

The Development of Sex Trafficking in Central America

By Kate Zdrojewski

Introduction

Human trafficking in Central America has taken center stage since the late 1990s. This increase in public attention has been driven by U.S. initiatives, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), as well as the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, commonly known as the Trafficking Protocol. The United States has the reputation of being the leader in the fight against trafficking in Central America, using the TVPA and the Trafficking Protocol as primary mechanisms for anti-trafficking efforts.

Despite these efforts, trafficking remains rampant in Central America. Although trafficking in the region also occurs for purposes of forced labor and illegal adoptions, this essay focuses on the problem of sex trafficking. U.S. Trafficking in Persons Reports show that eighty percent of all trafficked persons are female, up to fifty percent are minors, and the majority are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation (Chuang, 2006). These women and children are drawn into the region's illegal migration flow as a result of economic necessity. Women are increasingly assuming sole financial responsibility for their families, and consequently, children are more and more responsible for their own well-being. The lack of employment options at home contributes to their vulnerability to trafficking. Offering false promises of lucrative employment and opportunity, deceptive traffickers ultimately manipulate their victims into a life of sexual exploitation.

Illegal Migration Flows

Illegal migration in Central America flows primarily on the north-south axis. States with growing numbers of tourists, such as Costa Rica and Belize, are principal "receiving" states for women and children trafficked from surrounding states. Both Panama and the United States are ultimate destinations for trafficked persons from Central America.

The states that supply the majority of trafficked women and children are Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala. These "supplier" states are the origins of the majority of trafficked persons.

Although all states function as transit points in some respect, the major transit locations are Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico. It is important to note that victims are also trafficked within their own countries, particularly in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Honduras. Sex trafficking victims "often start via in-country trafficking and are then sold through a string of intermediary stops before reaching a point where they move to another country" (Guinn 2007: 9).

Trafficking can also be looked at as following a path from poor areas to areas of relative prosperity, as both Belize and Costa Rica are among the wealthiest states in the region. According to a Congressional Research Service report on trafficking in the region, internal trafficking generally flows from rural to urban or tourist centers, while trafficking across international borders generally flows from developing to more developed nations.

The Development and Growth of Sex Trafficking

The Commoditization and Victimization of People

Traditions of colonialism and capitalism have made people and products interchangeable, thus legitimizing the unequal treatment of people based on race, class, gender, and culture. This racism is often invisible and is manifest in government policy and institutions, and supports the power dynamic between the privileged, white population and the marginalized, dark-skinned population. This is evident in that most individuals targeted for trafficking are “of color” and poor, and most clients are white and wealthy. As disadvantaged individuals are forced into sexual exploitation, they are moved into forms of labor that objectify and mechanize their bodies.

This commoditization effectively creates a supply of vulnerable individuals that fall victim to trafficking as a result of economic instability, family disintegration, and prevalent attitudes that objectify women and children. Traffickers prey on the hopes and fears of their victims, promising them lucrative employment opportunities across the border. Once traffickers have a victim at their disposal, they use any means necessary to control and ensure their victims’ cooperation in selling cheap sex and labor which often includes threats, sexual assault, and drug addiction.

Economics and Market Liberalization

The reasons for the development and growth of human trafficking in Central America vary depending on the socioeconomic and political conditions of the states between which trafficking takes place. However, the development of human trafficking is primarily economic and follows the model of supply and demand. As political borders close while free market principles continue to promote a global marketplace, the movement of goods, people, and capital across borders increases, consequently raising demand for trafficked persons. The ultimate destination for trafficked persons often correlates with tourism, since many developing states rely on tourism for economic stability. As tourism grows, so does the demand for forms of sexual exploitation.

An example of this economic reasoning for the development of human trafficking is found in immigration that occurs between the United States and Mexico. Before 9/11, the U.S. and Mexico were on the verge of a complete revision of their migration and cross-border relationship. However, progress was halted after 9/11 and the U.S. continued to close its political borders with Mexico while continuing to encourage its free market principles, thus creating the demand for more illegal migration.

Corruption, Profits, and Anti-Trafficking Efforts

Corruption among public authorities and institutions allows the victimization of vulnerable individuals to occur and be maintained. There are significant linkages between corrupt societies, high incidences of trafficking, and the lack of effective anti-corruption strategies.

Likewise, corruption goes hand-in-hand with profits. Trafficking serves an economic function to outside parties, not just the traffickers, which promotes the sustenance of corruption and perpetuates the problem since many individuals are economically dependent on the trade. However,

trafficking could not exist without corrupt public officials, which suggests that many of those profiting from trafficking are public officials themselves. Trafficking requires the collaboration of many individuals and considering trafficking profits are high and local wages are usually low, accepting bribes is a common temptation for public authorities.

Since corruption enables trafficking, it is inherently linked to the lack of anti-trafficking policy. Recent reports on trafficking and human rights practices published by the U.S. Department of State found that the majority of Central American states are facing structural inefficiencies in anti-trafficking policies or a lack of anti-trafficking policy altogether. The region's critical problem in implementing effective anti-trafficking policy is the discrepancy between domestic, regional, and international standards and legislation. Since each Central American state has its own set of social, economic, and political issues and values, the problem of trafficking in persons is not equivocally prioritized throughout the region.

Recommendations

Address Trafficking as a Domestic Issue

Trafficking is only just beginning to be looked at through a human rights framework. The invisibility of the crime is easily maintained since victims rarely denounce their traffickers out of fear, and furthermore lack the power to pressure public authorities to take action. Nonetheless, it is essential that states first address the trafficking problem as an internal human rights issue that affects its political, social, and economic systems. If states continue to ignore the domestic manifestations of the issue, the cost will be high, encouraging corruption and compromising key relationships with other states.

Align Anti-Trafficking Efforts with Surrounding States

States must also align their policies with surrounding states and with the international legal standards regarding trafficking. International legislation such as the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Trafficking Protocol as well as the TVPA support a standard anti-trafficking framework that can help Central American states work together to combat the issue. The TVPA has also provided significant funding that supports local efforts to address trafficking. Additionally, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) met with Central American authorities in February, 2008 to launch a new project to combat trafficking in the region. As former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Harold Koh states, we must "use our knowledge, networks and norms to create an international framework of response" (Koh, 2006).

Increase Awareness and Provide Victim Assistance

Finally, increasing public awareness about the issue and supporting victims with necessary services is critical to successfully combating the issue. Effective support programs focus on training diplomatic personnel in the recognition and providing care for trafficking victims, since victims "are more likely to seek out their consulate or embassy than they are the police" (Guinn 2007: 18). However, there are very few centers that exist to help victims in Central America. The lack of support available to victims means many of them end up living on the street and resorting to

criminal behavior in order to survive. Most of the minimal assistance and funding that does exist goes to supporting child victims, but similar efforts need to be directed to women victims as well.

Conclusion

Human trafficking is a complex issue and a challenge to address due to its invisible nature within Central American societies. Trafficking develops and is fueled by a combination of socioeconomic and political conditions. Corruption emerges in impoverished societies and is present within sectors on local, national, and regional levels and leads to the increase in illegal migration. However, as governments are made more aware of the nature of trafficking, there is more pressure to view the issue within a human rights framework and not merely as a societal hindrance that can be ignored. Individual governments must address trafficking as a domestic issue that violates basic human rights, align their anti-trafficking policies with neighboring states according to international standards, and make prevention and rehabilitation services readily available. Central American states have the opportunity to use the frameworks set forth by the TVPA and the Trafficking Protocol as a guide to develop policies tailored to their own country. If and when this happens, Central America will undoubtedly experience success in the fight against human trafficking.

Annotations

Agathangelou, Anna M. and Ling, L.H.M.. 2003. "Desire Industries: Sex Trafficking, U.N. Peacekeeping, and the Neo-Liberal World Order." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 10 (1):133-148.

Annotation: This article explores the relationship between modern peacekeeping and older traditions of capitalism and colonialism. The authors use historical case studies to show how neo-liberal power and capital legitimize the unequal treatment of people by encouraging the commoditization of people. U.N. peacekeepers have played a role in allowing sex trafficking to prosper by ignoring how the constructions of racial, gender, class, and cultural identities obscure global inequalities. The article concludes with recommendations to increase awareness of the implications of the socioeconomic constructions of people, as well as exploring how identities figure into the relationship between peacekeeping and sex trafficking.

Andreas, Peter. 1996. "U.S.-Mexico: Open Markets, Closed Border." *Foreign Policy* 103 (Summer):51-69.

Annotation: This article identifies the increasing concern over migration across the U.S.-Mexico border that occurred in the 1990s. It focuses primarily on the growing migrant labor movement and drug trafficking, and how these issues have become significant in the cross-border economic relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. Andreas blames U.S. policymakers for the issues, noting that the promotion of free market principles contradicts efforts to keep borders closed to the movement of migrants. The article includes statistics that reveal a growing population of Mexicans in the U.S. and concludes by encouraging multilateral institutions to make migration issues central to their programs.

Carroll, Rory. 2007. "Child-Trafficking Fears as Guatemalan Police Rescue 46 from House." *The Guardian (London)* August 14, 16.

Annotation: This article reports on the rescue of forty-six children from a suspected illegal adoption agency in Guatemala, renewing concerns about the trafficking of children throughout Central America. Guatemala is notorious for illegal adoption networks that supply infants to Western couples. The United States has responded to the problem by directing the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala to require DNA tests to make sure the women giving up their babies for adoption are the real birth mothers. Despite these efforts, there remains a climate of fear and suspicion that foreigners in Guatemala are involved in illegal adoptions and child trafficking.

Casa Alianza. 2004. "Trafficking in Children in Latin America and the Caribbean." Casa Alianza, Covenant House, Latin America.

Annotation: The researchers at Casa Alianza, the Latin American division of the non-governmental organization, Covenant House, describe the trafficking situation in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Although labor trafficking is discussed, the report provides an overview of the trafficking situation, particularly in terms of the sex trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation purposes. The report marks Costa Rica as a principle "receiving" country, Nicaragua as the main "supplier" of trafficked persons, and Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico as "meeting points" where trafficked persons are sent to be transported elsewhere. The report concludes that the commoditization of people in Latin America is a result of a lack of law enforcement and victim protection.

Chuang, Janie A. 2006. "The Role of International Law in Countering Human Trafficking." Washington D.C.: The American Society of International Law. Available online: www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/chuang_the_law_human_tra_0408.pps.

Annotation: This presentation was created as a webinar by Janie A. Chuang, an advisor on trafficking issues for the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Chuang also participated in the drafting of the U.N. Trafficking Protocol to the U.N. Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, advocating for the inclusion of human rights protections for trafficked persons. Her presentation provides an overview of the human trafficking problem in Latin America within an international law framework. She discusses the legislation that addresses trafficking and its impact on trafficking as a transnational crime and human rights violation. The presentation also assesses the challenges in implementing international law and effective anti-trafficking efforts.

Davis, Michael Cory. 2007. "Human Trafficking." *Hispanic Magazine*. Available online: http://hol.hispaniconline.com/HispanicMag/2007_9/Feature-HumanTRaffic.html.

Annotation: This article offers a brief insight into the trafficking relationship between the United States and Central America, noting that the increase in people trafficked to the U.S. is

directly related to increased demand for cheap labor and sex workers. Traffickers prey on those living in corrupt and impoverished areas since they are more likely to be deceived by false promises of employment. Traffickers often hold respectable positions in society, making it easy to manipulate their victims. Assault, threats, and isolation are ways that traffickers keep their victims mentally controlled. The article concludes by calling on communities to educate themselves on the trafficking issue and to assist law enforcement and the rehabilitation of victims.

DeStefano, Anthony M. 2007. The War on Human Trafficking: U.S. Policy Assessed. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Annotation: This book takes a look at U.S. policy on human trafficking and positions the U.S. as leading the efforts to end international human trafficking. DeStefano explores some of the worst trafficking cases and openly recognizes that the complex dimensions of the trafficking problem are unknown and under-researched. The book includes a decade of reporting on trafficking policy, evaluates the effectiveness of legislation, and concludes that human trafficking should be interpreted as a very broad issue that is directly linked with current events and economic conditions.

Ghosh, Bimal. 1998. Huddled Masses and Uncertain Shores: Insights into Irregular Migration. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Annotation: This book analyzes the various aspects and dimensions of irregular migration, exploring its complexities and possible remedies. Human trafficking accounts for much of this irregular migration and is closely linked with drug and arms trafficking as well as prostitution. Ghosh investigates inadequacies in combating irregular migration and searches to find reasons for these inadequacies. The book concludes with a forward-looking set of proposals that can be shaped into a comprehensive strategy to combat irregular migration. The clarity of Ghosh's discussion makes this book valuable to researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers alike.

Guinn, David E. 2007. "Defining the Problem of Trafficking: The Interplay of U.S. Law, Donor and NGO Engagement and the Local Context in Latin America." Available online: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=892154.

Annotation: This piece identifies the problems that hinder the accurate assessment of trafficking, focusing on the inadequacy of collected data due to definitional, social, and legal disparities in Latin American countries and the United States. Guinn addresses the trafficking problem specifically in the Latin American context, noting the predominant illegal migration flows, the contributing factors for the growth of the problem, and the efforts the U.S. has made to combat the situation. Guinn positions the U.S. as the leader in attacking trafficking both in the Latin America and on a global scale, using the Trafficking Victims Protection Act as a foundational driver for anti-trafficking efforts.

_____. 2007. "Ambiguous Knowledge: Seeking Clarity in the Effort to Define and Assess Trafficking and the Sexual Exploitation of Children." Available online: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=997677.

Annotation: This conference paper raises questions regarding common conceptions about trafficking in order to inspire people to rethink their approach to the problem. Guinn uses the Latin American context to describe the politicization of the problem of trafficking and problems of assessment. He cites that assessment failures reflect the influence of outside pressures and the willful ignorance of authorities towards the trafficking problem. In addition, Guinn explores the interconnected dynamics between trafficking, prostitution, and pornography. He concludes by explaining that acceptance of pornography and prostitution affects the ability to assess and define trafficking.

Guinn, David E. and Elissa Steglich, (eds.). 2002. In Modern Bondage: Sex Trafficking in the Americas. Chicago: International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul University College of Law.

Annotation: This quintessential book addresses human trafficking within Latin American countries and in the region as a whole. Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama are used as case studies that demonstrate existing human trafficking problems, as well as the effectiveness of solutions created to remedy such problems. The book offers an excellent overview of the human trafficking issue, covering everything from the region's socioeconomic context, trafficking routes, and relevant policy and its obstacles. The book aptly concludes with recommendations on how to address human trafficking both on the regional and national levels.

International Organization for Migration. 2005. "World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration." In *IOM World Migration Report Series*, edited by I. Omelaniuk: International Organization for Migration.

Annotation: This biennial report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) focuses on the economic costs and benefits of international migration. The report attempts to answer questions surrounding where people are migrating and the implications of migration on both developing and industrialized economies. In addition, the report examines the socioeconomic impact of migration and the critical policy issues facing migrant source, destination, and transit states. The report concludes by emphasizing the need for cooperation among governments to make policy choices that steer migration more in the direction of benefits than costs.

Jewell, Dawn Herzog. 2007. "Child Sex Tours." *Christianity Today*. Available online: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/january/17.32.html>.

Annotation: This article gives a brief synopsis of international sex tourism. The author cites World Vision findings surrounding the reasons for the increase in sex trafficking. Ease of

international travel, anonymity, low costs, ready access, and immunity from prosecution are reasons sex tourists travel specifically for “sex tours,” twenty-five percent of whom are Americans. The author places World Vision in the limelight, noting that it is sponsoring a widespread media campaign to dissuade potential child sex tourists. However, she acknowledges that the problem is still massive.

Koh, Harold Hongju. 2006. “The New Global Slave Trade.” In Displacement, Asylum, Migration by Kate E. Tunstall (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Annotation: Written by the former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, this chapter responds to the common notion that slavery has come and gone. Using his personal experiences as evidence, Koh explores a virulent form of transborder slavery that he calls the New Global Slave Trade. He discusses how the modern slave problem emerged, what we can do about the problem, and the kind of anti-trafficking position that should be held by those in power. Koh declares that we have the knowledge, networks, and norms to create a foundation for response to the international trafficking problem and encourages capable persons to coordinate their efforts in combating this new form of slavery.

Langberg, Laura. 2005. “A Review of Recent OAS Research on Human Trafficking in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.” *International Migration* 43 (1/2):129-139.

Annotation: This article reviews the recent trafficking research completed by the Organization of American States (OAS) that assesses the existence of sex trafficking in Latin America. Langberg breaks down the OAS study by laying out the methodology, findings, policy results, and recommendations. Findings show a lack of adequate anti-trafficking legislation, allowing many women and children to fall victim to trafficking due to economic necessity. The article also exposes the business-savvy of traffickers that use the complex and vulnerable political, legal, cultural, and socio-economic landscapes to their advantage. Langberg calls for governments to recognize trafficking as a form of labor exploitation, not merely the movement of migrants, and pay more attention to internal trafficking.

Lyday, Corbin B. 2001. “The Shadow Market in Human Beings: An Anti-corruption Perspective.” Available online: <http://www.10iacc.org/content.phtml?documents=111&art=134>.

Annotation: This report briefly examines trafficking as a global phenomenon, discussing its relevance as a corruption issue and offering a few tactics to combat it. Lyday reviews the economic reasoning behind the development of trafficking in underdeveloped regions and discusses recent United States policy toward traffickers. The report exposes the linkage between corrupt societies, incidences of trafficking, and lack of law enforcement and anti-corruption strategies. Further, the report seeks solutions that protect victims and strengthen government efforts to fight trafficking without necessitating corruptive actions. The author calls on men, as the primary users of trafficked persons, to work with law enforcement and NGOs to target trafficking in order to fight the corruption that fuels trafficking.

Monzini, Paola. 2005. Sex Traffic: Prostitution, Crime and Exploitation. Bangkok: White Lotus Co. Ltd.

Annotation: A poignant account of the linkages between human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and prostitution, this book exposes sex trafficking as a lucrative global industry. Monzini roots her analysis within the context of neo-liberal globalization, identifying migrant women and girls caught in the industry as the new “slaves” of the contemporary era. The immense annual worth of this industry makes it attractive to organized crime networks. This situation has led to an increasing number of women working in extreme conditions of sexual exploitation and being exposed to risky sexual practices, violence, and manipulation. The book explores the techniques and methods used by traffickers, and evaluates the strategies that attempt to combat sex trafficking.

“Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.” January 18, 2002. Available online: <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/treaties/opsc.htm>.

Annotation: The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography was opened for signature in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly and entered into force in January 2002. The Optional Protocol seeks to further protect children from commercial sexual exploitation by providing victims with counseling and rehabilitation and promoting international law enforcement cooperation on trafficking in terms of jurisdiction and extradition, legal assistance, and asset confiscation. However, mechanisms have been underutilized in developing regions since many states lack a framework for operation.

Phinney, Alison. 2001. Trafficking of Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation in the Americas. Available online: <http://www.oas.org/cim/english/Proj.Traf.AlisonPaper.htm>.

Annotation: This paper is an introduction to sex trafficking in Latin America, offering a brief discussion on relevant issues. Phinney describes the common background of trafficking victims as well as those that purchase commercial sex. She focuses on how supply, demand, and impunity together create a space in which trafficking can flourish. The human rights violations associated with trafficking remain largely invisible and include severe threats to victims’ physical and mental health. The paper also includes the notable legislation that affects Latin America and concludes that current legislation is inadequate and needs to better assist and protect victims.

“Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.” December 25, 2003. Available online: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html>.

Annotation: Created to supplement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, this protocol was the first legally binding mechanism to provide a

definition of human trafficking. It is one of the two Palermo protocols, and aims to prevent and combat trafficking in persons by requiring the ratifying states to promote cooperation among other states in order to meet certain objectives. In addition to laying the groundwork for protecting and assisting trafficking victims and providing appropriate punishment for those responsible for trafficking, the protocol requires ratifying states to introduce national trafficking policy.

Ribando, Clare. 2005. "Trafficking in Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean." Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress. Available online: www.oas.org/atip/Latin%20America/CRS%20Dec%202005.pdf.

Annotation: This report describes the scope of the human trafficking problem in Latin America and efforts made by the United States to deal with trafficking in the region. Ribando reviews current U.S. anti-trafficking policy such as the Trafficking in Persons Reports and actions taken by the Organization of American States (OAS). Ribando suggests that the U.S. plays a key role in anti-trafficking efforts and assumes significant responsibility for combating the issue in Latin America. However, Ribando acknowledges the difficulty in measuring the success and failure of anti-trafficking legislation and suggests ways to improve effectiveness of anti-trafficking policy.

Roffman, Rachel M. 1997. "The Forced Prostitution of Girls into the Child Sex Tourism Industry." *New England International and Comparative Law Annual* 3.

Annotation: This article is an overview of the child sex tourism industry, focusing on the forced prostitution of girls. The piece is written within a legal framework and provides a brief analysis of the international laws and treaties that impact the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children. Roffman starts by explaining early treaties such as the International Agreement on Suppression of White Slave Traffic of 1904 and discusses how legislation has developed over the last century. She notes the importance of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women but also concludes that most anti-trafficking legislation has been largely ineffective.

Shelley, Louise. 2001. "Corruption and Organized Crime in Mexico in the Post-PRI Transition." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 17 (3):213-231.

Annotation: When President Vicente Fox was elected in 2000, seventy years of rule by the PRI (Institutionalized Revolutionary Party) ended, offering Mexico the opportunity for new policy and change. This piece shows how corruption has allowed problems like drug trafficking and human smuggling to develop. Mexican crime groups recognized for their narcotics trade are commonly involved in the sex trafficking of women and children. Until Fox was elected, Mexican society had failed to address these problems as internal issues that affect their political and economic systems. Shelley conveys that this ignorance has high political costs, encourages corruption, and compromises key relationship with other nations.

Shelley, Louise. 2003. "Trafficking in Women: The Business Model Approach." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 10 (1):119-131.

Annotation: Shelley explores the business structures of transnational crime groups involved in international human trafficking and recognizes that crime groups are shaped by historical roots as well as modern socio-economic and cultural conditions. Readers are introduced to six models of business operating in the trafficking area, each reflecting the influences and conditions that drive the trade. The article is based on the important correlation that exists between human rights violations and business models. The author concludes that trafficking cannot exist without corruption in the political and legal sectors and recommends fighting trafficking by understanding the economic strategies of traffickers.

Shirk, David, and Alexandra Webber. 2004. "Slavery Without Borders: Human Trafficking in the U.S.-Mexican Context." *Hemisphere Focus*. 12 (5):5.

Annotation: This article focuses on human trafficking across the United States-Mexico border in the forms of forced labor and sexual exploitation. The authors explore the contributing factors of the issue, focusing on the developing trends in the new global economy, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of trafficking policy and legislation in both the U.S. and Mexico. Although the authors point out that both states are making progress on the issue, they conclude with a call for more information and education on cross-border trafficking. Trafficking flows both ways across the border and is an issue that both countries must continue to address.

"Trafficking Victims Protection Act." 106-386. October 28, 2000. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/86205.htm>.

Annotation: The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) is the most comprehensive United States law on trafficking in persons. It addresses various aspects of human trafficking both nationally and internationally and targets the issue by establishing measures to prevent trafficking, prosecute those responsible, and protect victims. The TVPA recognizes sex and labor trafficking that involves force, fraud, or coercion with exception for minors. It is considered a foundational document on international human trafficking and has been reauthorized in 2003 and 2005 in order to assess the law's progress and provide recommendations for future research and funding.

U.S. Department of State. 2007. "Trafficking in Persons Report." Washington D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs and Bureau of Public Affairs. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/>.

Annotation: This annual report written and published by the U.S. Department of State is designed to raise global awareness, highlight anti-trafficking efforts being implemented, and to encourage foreign states to take effective actions to combat human trafficking. The report is based on the scope of human trafficking set forth in the Trafficking Victims Protection

Act. The report acknowledges the multi-dimensional aspects of trafficking and addresses the forms and impact of the issue, policy approaches, and “Topics of Special Interest” which includes descriptions of notable current human trafficking problems around the world. All states are categorized into a specific tier that indicates the magnitude of the trafficking issue in that state and reflects the existence and effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts.

U.S. Department of State. 2008. “Belize.” In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007* Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100628.htm>.

Annotation: This report documents the challenges to human rights that were faced in Costa Rica in 2007. The government respected its citizens’ human rights in general. However, notable abuses included brutality, abuse of women and children, and trafficking in persons for sexual and labor purposes. Reports showed that women were trafficked into the country for prostitution, although NGOs involved in commercial sex issues reported that most prostitutes were there by choice. There was evidence that Chinese nationals were trafficked into the country for labor purposes. The government was unable to prosecute traffickers due to victims’ tentativeness to press charges.

_____. 2008. “Costa Rica.” In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007*. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100634.htm>.

Annotation: This report documents the challenges to human rights that were faced in Costa Rica in 2007. The government respected its citizens’ human rights in general. However, notable abuses included delays in judicial processes, domestic violence against women and children, and child labor and prostitution. Lack of anti-trafficking policies inhibits the prosecution and conviction of traffickers. Persons were trafficked to, from, and within the country, most often for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. The government recognizes the prevalence of sex tourism and is developing plans to combat the issue and offering more services to victims.

_____. 2008. “El Salvador.” In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007*. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100639.htm>.

Annotation: This report documents the challenges to human rights that were faced in El Salvador in 2007. Widespread violence and corruption, discrimination, child prostitution, and human trafficking compromised the protection of human rights. The country was a key transit country for the trafficking women and children for sexual exploitation as well as a source of forced labor. Most trafficking victims are from neighboring countries that came in the false hope of lucrative employment opportunities and were forced into prostitution upon arrival. The government provides services to victims upon request, although the success of such services hinges on the societal discrimination that the victims face having been involved in sexual exploitation.

_____. 2008. "Guatemala." In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007*. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100641.htm>.

Annotation: This report documents the challenges to human rights that were faced in Guatemala in 2007. Notable abuses included the government's failure to investigate and prosecute unlawful killings, public corruption, violence and discrimination, and trafficking in persons. The country was a source, transit, and destination point for women and children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. Reports show that public officials do not treat traffickers as criminals, despite their use of deceptive tactics to lure their victims into the commercial sex trade. The government is progressing in its cooperation with NGOs and neighboring states in combating trafficking, although Guatemala maintains its key role in facilitating trafficking in Central America.

_____. 2008. "Honduras." In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007*. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100644.htm>.

Annotation: This report documents the challenges to human rights that were faced in Honduras in 2007. Among the notable abuses were unlawful killings, judicial corruption, widespread violence and discrimination, and trafficking in persons. The problem of human trafficking is increasing due to the link between illegal immigration and trafficking. The majority of commercial sexual exploitation victims in Honduras came from neighboring countries. Despite increased anti-trafficking training, the laws set forth to punish those involved in trafficking-related activities were not enforced effectively due to lack of government funding.

_____. 2008. "Mexico." In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007*. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Available online: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100646.htm>.

Annotation: This report records the challenges to human rights that were faced in Mexico in 2007. The information in the report was gathered throughout the year by United States Embassies in Mexico. Findings showed that the Mexican Government generally promoted human rights by completing appropriate investigations and prosecutions. However, corruption, coercion, and violence exist on many levels and related events are largely underreported. The report notes that persons were trafficked to, from, and within the country. The government faced structural inefficiencies in anti-trafficking policies but made improvements in investigations and prosecutions of trafficking cases. However, securing convictions in trafficking cases remained a challenge.

_____. 2008. "Nicaragua." In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007*. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Available online:

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100647.htm>.

Annotation: This report documents the challenges to human rights that were faced in Nicaragua in 2007. Notable abuses included lack of respect for the law and widespread corruption. Nicaragua was a primary point of origin and transit for the trafficking of persons, not a destination country. The internal trafficking related primarily to the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation. Labor trafficking is not criminalized, and legislation against the sexual exploitation of minors does not protect all individuals under eighteen years of age. The combination of corruption with a lack of resources and funding to implement anti-trafficking policies encourages the growth of a population vulnerable to trafficking.

_____. 2008. "Panama." In *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2007*. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100648.htm>.

Annotation: This report documents the challenges to human rights that were faced in Panama in 2007. Among the challenges were corruption, discrimination and violence against women, and trafficking in persons. Women and children were trafficked to, from, and within the country primarily for purposes of sexual exploitation. Reports show that some women came willingly into the country to become prostitutes, but were deceived as to the actual condition of employment. Law prohibits human trafficking and sexual exploitation and although the country has a number of committees dedicated to implementing anti-trafficking plans, the effectiveness of such plans is questionable.

"United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child." September 2, 1990. Available online: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>.

Annotation: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international convention set forth to protect the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children. The UNCRC deals directly with the exploitation of children and children in the sex tourism industry. States that ratify the Convention are bound by law to uphold its provisions. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child regulates the compliance of signatory states. The UNCRC marks a significant step in the protection of children from trafficking and from sexual exploitation through its focus on education and cooperation. However, it lacks means for individual remedies and state-to-state confrontations in order to provide protection for the children trapped in the sex tourism industry.

"United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others." July 25, 1951. Available online: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/33.htm>.

Annotation: The 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others continued the Draft Convention of the League of Nations in 1921, which was delayed due to World War II. The

Convention calls for its signatory states to prosecute those involved in trafficking of the prostitution of trafficking victims. Unlike previous international law, this Convention was unique in that it addresses international trafficking as well as forced prostitution. It also calls for cooperation among states in the sharing of information. However, since the Convention lacks a direct call to action for relief of the victims, states are left to their own devices to implement the anti-trafficking mechanisms, which is difficult for developing states.

“United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.” September 29, 2003. Available online: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html>.

Annotation: This Convention is the United Nations’ principal instrument in controlling transnational organized crime and represents a heightened recognition of the gravity of the issue. It is supplemented by three protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. States must be parties of the Convention before they can be parties to the Protocols. Once ratified, the state makes a commitment to combat organized crime through a series of measures including the creation of domestic criminal offenses, adopting a framework for extradition, and promoting appropriate training for authorities.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2008. “Fighting Human Trafficking in Central America.” Available online: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/fighting-human-trafficking-in-central-america.html>.

Annotation: This article covers an event held in El Salvador in February 2008 to launch a new project to combat human trafficking in Central America. Several Central American authorities present at the event recognized the importance of aligning national anti-trafficking legislation with international standards and that training public officials is critical to this process. The event highlighted the willingness of the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) to contribute to the region’s fight against trafficking by offering its expertise on tactics to end organized crime.

Vayrynen, Raimo. 2003. “Illegal Immigration, Human Trafficking, and Organized Crime.” In *UNU/WIDER development conference on Poverty, International Migration and Asylum*. Helsinki, Finland UNU/WIDER. Available online: http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/discussion-papers/2003/en_GB/dp2003-072/.

Annotation: This paper distinguishes between illegal immigration, human smuggling, and human trafficking, and notes that these different types of movement have varying legal and political consequences. The author describes human smuggling and trafficking as an important element of organized crime and the illicit global economy. The main reason for illegal migration is economic and follows the supply and demand model. As political borders close, the movement of goods and capital across borders increases, consequently raising demand for smugglers and traffickers. The piece also provides recent illegal immigration patterns and statistics around the world.

Waslin, Michele. 2003. "The New Meaning of the Border: U.S.-Mexico Migration since 9/11." Washington D.C.: The National Council of La Raza. Available online: <http://repositories.cdlib.org/usmex/prajm/waslin/>.

Annotation: This document examines United States immigration policy since September 11, 2001 on the significance of the U.S.-Mexico border, and the impact of new policies on Mexican migrants living in the U.S. Just prior to 9/11, the two nations were on the verge of rewriting immigration laws. However, U.S. counterterrorism policies took precedent and adversely impacted the migratory relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. The border is not only a means to control illegal migration, but has become an important element of the U.S. war on terrorism. The occurrence of 9/11 misguided immigration policies and has deteriorated relations between the two nations.

Zhang, Sheldon X. 2007. Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings: All Roads Lead to America. Westport: Praeger.

Annotation: This book examines the illegal migration flows into the United States. The author takes the position that many individuals want to come to the U.S. even if it means being trafficked or smuggled in order to gain entry. Zhang explores illegal migration through both legal and illegal channels, noting that women and children from developing nations are especially vulnerable to trafficking for sexual exploitation and other illicit purposes. The book provides a thorough overview of the scope, methods, and strategies of global human trafficking and smuggling, and addresses the challenges the U.S. government faces in combating these activities.

Sex trafficking is a massive, worldwide problem that can take many forms. One of the most prolific: America's multibillion-dollar illicit massage industry. The prominence of illegal parlors and their ties to sex trafficking drew national attention in February with the arrest of New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft and hundreds of other men who police say solicited sex acts in Florida spas. In March, Martin County Sheriff Will Snyder told USA TODAY that the spas involved had "all the trappings of human trafficking." Law enforcement has ramped up its tough-on-trafficking language in recent years. In the United States, 300,000 minors are victims of sex trafficking. Los Angeles is the hub of underage prostitution in the country. In the streets of East Hollywood, in apartments, but also in motels, groups of girls work as prostitutes under the control of their pimps. Every girl is thought to bring in between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year, but the trafficking of girls is less risky for the criminals than that of arms or drugs. We follow the specialized brigade tasked with stopping the pimps, see how they dismantle pimping networks, trap sex offenders, and organize rescue operations for underage prostitutes. We also meet Tika, a 38-year-old forced into prostitution as a teenager, who now works as an activist helping young victims. Due to copyright restrictions, this video can only be viewed on RT's live feed. Human trafficking in Central America has taken center stage since the late 1990s. This increase in public attention has been driven by U.S. initiatives, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), as well as the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, commonly known as the Trafficking Protocol. The United States has the reputation of being the leader in the fight against trafficking in Central America, using the TVPA and the Trafficking Protocol as primary mechanisms for anti-trafficking efforts. Although trafficking in the region also occurs for purposes of forced labor and illegal adoptions, this essay focuses on the problem of sex trafficking.