

**A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE COMBAT
AGAINST SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND
CHILDREN ACROSS BORDERS: UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA AND UNITED MEXICAN STATES**

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**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work**

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE COMBAT
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The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of professionals about slavery and trafficking of women and children, with a primary focus on the United States and Mexico. The study explored the policies, prevention strategies and clinical and governmental interventions that both countries have on the issue as well as demographics and other characteristics of the victims and perpetrators, types of slavery and trafficking, and the types of modes of transport. The sample consisted of 8 participants of various backgrounds. The participants perceived slavery and human trafficking to be a “crime against humanity” in that anyone can be a victim. The 8 participants perceived that awareness, prevention, and intervention efforts, on both micro and macro levels, in the United States and Mexico need to be improved. Participants viewed research as another area that needs to be immensely improved in terms of documenting all aspects of this problem.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of professionals in the field of slavery and trafficking, in the United States of America and the United Mexican States (Mexico), about international slavery and trafficking of women and children, with a primary focus on the United States and Mexico. Specifically, the study examined the policies, prevention strategies, and clinical and governmental interventions that both countries have to address slavery and trafficking. This study also examined the demographic and other characteristics of the victims and perpetrators of slavery and trafficking, the types of slavery and trafficking, and the types of modes of transport.

Overview

Human trafficking is considered to be the modern form of slavery. It has been classified as the third largest and most profitable criminal industry in the world at estimated annual revenues of \$9.5 billion, with drug and arms trafficking the top two (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005b).

It is estimated that 600,000 to 800,000 persons are being trafficked each year across international borders. Out of these 600,000 to 800,000 persons, 80% are women and girls. Among these 80% of women and girls, 70% are forced into being sex slaves and the other 30% are forced into other forms of slavery or used for removal of organs (U.S.

Department of Justice, 2006). The number of slaves who are trafficked each year compared to the number of slaves who die every year illustrates the severity of slavery and trafficking. It has been found that sex slaves alone account for approximately 30,000 deaths each year, worldwide, mainly due to torture, neglect, and diseases such as AIDS (Goolsby, 2003).

Slavery and trafficking are significant problems in Mexico and the Mexican government has in some ways tried to improve on this problem by providing some services to victims but has not been very successful in doing so. In the United States, Mexicans are the second largest group forced into labor (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 2001). The extent of the problem in the United States and in Mexico may be greater but due to problems with research in this area, such as sampling and data collection issues, it is difficult to find out how large the problem really is.

There are many non-profit and governmental organizations around the world that have extensively worked in the area of slavery and trafficking of women and children and have written papers on the subject. They have done a great service. However, there continues to be a significant lack of social work literature, as well as of other related disciplines, in regards to slavery and trafficking of women and children, particularly in the United States and Mexico.

Definition of Terms

Murphy (2001) defined trafficking as:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, 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 labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. (p. 408)

According to Anti-Slavery International (n.d.), a slave is defined as a person who is owned by another, either an individual or an organization, who is mentally and/or physically threatened and/or abused into forced labor and/or sexual exploitation. The slave is dehumanized to the extent to where he/she is bought and sold as a commodity. The slave is also one who is physically held captive or on whom limitations to freedom are placed.

There are six forms of slavery identified by Anti-Slavery International (n.d.), which are as follows: 1) “Bonded labor” is estimated to affect about 20 million individuals worldwide and can be passed from generation to generation. The most common reason for this is poverty (Quirk, 2006). The individual is deceived into borrowing money and in order to pay the debt is forced into labor, which he/she may never pay back due to accumulating debt for basic food and shelter; 2) “Early and forced marriage” specifically affects women and girls. They are forced to marry. In this marriage they most likely will experience a life of violence and servitude; 3) “Forced labor” affects men, women, and children. They are forced to work illegally by private persons, governments, or political parties; 4) “Slavery by descent” includes those who are born into slavery or are from a particular group that is classified as a slave labor group; 5) “Trafficking” affects women, children, and men. This is where an individual is transported or traded across borders for the reason of labor and/or sexual exploitation; 6) “Worst forms of child labor” affect an estimated 179 million children, worldwide, who are forced into labor that is dangerous to their health and well-being (Anti-Slavery International).

Multicultural Relevance

There are clear ethnic/cultural trends in regards to those individuals who are victimized most often in the United States. These individuals are of Asian or Latino descent (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 2001).

Importance to Social Work

This study was important in that it brought forth information in regards to policies, prevention strategies, and clinical and governmental interventions that both the United States and Mexico use to address slavery and trafficking. The study was conducted in order to learn more about what is already being done and to gather the views of professionals' regarding what they feel would be appropriate new and progressive approaches in each country.

This study also examined the demographic and other characteristics of the victims and perpetrators of slavery and trafficking, the types of slavery and trafficking, and the type of modes of transport. In doing so, the researcher sought to expand awareness and generate new information that can help social workers and other professionals in the field of slavery and trafficking work better on many levels, from the grassroots to the governmental.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Extent of the Problem Worldwide

The numbers of victims of slavery and trafficking continues to grow over the years and global attempts to decrease and eliminate slavery and trafficking are ineffective thus far. Basu (2005) stated that one of the reasons why this is so is because current laws treat trafficking as a migration issue, which means that the traffickers who are detained are usually charged for illegal immigration and fraud but are not charged for exploitation of persons. The traffickers are, therefore not fully punished for their crimes and the victims are left without help and without retribution, and at times will be treated as criminals themselves. However, in recent years national governmental bodies and international organizations are acknowledging that human trafficking is a human rights issue and not just a migration issue (Basu). Acknowledgement is a major step in the right direction to combat slavery and trafficking because without it, and without consensus about the problem, these bodies and organizations cannot begin to work together to build a system that will be more effective in eliminating the problem.

Extent of the Problem in United States

There have been two significant governmental attempts to end slavery in the United States alone; one being President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation at the end of the Civil War in 1863 and the Thirteenth Amendment shortly in 1865. To the

dismay of many U.S. citizens and residents, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment were not very successful in completely abolishing slavery. According to Ryf (2002), there were still over 1 million individuals held captive and used for forced prostitution, sweatshop work, and domestic labor in the United States after 1865.

Nevertheless, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment were significant in that they both conveyed to society that slavery was against a person's universal human rights. They also set the precedence for future legislation and policies needed to continue the fight against slavery and trafficking.

One example of this is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, which affected not only the United States, but also the international community as a whole (Ryf, 2002). The Act was established because it was found that trafficking was a growing industry nationwide and that strict immigration policies alone would not decrease the problem, but only increase it. With stricter immigration policies, there would be a greater demand for slaves, which coincides with the economic theory of limited supply leading to increased demand. In contrast, the Act was created in a way that looked at the problem of trafficking through a human rights perspective. It focused on combating the trafficking of persons through prevention, protection, and prosecution. With this Act, the United States at present time is able to help other countries, worldwide, meet a set of minimum standards. If these countries do not meet these standards, they will be sanctioned in terms of trade and other agreements with the United States (Ryf).

Another Act that was established by the United States was the U.S. Violent Crime Control Act of 1994. This Act made it a crime for a person to travel with a minor with

the intent to engage in sexual acts. The Act was hard to use in the prosecution of perpetrators because of the word “intent.” In the judicial system, the perpetrator can only be prosecuted for the actual crime committed, not based on the possibility that he or she merely planned to commit the crime (Meier, 2006). Although the Act was not effective, it can be used to bring awareness to the problem and as a framework for future policies and legislation.

Other examples of legislation to help fight against human trafficking and slavery are the 16 federal statutes in place today under the enforcement of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the U.S. Department of Justice (2005a). These statutes look at the problem as a migration issue as well as a human rights issue. The statutes pertain to a variety of areas, including kidnapping; hostage practices; smuggling illegal immigrants for prostitution, sale into involuntary slavery, forced labor, or peonage; forced trafficking of children for sex; and creating fraudulent documents.

Some studies have been able to document the numbers of individuals who are trafficked and forced into slavery in the United States. However, those who have documented statistics on this problem have warned that their statistics are not absolute due to the fact that the industry of trafficking and slavery is an underground organization. The statistics are usually retrieved on a case by case basis from the police, social workers, investigative reporters, and freed slave reports (Musser, 2002; Free the Slaves & University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center, 2004).

Free the Slaves & University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center are two organizations that have studied this problem. They have defined forced labor as involving “a wide range of industrial sectors, including domestic service, the sex

industry, food service, factory production, and agriculture.” Their September 2004 report noted that as of December 2003, Chinese were the first largest group of individuals classified as forced laborers in the United States, at an estimated number of 10,000 individuals; Mexicans were the second largest group, at an estimated 1,500 individuals; and Vietnamese were third, at an estimated 250 individuals. It is estimated that 50,000 women and children are trafficked into the United States per year, primarily from Latin America and Asia (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 2001). These numbers are probably higher, but due to the difficulties in collecting data in this area, the extent of the problem will not be known until data collection and tracking are improved by the researchers, police, social workers, and other professionals involved in the area of slavery and trafficking.

The report also found that in at least 90 cities in the United States, in the past 5 years, forced labor existed and that the most highly concentrated states with this problem were California, Florida, New York, and Texas. A rather interesting pattern is that these four states are transit routes for international travelers.

Extent of the Problem in Mexico

According to Ryf (2002), the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 is the most important anti-slavery bill passed since the end of the Civil War. This Act, as stated earlier, created a set of minimum standards for prevention, protection, and prosecution in order to eliminate trafficking worldwide. Because of this Act, all countries are required to comply with these standards. The countries are placed in one of four tiers in accordance with their improvement and compliance as defined by U.S.

Department of State (2006). These are Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 2 watch list, and Tier 3. Tier 1 includes those countries that fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Tier 2 countries are those that do not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but are making significant efforts to comply. Those on the Tier 2 watch list meet the same criteria as for Tier 2. In addition, they may have severe and/or increasing forms of trafficking, or there is a failure to show that they are increasing their efforts to eliminate trafficking compared to the previous year. Tier 3 countries do not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and are not making significant efforts to comply.

Mexico is currently listed in the Tier 2 watch list. According to the U.S. Department of State (2006), "Mexico is a source, transit, and destination country for persons trafficked for sexual exploitation and labor" (p. 178). The main problem in Mexico is child sex tourism, mostly in border and tourist areas. Mexican women are also trafficked into the United States for the sex trade. The U.S. Department of State (2006) also reported that Mexico has been on the Tier 2 watch list consecutively for the last 3 years. This is due to two factors: 1) The Mexican government is yet to comply with commitments that were made in order to enhance efforts in the prevention, prosecution, and protection of those being trafficked; 2) The Mexican government did not record law enforcement statistics on trafficking activities. Mexico's inability to record law enforcement statistics surrounding trafficking activities is due to not having specific trafficking laws; these activities may be tabulated under other laws that may not be related.

Although Mexico is listed on the Tier 2 watch list, there are some organizations and offices of its government that are trying to combat slavery and trafficking. The Office of the Attorney General (in Mexico) oversees the following programs that provide help to victims and support the elimination of slavery and trafficking. These programs are as follows: Attention for Victims Program, Comprehensive Program for Crime Prevention, Confidential Denunciation of Federal Crimes Program, and Program of Support for Families of Persons Missing or Misplaced (Cybernetic Police, Officer of the Attorney General Mexico, & Alliance House Mexico, 2003).

Slavery and trafficking is a big problem in Mexico and it is also a growing industry, as it is in the United States. According to the Embassy of the United States of America, Bogota, Colombia (2001), Mexico is said to be the origin of victims who are trafficked to the United States, Canada, and Japan. Mexico is also considered to be the transit route through which persons from other countries are trafficked.

These victims of slavery and trafficking in Mexico are more likely to be coerced into prostitution by an offer from a perpetrator of a decent job, such as a waitress, nanny, or domestic worker (Garbay, 2003). These offers are tempting to individuals who are living in poverty and are in need of money to help support their families. The following testimony by Inez, who is from a small town near Veracruz, Mexico, illustrates this method well:

Sometime in 1997, a woman named Maria Elena approached me and told me about opportunities for work in the United States. She told me she had worked there at a restaurant and had made good money . . . Maria Elena set up a meeting with two men named Abel Cadena-Sosa and Patricio Sosa. At the meeting, the men confirmed that they had job openings for women like myself in American restaurants . . . I decided to accept the offer. In 1997, I was brought into the United States . . . I met a girl named Sue who lived in the trailer. She asked me if I knew why I had

come to Avon Park. I said I was going to work in a restaurant. She told me that I was actually going to be selling my body to men. I looked at Maria Elena in utter horror, but she did not appear surprised. Maria Elena admitted that she had already worked in trailer brothels in the past. She said it would not do anybody any good to complain. I was going to have to do the work anyway, since I had a smuggling debt to pay off. Maria Elena also warned me, "If you escape, Abel Cadena will go after your family because you owe him money." Some of the other girls . . . warned me that if I tried to escape, the men would find me and . . . abuse me. (Human Trafficking, 2006, p. 1)

Not only does Mexico have a major problem with trafficking persons to other countries for the purpose of slavery, but they also have a major issue with slavery within their own country. According to Goolsby (2003), the most common types of slavery in Mexico and Central American countries are prostitution and child exploitation and child sex tourism. The Alliance House Mexico (2005) reported that child exploitation has grown between 2003 and 2005 in terms of the number of victims from 16,000 to 20,000 cases of children who were reported. There are at the least 1,000 children at risk of being exploited in Acapulco alone. The majority of the boys who are sexually exploited are between the ages of 12 and 17 and it is said that 50% of the girls who are prostitutes are under the age of 15 (Cybernetic Police, Officer of the Attorney General Mexico, & Alliance House Mexico, 2003).

United States and Mexico: Bilateral Partnership

The United States and Mexico have made some significant strides in working together to combat slavery and trafficking within the two countries. On August 19, 2005, it was announced that the United States and Mexico had agreed to put into place "cooperative programs" to help fight the trafficking of persons, specifically for sexual exploitation and forced labor. The programs will create more attention to those victims of slavery and trafficking on the "common border" and in southern Mexico. Through

these programs it is hoped that sexual tourism will decrease, awareness of the problem will increase, and the exchange of information between the two countries will increase in order to eliminate the problem, eventually. Also, the agreement is expected to enable both countries to capture trafficking criminals and take legal action against criminal organizations (Embassy of the United States Mexico, 2005b).

The United States and Mexico also came together in April 2004 at the Working Group meeting that was led by University of California, Berkeley's Human Rights Center and International Human Rights Law Clinic. The people present were representatives of government offices and non-government organizations, academics from Mexico and the United States, and Mexican trafficking survivors. The meeting was organized to discuss the trafficking problem and design recommendations regarding improved protection and support for survivors of Mexican forced labor. The Working Group found that many survivors of slavery continue to be harassed and threatened in order to keep them silent. Even when the trafficker is imprisoned, the survivor and his or her family are still not safe from the trafficker's associates. The survivor's family in Mexico is threatened with death and/or being forced into labor as well. Thus, survivors of slavery are typically very reluctant to seek help or to testify against their captors. Also, the trafficker's ability to continue to threaten the survivor and his or her family makes it very hard for the survivor to mainstream back into his or her old style of living and to recuperate from the trauma. The recommendations that the Working Group participants came up with were in the following seven areas: protection for family members, protection for returnees, protection/support for survivors in the United States, protection against disclosure of identifying information, corruption/lack of training among law enforcement at the federal

and local levels, strengthening and supporting non-governmental organizations (NGO), and the gap between law and practice (University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center & International Human Rights Law Clinic, 2004).

Victims of Poverty and Perpetrators Who Profit

There are families that are tricked, coerced, or propositioned into selling their children into different types of slavery. The targeted families are those that are economically disadvantaged, live in war-ridden societies, and are isolated from opportunities. Quite often they are from areas such as Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Latin America (Basu, 2005; Skrivankova, 2006). Perpetrators find these families to be vulnerable and capable of being taken advantage. They give them the hope of money in order to support the family; instead, the perpetrator is the one to make the money. They then leave the family in mental and/or physical captivity, traumatized, and poorer. Leuchtag (2003) gave a case example of such a family:

Siri attends 4 years of school, then is kept at home to help care for her three younger siblings. When Siri is 14, a well-dressed woman visits her village. She offers to find Siri a “good job,” advancing her parents \$2,000 against future earnings. This represents at least a year’s income for the family. In a town in another province, the woman, a trafficker, “sells” Siri to a brothel for \$4,000. Owned by an “investment club” whose members are business and professional men—government bureaucrats and local politicians—the brothel is extremely profitable. In a typical 30-day period it nets its investors \$88,000. (p. 10)

Slavery and trafficking is a very profitable industry (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005b). In regards to trafficking, it is estimated that one slave is sold for an average of \$12,500, while the expense of one slave is approximately \$3,000 for transportation and fraudulent documents. The perpetrator therefore has profited an estimated \$10,000 per slave (Kapstein, 2006). Sex slaves, who are usually held under debt bondage, are

continually abused and preyed upon over time. This is lucrative for perpetrators in that, over time, they will make continual profit from their slaves, especially since the slaves get paid little to nothing.

Why Does Slavery and Trafficking Continue to Exist and Flourish?

Beyrer (2004) stated that there are three reasons why slavery and trafficking continues to exist today, particularly in terms of child labor. One reason is that the demand for cheap labor is growing and will continue to do so as long as the demand for labor is high and the widespread tolerance of exploitation continues. An example of this would be debt bondage, which is outlawed internationally but still continues in some countries due to governments' unwillingness to enforce the laws and a lack of resources and processes that are necessary to penalize the perpetrators (Anti-Slavery International & Development and Peace, 1999).

The second reason that child labor, in particular, is an increasing problem is due to the need to incorporate children in armies and militias in countries such as Burma, Uganda, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (Beyrer, 2004). According to Becker (2004), children are used in armies and militias in at least 20 countries around the world. It is estimated that there are approximately 300,000 child soldiers. Becker stated that children are seen as very cost effective, compliant, and effective in combat.

The third reason why slavery and trafficking in child labor is high is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. There are more than 14 million children who are orphaned due to the epidemic and more than 90% of these children live in developing countries where they are left vulnerable and open to abuse and exploitation (Beyrer, 2004).

Free the Slaves & University of California, Berkeley's Human Rights Center (2004) reported that one of the reasons why slavery and trafficking are prevalent is because they are considered exclusively federal crimes. This means that federal law enforcement agencies are rather disconnected with state law enforcement agencies when it comes to this problem, which has enabled perpetrators to go undetected. Also, federal law enforcement officials are the ones responsible for providing safety, funds, and assistance to the survivors and their families. However, they lack the resources to do so. This, in turn, leads to survivors' reluctance to testify and/or cooperate with criminal investigations against their captors because they are left on their own and are frightened of being killed or retaliated against (Free the Slaves & University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center).

The fight against slavery and trafficking is also hindered because women who are trafficked as sex slaves are often seen by law enforcement officials, immigration officials, and judiciary bodies as prostitutes instead of victims of slavery. In addition, those who are forced into labor are often treated as a migration problem. These victims are turned into criminals, left without help, and never told of their rights, which leads to further victimization and traumatization (Basu, 2005; Skrivankova, 2006).

Another reason why slavery and trafficking exist to this day and continue to flourish is also due to the underreporting of the problem by the press (Ricchiardi, 2003). This is a major problem because the press has a great capability to spread information to the general public and to professionals with respect to knowledge about the extent of this problem, the persons involved, and how to help. It would be very valuable to make this

problem known worldwide. Ricchiardi, a journalist, explained why it is underreported in the media:

So far, there is no evidence of reporters being killed for delving into the sex-slave industry. That's because none have penetrated its inner workings, explained Sullivan over lunch in Sarajevo. "The closer you get to the heart of trafficking, the closer you get to the Serbian, Albanian, and Russian Mafia. It is well known they will kill anybody to protect their business," says Sullivan, who has interviewed more than a dozen survivors . . . the issue of forced prostitution has been largely ignored or glossed over by the local and international press corps. (p. 29)

Kapstein (2006) stated that the economic and governmental systems we have in place today allow criminals more incentives than sanctions when they "market humans." He believes that the current systems in place today in industrial countries, for political reasons, choose not to use the money, power, and resources they have at their disposal toward the fight against this problem. Kapstein believes that slavery and trafficking could be significantly curtailed if these resources were used willingly. Also, in order for slavery to flourish, there needs to be national governmental involvement. The September 2005 report by the Office of the Press Secretary, U.S. Department of State, illustrates examples of countries that have problems with governmental involvement. The report states that the Burmese military is directly involved in forced labor and Cambodia has failed to address the fact that there are senior law enforcement officials that are involved in trafficking. The report goes on to state that Cambodia has also failed to investigate or prosecute significant traffickers. Another country in the report is Cuba that has a state-sponsored tourist industry that somewhat promotes child prostitution and draws in sex tourists from other countries (U.S. Department of State, 2005).

Free the Slaves (2006) attributes the increase in slavery to three trends. The first trend is the current increase in population worldwide and particularly in developing

countries. The sudden increase in the population within developing and other countries leaves them unprepared to expand jobs and resources for their people, especially if they were already having problems prior to the population explosion. This, in turn, increases the number of men, women, and children who live in poverty and therefore increases their chances of being victims of slavery and trafficking. The second trend is the social and economic shifts in urban areas, which leads to unemployment and reduced resources, thus making people more vulnerable to slavery and trafficking. The third trend is the corruption within governments worldwide. As stated above, there are governments, at both federal and state levels, that have tolerated and/or contributed to the problem instead of following international and national laws designed to fight against the problem.

Interventions for Victims

At a NGO level, certain interventions have been put into place in order to help victims overcome the psychological and physical trauma that they have suffered. Interventions such as mental health treatment, medical treatment, housing and legal services. One such NGO is Florida Freedom Partnership (FFP), which provides the above mentioned interventions. In regards to mental health treatment, FFP has a “Rapid Response Team” that is comprised of a program specialist, a mental health advocate, and a translator that will quickly assess the victims and provide them with services that meet their needs. The mental health advocate will provide victims with crisis intervention as well as 25 hours of clinical intervention. Other services for victims are case management, cash aid, transportation assistance, free medical care, housing and legal services (Florida Freedom Partnership, n.d.).

Another NGO would be the Coalition Against Slavery and Trafficking (CAST). CAST also provides intervention services similar to that of FFP with the only difference being that CAST provides an additional service, which is the “Wellness Program for Survivors of Trafficking.” The program consists of mental and physical health services that meet the needs of the victims they serve. CAST also connects with other organizations in order to provide victims with a wide range of culturally and linguistically sensitive services such as “herbal medicine, yoga, art, and dance” (Coalition Against Slavery and Trafficking, 2005).

According to the Embassy of the United States Mexico (2005a), Mexico is considered to be weak in the area of NGO’s who work with victims of slavery and trafficking. Although, there are some organizations such as The National Commission of Human Rights (CNDH) of Mexico that works with victims of crime and has developed programs that assist victims of trafficking. CNDH offers a program called Provicima, which provides psychotherapy and crisis intervention for victims suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other emotional issues that were a result of their victimization. The program also offers legal services (National Commission for Human Rights of Mexico, n.d.)

The U.S. Federal government has also intervened in behalf of the victims of slavery and trafficking, who currently reside in the United States, by providing them with certain protections. There are three specific protections that were put in place by the U.S. Attorney General and these are: 1) Witness Security Program where the victim and/or family members are relocated, given new identities, and are provided with housing, medical care, job training, employment, and basic living expenses; 2) Emergency

Witness Assistance Program is where federal law enforcement must provide victims and witnesses with immediate financial and other needed assistance but does not offer physical protection; 3) Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and Protections from Removal is where the federal government protects the family members of the victims who are targets or likely to become targets of traffickers. In this last protection the federal government will usually reunite the family with the victim by bringing them to the United States. With the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the victims are allowed to stay in the United States in order to decrease the victims vulnerability (University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center & International Human Rights Law Clinic, 2004).

The Mexican government also intervenes in behalf of the victims. The Mexican government does not see trafficking as a federal crime so these victims fall under the category of victims of organized crime. The Attorney General's Office provides certain protections for these victims by establishing the Federal Organized Crime Act. Under this Act the Mexican government has a Witness Protection Program that is lead by the Specialized Unit against Organized Crime. This program protects the victims by providing them with physical protection, surveillance, legal measures, or protecting their identity. This program may also protect the victims' families. Other benefits of the program for the victims and witnesses are financial, medical, educational, employment, and housing. The Federal Attorney General's Office also has three deputy assistant attorney generals that protect victims. The Assistant Deputy Attorney for Human Rights and the General Office of Attention to Victims of Crime provides victims with easier access to the criminal justice system, medical, and psychological services that they are in

need of (University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center & International Human Rights Law Clinic, 2004).

Conclusion

Significant steps have been taken to combat slavery and trafficking by agencies on several levels, from local to international, and by both governmental and non-governmental groups. Nevertheless, there are significant changes that continue to be needed in order to combat the problem. One important change that needs to be made is to stop law enforcement and other judicial systems from stigmatizing the victims of slavery. Law enforcement professionals should be trained to understand the problem and to treat slaves as true victims in order to allow them to receive the help they need.

There is a need to study the issue of slavery and trafficking of women and children within the United States and Mexico due to the rapid increase of this “industry” in these two countries. Also, there is a need for further research on the trafficking of women and children from Mexico to the United States. With research comes knowledge and awareness that may be spread to professionals and to the general public. This is needed in order to help end slavery and trafficking and to protect every individual’s universal human rights.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Design

Due to the fact that slavery and trafficking has been underrepresented in social work research, this study is considered qualitative and exploratory. It is also considered descriptive since univariate statistics were used.

This study used open-ended interviewing based on an interview guide. The interview guide addressed topics such as policies, prevention strategies, and clinical and governmental interventions that both countries have on slavery and trafficking. The interview guide approach allowed for a better degree of comparability between interviews than the informal conversational interview. It also allowed for flexibility during the interviewing process in that the interviewer was able to probe for more complete responses and clarify unexpected responses.

Sample

The sample was recruited through non-probability methods, specifically availability and snowball sampling. Only professionals combating slavery and trafficking were selected as participants in this study. Five agencies were identified for initial sampling: Mexican Consulate, Polaris Project, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW) and Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition in the US and Mexico (BSCC). The Mexican contact was no longer with

BSCC but the flyer was forwarded to the individual who was working as a director at the Binational Coalition against Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Mexico. The director or coordinator of each agency was found on the agency's web sites and that is how the initial potential participants were identified. A flyer, introducing the researcher and inviting them to participate, was sent by email and mail to these directors or coordinators.

The director from CAST forwarded the flyer to all the employees and one individual agreed to participate and was interviewed. This interview then led to other agencies such as the U.S Immigration, Customs, and Enforcement (ICE), Federal Bureau of Investigations Special Victims Unit (FBI), Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA), Pacific Asian Families (C-PAF), and Program for Tortured Victims (PTV). A flyer was sent by mass mail to the agents in charge at all ICE and FBI agencies in the U.S, by mail to VOCA, and by email to C-PAF and PTV.

One individual from BSCC agreed to be interviewed. This individual forwarded the flyer to those who might be interested and also made the researcher aware of a monthly coalition meeting where it was suggested that the researcher pass the flyers out to the coalition members. The researcher attended this meeting as well as one other meeting and did pass out the flyers to all the members after gaining permission to do so. This led to two more individuals who participated in the study, one from the San Diego County Department of Health (SDCDH) and the other from the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force (OCHTTF). The SDCDH participant referred the researcher to the Action Network agency and the OCHTTF participant guided the researcher to a potential participant from the Salvation Army and the flyer was emailed to both agencies.

Finally, the researcher conducted a mass mailing and emailing of the flyers to various governmental and non-governmental organizations across the United States and in Mexico. Some of the potential participants were found by identifying them on their organization's web sites and organizations were also called in order to identify potential participants. Those who were interested in participating contacted the researcher by email and were then sent the consent letter and the interview guide. Some of the prospective participants did not continue communication with the researcher, after this point, in order to schedule a time to be interviewed. There were others who wanted to participate but were prevented from doing so by their administration.

Eight individuals were interviewed for this study from the following agencies: Coalition against Slavery and Trafficking; U.S. Immigration, Customs, and Enforcement; San Diego County Health Department; Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force; HumanTrafficking.org; Salvation Army; Binational Coalition against Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Mexico and Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition.

There was only one interview from an agency in Mexico, although it was intended that at least half of the participants would come from Mexico. This was due to the fact that there are but a few agencies in Mexico that deal with human trafficking. Also, the researcher was not able to gain strong cooperation with those agencies in Mexico whose staff were invited to participate in this study. The researcher intended for a larger number of participants for this study but due to non-cooperation and other difficulties, the sample was limited to eight participants. In regards to the response rate, it is impossible to calculate due to the mass mailings and emails sent out within a 4-month period.

Data Gathering

The data were gathered by conducting phone and face-to-face interviews. The agency in Mexico was contacted by phone and the interview was recorded with the consent of the participant. The governmental offices and agencies in the United States were interviewed by phone or face-to-face, depending on their location.

Once the participant showed interest in being interviewed, the consent letter and the interview guide were emailed directly to the participant. The IRB approved a waiver of the signature, due to the fact that some interviews were conducted by phone and due to the professional (rather than personal) nature of the questions. The researcher contacted the participants by phone or email to set up a specific time and date to hold the interview. Before the interview began, the researcher asked the participants if they had read the consent letter and if they had any questions or needed clarification. The participants were then asked to verify permission to tape the interview. Two refused to be taped so handwritten notes were taken.

Instrument

The interview guide consisted of four sections (see Appendix A). The first section asked questions specific to the participants' country and their knowledge and perceptions of policies that affect slavery and trafficking, prevention strategies that help combat slavery and trafficking, and clinical and governmental interventions that are used to help the victims of slavery and trafficking.

The second section consisted of questions specific to the professionals' knowledge and perceptions of the demographics and characteristics of victims and perpetrators, the types of slavery and trafficking, and the modes of transporting slaves.

The third section addressed what the participants felt was needed to decrease and eventually eliminate slavery and trafficking worldwide and their perceptions of the bilateral partnership between the United States and Mexico in regards to combating the slavery and trafficking of women and children across the border.

The final section consisted of demographics of the participants: gender, age, ethnicity, years of experience in the field of slavery and trafficking, position/title, degree or highest level of education; and country of residence.

Data Analysis

Eight interviews were taped recorded, with consent, and two were hand written. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Once the transcription was completed, the responses were grouped into themes. The data were then presented by using frequencies and verbatim narrative quotes.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Demographics of the Participants

In regards to the eight participants who were interviewed, the majority were directors, but the sample also consisted of other professionals such as nurses, case managers, and coordinators. The disciplines reported were International Relations, Government, Law, Political Science, Public Health, Business, Education, and Social Work. Their degrees ranged from Bachelor's level to Ph.D. level. The remainder of their demographics are presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. Demographics of the Participants

		Number
Gender	Female	6
	Male	2
Age	26-36	3
	37-47	3
	48-60	2
Ethnicity	European American	3
	Middle Eastern America	2
	Latino/Latino American	2
	Asian American	1
Years of Experience	0-4	3
	5-9	3
	10-36	2

Policies in the United States

Federal

Two participants stated that the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 was the “most progressive” policy that is currently in place. One stated that the policy was developed “to provide protections for victims, to go after the traffickers, and to fund international programs to prevent trafficking.” Although this policy appears to be strong in theory, according to another person, its “implementation . . . takes a long time in mobilizing all of the different people who need to be involved in this issue . . . the coordination . . . is a little flawed in that they are not always working with one another.”

The 42 Department of Justice Task forces, run by the U.S. Attorney’s Office, were viewed as implementing policies to help improve coordination among professionals who are working to combat slavery and trafficking.

The U.S. Protection Act of 2000 was identified by 3 participants as an important policy. One statement was that this act is currently “very useful in really addressing modern day slavery.” The reauthorizations of the Protection Act in 2003 and 2005 continued to help change the laws, for example, “if an American leaves the country with the intent to exploit, they will be accountable for sexual tourism and exploitation of a minor.” The policy also “allowed for the issuance of the Trafficking Visa (T-Visa) or Victim-Visa (V-Visa) for victims of crime.”

State

At the state level, 2 participants identified the law AB22, which is in place in California. This law allows California to “prosecute domestic and international trafficking at a state level.” When traffickers are federally prosecuted, they can be

charged more severely “so traffickers are more willing to say that they are guilty less often than they would at the state level.”

Another state policy was mentioned by 1 participant, the Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act in New York. This Act “changed the law of prostitution . . . only those over the age of 18 will be prosecuted for prostitution in New York.”

Micro level

Task forces on human trafficking were identified as a policy at the NGO level by 1 participant who stated that there are “10 task forces in the country that are not federally funded . . . I think that this model of cooperation can be very successful.” Before these task forces were put into place, “the NGOs didn’t want to work together, there were a lot of personality issues, a lot of turf issues . . . nothing was getting done in terms of coordination, so that’s changed a lot.”

Interviewing as a policy

Two participants identified interviewing of victims by federal authorities and law enforcement personnel as a policy issue. One participant stated that these authorities are responsible for interviewing possible victims and they do not always involve NGOs in this process. This participant stated that if the NGOs and the federal authorities have a good relationship, then it is more likely that the federal law enforcers will involve the NGOs in the interviewing process. The participant stated that it is necessary to have the NGOs involved because interviewing a victim is “a very sensitive thing” and that at times federal authorities will have a “preconceived notion . . . this person is a criminal . . . illegal . . . a prostitute, that’s going to cloud sometimes the way the story comes out.”

The other participant who commented on this issue that when law enforcement personnel interview victims, they tend to want the victims to say a few words that will fit into the law so that they can be classified as victims. But at times, the victims do not say that they are victims because if they do “her sister will wind up replacing her in the brothels . . . she will not say ‘I was extorted’ . . . it takes months to get to that point.”

Policy changes

Four participants wanted to see changes in regards to the laws that affect slavery and trafficking. One participant stated that stronger and stricter laws need to be in place and that those laws need to be implemented immediately. The second participant stated that “the fact that we don’t have a federal law against prostitution enables a lot of businesses to operate that most likely may really contribute to sex trafficking.” The third participant stated that the “law that deals with trafficking is narrowly defined . . . women are abused . . . but they do not meet the letter of the law for a trafficking charge . . . they’ll fall under either a smuggling or a harboring charge . . . could possibly receive some improving.” The fourth participant perceived the T-Visas to be great but “the amount of T-Visas is large but the amount given out is small. This, again, goes back to how the law narrowly defines victims of slavery and trafficking.

There were 2 participants who wanted to see change in the realm of research because “we need a much better understanding of the dynamics in the countries . . . sending countries, the countries where people are coming from, to be able to prevent it.”

One participant stated that “the restructuring of the juvenile system needs to be done. Child prostitutes are on the streets and when they are picked up by the police, they are sent to juvenile hall to be re-victimized . . . they should be put into a safe house.”

This participant also stated that we should “restructure what we do with Johns who pay for sex for prostitutes. If the prostitute is a child, they are not mandated to register as a sex offender.”

Policies in Mexico

Mexico does not have many policies in regards to slavery and human trafficking. One participant stated that Mexico is a transit country and there is a serious problem with this issue. The participant stated that “we do not have a national law or policy that deals with this issue . . . the only ones that are working on this issue are the nonprofit organizations.”

According to this participant, people come to Mexico from all over the world in order to cross to the United States and that “this phenomenon of immigration provokes the existence of human trafficking . . . many people just want to cross but many networks of exploitation and traffickers utilize these immigrants for human trafficking.”

Policy changes

The participant stated that he or she would like Mexico to approve laws to combat trafficking. He or she recommended the formation of a federal law against human trafficking and also a national policy of prevention. The participant stated that work has to be done in the “expulsion states . . . where people come from like Oaxaca, Veracruz, Guanajuato, Chiapas; in those communities we need to take the programs of prevention and national policies to the families.”

Prevention Strategies in the United States

Nonprofit level

Three participants provide prevention services in the form of education, training, outreach, service connections, and raising awareness. One participant provides educational resources on the Internet to raise awareness. The second participant trains law enforcement personnel and organizes events and movie screenings about slavery and human trafficking. This participant also tries to “break down barriers” with other agencies so that clients can receive the proper services; and the participant also tries to find organizations that “can join our group or that can help our clients.” The third participant helps families in regards to poverty and awareness of the teen prostitution problem in the San Diego area. A participant stated that “60% of our children get involved in prostitution for personal expense . . . I get them involved in community resources to prevent and again talk openly about teen prostitution . . . to help the family as a prevention, locally.”

Governmental level

In regards to prevention at the government level, there were 2 participants who found that T-Visas were a good prevention strategy. One felt that in doing this the victim can stay in the United States and “not fear deportation, thus allowing them to have confidence to come forward and report these crimes.”

One participant stated, “the Department of Justice is giving more grants . . . unless you have money or funding to help those people, you cannot do it . . . a lot of funds for domestic and foreign clients.”

One participant emphasized the value of “the formation of task forces where state, local, and federal agencies combined efforts . . . working better toward making a greater awareness to the community about reporting this type of activity and getting outreach to people on what they can do to prevent themselves from being victims.”

Development and improvement needed in the area of prevention

In regards to awareness as a prevention source, 3 participants noted this as an area that can be improved. One stated that “because human trafficking in itself is new . . . a lot of awareness . . . education is needed because until people and communities react to it and accept it as a problem it won’t work.”

There were 2 participants who wanted to see “alternative economic opportunities” in the places where the victims are coming from so that they are not vulnerable and easy targets for the traffickers. One participant stated that this is important because then women would not have to leave their communities due to lack of job opportunities, which makes them vulnerable to traffickers.

In regards to migration, a participant stated that a good prevention policy would be to improve the “opportunities for people to migrate safely and have more opportunities for legal migration.”

The increased use of airports for prevention was identified by a participant who stated that, “many of my clients came through our airports and traveled many times, and it’s a great place to identify them.”

One participant felt that teen runaway prevention would be important since teens are quite often victims of human trafficking and slavery because they have few skills and cannot find work.

Prevention Strategies in Mexico

Nonprofit Level

The participant from Mexico is currently trying to work with governmental officials, police, immigration officials, and social leaders by letting them know about human trafficking and slavery and that it still exists today “because a lot of people don’t know that it exists . . . I also try to find allies to help with this.”

According to this participant, in general, the NGOs in Mexico are going into “small communities, for example, in Tijuana, in the schools, working in the poor communities” to inform them of human trafficking and slavery. “We are also developing campaigns . . . using billboards and flyers, we give them basic information.”

Governmental Level

One participant stated that “federal police are working to attend to this issue of human trafficking and to identify victims of trafficking. They are also working with the Cybernetic Police” in order to find human trafficking rings on the Internet.

Development and Improvement Needed in the Area of Prevention

The participant from Mexico stated that there could be great improvement in the area of prevention. “Something important to do is a national program . . . and we need to unite what nonprofits are doing and what the government is doing in order not to duplicate things.”

Clinical and Governmental Interventions in the United States

Non-profit Level

The participants’ agencies have certain interventions in place to help victims. Three participants stated that they help victims with medical care, mental health services,

education, emergency shelter, food, clothing, job training, legal assistance, 24-hour crisis intervention hotline, interpretation and translation, and case management. Some services are offered directly by the agency and others services are obtained from other agencies in the area.

Governmental Level

Two participants stated that “law enforcement are becoming more aware of the situation” and that “law enforcement are doing a lot to help.” Also, they said that NGOs are “working closely with local law enforcement, FBI, Victims Assistance, ICE, Homeland Security” and their staff is also being trained on the issue.

One participant stated that Thailand is using an intervention technique in order to prevent victimization. They are recording the interviews that they have with the victims so that they will not have to be interviewed again and again by the police, doctors, social workers, and so on. They also use the videotape for court cases.

Development and Improvement of Intervention Strategies

Two participants stated that they would like to see more shelters and services in general for victims of trafficking. Also, “collaboration and expansion of services” that are already being done with domestic violence programs should be enhanced so that they can serve victims of trafficking as well.

Two participants felt that involvement between agencies and professionals needs to increase due to the severity of the problem. One participant stated that he or she sees this collaboration in the form of engaging various professionals such as “law enforcement, healthcare professionals, mental health professionals, and even educators” so that they

can be involved in this issue because they are sometimes able to observe what is going on at some level.

Clinical and Governmental Intervention in Mexico

In regards to non-profits, according to the Mexican participant, there are not that many interventions in Mexico. The issue in Mexico is quite new and “some non-profits are just learning about the issue.” The participant stated that the first step is acceptance and preparation for the issue and the “next step is to identify the victims and attend to them.”

In the governmental level, the participant stated that Mexico has a national campaign to help prevent human trafficking. The campaign is taking place in the media, such as radio and television.

Demographics of Victims in the United States

In general, there were 3 participants that stated that victims could be from “any background and 1 defined it as a “crime against humanity.” Although they felt this way, they did state that at times there was a tendency for a victim to come from one group more than another. Table 2 shows the age of the victims in the United States, according to the participants in this study.

TABLE 2. Age of the Victims from the United States

Prevalence	Age
Most Common	0-18
Fairly Common	19-25
Least Common	65

In regards to ethnicity, the 3 participants stated that victims are of any ethnicity and are from “anywhere,” although, they did state specific ethnic backgrounds of the victims that are found United States wide. Two participants stated the ethnic backgrounds that are prevalent in the area of San Diego. One of the participants stated the ethnic backgrounds that are prevalent in the Arizona and Texas area. The specific countries that the victims come from are depicted in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Ethnicity or Area of Origin of Victims in the United States

Location of	Frequently Noted Ethnicity or Area of Origin of Victim
United States Wide	African, Asian, South Asian, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, East Europe, France, Thailand, Mexico, Guatemala, Korea, Indonesia, Philippines, Afghanistan, Ukraine.
San Diego	African-American, Mexican, South American, Muslim, Somalians, Russian, Korean.
Arizona/Texas	Latino Ancestry most prevalent.

In regards to gender, 3 of the participants stated that they have mostly observed females to be the victims, but that you men can be victims as well.

In regards to education, 4 participants observed victims to have low levels of education as a rule. However, a participant stated, “They can be anywhere from not educated to Ph.D.s. We had a case of schoolteachers, they were master’s level and Ph.D. educated people.”

In regards to socio-economic status, 4 of the participants found that the victims nearly always come from poverty-stricken backgrounds. One of these participants also found that there were “affluent socioeconomic groups of girls who wanted to experience prostitution . . . in our high schools . . . [it] started with their consent but then right away they become a victim.”

Characteristics of Victims in the United States

According to 3 participants, the victims could have a combination of problems such as “poverty, history of child abuse, low self-esteem, naiveness, subservience, domestic violence issues, sexual abuse, and gang activity.” Victims could also be homeless and runaways. Another participant stated that family obligation could also be a reason why a victim is vulnerable to this issue. “They put it onto themselves in that they may have a grandparent that is ill and they want to help.”

Demographics of the Victims in Mexico

The participant from Mexico stated that women are usually the most prevalent in being victims. The age of the victims could be of any age from babies to adults. The most common age group is women from age 14 to 21. In regards to socioeconomic status, the participant stated that there are not only poor people who are victims; middle and high class people can also be “hooked,” but this is not common. In regards to education, the participant stated that the educational level of most victims is low.

Characteristics of Victims in Mexico

In regards to characteristics, the Mexican participant stated that “many of them were orphans . . . hooked to drugs . . . or on the streets . . . easier to hook than a person who is socially stable.”

Demographics and Characteristics of Perpetrators in the United States

According to 4 of the participants, the perpetrators could be anyone, although there are certain groups that are prone to engage in such criminal activities. The demographics of the perpetrators are detailed in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4. Demographics of the Perpetrators in the United States

Demographic	Prevalence
Age	
Adults	Most Common
Gender	
Men	Most Common
Women	Least Common
Level of Education	
Educated	Most Common
Not Educated	Least Common

In regards to ethnicity, 1 participant stated that “they usually come from the ethnic group of the person that they are abusing.” This is because when you are from the same ethnic group, you “have an understanding of the cultural issues . . . can use cultural beliefs to keep people in the situation of exploitation.” But 1 participant did state that in Arizona and Texas “what we see more of is if the women are Guatemalan you . . . will have a Mexican abuse a Guatemalan” due to fear of retaliation. If the woman has family in Guatemala and the abuser is Guatemalan, then it would be easier for the family to retaliate. In San Diego, 1 participant stated that there are more African-American perpetrators than any other ethnicities.

In regards to socioeconomic status, 2 participants stated that this also varies in that perpetrators can be “very affluent business people, from professional lawyers, teachers, engineers, and doctors.”

In regards to characteristics, the perpetrators could be working alone, in groups, and in organizations in order to make a profit by exploiting victims. Four participants stated that the perpetrators could work alone. One example was a “University of Texas at El Paso professor who was using his research thesis to bring Eastern European women . . . forcing them to dance in strip clubs . . . he and his wife netted about \$900,000, and they are in jail now.”

The perpetrators could also be working in groups, according to 5 participants. “They can be working in smaller networks and family networks or extended community networks.”

According to 4 participants, people could also be working in “large transnational organized crime units . . . are more prevalent.” It could be organized crime “like the Mafia, because they have branches all over the world” and “have a diversified labor” force to handle the technical aspects involved in trafficking victims.

There were 2 participants who stated that the perpetrators can be “narcissistic and egotistical” and “they themselves are either victims of domestic violence, child abuse . . . no education, no work skills . . . engaged in all kinds of illegal activities . . . selling drugs, doing prostitution . . . running gang activities . . . very powerful people.”

Demographics and Characteristics of Perpetrators in Mexico

In Mexico, the participant stated that perpetrators tend to come from “good economic level and good social level . . . people that are well known in the community . . . they

could be men from 30 to 45. No steady address and do not live in one single city; they change cities because it is hard to locate them.”

Regarding the characteristics of the perpetrators, according to this participant, “they can’t be alone because to run human trafficking . . . you need a lot of people . . . one person to hook the victim . . . you need to take them to take them to . . . a place, and there will be another person . . . so it’s a chain.”

Types of Slavery and Trafficking, Worldwide

There were several types of slavery and trafficking listed by the participants. In regards to labor, 7 participants stated that the forms of labor trafficking are domestic servitude, farm labor, janitorial services, car wash employment, agricultural work, restaurant work, construction work, landscaping, factory work, garment industry work, fishing, begging, housekeeping, office cleaning, and babysitting.

In regards to sexual slavery, 6 participants identified several forms: pornography, stripping, commercial sex use, domestic servitude with sexual elements, prostitution, and sex tourism.

One participant identified “baby selling and propagating babies to sell” as another form of human trafficking.

There was also a participant who gave reasons why perpetrators are involved, stating that “economically, it’s very profitable. Much more profitable than drugs and weapons . . . you can get a child, 10 or 11 years old . . . you can use and use them until they are 45, or whatever age.”

Types of Modes of Transport

There were several modes of transport listed by the participants. Six participants identified the use of planes as a mode of transport. The victims will “have all the fake documents” to cross over in a plane.

Another mode of transport identified by 5 participants was the use of cars, trucks, busses, and taxis.” One of these participants stated that the perpetrators will “send them out of the brothels in taxis to do calls. The taxi companies and the traffickers have a deal.”

Three participants identified walking as another mode of transporting victims. One participant stated that he or she had one client who walked from Honduras and did not get into a vehicle until she got to the Texas border.” Another participant stated, “In El Paso they would just run the kids for a day from Mexico . . . would cross the border . . . and they make them beg for the whole day . . . sell candy . . . they make them disabled, they cut their [bodily] organs so people have pity on them and give them money.”

There were other modes identified by 2 participants, such as railways, boats, underground routes, and refrigeration cargo where victims could die.

Additional Comments

Ways to Decrease and Eventually Eliminate Slavery and Trafficking Worldwide

There were 7 participants who stated that more education and research are needed. One said, “More people need to become aware of it and more communities need to get involved with it.” Another participant stated that “we need to tell the entire community what human trafficking is . . . where does it exist and how can we prevent it because if people don’t know what human trafficking is, then they will never denounce it.”

Four participants stated that coordination is needed in order to combat slavery and trafficking. Three of these participants stated that the superpowers need to “share their prosperity with other countries” and that they can “let other countries really grow, keep their independence.” One participant stated that we need to have “continued aggressive enforcement efforts and international cooperation.”

Three participants identified the need for more research and the improvement of laws. Two of these participants wanted to see improvement in data collection. They both stated that the statistical number of 14,000 or so victims in the United States is a meaningless number. One stated, in regards to the number of victims, “It’s more than we talk about but then do we have a correct number” and the other stated that “American academics are not really engaged in this issue . . . so we’re left to rely on the United States government and their research is flawed.”

United States and Mexico Bilateral Partnership

In regards to the bilateral partnership between these countries, there was an almost equal split among the 6 participants who commented on this issue. Four participants stated that the partnership is good and strong. One stated, “We had a client from Mexico . . . we were able to get their children from Mexico . . . because we had a good relationship with the embassy over here.” Another participant stated that “they do work with us . . . our agency has a strong working relationship with the [Mexican] government.”

In contrast, 3 participants stated that there was a weak relationship between the United States and Mexico. One participant stated that “on paper they like to pretend they are working together; in reality they don’t . . . on both sides . . . These two countries have

a long way to go and we need . . . very strong people who can advocate for these issues, on both sides.” Another stated that “it is weak . . . because of immigration . . . because of tension between the governments, they do not work together.” One other participant stated, “I think that there’s more interest in part of the United States than in Mexico to attend to this problem . . . I think that there is a collaboration with the government in Mexico in order to work on the issue . . . United States cannot work alone and Mexico cannot work with it alone either.”

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Policy

Slavery and human trafficking is a very complex issue in regards to the work needed to combat the problem but the problem itself has been present in our world for centuries. There have been a few policies in United States history that were put into place to deal with the issue of slavery in the past, such as the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 and the anti-slavery policy called the Mann Act of 1910, but they were not very effective in ending slavery (Ryf, 2002).

Federal government policies, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the United States Protection Act, were passed in 2000. The federal government has been actively addressing this issue only for the past 7 years. It is commendable that these policies have been developed but, as one participant stated, there needs to be improvement in the implementation of these policies in order to have a greater positive impact on the problem.

The participants identified several policy changes that they perceived to be the most important in dealing with slavery and human trafficking. The first is the development of a federal law against prostitution in order to make it more difficult for the traffickers to exploit others. The second is the need to expand the criteria for what defines a victim of slavery and human trafficking so that they are not denied the services that they are greatly

in need of in order to overcome the trauma. T-Visas would be important in regards to this issue due to the fact that most victims are in fear of being deported. If victims are deported, they are at great risk of being re-victimized by the traffickers who exploited them (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). With a T-Visa the victim, as 1 participant stated, would be more willing to come forward and report what has happened to him or her. Thus, we would be better able to find, rescue, and help victims.

In Mexico, there are no federal policies in place because the work in combating the slavery and trafficking is very new, much newer than in the United States. There appears to be a need for the development and implementation of federal policies against slavery and human trafficking and prevention in order to begin to build the framework for change within Mexico.

Prevention

There are several strong prevention efforts in the realm of slavery and human trafficking in the United States. Non-profits are focusing their efforts on education, training, outreach, and awareness in order to make communities aware of the problem so that they can begin to be involved in combating the issue.

During and after the development of this study, the researcher found that there is not one type of person who can help in the fight against slavery and trafficking. It is said that anyone, no matter what he or she does in life, can do something to help combat the problem, no matter how big or small. It could be anything from just being aware that it exists and being vigilant in the community to making others aware of the problem to a macro level, such as by lobbying for federal change in regards to this issue. It is important that social service practitioners, in particular, are aware of the problem in order

to be able to identify the risk and to be prepared to handle a case of sexual exploitation if it is found (Scott & Harper, 2006). One needs awareness in order to begin to understand the dynamics of the problem and to learn how to help decrease the problem.

At the governmental level, there are prevention efforts in place. Funding is important in helping non-profits continue to serve clients and to be able to develop more awareness campaigns in the community. Federal task forces are also important in that they are working towards developing and implementing awareness campaigns in the United States.

Mexico is still at the beginning stages of bringing awareness to the community, to non-profit and governmental professionals, immigration officials, police, and social leaders. As 1 participant stated, the first stage is awareness because, without awareness, how can one be against it?

Intervention

In regards to intervention, much work is being done at the non-profit level. There are many services that are provided to the victims of slavery and trafficking and it appears that they are working together to build collaborations and a network of care for these victims. Although there are services in place, it appears that more services are always needed, especially in regards to shelters. One suggestion that was given was to admit victims of slavery and trafficking into domestic violence programs, which have shelters and other services that can be used by victims of slavery.

In regards to Mexico, since the anti-trafficking movement is rather new, there are only a few interventions in place and NGOs are considered weak in this area (Embassy of the United States Mexico (2005a). However, as more and more non-profits are becoming

aware of the problem, there hopefully will be more of an effort to develop and implement interventions for these victims. Currently, programs such as the National Commission for Human Rights of Mexico does provide victims of trafficking with psychotherapy, crisis intervention, and legal services (National Commission for Human Rights of Mexico, n.d.).

Victims and Perpetrators

According to the participants, there appears to be a common perception that the victims of slavery and trafficking can be anyone. As shown in Chapter 4, there are certain individuals who are more vulnerable to this crime but in the end everyone does have the potential of being victimized in this way. There are many people in this world who are not aware of the problem. Those who are aware most likely assume that it can never happen to them or to anyone in their family, but as this study has shown, that is not true. It is important that people know this in order to join in fighting this problem. As one participant stated, “it is a crime against humanity.”

The perpetrators, as this study has shown, can also vary widely in demographics. The main purpose for perpetrators to engage in labor and sex trafficking of women and children is that it is very profitable (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005b). As this study shows, it is important to cut the feeding streams that keeps this “industry” alive today by prosecuting these perpetrators more severely and to eliminate the re-victimization of the victims by creating stronger policies and laws, and to provide economical enrichment to the “expulsion” states in order to decrease vulnerability within it’s people. It is also important that people, in general, know who can be perpetrators in order to keep an open mind and an open eye in their community so that they themselves are not lured into being

victims. Also, awareness is needed so that they can see the signs and intervene by reporting a possible victim.

Bilateral Partnership between the United States and Mexico

Continual work is needed to strengthen governmental and NGO relationships so that they can have a greater impact on this problem. As most participants stated, this problem cannot be resolved by itself. There needs to be very strong partnerships among individuals, communities, various advocate groups, NGOs, and governments in all countries. It also appears that the United States is working more vigorously on this problem than Mexico. Mexico has been on the Tier 2 watch list for the last 3 consecutive years (U.S. Department of State, 2006). As the participant in Mexico stated, there are current attempts being made to change this. Due to the fact that victims are being transferred across the United States and Mexico border, it is very important that both countries begin to combine their efforts to help these victims and to help decrease the problem.

Implication for Further Research

There is a limited amount of research being done in this area. Slavery and human trafficking is very complex and it needs to be researched more vigorously in order to further our knowledge of the dynamics of this problem. Two participants stated that there are problems in data collection with respect to the number of victims in the United States. Some agencies have developed their own data collection system, but its research in this area would be very beneficial in order to develop a national and international data collection system. In this way, we can begin to plot where the victims were found, who they are, where they came from, how they became entangled in this problem, and other

vital information in order to develop and implement appropriate policies, preventions, and interventions.

Research on all possible aspects of this problem is very important in order to continue to develop and improve policies, prevention strategies, and interventions. Some of the areas that can be studied are the characteristics and numbers of actual victims of slavery and human trafficking. Also, research on the perpetrators should be done so that we can better understand their characteristics and backgrounds. In doing this we can perhaps develop prevention and intervention programs targeted directly toward these perpetrators so that we can begin to decrease the demand. Slavery and trafficking, in particular with sex slavery is a demand issue; if there were no demand, there would not be a problem.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations in terms of generalizability in that the sample was small and was taken from certain organizations that may not have been representative of the entire slavery and trafficking professional network. Although the interview guide approach used did enhance comparability within the sample, it still has its limitations in that it is not a highly structured approach that provided for optimum precision and comparability.

A limitation of this study could also be the subjectivity of the researcher's interpretation. Another limitation could be due to the fact that there were differences in the method of data gathering (phone or face to face), which may have an effect on how the participants responded.

It is important to state that only a single person responded from Mexico. Thus, the results are not representative of all the agencies in Mexico that deal with the issue of

slavery and human trafficking. Thus, the results of this study primarily focused on what is happening in the United States in regards to slavery and human trafficking. However, the results are expected to provide a framework to build upon in order to expand research in this area.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy

It is important that social workers get involved with this issue on both micro and macro levels. As stated by the participants, there needs to be individual, community, and professional involvement in order to bring this issue to the forefront and to continue to expand prevention, intervention, and research efforts. Social workers can be key in the effort to combat trafficking in that they work in a wide range of communities, especially those who work at the grass roots level.

Social workers also need to be very aware of this issue because they are in the field and work with a variety of clients who may fit the profile of a trafficked victim. If they are aware they can help the victims and prevent others from becoming victims.

This study strove to expand knowledge and awareness of this problem to those outside of the field of slavery and trafficking. In doing so, the objective was to attempt to begin the process of building a coalition between the professionals in the field, those in the general public, and those in other disciplines in order to put an end to this problem.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Before we start the interview I would like to thank you for participating in this study. I would also like to state that all your responses to the questions will remain confidential. If there are any questions that are unclear please let me know and I can clarify further. If you do not feel comfortable answering please feel free to let me know and we will move on to the next question. I would now like to begin the interview by first asking you questions regarding policies in your country that influence sex and labor slavery and trafficking of women and children.

1. What policies do you think are most important as related to sex and labor slavery and trafficking of women and children?
 - a. Probe: What policies have a direct negative affect on slavery and trafficking?
 - b. Probe: What policies have a direct positive affect on slavery and trafficking?
 - c. Probe: Are there any policies that you know of that indirectly affect, negatively or positively, slavery and trafficking?
 - d. Probe: What changes would you like to see in the realm of policies that would decrease and/or eliminate slavery and trafficking?

I would now like to ask you questions in regards to prevention strategies that are in place today in your country to help combat sex and labor slavery and trafficking of women and children.

1. At a non-profit agency level (micro), in general what prevention strategies are you aware of that have been put into place that you think are important in helping combat slavery and trafficking?
 - a. Probe: Do you know of specific prevention strategies and/or programs?
 - b. Probe: Do you feel more can be done in the development and improvement in the area of prevention?
2. At a governmental level (macro), in general what prevention strategies are you aware of that have been put into place that you think are important in helping combat slavery and trafficking?
 - a. Probe: Do you know of specific prevention strategies and/or programs?
 - b. Probe: Do you feel more can be done in the development and improvement in the area of prevention?
3. At your agency, are there specific prevention strategies and/or programs in place that you think have been important in helping combat slavery and trafficking?

- a. Probe: Do you think that your agency has spent a sufficient amount of time and energy in developing and improving prevention strategies or do you think that more can be done in this area?

Now that we have spoken about prevention I would like to move on to interventions that are used in your country in the area of sex and labor slavery and trafficking of women and children.

1. At a non-profit agency level (micro), in general what clinical interventions are you aware of that have played an important role in helping the victims of slavery and trafficking?
 - a. Probe: Can you tell me the specific interventions that have been used?
 - b. Probe: Can you tell me how effective these interventions are in helping these victims?
 - c. Probe: How satisfied are you with the developments and/or improvements of these intervention strategies?
2. At a governmental level (macro), in general what interventions are you aware of that have played an important role in helping the victims of slavery and trafficking?
 - a. Probe: Can you tell me the specific interventions that have been used?
 - b. Probe: Can you tell me how effective these interventions are in helping these victims?
 - c. Probe: How satisfied are you with the developments and/or improvements of these intervention strategies?
3. At your agency, are there specific interventions in place that you think have played an important role in helping combat slavery and trafficking?
 - a. Probe: Do you think that your agency has spent a sufficient amount of time and energy in developing and improving interventions strategies or do you think that more can be done in this area?

This next part of the interview consists of questions in regards to the demographics and characteristics of victims and perpetrators, the types of slavery and trafficking, and modes of transporting slaves.

1. To your knowledge, what are the demographics and other characteristics of the victims of sex and labor slavery and trafficking?

- a. Probe: Demographics - age, gender, level of education, ethnicity, socioeconomic status.
 - b. Probe: Characteristics – does the victim come from a history of abuse, vulnerability, self-esteem, what type of people are seen as targets?
2. To your knowledge, what are the demographics and other characteristics of the perpetrators of sex and labor slavery and trafficking?
 - a. Probe: Demographics – age, gender, level of education, ethnicity, socioeconomic status.
 - b. Probe: Characteristics – individuals, groups, organizations.
 3. To your knowledge, what types of slavery and trafficking are there, worldwide?
 4. To your knowledge, what types of modes of transport are there when transporting slaves across borders?

That concludes this portion of questioning. Before I ask you a few questions about your background, I would like to give you an opportunity at this time to comment on two things:

1. What do you think is needed in order to decrease and eventually eliminate slavery and trafficking, worldwide?
2. Can you comment on the United States and Mexico bilateral partnership in regards to combating slavery and trafficking of women and children across the border, is it a strong, moderate, or weak relationship?

Now, I would like to ask a few demographic questions about yourself.

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Years of experience in the field of slavery and trafficking
5. Position and title
6. Degree held or highest level of education
7. What country are you from

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your participation in this study. Are there any questions or additional comments you would like to add at this time?

By Anna Maria Rosales

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