feminization of migration is another factor that has to be taken into consideration, because migrant women travelling alone are more vulnerable to being trafficked and exploited.¹³

As Scarpa tells us, there are simply more women traveling alone throughout the international community nowadays. With more women, there is a higher chance that some of these women will be trafficked simply because the supply is higher, and the demand is steady.

Women are also trafficked for reasons that aren't as related to social issues. On the contrary, these reasons are related to political issues, such as migration and globalization:

Other factors contributing to the spread of the phenomenon are: globalization of labour and markets, associated with increasing the obstacles to legal migration that may push people in search of better living standards into the hands of traffickers who promise that they will help them to reach their desired destinations. The modernization of travel systems, the reduced costs of travelling,

¹³ Scarpa, Silvia. *Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

and the use of new technologies, such as the internet are among the factors that have facilitated the spread of trafficking in persons in the last decades.¹⁴

As we can see, illegal migration and globalization of labor make women targets for human trafficking for many of the same reasons that are associated with an increase in female migration and travel. There are simply more women migrating and looking to work internationally, and therefore there is more of a supply for the traffickers. Furthermore, because of the immigration laws of most nations, many of these women who have no other means of entry are forced to utilize more unconventional methods. In other words, they are forced to hire smugglers and trust that these smugglers will not enslave them.

Although some might take the increase in female migration as a positive sign of female empowerment, it does not always end well. While the initial action might be empowering, women trying to cross borders illegally very often have to hire smugglers. While they might not be trafficked by these smugglers, they are still subject to the will of the smugglers. Therefore, the action may be empowering at first, but until the woman arrives at her desired destination, the empowerment is put on hold.

The last factor that plays a large role in the prevalence of human trafficking around the world is that of countrywide conflict. As Scarpa tells us, transition countries have become very lucrative for human traffickers:

Transition countries and those in conflict or post-conflict situations provide a perfect environment for the phenomenon [of human

¹⁴ Scarpa, Silvia. *Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

trafficking] to flourish. A clear example of the former is given by the collapse of the Communist Bloc and the transition to market economy of those countries, producing a general increase in poverty, unemployment, inflation and social differences, which are all causes of human trafficking. Many impoverished Russian, Moldavian, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian women and men have, in recent years, been willing to emigrate mainly to Western Europe or to the United States; some of them ended up in the hands of ruthless organized criminal gangs who trafficked them abroad. In conflict and post-conflict situations, especially when governments are not able to control the whole territory, and find and prosecute criminals, there may be a general increase in illegal activities, including the lucrative traffic in humans. In these two specific situations women and children are more vulnerable to being trafficked due to a general increase in violence, social disintegration and the lack of opportunities.¹⁵

As we can see, countries in transition, and countries that are recovering from internal conflict are far more lucrative for human traffickers. As Scarpa tells us, there is an unprecedented amount of poverty, unemployment, and economic strife, and there is oftentimes an increase in social tension. Furthermore, because the social safety systems and government infrastructure of these countries has often been torn apart by conflict, there are no mechanisms in place to protect trafficking victims, and prosecute human traffickers. Furthermore, this is connected to migration, in that there is always a rise in migration out of a war-torn, or transitional country. Because of the stricter immigration laws in Western Europe and the United States, which endeavor to make migrants go through the bureaucratic system and have somewhat high rates of deportation, migrants are

¹⁵ Scarpa, Silvia. *Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

often forced to illegally enter a target country using a smuggler. More often than not, this smuggler turns out to be a trafficker in disguise. Furthermore, there is usually a disproportionate amount of women and children who are forced to utilize illegal migration options because they have less agency, fewer opportunities, and are more likely to be subjected to violence and social stigma in their home countries.

THE TYPES OF SLAVERY/HOW PEOPLE ARE ENSLAVED

Three types of slavery exist in the world today. Each type differs with regard to how an individual was enslaved, and how they are treated. These three types are known as Chattel Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Contract Slavery.

Chattel Slavery is what usually comes to mind when most people hear the word “slavery.” It is the oldest version of slavery. The slaver-owner buys or captures the slave, and then exerts control over the slave. Moreover, any children born to the slave become slaves as well. This is the least pronounced form of slavery in the world in the present day. It is only found in a few African and Arab countries. The most well known country with prominent use of chattel slavery is the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Debt Bondage is by far the most prominent version of slavery that exists in the present day. An individual exchanges his/her own servitude for a sum of money, and is forced to work until the sum is paid back. However, the length of servitude is not known, and the labor can be inherited by offspring. In some cases, failing to repay the loan can result in the slaveholder selling the slaves

offspring in order to pay off the debt. This form of slavery differs from chattel slavery in that there is not a pronounced assertion of ownership, but violence is used to exert complete control over the slave.

Debt Bondage is the form of slavery most often used when trafficking young women who are to work in brothels as prostitutes. The women arrive at their destination, and are immediately told that they have to (at least) repay their travel fees before they are allowed to leave. However, these women are usually kept until they escape or can no longer function.

The third and final form of slavery is *Contract Slavery*. *Contract Slavery* consists of deceiving an individual and making them think that they will be working in a legitimate establishment. A contract is produced that supposedly promises employment and a fair salary. However, when the trafficked individual arrives at their new place of employment, they are enslaved. The purpose of the contract is to entice a potential slave, and convince them to take a chance and accept a position in a factory or workshop in another country, and to deal with any legal troubles that might arise. If legal questions are presented by any sort of authority, the contract can be produced to convince the authority that the operation is legitimate. However, although there is a contract, the worker is a slave, whose free will has been taken using violence, coercion, and deception.

SLAVERY IN RUSSIA, PAST AND PRESENT

The concept of slavery is by no means a new occurrence to the Russian populace. Slavic peoples have made up a sizeable portion of the European

Slave Market since the Roman period.¹⁶ This practice continued until Russian slaves were freed by Peter the Great. However, two generations before, after the Law Code of 1649 was introduced, Russian peasants who worked for nobles in Central and Southern Russia were legally bound to the land as serfs. Serfdom was basically slavery, in that serfs were not allowed to abandon their owners, and could not leave the land that they were attached to, although in the Russian context, serfs were allowed to spend some time engaging in subsistence farming for themselves and their families on communally held land. Over the 18th and early 19th centuries, nobles would employ serf labor not only in agriculture, but also in manufacturing and the arts. Serfdom continued until the Alexander II emancipated the serfs in 1861.¹⁷

If we go forward to the time directly after the Russian Revolution, we can see how the roles of women and feminism play into the attitudes and problems that are evident today. Directly after the revolution, there was supposed to be an increase in female agency. For example, unlike the time before the revolution, for women, there was a “great increase in education, to where women came to be proportionately better represented as students in Soviet institutions of higher learning than men,” and that “women rose remarkably in the professions, so that today, for example, the great majority of the doctors of medicine in Russia are

¹⁶ Shelley, Louise I. *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

¹⁷ Shelley, Louise I. *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

women” (Riasanovsky 575).¹⁸ However, while these women did experience newfound freedoms in society and the workplace, they were still expected to do the majority of all housework. It is evident that while women did gain more agency, equality was not attained.

Furthermore, in order to understand slavery within the history of Russia, we must look at the Stalinist policy of Collectivization. Collectivization refers to the consolidation of farm and agricultural land and labor into collectivized agricultural operations. Collectivization revived a system akin to serfdom. Although the laborers protested and resisted on account of the hardships and famine that were prompted by collectivization, they were forced by the Soviet government to collectivize. The Soviet government accomplished this by both using military and police to intimidate Soviet citizens, and later by awarding tax exemptions and rare goods to those who collectivized. While collectivization was supposed to be voluntary, this was not the reality. Laborers on collectivized farms were barred from leaving the farms or going into the cities, and could not leave their respective farms.

If we go forward in time to the later years of the Soviet Union, we are able to observe the social paradigm which, combined with the Russia’s history of slavery, played a part in creating the prevalence of human trafficking and slavery in the Russian Federation of today. Following the institution of *Perestroika*, which means “Restructuring,” and *Glasnost*, which means “Publicity,” the subject of sex was no longer taboo. As Yuliya Tverdova says, “now in the late 1980s,

¹⁸ Riasanovsky, Nicholas V. *A History of Russia*. New York: Oxford UP, 1984. Print.

sexuality was embraced and celebrated by the younger generation as a symbol of changing times”¹⁹. Since public discussion of sexuality and prostitution was completely taboo before the policies of Glasnost, it is impossible to know how much prostitution was a part of Soviet society. As this widespread acceptance of an increasingly sexualized worldview spread among the Russian populace after Glasnost’, the pervasiveness of prostitution grew. Many college-aged females began to prostitute themselves in order to supplement their income while working, or pursuing higher education.²⁰ As a result of this rapid acceptance of sexuality, men began to feel more freedom to violate women. The combination of the country’s history of slavery and extreme repression of political, social and sexual discourse with the newfound freedom of sexual expression brings us to the current situation, where Russia boasts one of the highest rates of human trafficking and sex trafficking.²¹

While Russia’s history of slavery and the newfound freedom of expression are important to the understanding of the human trafficking problem in the modern day Russian Federation, one cannot change history. However, there are several factors that can be changed. One of the biggest contributors to human trafficking and slavery in the Russian Federation is corruption.

¹⁹ Tverdova, Yuliya V. "Human Trafficking in Russia and Other Post-Soviet States." (n.d.): n. pag. Print.

²⁰ Tverdova, Yuliya V. "Human Trafficking in Russia and Other Post-Soviet States." (n.d.): n. pag. Print.

²¹ Tverdova, Yuliya V. "Human Trafficking in Russia and Other Post-Soviet States." (n.d.): n. pag. Print.

CORRUPTION, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR SANCTIONS IN RUSSIA

In the present day, it is a well-known fact that Russia is one of the most corrupt states within the international community. The Freedom House corruption rating awarded to the Russian Federation in 2013 was a 6.50 on a scale of 1-7, with 1 being the least corrupt, and 7 being the most corrupt.²² Moreover, Transparency International has rated Russia at a 28, using a scale of 0-100, 0 being the most corrupt, and 100 being the least corrupt.²³ One of the most elucidating examples of corruption in the Russian Federation is the how Russian officials deal with the problem of human trafficking and modern slavery.

Not unlike many other states that suffer from human trafficking problems, the Russian Federation possesses a corrupt police force, and a Duma with a fair amount of corrupt politicians. At the worst, these policemen and politicians are complicit in the business of human trafficking, and are clients of those that are enslaved. At the best, they turn a blind eye, and use the Russian legal system to further victimize human trafficking victims. Tverdova best describes this problem:

Naturally, the existence of laws prohibiting human trafficking does not guarantee effective prosecution. Often, law enforcement personnel are participants in the crimes. Women forced into prostitution by traffickers have exceptionally low trust in law enforcement agencies after being raped by policemen or having had policemen as clients and the Russian police are one of the mostly distrusted government institutions²⁴.

²² "Freedom House." *Freedom House*. N.p., n.d. Web.

²³ "Transparency International - The Global Anti-Corruption Coalition." *Transparency International - The Global Anti-Corruption Coalition*. N.p., n.d. Web.

²⁴ Tverdova, Yuliya V. "Human Trafficking in Russia and Other Post-Soviet States." (n.d.): n. pag. Print.

It is evident that the human trafficking trade is perpetuated and somewhat fueled by corrupt Russian policemen and government officials. Furthermore, the corrupt policemen and government officials that are caught rarely face justice. For example, many illegal acts committed by policemen related to human trafficking, slavery, and prostitution were documented between 2008 and 2010, but often there was no further investigation, and very few, if any repercussions.²⁵

In order to best defeat the large amount of corruption within the Russian government in general and with regard to human trafficking in particular, I believe that sanctions are the optimal method among other less productive, but still somewhat viable strategies. However, the sanctions that would truly bring about change in Russia will come at a very high cost.

If we truly want to cripple the Russian economy, and use this leverage to demand that the Russian government take serious steps to eliminate corruption, we need to attack the product that makes up the majority of their export market: oil and natural gas. Oil and natural gas make up about 52% of federal revenue, and more than 70% of exports in 2012²⁶. Furthermore, about 79% of Gazprom's (major Russian gas supplier) exports were sent to countries that are members or the European Union, or are aspiring to be members of the European Union²⁷. In order to cripple the Russian oil and natural gas market, we would need to

²⁵ Damiana, Eric A. L. "Silent Suffering: A Critique of Sex Trafficking Policy in the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic." (2012): n. pag. Web. <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/22002/Damiana_washington_0250O_10484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

²⁶ "U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." *Russia*. N.p., n.d. Web.

²⁷ "U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." *Russia*. N.p., n.d. Web.

encourage Germany, the de facto leader of the European Union, to urge the rest of the member states to drastically reduce their consumption of Russian oil and gas. We know that this would be effective because, as Weiss tells us, “countries depending on a single export...are likely to be most affected [by sanctions]”²⁸. However, while this strategy would be effective in harming the Russian economy, there are two other factors and results from such sanctions that need to be considered.

First and foremost, the European Union would need to find another supplier of oil and natural gas. The EU relies so heavily on Russian oil and natural gas that a ban on Russian oil would also harm European Union Member States. Because of this, a ban within the European Union on Russian oil and natural gas would be fairly unrealistic.

Second, a sanction that so violently cripples the Russian economy might be seen as disproportionate when dealing with a problem like corruption. As Weiss tells us, “sanctions may serve as a catalyst for worsening socio-economic and related conditions; or they may exacerbate one of more deteriorating conditions that already exist in the economic sphere”²⁹. If this sanction were to create socio-economic problems for the populace in addition to the government, and cause the Russian citizenry to live in extreme poverty, which it would, the ban on Russian oil and natural gas would be seen as a failed sanction.

²⁸ Weiss, T. G. "Sanctions as a Foreign Policy Tool: Weighing Humanitarian Impulses." *Journal of Peace Research* 36.5 (1999): 499-509. Web.

²⁹ Weiss, T. G. "Sanctions as a Foreign Policy Tool: Weighing Humanitarian Impulses." *Journal of Peace Research* 36.5 (1999): 499-509. Web.

Furthermore, poverty is conducive to human trafficking and slavery, which is the overall problem that we are trying to solve.

Because a European Union ban on Russian oil and natural gas would be disproportionate, and would most likely lead to increased poverty, smart sanctions would be the most reasonable course of action. Unlike regular sanctions, Smart Sanctions exclusively target groups and individual actors that are responsible for a crisis, or are influential in the country where the crisis is taking place. Using smart sanctions, a state can enact policies that attack problem actors while simultaneously supporting positive actors³⁰. Furthermore, by utilizing smart sanctions, the United States government would be able to pursue its own interests by sanctioning the Russian elite, without causing the Russian populace to become impoverished.

If the United States, along with the rest of the West, was to utilize smart sanctions in order to urge Russia to deal with its corruption problem with regard to human trafficking, I believe the best course of action would be that which was taken after Russia's incursion into Ukraine. The United States State Department tells us that due to Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, the State Department has selected several Russian companies and people, mostly defense companies and Putin's close cohorts, and has also implemented smart sanctions which target all but six Russian banks and four energy conglomerates. The State

³⁰ Weiss, T. G. "Sanctions as a Foreign Policy Tool: Weighing Humanitarian Impulses." *Journal of Peace Research* 36.5 (1999): 499-509. Web.

Department has also implemented measures which work to discourages exports to Russia, and foreign investment in Russia³¹.

If we want to urge the Russian government to get its corruption in check, smart sanctions similar to those previously mentioned are undoubtedly a very plausible solution. However, we have seen that sanctions such as these did very little to stop or prevent Putin's intervention in Ukraine, so the effectiveness of smart sanctions with regard to corruption might be a dubious proposition. However, regardless of whether smart sanctions are successful in the long-term goal of abolishing corruption in the Russian government, and thereby coming closer to eliminating human trafficking, smart sanctions would indisputably be effective in drawing attention to Russia's corruption, and providing external motivation to deal with internal issues. While ultimately, corruption needs to be dealt with from inside the Russian state, this international attention might cause the Russian government to be more active in cases where a Russian policeman or government official is involved in human trafficking.

THE POTENTIAL FOR "NAMING AND SHAMING" IN RUSSIA

If we were to rule out smart sanctions in combatting the problem of corruption within the Russian government, I believe another potential solution could be "Naming and Shaming." Naming and shaming refers to the outing of regimes that are notorious for human rights abuses by news organizations,

³¹ "Ukraine and Russia Sanctions." *U.S. Department of State*. U.S. Department of State, n.d. Web.

NGOs, and other governments³². In order to out the Russian government as an entity that does not prosecute policemen and government officials when they engage in prostitution and/or work with human traffickers, NGOs and news organizations could emphasize the problem and make sure that there is widespread knowledge of Russian corruption. As Hafner-Burton tells us, Naming and Shaming is often effective: "Governments put in the global spotlight for violations often adopt better protections for political rights afterward..."³³. While Naming and Shaming isn't a "silver bullet" that could eliminate corruption in the Russian Federation single-handedly, it is most certainly a potential remedy (in conjunction with other strategies).

NGO ACTIVITY IN RUSSIA

When Mikhail Gorbachev took office in 1985 the Soviet Union was in a state of disarray. Resulting from a dangerously high military and arms budget, Leonid Brezhnev had transformed the already stagnant economy into a disaster. Yuri Andropov, Brezhnev's successor, did no better. Rather than focusing on reviving the perilously stagnant Soviet economy, Andropov implemented a platform centered around discipline, repression, and the extermination of Soviet corruption. Recognizing the folly of his predecessors, Mikhail Gorbachev made the overhaul of the Soviet economy his mission. In addition to other, lesser known reforms, Gorbachev instituted the aforementioned policies of *Perestroika*

³² Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. "Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem." *International Organization* 62.04 (2008): 689. Web.

³³ Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. "Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem." *International Organization* 62.04 (2008): 689. Web.

(Restructuring), and *Glasnost (Publicity)*. However, these seemingly revolutionary policies became instrumental to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union's external debt grew by billions of rubles, and the Soviet quality of life became even more atrocious. However, because of *Glasnost*, the Soviet populace could now protest the outrageous political and social decisions made by the Soviet government. Slowly, the country began to dissolve. By 1991, the Soviet Union was unsalvageable³⁴.

While the disintegration of a country that was notorious for its aggressive international policies and human rights abuses is undoubtedly a positive occurrence, it leaves repercussions that are still being felt today. Unsurprisingly, the most urgent problem remains the Russian economy.

Although the Russian economy is bouncing back, the hardships resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union are still evident to many Russian citizens. Furthermore, as a result of the sanctions placed on Russia in response to Russia's intervention in Ukraine, and the drop in oil prices soon after, the Russian economy has become even weaker. Women are the hardest hit by Russia's economic turmoil:

The collapse of the Soviet regime and the economic shock that hit the former communist countries resulted in the immediate deterioration of the living standard among the general population. Women, however, suffered more severe economic consequences than men. Unemployment, nonexistent under communism was much higher in the female labor force, and women had more difficulties transferring from the public to the private sector due to the widespread social stigma. Those able to keep their jobs experienced terrible wage delays, which lasted for months and, in

³⁴ Михаил Сергеевич Горбачёв (*Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachov*).” Biography of Gorbachov, Mikhail N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2016

some cases, even years. Unimaginable hyperinflation in the 1990s made money worth less by the day, and the bankrupt government was unable to provide a safety net.³⁵

As a result of this financial destitution, a woman in the Russian Federation became more likely to be victimized by human traffickers than a woman who is living comfortably and able to make ends meet. This is proven by Kevin Bales who says, "Slavery grows best in extreme poverty...the common denominator is poverty, not color³⁶." Furthermore, we can look to an Eastern European victim of human trafficking who said, "I understood everything and had a foreboding, but I never imagined it would be so horrible. But I had no other way of feeding my child."³⁷ It is obvious that there is a strong correlation between poverty and human trafficking.

In addition to simply causing women to become victims, female poverty causes women to return to the life of human trafficking. Tverdova tells us that, "after returning to their homes, trafficking victims face the same economic challenges and employment prospects that initially led them abroad. Unable to survive, they may turn back to traffickers³⁸."

³⁵ Tverdova, Yuliya V. "Human Trafficking in Russia and Other Post-Soviet States." (n.d.): n. pag. Print.

³⁶ Seidman, Gay W., and Kevin Bales. "Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy." *Contemporary Sociology* 29.2 (2000): 355. Web.

³⁷ Wylie, Gillian, and Penny McRedmond. "A Business of Supply and Demand: The Trafficking of Women and Girls From Russia and Ukraine." *Human Trafficking in Europe: Character, Causes and Consequences*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. N. pag. Print.

³⁸ Tverdova, Yuliya V. "Uman Trafficking in Russia and Other Post-Soviet States." (n.d.): n. pag. Print.

In order to eliminate the suffering of countless women in the Russian Federation, and thereby come closer to resolving the problem of human trafficking, I propose more NGO activity that targets disadvantaged women who live in areas that are at a high risk for human trafficking, and more widespread acceptance of NGOs in Russia. This would be beneficial in the fight against human trafficking because well functioning NGOs are vital in assisting the destitute.³⁹ Furthermore, NGOs are able to focus on women in order to provide them with social mobilization, empowerment, and political agency.⁴⁰ Since we know that human trafficking of women in the Russian Federation is, in large part, a result of poverty and destitution, we can reasonably argue that if NGO support can bring Russian women out of poverty, NGO activity in Russia would reduce the amount of potential trafficking victims, and thereby reduce the amount of human trafficking in general.

While reading this argument, some might in turn offer the counter argument that NGOs create a relationship of dependence between the NGO and the victim⁴¹, I believe that this is a perfectly acceptable risk. If some people become slightly dependent on an organization that exists to bring an end to human trafficking and to assist victims, I would argue that this is far superior to the alternative of human trafficking and slavery.

³⁹ Karim, Lamia. "Politics of the Poor? NGOs and Grass-roots Political Mobilization in Bangladesh." Rice University, n.d. Web.

⁴⁰ Karim, Lamia. "Politics of the Poor? NGOs and Grass-roots Political Mobilization in Bangladesh." Rice University, n.d. Web.

⁴¹ Karim, Lamia. "Politics of the Poor? NGOs and Grass-roots Political Mobilization in Bangladesh." Rice University, n.d. Web.

However, if we are to bring about the beginning of the end of human trafficking in Russia, it is imperative that the Duma become more accepting of NGOs. The Russian Federation is notorious for pestering human rights activists and NGOs. For example, the FSB recently shut down 20 NGOs because of their (alleged) ties to foreign intelligence services, and introduced legislation that creates substantial trouble for NGOs trying to make a difference in the Russian Federation, while citing the need to document the “functions of foreign agents” as the reason.⁴² Damiana describes the situation best:

Groups focused on women’s rights and issues cannot become effective under current state structures, and so women’s place in society and social attitudes about women’s roles cannot change. Allowing NGOs to organize and civil societies to develop would break this chain of events, and women’s groups would also be able to aid and to rehabilitate trafficked women more directly⁴³.

Additionally, there are allegations about the FSB’s involvement in political killings, such as the killing of Natalya Estemirova, a journalist investigating human rights abuses in Chechnya⁴⁴. If there is not a radical change in the way that the Russian government receives and treats different NGOs, NGOs that could make a positive impact on the problem of human trafficking may realize that they have an incentive to stay out of Russia. Furthermore, they may realize that their

⁴² International, Amnesty. "Amnesty International Report 2013: The State of the World's Human Rights." N.p., n.d. Web.

⁴³ Damiana, Eric A. L. "Silent Suffering: A Critique of Sex Trafficking Policy in the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic." (2012): n. pag. Web.
<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/22002/Damiana_washington_0250O_10484.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

⁴⁴ International, Amnesty. "Amnesty International Report 2013: The State of the World's Human Rights." N.p., n.d. Web.

actions are so regulated and prohibited in Russia that they are not able to effectively promote change, and decide to take their services elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have examined human trafficking and slavery as a whole. We have looked at different definitions and types of human trafficking and slavery, and we have examined the methods by which individuals are trafficked. Then, we considered the problem of human trafficking in Russia. After developing a general history of slavery and subjugation in the Soviet union, we began to investigate different methods by which the problem of human trafficking can be remedied.

First, we considered sanctions in order to push the Russian government to deal with intergovernmental corruption. While either sanctions or smart sanctions have the potential to be effective, there is an argument to be made that they would exacerbate the problem. Sanctions have a tendency to exacerbate already existing socio economic problems and worsen areas of poverty. Since poverty is conducive to human trafficking, sanctions could potentially make the problem worse.

Next, we looked at Naming and Shaming. Naming and Shaming has the potential to be effective based on the fact that it would produce embarrassment on the part of the Russian government. If news organizations, NGOs, and foreign governments worked to draw more attention to the problem of corruption in Russia, there might be some change. However, the Russian government could also just dispute claims of corruption, and stay the course.

Finally, we looked at NGOs. NGOs can be integral in the endeavor to help at-risk women climb out of poverty and become less likely to become victimized by human traffickers, and NGOs can be effective in providing women with social and political agency. Furthermore, NGOs have the ability to put pressure on the Russian government regarding corruption. However, if NGOs are going to be active in preventing and abolishing human trafficking in Russia, they need to have more flexibility to actually work. The Russian government needs to quit harassing NGO workers, and needs to make the political atmosphere in Russia more accepting of NGOs and human rights workers. If the Russian government continues to treat NGOs negatively, NGOs that are active in the prevention of human trafficking may decide that the risk of working in Russia outweighs the reward. Furthermore, NGOs working in Russia might decide that they can be more productive elsewhere.

However, despite all of the information in this study, it remains that human trafficking is not a problem unique to Russia. There are incidences of human trafficking worldwide. Furthermore, although many trafficking victims do end up being exploited in Russia, it is important to note that the Russian Federation is also very often just a transit route, through which women from other Eastern European states are taken to European Union countries, as well as the United States.

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