The Flow of Persons into the Trafficking Industry: The Relationship Between Human Trafficking and Globalization

“Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.” (United Nations 2000). A lengthy definition for the term many know as human trafficking is seemingly fitting if one were to try to fully understand the worldwide issue. Human trafficking has become a globalized concern as it has encompassed over one hundred countries across the globe. As a term, globalization is broadly the process of interaction between people, companies, and governments of different countries (“What is Globalization” par. 1). In the world today, the overwhelming access to technology, information, machinery, and people, results in easier ways to communicate and make a difference on a global scale. This globalization of technology and information is affecting the processes that are transforming how people experience the world. Although globalization can be viewed as the road toward a more interconnected future, it can also have negative effects on issues such as human trafficking. Crimes against humanity like human trafficking continue to exist because globalization has created a more interconnected world.

In this globalized, interconnected world, human trafficking is a growing industry due to the movement of large, multinational corporations overseas. Many businesses are expanding past the boundaries of their country in order to develop their international network. Because of this expansion, borders begin to dissolve globally, creating the interconnected world that exists
today. However, large corporations and first-world countries seem to be the only ones benefitting from a system in which a majority of the third world population is left behind and desperate to survive. In an article published in the Wisconsin International Law Journal, author Luz Estella Nagle states that the integration of regional and international markets has caused lessfortunate nations to “take the wrong turn”, further shifting their country into a place that is potentially “unsafe, unethical, under-inclusive, and impoverished” (1). These conditions, in turn, may cause people to want to leave their own country to find a job or city more prosperous than their current one. Nagle’s claim that large corporations have shifted the migration of people in third world countries is supported by the Journal of Research in Gender Studies, in which Kim Anh Duong states that many people, most nearly women, feel the need to work by any means necessary in order to send extra money home to their families. Due to the desperation of these people, desperate measures may be taken, including measures such as human trafficking. Because globalization has made it easier for people to move freely across borders, women are in greater danger of being trafficked (par. 23). It is because of globalization that corporations are able to decrease the living standard of underdeveloped nations and in effect, increase migration of people, predominantly females, into the trafficking industry. The globalization of business enables traffickers around the world to further progress the worldwide enterprise of human trafficking, destroying thousands of lives in the process.

The globalization of corporate businesses shifts the human trafficking industry, reducing women to objects and complicating the inequalities that exist between genders. Gender inequality has been an issue since the beginning of humanity, and the subject of human trafficking bears no exception to this phenomenon. In her article on the gender aspects of human trafficking, Kim Anh Duong expresses her opinion on the gender inequality that exists in the
trafficking of persons. With a background in social science and women’s studies, Duong first states that it has typically been the case that women receive lower income. Along with that, the globalized market economy is continuing to grow and further providing more opportunities for work in textile and garment factories, a field predominantly handled by women, where the norm is “long time with low pay”. She solidifies her case by inviting the idea that the inequality between genders in an impoverished situation is “a main cause of human trafficking.” This is justified by the point that the “feminization of poverty” causes women to suffer from poverty at a higher level than men, pushing them toward other “risks of being exploited or deceived” (par. 22). The main facet of human trafficking that objectifies women is sex trafficking, which results in the sexual exploitation of the women involved. An organization entitled Equality Now published a page on their website dedicated to girls who have shared their story about being in the trafficking industry. A woman from Jessore, Bangladesh said of her experience in the industry, “I was raped several times a night for nearly a month before the madam started selling me to men for money. It was typical for me to have ten to twelve buyers every night. They were usually abusive, treating me as if they owned my body,” (par. 7). Another woman from Canada states, “The violence becomes normal, the derogatory names men call you become normal…It’s hard to describe the exploitation—it was just everywhere, it was just a part of life,” (par. 3-4). These stories shared by victims of traffickers from different sides of the globe bring to light the mistreatment and corruption of women who are brought into the trafficking industry. The unfair and exploitive treatment of sex trafficking victims ultimately shows the dominant unequal culture between men and women.

Traffickers around the globe seek to fulfill their own agenda when objectifying women. In the global issue of human trafficking, traffickers are partaking in the process of exploiting
thousands of women, many of them due to ulterior motives. A countless number of traffickers use women as objects to continue their inflow of money, and other motives have reached the surface as well. Recently, a movement entitled “Bring Back Our Girls” was brought to the attention of people throughout the world through the Internet, mobile phones, and even celebrities. The cause of this movement is the Nigerian militant organization Boko Haram, who kidnapped 230 schoolgirls in 2014 from a secondary school in Nigeria, later publicizing they would be sold at market. Boko Haram has demanded that the government release imprisoned members of their group in exchange for the schoolgirls (“Bring Back Our Girls” par. 2). Through the use of technology, this terrorist group is focusing on their tribalistic agenda by using the girls to negotiate an offer between themselves and the government. This trafficking of girls from Nigeria is not specifically involving sex trafficking, however, the girls are being exploited for the main purpose of Boko Haram to receive their imprisoned members back from the government. Nagle’s article on the effects of globalization on human trafficking also comments on the fulfillment of one’s own agenda. In countries in which people are trafficked, it is a common misconception that trafficked persons are illegal immigrants, resulting in their deportation. This deportation allows “human traffickers to operate even further underground and to keep their ill-gotten money” (135-136). This deception of forces of security in countries throughout the world is essentially allowing traffickers to operate their system completely and effectively, without punishment for the crime they are committing. Through using trafficked persons to establish dominance over the government and forces of security, traffickers are able to maintain their privatized, underground operation. Because traffickers seek to fulfill a personal goal through the women they traffic, they will most likely continue to flourish until someone puts a stop to the global trend.
Presently, human trafficking is an effect of the globalization of large corporations, resulting in detrimental effects on women and further complicating the trend of inequality between genders. Traffickers also possess ulterior motives in order to satisfy their own agenda. As a problem in almost every nation, human trafficking continues to expand its reach ultimately because of globalization and the dissolving of borders. The world is slowly becoming one big market where people are able to communicate and reach past the lines of their domestic country. This ability to reach nearly every country has the potential to advance the world towards a better future in aspects like medicine, technology, and communication. However, the greed of certain corporations and enterprises causes people at the other end of the deal to suffer.
Works Cited


"United Nations General Assembly: Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children; and Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea And Air."
