

HUMAN TRAFFICKING EXAMINED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY THEORY

By Carol Hubbard
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Slavery is alive and well hundreds of years after wars were fought to abolish it, and it is a growing part of the larger global problem of human trafficking. While no longer openly practiced, it is still flourishing on a de facto, covert level. Kevin Bales, director of Free the Slaves (Washington, D.C.) and sociology professor at the University of Surrey, states that 27 million people are enslaved worldwide, of whom 15 million to 20 million are bonded labor in Nepal, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.¹ And according to the latest Trafficking in Human Persons Report, by 2010, human trafficking will be the No. 1 crime worldwide.²

As Professor Bales points out, modern consumers of slave labor have all the benefits without any responsibility; their victims, however, have all the misery, despair and even horror of slavery, yet without any of the protections:

“[This] is not about owning people in the traditional sense of the old slavery, but about controlling them completely. People become completely disposable tools for making money.... In the past, slavery entailed one person legally owning another person, but modern slavery is different. Today slavery is illegal everywhere, and there is no more legal ownership of human beings. When people buy slaves today, they don't ask for a receipt or

1 Disposable People, xii and 9.

2 Labott, “Recession boosts global human trafficking, reports says”; also classnotes, 8/12/09.

ownership papers, but they do gain control — and they use violence to maintain this control.”³

Human trafficking consists of the procurement and transport of individuals across and within borders for illegal purposes and typically involves coercion, deception and violence. Consequently, many trafficked victims (most of whom are women or children) end up as sex, farm, factory, or domestic slaves.⁴ While many people might like to believe that de facto slavery only exists in “faraway countries,” the reality is that its tentacles reach even into prosaic midwestern American cities such as Cincinnati, Ohio:

“‘Unfortunately, slavery continues to persist around the world and here at home,’ said Donald Murphy, the Freedom Center’s Chief Executive Officer. ‘Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery in which individuals -- even children -- are forced to work or provide services under the threat of violence or psychological manipulation, and victims come from all economic classes and ethnic groups.’”⁵

While transnational activities such as slavery, human trafficking and trafficking in controlled psychotropic substances are all prohibited by powerful global norms,⁶ their prohibition comes late in world history. The problem is that enforcement of those norms has been weak, inconsistent, poorly funded, and largely unsuccessful. Until late in the 19th century, slavery was still considered legal — even necessary — in various parts of the world. Human trafficking and the opium trade were both open and fairly commonplace enterprises. How we got to today’s situation — where slavery and human traffick-

3 Bales, *Disposable People*, 4-5.

4 Aguilar-Milan, Foltz, Jackson and Oberg, “Global Crime Case.”

5 “First Study of Its Kind Shows Global Problem of Human Trafficking Exists Locally.”

6 Andreas, *Policing the Globe*, 17.

ing are now illegal (officially) around the world — is basically a story of increasing enlightenment and determined activism. From the 18th century onward, the anti-slavery movement known as abolitionism spread from and through countries permeated with Christian and Enlightenment principles about the rights and obligations of man.⁷ In the early 1900s, the United States took it to the next step:

"[C]harges that an international criminal syndicate was running the white slave trade ... persuaded Congress to pass the Mann-Elkins Act prohibiting any interstate or international traffic in women for purposes of prostitution. At an international level, the campaign against the white slave trade secured the cooperation of governments and led to international conferences and agreements condemning the practice, notably the Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade, signed in Paris in 1904 and ultimately ratified by about one hundred governments."⁸

Nonetheless, while laws prohibiting slavery and human trafficking have been implemented, stopping human trafficking has been far less successful. It is the third largest illicit global trade — and reportedly the fastest growing. Deregulation, open borders, interdependent economies, and the ease of international banking have only made its operation easier.⁹ In recent decades, human trafficking has spiked, especially in certain unstable areas of the world.

So the question we will examine is: Can the continuation and escalation of transnational human trafficking be explained by economic decline in certain unstable

⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*

nation-states or a by a particular theory of international political economy? The following chart¹⁰ is helpful for understanding the "process," "means," and "end":

Three Elements of Trafficking		
PROCESS	MEANS	END
Recruiting or Harboring or Moving or Obtaining or Maintaining a person	Force or Fraud or Coercion	For involuntary servitude or Debt bondage or Slavery or Sex trade

The global financial crisis has increased the worldwide trade in trafficked persons, says a State Department report released in June 2009. The State Department’s annual “Trafficking in Persons Report” also says trafficking has increased in Africa and slaps six African nations on a blacklist of countries not meeting the minimum standard of combating trafficking. This report, mandated by Congress, features data and statistics from 175 countries around the world regarding the amount of human trafficking that goes on within their borders. The report cites the International Labor Organization, which estimates that at least 12.3 million adults and children are victims of forced labor, bonded labor

10 “Policing Human Trafficking.”

and sex slavery each year.¹¹ “This is modern slavery. A crime that spans the globe, providing ruthless employers with an endless supply of people to abuse for financial gain,” said Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as she announced the report. “With this report, we hope to shine the light brightly on the scope and scale of modern slavery, so all governments can see where progress has been made and where more is needed.”¹²

Human trafficking is transnational; and as such, there are three categories of countries involved: countries of origin (where the people being trafficked come from), recipient countries (developed nation-states such as the U.S., Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran and western European countries that have high levels of disposable income) and countries in transit (countries with weak and/or corrupt governments that serve as conduits between source countries and recipient countries).

Most, if not all, of the source countries are either developing countries or countries that have experienced financial upheaval. Countries that had the worst results from applying the neoliberal model saw the collapse of their middle class — especially Thailand, Malaysia and Russia. In recent decades, there has been a big spike in both the transnational movement of women for purposes of prostitution (most notably in parts of

¹¹ “Southeast Asia is one of the world's largest exporters of sex slaves and a sex hot spot. Thanks to devastating and widespread poverty, there is an abundant supply of recruits available to meet the demands of wealthy customers in Japan, China, Australia, Europe, and the United States. In 2006, Cambodia was one of the busiest spots in the world for human trafficking, with a majority of victims from Cambodia being delivered into the sex trade in Southeast Asia. An estimated 30,000 of those Cambodians exploited in the sex trade were children.” (Aguilar-Milan, Foltz, Jackson and Oberg)

¹² “Recession boosts global human trafficking, report says,” Elise Labott, CNN State Dept.

East Asia and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union) and in global attention devoted to it.¹³

In the 1980s, Thailand adopted “capital accounts liberalization” (an IMF strategy that refers to easing restrictions on flows of capital across a country’s borders but which causes problems during times of economic distress if a country finds it difficult to maintain capital outflows¹⁴). This led to high interest rates and high growth rates, resulting in a sudden economic collapse; so the IMF arranged a bailout for Thailand, Indonesia and S. Korea. But Thailand’s trade deficit caused further bankruptcies and degradation of its middle class. Russia, Brazil and Argentina were in a similar situation in the late 1990s and early 2000s; thus the call for more bailout money to prop up their currencies and prevent the inevitable financial collapse.¹⁵ Thailand had no human trafficking before 1998¹⁶ (one year after the crash of the economy in south-east Asia), but its sex trade — especially the appalling trade in child sex slaves usually obtained from rural areas through desperation on the part of families and deception on the part of traders — is notorious around the globe.

The fall of the Iron Curtain and subsequent economic and societal upheaval in the former Soviet Union, along with newly porous borders, provided an open door to the transnational trafficking of women. Subsequently, the process by which young Russian

¹³ Andreas and Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe*, 35.

¹⁴ Kose and Prasad, “Liberalizing Capital.”

¹⁵ Class notes, 8/1/09.

¹⁶ Lynn Holland, IPE, 8/1/09.

women have been duped into becoming sex slaves has become notorious enough to have made it on to prime-time TV documentaries and into story lines for various TV dramas. As Andreas and Nadelmann point out in *Policing the Globe*:

Women trafficked transnationally for purposes of prostitution sometimes go willingly, but more often are tricked into it. They're "... kept in prostitution by exploitive economic relationships backed by ignorance, fear, force, and other threats of violence and humiliation."¹⁷

Understanding how human trafficking flourishes — and how it might be stopped — lies, first, in viewing it in most cases as a type of transnational corporation (TNC). TNCs operate across borders, often with headquarters in one country and production and/or distribution in others, and they rely heavily on “sub-contractor” and subsidiary relationships. Not surprisingly, therefore, law enforcement officials suspect that organized crime groups, which can be a form of TNC, have benefited from involvement in human trafficking:

“... [E]merging crime groups in Eastern Europe ... and the Far East (such as the Japanese Yakuza and the Chinese Triads) [exploited] the drive for illegal immigration in areas of the former Soviet Union and Southeast Asia. In light of this growing trend toward migration, trafficking ha[s] become an urgent problem for international law enforcement officials.”¹⁸

It is important to understand that human trafficking is a business venture. By virtue of being both a business and illegal, it usually generates large profits for the individuals and groups involved — which is where money laundering comes in:

¹⁷ Andreas and Nadelmann, 35.

¹⁸ DeStefano, *The War on Human Trafficking*, 19.

“[B]y using funds from such illicit sources, criminals risk drawing the authorities’ attention to the underlying criminal activity and exposing themselves to criminal prosecution. In order to benefit freely from the proceeds of their crime, they must therefore conceal the illicit origin of these funds.”

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Interestingly, money-laundering, which is an essential part of any successful smuggling operation, was not made illegal until later in the 20th century — in order to help expose and prosecute various kinds of organized crime.²⁰ The State Department report released in June 2009 states that the global economic crisis also is boosting the demand for [human trafficking](#) because of a growing demand for cheap goods and services: “A striking global demand for labor and a growing supply of workers willing to take ever greater risks for economic opportunities seem a recipe for increased forced labor cases of migrant workers and women in prostitution.” In addition,

Much of the growth of prostitution in East Asia has been tied to a boom in 'sex tourism,' facilitated by declining costs of travel and customer access to information through new technologies such as the Internet. In Thailand, which has served as a regional hub for sex tourism, women and children are trafficked from neighboring countries such as Myanmar (Burma) to work in urban brothels that are a major component of the country's tourism industry."²¹

Second, for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, war, economic upheaval or natural disasters, people sometimes begin to identify with their networks rather than a particular nation-state. And if those networks or institutions have values that “regular” people would find offensive, then we must acknowledge the role that perceived identity

19 “Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism,” IMF website.

20 Andreas, *Border Games*, ch. 2.

21 Andreas and Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe*, 36.

plays in perpetuating and growing these networks and their nefarious activities.²² A study published by the Kiel Institute for World Economy cites the role that migration routes — and personal connections — may have in the escalating human trafficking trade: “First, migration networks may not always be beneficial for migrants. Although we cannot directly assess the role of networks . . . trafficking primarily occurs where migration flows are largest, and access to networks relatively easy, with the anecdotal evidence that many trafficked victims are recruited through personal relationships.”²³

One of the dangers with migration networks is that people who pay traffickers to help them enter countries illegally are vulnerable to exploitation. This is still happening in economically depressed countries like Malaysia.²⁴ And in Mali beginning in the 1990s, desperately poor families sent young sons off with traffickers to work on isolated cacao farms in the Ivory Coast, not realizing that they had condemned them to some of the worst situations of slave labor since the Nazi death camps of World War II.²⁵

With this basic understanding of the who's, how's, and why's of transnational human trafficking, one can see that the realism theory of IPE, which views the nation-state as the center of decision-making, does not adequately explain how trafficking can succeed. For realists, sovereignty means nation-state sovereignty. It is based on the theory

22 Classnotes, 8/1/09.

23 Mahmoud and Trebesch, “The Economic Drivers of Human Trafficking.”

24 “Those who wanted to cross into another country would have to pay RM2,000 to the syndicate. If they are unable to pay, they would be sold to businesses in Thailand where they would have to work until their debts were paid off.” (US lauds arrests linked to human-trafficking ring,” New Strait Times, 2009.)

25 “Chocolate and Slavery: Child Labor in Cote d'Ivoire.” It should be noted, however, that as of 2005, efforts on the part of the UN and NGOs working with producers of cacao and chocolate products have done much to highlight child slavery in the Ivory Coast, eliminate abuses, and improve working conditions.

of international relations called *real politik*: Nations are mutually exclusive of each others and balance power among themselves, they do this by making alliances. At its best, realists would argue that by recognizing the nature and motivations of nation-states, the balance of power can be a good thing; at its worst, bad behavior by nation-states is excused. But what flies in the face of realism is that there are transnational issues such as human trafficking — networks that transcend state lines and would not be able to exist otherwise. The only sense in which realism — and the importance of the nation-state — is applicable, I believe, is by viewing the causative and enabling roles of the state: By making the transport of certain things illegal, the state is the catalyst for smuggling; and by not being able to effectively enforce the law, the state helps to perpetuate the smuggling and even make it successful.²⁶

Neoliberalism, however, provides reasonable and rational explanations for international trafficking. As Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye maintain:

“[I]n the post-WWII era, countries have become more and more intertwined economically. The explosive growth in the size and number of transnational corporations has blurred state boundaries, rendering traditional realist assumptions about the centrality of the state questionable. Realists contend that the state is the dominant actor in world politics and that military force and violence are the primary means by which states achieve their goals.”²⁷

As Keohane and Nye point out in their neoliberal critique of realist theory²⁸ : “. . . the day-to-day affairs of states have more to do with promoting cooperative economic inter-

26 Andreas.

27 Goddard, Cronin and Koshore, *International Political Economy*, p. 49.

28 Goddard, et al., 49-58.

actions than with military and security matters.” From the neoliberal perspective, then, the complexity of relationships and conflicting goals among nation-states would lead “. . . some officials, particularly at lower levels, to emphasize the variety of state goals that must be pursued. In the absence of a clear hierarchy of issues,, goals will vary by issue, and may not be closely related. Bureaucracy will pursue its own concerns. . . . More-over, transnational actors will introduce different goals into various groups of issues.”²⁹

Complex interdependence, as defined by Keohane and Nye, has three characteristics: multiple channels of action between societies and the absence of a hierarchy of issues — both of which bring about a decline in the use of military force and coercion in international relations.³⁰ The one most pertinent to a discussion of human trafficking is multiple channels, which connect societies, and transnational corporations (TNCs) — which are the most sophisticated examples of institutions utilizing multiple channels. Successful human trafficking enterprises depend on international webs of “sub-contractor” arrangements and agreements — often including unethical law enforcement and border officials. For example, a number of senior immigration officials in Malaysia were arrested in July 2009 on charges of participating in human trafficking networks:

“[I]nvestigations by police revealed that the Immigration officers were connected with networks from other countries, especially in the smuggling of Rohingya refugees. The officers acted as middlemen and protectors to the human-trafficking syndicate which recruited the illegal immigrants.”³¹

²⁹ Goddard, 52, emphasis added.

³⁰ Goddard, 49-58.

If one views human trafficking “enterprises” as types of TNCs (however illegal and morally repugnant), then Keohane and Nye’s theory is very useful for explaining how human trafficking can persist, even thrive, in the face of varying levels of national and international prosecution.

Another fact that reinforces the neoliberal view of IPE is the active role of institutions (also known as regimes) and complex interdependency in human trafficking — and the fact that trafficking operations share a great deal in common with legitimate enterprises. Smugglers use many of the same practices as people in conventional business, and increasing globalization has benefited both legal and illegal businesses.³² There are differences, of course: disputes are handled by killing rather than suing, and high profits result as much from the obstacles of laws and law enforcement as they do from market demand.³³

While human trafficking enterprises depend heavily on “subcontractors,” so to speak, and consist of interdependent networks, it would be a gross exaggeration to say that they’re inextricably linked throughout the world. As Peter Andreas points out in *Border Games*:

31 “US lauds arrests linked to human-trafficking ring.”

32 “Employing their financial resources to bribe officials, international networks to arrange swift transport, and new technologies to generate false documents, traffickers can complete the process of abduction in one hot spot to delivery in another within a 48-hour to two-week time frame. Globalization has made human trafficking easier. Deregulation, open borders, entwined economies, and the ease of international banking have all facilitated the ability to market and traffic human beings. The complexity of networks, e-cash, and cross-border enforcement issues have also significantly decreased the risks associated with this illicit trade.” (Aguilar-Milan, et al.)

33 Andreas, 21.

“Even though the global reach of some smuggling groups has accelerated with the growth of the global economy, the image of an octopus-like global network of crime syndicates that runs the criminal underworld through its expansive tentacles is a fiction invented by sensationalistic journalists and opportunistic politicians. This reality actually makes law enforcement efforts more difficult, as there is no one “head” or handful of heads that could be easily eliminated to shut down human trafficking.”³⁴

I believe Peter Gourevitch's two-level model of the interplay between nation-states and institutions (also known as regimes) best explains the prevalence of human trafficking. Domestically, there is no overwhelming financial interest in shutting this down (quite the contrary, in many cases) — and internationally, there isn't either. There certainly is a higher, moral and (long-term) societal interest in doing so, but the short-term benefits are hard to document beyond those to the individuals involved and their families. Gourevitch sees the state as caught between international and domestic interests (external and internal):

“Finally, the existence of multiple channels leads one to predict a different and significant role for international organizations in world politics.... [I]n a world of multiple issues imperfectly linked ... the potential role of international institutions in political bargaining is greatly increased. In particular, they help set the international agenda, and act as catalysts for coalition-formation and as arenas for political initiatives and linkage by weak states.”³⁵

Coalitions rule for a time with their favored structures (institutions) until an international crisis — such as a great depression or a world war — provokes changes across the developed world. Subsequently, in spite of similar effects, there are unique outcomes:

Some countries morph into a social welfare state, while others react by repressing cer-

34 *Ibid.*

35 Gourevitch, *Politics in Hard Times*, 56.

tain groups (as happened in Nazi Germany). In a developed nation, you may get higher taxes, inflation or a change in political party, but safety nets exist for those affected by the economic decline or disruptions of infrastructure. In a developing nation, however, the lack of such safety nets may make affected populations vulnerable to victimization by human trafficking networks.³⁶ For example, after the United States went to war against Afghanistan post-9/11, and Afghanis fled across the border into Pakistan, many of the affected children ended up enslaved in Pakistani rock quarries.³⁷ Similarly, Gourevitch's model also explains how and why institutions (such as the United Nations or NGOs) operate apart from and, also, in cooperation with nation-states to form coalitions and institute needed change—and thus provides hope that such ongoing dynamics can be used to combat human trafficking:

“The 1972 Stockholm Environmental Conference strengthened the position of environmental agencies in various governments. The 1974 World Food Conference focused the attention of important parts of the United States government on prevention of food shortages. The September 1975 United Nations special session on proposals for a New International Economic Order generated an intra-governmental debate about policies toward the Third World in general. The International Monetary Fund and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade have focused governmental activity on money and trade instead of on private direct investment, which has no comparable international organization. By bringing officials together, international organizations help to activate potential coalitions in world politics.”³⁸

36 Ibid.; also classnotes, 7/22/09.

37 Bales, *Disposable People*, xi.

38 Ibid., 56-57, emphasis added.

CONCLUSION

Human trafficking is a significant problem in certain nation-states or regions of the world, with source countries such as Russia, southeast Asia and various African nations such as Mali, Chad, and the Sudan—and its end results operate covertly in developed countries such as France, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. and less covertly in developing countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India³⁹ through people brought in to service the household help, prostitution and pornography trades. It continues even though it violates international and domestic law against slavery, not to mention the “shocked conscience” standard used by most of the civilized world to determine cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Human trafficking continues to flourish for two reasons: (1) fallout from economic recessions and experimentation with neoliberal policies in vulnerable nations — leading to an increased supply of people, and (2) developed nations providing a ready market for what human trafficking “commodities.” As the 2009 “Trafficking in Persons Report” from the U.S. State Department states:

The global financial crisis has increased the worldwide trade in trafficked persons . . . The report, mandated by Congress, features data and statistics from 175 countries around the world regarding the amount of human trafficking that goes on within their borders. The report cites the International Labor Organization, which estimates that at least 12.3 million adults and children are victims of forced labor, bonded labor and sex slavery each year.”⁴⁰

39 Bales, 9.

40 Labott.

Keohane and Nye's work on complex interdependence working through institutions of shared norms and values, coupled with Gourevitch's two-level model, explains how and why the human trafficking "business model" is so successful, and shows how that same dynamic of complex interdependence and shared values worldwide (between nations, NGOs and other transnational groups of individuals) could eventually eliminate human trafficking.

Now, back to our original question: Can the continuation and even regional escalation of transnational human trafficking be better explained by economic decline in certain nation-states or by a particular theory of international political economy? I believe its continuation in the face of anti-trafficking laws and varying degrees of prosecution is best explained by IPE theory — specifically, Gourevitch's two-level model. Domestically, there is no overwhelming financial interest in shutting down trafficking (quite the contrary, in many cases); and, internationally, there isn't, either. There is a transcendent, aspirational and global interest in doing so, but the short-term benefits are not always easy to demonstrate beyond the immediate benefit to the individuals and families involved. Opposing human trafficking is costly on a real and immediate basis, whereas the benefits (except for reducing associated crime) are more intangible.

The escalation of human trafficking in certain areas of the world in the past two decades can clearly be seen to have followed closely on the heels of financial upheaval —often triggered by the failure of neoliberal IPE policies introduced to developing countries. A secondary factor, especially in China and certain southeast Asian countries, has

been the practice of aborting female babies over the past several decades, which has created an inordinate demand for prostitution, pornography and "mail order" brides. Selective sex selection of male babies arise in areas where cultural norms value male children over females. Societies that practice sex selection in favor of males are quite common, especially in countries like China, Korea, Taiwan and India.⁴¹

Ending Human Trafficking

Nation-states are not rational, quickly adaptable entities that shift quickly due to their best interests; like individuals, they resist change until the pressure builds to make them willing to. Criminal activities such as human trafficking or drug trafficking tend to generate large profits for the traffickers. However, by using funds from such illicit sources, criminals risk drawing the authorities' attention to the underlying criminal activity and exposing themselves to criminal prosecution. In order to benefit freely from the proceeds of their crime, they must therefore conceal the illicit origin of these funds through money-laundering.⁴² Therefore, better methods for uncovering and prosecuting money laundering schemes would undoubtedly make it more difficult, and less profitable, to engage in human trafficking.

Research done by Toman Mahmoud and Christoph Trebesch for the Kiel Institute for the World Economy "... document[s] the strong link between illegal migration patterns and trafficking. Therefore, it seems likely that the market of human trafficking and

41 ("Self-Selective Abortion and Female Infanticide," Wikipedia.)

42 "Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism."

the number of victims will continue to grow as long as migration pressure remains high.”

⁴³ To countermand this, policy measures against human trafficking and related awareness campaigns should mainly be targeted to areas where migration rates are high or on the rise, not to remote areas with no or little migration. Anti-trafficking campaigns and measures to make more reliable, official information available in the migration process could be promising ways to reduce the incidence of trafficking. Moreover, “besides awareness campaigns, the ILO (2005) suggests to set up labour market information systems on jobs at home and abroad and the general use of model employment contracts.”⁴⁴

A number of NGOs are devoted to anti-trafficking, which is a real asset as they can more easily work across borders and organizations than can official government agencies, but they are often hampered by lack of funds⁴⁵ and disagreements over related issues that are important, but certainly less urgent:

“[T]he international anti-trafficking movement remains deeply divided due to the sharply opposing views of abolitionist feminists ... and sex worker rights feminists ... concerning the appropriate legal status of prostitution. Supporting the prohibitionist model, the U.S. has enthusiastically promoted the construction of a global anti-trafficking prohibition regime and embraced an aggressive monitoring and reporting role.”⁴⁶

43 “The Economic Drivers of Human Trafficking.”

44 Ibid.

45 “While they have been making progress against human trafficking and slavery, they, too, have been limited. NGOs suffer from lack of funding, and efforts to raise funds have been difficult. The phenomenon of human trafficking and slavery is evidently so abhorrent that it is hard to find those who will acknowledge its existence and fund efforts against it.” (Aguilar-Milan, et al.)

46 Andreas and Nadelmann, 36.

That said, there is substantive hope for change through a rising tide of international opposition from the individual to the transnational levels:

"A growing number of countries have agreed to ... adopt a common set of legal definitions, standards and procedures, formalized in the 2000 UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, and its 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.'" ... This represents "...a significant step toward the establishment of a global prohibition regime."⁴⁷

Here in the United States, when the Clinton administration "... began to push for a U.S. position on human trafficking, officials advanced the notion of 'Three Ps': protection, prosecution, and prevention. Referring to the 'prevention' aspect of that notion, article 12 of the proposed U.N. protocol called on nations to establish 'social policies and programmes' to prevent trafficking."⁴⁸

History reveals how even one courageous, persistent and visionary individual — not to mention a group or groups of individuals — can galvanize massive change. William Wilberforce in 18th century England, the abolitionists of 19th century America, and Mohatma Gandhi all were passionate about and successful in advancing human rights, directly or indirectly, against seemingly overwhelming odds. And they did not have the tremendous benefit of the instantaneous, worldwide communication networks we now have. Countering human trafficking is costly in money, time and, to a lesser degree, the danger to those who directly threaten the networks; but as individuals, institutions like the United Nations and anti-trafficking NGOs, and nation-states begin to identify with

47 Ibid., 36-37.

48 DeStefano, 23.

and seek the ideal of a world without human trafficking, their collective power can (and I believe will) become too great to resist.

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