

The College at Brockport: State University of New York

## Digital Commons @Brockport

---

Senior Honors Theses

Honors College at The College at Brockport

---

1-13-2017

### Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

Porsche Taylor

*The College at Brockport*, porschet2015@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/honors>



Part of the [Criminology Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), and the [Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance Commons](#)

---

#### Repository Citation

Taylor, Porsche, "Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State" (2017). *Senior Honors Theses*. 175.  
<https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/honors/175>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at The College at Brockport at Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@brockport.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@brockport.edu).

Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation in the Honors College

By

Porsche Taylor

Criminal Justice Major

The College at Brockport

January 13, 2017

Thesis Director: Dr. Megan Kienzle, Assistant Professor,  
Criminal Justice

*Educational use of this paper is permitted for the purpose  
of providing future  
students a model example of an Honors senior thesis project.*

**Abstract**

Sex trafficking is a topic that has been vaguely discussed by many researchers over the years. Although sex trafficking is becoming more common (Kortla, 2010), many people are unaware of how easy it is for children to become victims. This research will look at how children get caught and lured into the sex industry. It will also touch on the factors that play a role in increasing the likelihood of these children becoming sex trafficking victims. Although there are some programs available to help child victims recover from this lifestyle, there are many other programs being worked on that could provide a support system for the victims. These programs assist victims in helping them get back on their own feet. It provides the victims with counseling to help them through the trauma they have had to face while being in the sex trafficking business. Some of the programs assist in providing shelter for the victims. Once the victims have been rescued they automatically are given a place to stay. The research will dive into what the communities must do, as well as law enforcement, social workers, and people in the communities to make a difference and begin to put an end to the epidemic that is taking the lives of our children beyond the currently operating programs.

## **Short Introduction**

This topic is going to discuss how sex trafficking is becoming more common amongst young boys and girls in the United States, specifically in New York state. Although this topic has been brought out to the forefront recently, more people need to be made aware of the issue. It is not a very commonly known issue and has not received as much attention as one would think given the increased involvement of young children from our communities.

This topic is very important to research because sex trafficking has begun to take over the lives of too many boys and girls. A lot of these children feel they are missing something at home whether it be their parents' time, love, a sense of belonging, wanting to feel as though they matter to just one person, or they just may not agree with their parent's rules (Kortla, 2010). In return, this can leave the children feeling as though they need to become attached to the first person that pays them any attention. This in return can allow the children to put all their trust into a stranger which can allow them to be lured into a business or industry that they just are not prepared to work in. They can get so caught up in someone being interested in them that they are blind to the fact that they are being used to make a profit. Without even realizing it, these children can become victims. The victims are too busy trying to satisfy their needs of loneliness that they do not realize what type of situation they are getting into. This alone ensures that the communities as well as the parents need to be made aware of what is going on around them. These children and parent relationships need to be more solid. People should feel the need to want to keep a closer eye on the children and make sure that they are being protected so that things like this cannot easily happen to them. These are some recommendations that I think could be identified as ways to help when trying to prevent children from being taken advantage of and

becoming a part of the sex trafficking game. These recommendations would all be a big help because more people would be involved. Quite often, children seem to do what they want. In this instance, people would be looking out for the greater good for the children and community as a whole, and the parents would be paying more close attention to their children. This will keep the parents updated on what their children are doing. It will give them less privacy which would prevent them from getting involved with sex trafficking in the first place.

### **Background and Need**

“Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, receipt of a person(s), 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 giving or receiving payments or benefits for a person to have control over another, for the purpose of sexual exploitation” (Nawyn, Birdal, Glogower, 2013, p.56). Every year there are over 300,000 people under the age of 18 being sold off into the sex world, which means that every day hundreds of children are being sold (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). The United Nations found that worldwide, including other countries along with the U.S., there are over 1.2 million children being trafficked. There are many factors that that contribute to children being trafficked:

1. The relationship a child has with their parents
2. The kind of characteristics a sex trafficker looks for
3. The demographic background they come from
4. The kind of help that is being offered to the victims in the community
5. Being able to actually identify a sex trafficking victim from a criminal so that they can get the help that they need

## **History of Sex Trafficking**

Sex trafficking is a term that has been around for many centuries. When it came to children and trafficking, it was not a well-known issue so prior to the 1800's there was not much to discuss. Sex trafficking would quickly change with the times as the 1800's approached. In England, new propaganda was forming which involved the prostitution of many minors. Although it has now become more common to sell boys and girls, during earlier times the young women were the ones who were targeted and forced to work in brothels and sell their bodies for sex to satisfy the needs of random men (Attwood, 2015). This was something that had become a commonly accepted practice in England. Around 1869, Josephine Butler, an activist, made an attempt to promote that sex trafficking would not be accepted (Attwood, 2015). She tried to fight against it but during that time the men had more control over things than women did. The men would be the ones who would have to take over the anti-trafficking movement in order for any change to be realized. It would be their job to defend and protect these young women from having to commit adult acts without their coerced consent. During this time there were three male leaders who tried to do their part when it came to stopping or preventing sex trafficking.

Alfred Stace Dyer, was a publisher who wrote in a daily news journal. He had learned through a friend of his that there were brothels where young girls were performing acts against their will. He decided that he wanted to be the one to expose these brothels because he was against this type of behavior. He argued that it was a breach of the law and the behavior at the time was morally concerning (Attwood, 2015). He took it upon himself to write about these brothels in his journal articles. Due to certain guidelines and laws at the time, it was illegal for the girls to be prostituting. The girls were forced to lie about their ages and use false names. This made things worse because they are younger than they are telling people. Most of them were

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

minors; some of them were as young as ten and eleven years old. This played a major role because it made the younger children more susceptible to becoming a part of the sex trafficking. Age did not matter to those who were looking for their victims. This was so unjust to Alfred Stace Dyer that he formed two different committees. One of which was the London Committee for the Exposure and Suppression of the Traffic in English Girls for Purposes of Continental Prostitution (Attwood, 2015). This committee came about when Dyer and his associates found out that the English government were allowing sex trafficking to take place legally with young children. The English government knew that sex trafficking with young children was happening and they did nothing to try and stop it. Due to this, Dyer felt as though he was doing his duty to help out all these girls who may have not had a father or who had a father that was never around to protect them.

The second male leader, William Alexander Coote, was a Christian man and a compositor who was in charge of the National Vigilance Association (Attwood, 2015). This association was set up to prohibit the trafficking of those from international countries. All information regarding sex trafficking had to pass through his committee. The government also had to cooperate with his committee and keep him informed on what was going on. He too portrayed himself as a defender to the young girls that had been forced into the sex world business. He felt as though these girls were victims and that someone needed to have a voice to be able to speak for them since they could not stand up for themselves. He knew many young women entered into the country to prostitute and sell themselves to earn money and give themselves what they thought would be a better life than what they had already been living (Attwood, 2015).

Finally, the third male leader, A. Neil Lyons, was another journalist who also wrote for his local newspaper. He thought it was his duty to protect his wife and all men's daughters from the brothel owners and the prostitution ring. He promoted women's rights and abiding by the law. He was against the Council of Labor Affairs bill which allowed Englishmen to have their own personal liberties (Attwood, 2015). During this time the personal liberties law gave men the impression that they had free reign sexually, giving them control of the situation with women. He strongly disagreed with this because he believed no man should be allowed to just have their way with a person. He believed that it did not matter if a bill says so; it still goes against universal human morals.

Human and sex trafficking is a term that was known but was not necessarily used or recognized by people for some time. What we now think of as sex trafficking was, at that time, mostly considered a violation of human rights (Hosang & Yamin, 2016). During the 1990's the terms human and sex trafficking would be used more and become more acceptable to the media, and then to the general public. Over many centuries there were many attempts to put an end to sex trafficking, and then in other countries like the United States, sex trafficking would pick up. More children would be susceptible to becoming victims and being lured into the sex slave industry as this problem moves around the globe over time.

### **Characteristics of Sex Trafficking Victims**

There are many children that are at risk to becoming victims of sex trafficking. The United States has the second largest market for sex trafficking (Schauer, & Wheaton, 2006). Those being trafficked usually come from three different areas which include Asia, Mexico, and the independent countries of the soviet block such as Armenia and Azerbaijan (Schauer, &



## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

Wheaton, 2006). Additionally, children can be trafficked from one state to another as well if the trafficking is occurring within the United States.

Though there is not always a certain preference, there are some teens and young children that are more at risk to being lured into the sex industry than others. Those that have either run away from home or been thrown out their homes, those that are homeless, those that have already been abused, or those that are in foster care are more likely to fit the description of a sex trafficking victim (Kortla, 2010). Their parents may be on drugs which causes that child to lack a positive parental role model in his or her young life (Ernewein & Nieves, 2015). Some of the children are given away because their parents do not want them or need the money to support their drug habits.

Children are also easy targets when it comes to the internet. Sex traffickers go onto social media accounts to prey on their victims as well. All they have to do is put up a false advertisement trying to offer a “modeling” job or some type of employment that will be appealing to the child or adolescent. This is a trick to get them to share their photos, and to send their personal information and is likely to be especially effective in young children who do not yet have developed safety or protective skills to warn them against providing this kind of information to strangers online, or guardians to check on their internet use. These young boys and girls can also be targeted when they are out with their friends at the mall, waiting at the bus stop to be picked up, hanging around corner stores, and many other commonly frequented places in our communities.

It is easier to lure those in who stereotypically look as though they do not have money or experience that would help them to get a job (Kortla, 2010). This is not to say that some are not targeted who still live at home with their parents and already have everything that they could ask

for. Studies have shown that each year more than 2.8 million children have been thrown out of their homes, leaving few or no options for them to go. This makes it easier for them to become victim to a pimp or a sex trafficker because they have no one else to turn to. Many need the money to be able to get by and make ends meet or at least be able to afford a meal or find a decent place to stay which they likely do not have to worry about once they get an “owner”. All of these things can make the children an easy target and make the “job” seem more appealing to pull the child in than the reality would portray.

### **Indicators of Sex Trafficking Victims**

We need to be able to identify the sex trafficking victims from others so that they have a greater chance of being rescued and helped. To try and make it easier to tell if someone has been a victim of sex trafficking there are specific indicators. They may seem as though they are being controlled by someone else. It may present differently in different people, but there are general signs that can indicate a child being controlled. At times it can be hard to differentiate between a child being controlled by a dominating parent as opposed to a child being controlled by their pimp or owner. This is a difficulty of sex trafficking work that has not yet been mastered and additional research would need to be done. When asked questions they do not necessarily speak for themselves. Someone else may jump to answer any questions addressed to them. They may not have any money and do not have control over their own schedule with what they can do. They may be new to the country and do not know anything about where they are going to be living. They could also be in fear that they could easily be deported back if they do not take part in the requests of the trafficker. They may be living in fear, and seem really depressed (Macy & Graham, 2012). They may have particular signs of physical abuse and they may even be going through emotional abuse. When having to make trips to the doctor or hospital if something

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

happens, they may have extra concerns about their health; including certain information regarding diseases and pregnancy. They might not have any trust in adults. They would rather not be bothered and it is hard for them to believe anything an adult says. Their behavior around men may be questionable. They may look uncomfortable and uneasy. They may not have any actual belongings with them when they are seen. They may only have a cell phone and that could be the way for them to be reached by their trafficker. They may receive little to no pay for the work they have done and if they are paid, the amount received may not match up to the sexual acts that they had to put in. They may also be seen walking alone or in a small group with other children (Macy & Graham, 2012). There are many things if people are made aware that can seem out of the ordinary when it comes to children being trafficked. A life could be saved and rescued if more people knew what indicators to watch out for. People in the communities could get the word out. There could be campaigns held and signs made making the public more alert and aware. This would help them to try and identify children that are at risk for sex trafficking or help those who may already be victims of it.

### **The Sex Trafficker**

There are four different roles that a sex trafficker can be placed under. Each role is generally one member of a group of people working together toward their end goal of a successful (profitable to them) sex trafficking business. The first one is the Organizer, who makes the plans and keeps the network organized (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). Next is the Middleman, who does all the recruiting. They are the ones who sell the young victims and transport them to their destinations (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). Then there is the Business Operator, which include owners of brothels, pimps of those being paid to have sex with an unknown person, and club owners (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006). In this industry there are those

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

who work with law enforcement and the government who will turn their head if the price is right. These are the corrupt ones and they sometimes take part in the sex ring themselves (Schauer & Wheaton, 2006).

The sex traffickers are the ones who control the victims. They make a profit off of the children and do not seem to think that there is anything wrong with being in this business. Their main concern is to gain the trust of the children by tricking them and making them believe that they are there for them and that they are only here to help them have a better life. There are many tricks and routines that they have available to use which coincidentally allows them to be able to entrap their victims. The number one way of gaining the trust of these young victims is by flattering them or romancing them (Macy & Graham, 2012). The trafficker basically gets to know the victim and ends up showing them lots of love. They say the right things to the victims that they think they want to hear. They take them out on dates while showing them that they have lots of money and that they can take care of them. They do things that the boys and girls their age do, such as taking them to the theme parks and movies. They show them all of this attention that the victims have been lacking in their day-to-day lives. The trust grows even further when the trafficker realizes that the youth feels they are in a bad situation and that they need a way out.

The trafficker is there to help escape and find a way out for what is supposed to be a better life and is even quick to provide them with a place to stay. They are also quick to give the youth money making them think that they are doing it as a friend. This is called the “switch and bait” move because a few days later the trafficker informs them that they must give the money back. When the youth informs them that they cannot, the trafficker threatens them which in return can lead the child to start having sex with people for money. It is their only option to repay

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

the money they now owe back to the trafficker who entrapped the child in the first place. If it comes down to it and the trafficker sees that the youth is not cooperating, they may take the action of drugging them and then abducting them. In a quick instance a trafficker can basically persuade these victims to do anything. They put them to work as sex slaves and force them to work between 10-18 hours a day (Yen, 2008). It does not take much to be able to gain the trust of the youth and then turn them into a living puppet doll.

### **Why Victims Stay**

Many victims live in fear of their trafficker which can make it hard to be able to get out of that lifestyle. A lot of them are neglected and abused for so long that they do not have any fight left in them. Although many of them want to escape, they fear that if they try, their lives could be taken. If the sex trafficking victim gets caught they fear that they will receive extensive punishment. The victims also fear that if they run they will be found by their trafficker (Brunovskis & Skilbrei, 2016). The traffickers are not obligated to show the trafficked victims any mercy. The traffickers main goal is to have these victims sleep with multiple partners on a day to day basis so that they can make a profit.

The trafficker sees the child as a quick way to cash. Some of the victims feel as though this is the only way to live their life. The sex trafficking victim feels as though they have no other options available to themselves. The sex trafficking victim has been shut out by family and in all reality they need to be able to survive. The sex trafficking victim feels that they are doing what they need to make ends meet. Some of the trafficking victims have tried to escape and have gotten away only to be kidnapped by their trafficker and brought back into the business. Due to the victim likely being punished for their actions, they are not likely to try and escape again.

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

Other victims can also become fearful by hearing word of mouth about what may have happened to another person that they know for not following the rules (Squillante, 2014).

Others stay because they are extremely ashamed of the lifestyle that they have gotten into (Reid, 2014). The victims think that because of this no one else will ever want them. The sex trafficking victim may also be getting blackmailed by their trafficker. He may have pictures of her or him doing sexual acts so that, if forced to, the trafficker can convince the victim that they have no problem sending a copy of these photos to their families back home to show. A lot of the victims also think that they are obligated to stay around (Reid, 2014). The victim may feel as though the trafficker has helped them out of their worse situation so it is only right that they stick around. Some stay because the trafficker informs them that they are an accomplice to crimes. A lot of times the trafficker forces the trafficked victim to help them recruit others who they think would be a great asset to the team business, thus perpetuating the cycle of trafficking onto new and additional victims.

The trafficked victim is given the role of sometimes keeping the other victims in check and making sure that they are performing their duties to the best of their abilities. The female trafficked victims tend to stay if they have become pregnant by their trafficker or one of their clients that they have slept with (Reid, 2014). They think it is best to keep their “family” together, especially if it is with the trafficker. A lot of the victims end up being isolated and kept away from others. This makes it easier for the trafficker to control all communications the victim has. Most of the victims are usually held against their will so they have no control over what they themselves can do.

The sex trafficking victim may also be intimidated by their captor or feel threatened. They may be threatened with weapons such as knives or a gun (Reid, 2014). The sex trafficking

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

victim knows that if they try and escape that they could possibly be killed. The sex trafficking victim may stay because they are told that if abandoned they will be turned into the police, or worst yet, they will be forced to go back to where they originally ran away from. The trafficker even goes as low as to tell the victims that if they leave, their family members will be found and killed (Reid, 2014). At times it can be so bad that the trafficker may want to teach a victim a lesson by making them watch another one of the victims be raped, or they may even be raped themselves.

The sex trafficking victims also receive lots of physical abuse which can cause many injuries. Those scars are a constant reminder of what they don't want to do so they stay. One of the big reasons a lot of the victim's stay is because the trafficker provides them with a lot of hope. The sex trafficking victims are given the impression that they are the best out there. That the trafficker cannot make it without them. The trafficker and the victim have an understanding that no one else will be able to comprehend what the two of them have been through or their "bond". That it is them against the world. The sex trafficking victims believe that although they may be having a spiral downfall that one day things will look up for them and they will be making money how they used to even though the trafficker is the one who handles the majority of the money. Some of the trafficked victims never see any of their money (Reid, 2014). The sex trafficking victims have no control over it so they do not have the financial stability they would need to be able to take care of themselves on their own if they were to leave.

Unfortunately, under the circumstances, they think that this is the only way of life and that they must do this to survive. They need food, shelter, and clothing so they think of this solution as a means to get the important things that they need. They have few other readily available options and no one else to turn to so they get it set in their minds that these traffickers

actually care for them and love them. In reality they are only being used for the trafficker's benefit. A victim could feel all of these things together giving them a compounded effect. In return this could make them feel stuck in the world they have become a part of.

### **Economic Profits**

There is an extreme gain for traffickers financially by being in the sex trafficking business. There is a high demand for women and children in the market and it is easy for the traffickers to make money off of the victims. A lot of communities already have a lack of resources and do not have the necessary funds available to help out a lot of the sex trafficking victims. This makes it easier to make the sex trafficking victim vulnerable and prone to becoming a victim of sex trafficking. Each year statistics have shown that there is an annual profit of at least \$31.6 billion dollars being brought in from trafficking (Schaffner, 2014). This means that there are over 700,000 women and minors being abused by this crime. This gives the traffickers the opportunity to be in control of their own prices. They have room to negotiate which means that depending on what the trafficked victim has to take part in, there can be more money made. Due to so many changes that can take place, the trafficker has to be able to adapt quickly in different situations when it comes to this market (Wheaton, 2010). Since there is such a demand for young boys and girls in the sex trafficking market, people will pay more money to be able to have access to them. The trafficker can go with the highest bidder in these cases. A trafficker can make between \$13,000.00 and \$100,000 per trafficked victim (Wheaton, 2010). Although they can make a lot of money off of these victims, there are a lot of other expenses that have to be paid. Transporting victims from one place to another costs money. There were travel fees depending on far they had to go. Some traffickers also have to falsify documents to give the trafficked victims a fake identity. In the long run the traffickers are making more money than



they have to spend to run their business; the profits per victim far exceed the expenses overall. To them this is the business to be in because it is easy money that they are having other people perform duties to make for them.

### **Laws, Policies, and Sentencing**

In order to try and bring some justice to sex trafficking there are many acts that have been created along with many laws and policies that have been made to try to protect and help the victims. In 2001, there were only a few hundred prosecutions of those who had illegally trafficked victims (Schaffner, 2014). Quite often many of the perpetrators are not caught which allows them to stay in the business. Those prior arrests did not really have an effect on the other traffickers in deterring the behavior in the future for themselves or others. While there are some laws that are intended to protect the young victims, they are not always useful. Due to the fact that there is corruptness in the system with police officers and others, the victims can be scared and then be less likely to testify against the trafficker who has harmed them (Mathews, 2005). Police can be corrupt in abusing and neglecting the power that they have. They may have a victim that has been sex trafficking and instead of helping them out, they may take part in making the victim sell themselves to men so the police can make a profit, essentially making the police or individual officers a part of the trafficking ring themselves. In the mid 1900's an act was passed known as the Mann Act which was used against the trafficking victims rather than the trafficker (Mathews, 2005). The victims could be punished for the sexual acts that they had committed even though it had been done against their will. This was when the U.S. began to realize that the victims actually had no protection although it provided a starting point for trafficking being addressed altogether (Mathews, 2005). At this time there were no set laws for sex trafficking in the U.S. In 1994, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act was

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

passed which would later be known as the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Act. This act would make it an illegal offense to travel to different areas to engage in sexual acts with minors (Andrews, 2004). In 2000, an act was passed called the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. This was intended to protect those being trafficked, stating that it was a violation of their human rights. It also pertained to the traffickers by holding them accountable for their actions so they could be punished more easily. This act would allow them to be able to receive more penalties and longer sentences for the harm that they put these victims through during the illegal sexual actions. The Protect Act, as it has been shortened to, is the guideline that is used for sentencing (Albonetti, 2014). The structure helps when trying a trafficker or a perpetrator in court for a crime that they have committed. A study showed that the average age of the traffickers who were arrested and served prison time was around 35 years old. They served their time in the federal prison averaging about 132 months (Albonetti, 2014). A defendant's sentence depends on how many charges he or she has and the types of crimes that were committed.

### **Reform Recommendations**

A lot of researchers agree that there needs to be some sort of reform when it comes to how the U.S. addresses sex trafficking issues. There are a few changes that I would like to see based off the research that would be beneficial to the sex trafficked victims. Although there has been some progression made, there is always room for more change that can benefit the trafficked victim and punish the trafficker. For one, there should be some sort of set structure for being able to identify between a victim and an actual criminal. When raids are done at brothels, in homes, or even on corner streets, everyone who is there at the time is arrested and booked in the local jail. Some say that due to the fact that the people are caught in the act it's difficult to determine who the criminal is and who the victim is due to what can appear to be consensual

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

behaviors and uncertainty in ages. A lot of the times the victim is not willing to speak against their abuser so the police and even social services are not always able to tell what is actually going on.

When the police have tried to help in the past, the trafficker has punished the other victims by taking away their medical insurance and preventing them from getting medical attention that any of the trafficked victims may have needed to seek (Burkhalter, 2012). There are some clinics that the sex trafficked victims could go to if there were any problems or they had any medical situations. Places like planned parenthood are available for the victims. Most of the time they only way they have access to get to these clinics is through the trafficker with his or her approval. If they mess up in any way, their privileges to go for checkups could be revoked. Due to this reason the police and other medical or social service agencies can have the blame placed on them as to why the youth may not be able to seek medical attention when needed.

Another reason researchers want to see a change in the way the police behave with those trafficked is because they too can treat the victims inhumanely. The corrupt ones oftentimes themselves abuse the victims and take advantage of them. Due to reasons like this there have been sex unions set up for those that are placed in the sex trafficking industry (Burkhalter, 2012). This union is a way to help the sex trafficking victim be protected. The police and social workers must go through extensive training to learn how to deal with certain situations. They must be caught up with the most current information and know all the most effective techniques in order to be able to help them. They need to know what to do in different situations so they do not provoke a situation or make things any worse. They need to know how to deal with victims who have been traumatized and who may not be in the right state of mind.

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

Many youths are continuously effected by this crime. Most of the research has talked about women without much information on minor youth in the United States. More studies need to be done on the young victims involved in the sex trafficking industry to determine exactly how often this occurs in the United States. People in the communities and parents need to be made aware of this situation so that they know what to watch out for when it comes to their children. It is important to make sure that young boys and girls do not continue to become victims of sex trafficking.

### **The Current Study**

The main goal of this research is to see how often sex trafficking occurs in the United States (specifically New York state) against young boys and girls. Sex trafficking, also referred to as modern day slavery, has been an issue that has been going on for some time now as discussed above. Although this is something that happens in other countries, many young victims are more affected by this in the United States than have previously been reported. The research will look into this to see how often police officers come across this problem in the states and what commonalities they have identified across cases they have worked.

### **Method**

#### **Participants and Procedure**

The survey study proposed here intended to use snowball sampling to recruit officers who were identified by their involvement in sex trafficking units within New York law enforcement agencies (or through referral to those with sex trafficking experience in agencies without a dedicated unit). The participants in this study must all be over the age of 21 years old

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

and we will have at least 30 participants. The study has not yet been completed due to time constraints and IRB concerns over the sensitive nature of the data collection topic.

First, to find what agencies to use, I identified different police agencies around Monroe County who had a specific sex trafficking unit within their department. In reaching out to the known sex trafficking units, I will inquire about additional departments or personnel who may have experience with this type of case, and will include any new individuals in this manner. Therefore, the sampling frame and overall study sample will continue to grow as the study moves along with the additional of new participants. I am striving for a goal of at least 25-30 law enforcement personnel perspectives to be included in the final study sample.

Once identified, participants will be sent an email link. I will continue to follow up with them through emails to ensure as high a response rate as possible. Then I will thank them for their participation. Once all the data has been received, I will identify themes from the open ended responses that have been received. The results will be reported through descriptive statistics.

Additionally, I will inform the participants that there will not be any compensation for doing this, but that they would be helping out an honor's student with her senior thesis by taking part in the study and be able to add their perspectives to the field of knowledge on sex trafficking. The study will be voluntary and at any point the officers had the right to drop out if they felt the need to. They also had the option to skip over any of the questions asked that they may not have felt comfortable answering. I reassured them that even if they chose not to take part in the study, it will not affect the relationship that they may have had or might possibly want in the future with Brockport College. If they did choose to participate, they will be redirected to the online survey where there would first be an informed consent required of them, which they

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

could sign electronically, and explaining in detail what would be expected or asked of them during the study, and how to complete it. I also made it very clear that everything that is filled out would be kept private and confidential and that it would be stored and locked away for the next three years following the study at which time the data would be deleted permanently. The entire study will be completed online through a program called Qualtrics which allows researchers to set up questionnaires and then disburse out electronically for ease of response for the participants. They will be able to access the full questionnaire online and I would be able to receive all their responses once the questionnaire was complete. After receiving all the questionnaires, a series of graphs and tables would be made to show all findings. I will code for common themes found throughout the research as well as report the descriptive statistics for the results that are gathered.

### **Measurement**

This questionnaire regarding sex trafficking will take the participants about 30 minutes at the most to fill out. It is important to study to see how particular areas are impacted by sex trafficking and if the cases they identify fit the international findings (for example, about motivations for staying with the traffickers or indicators for identifying victims). By conducting this research, I hope to find out how sex trafficking happens in different locations, if it happens at all. I also want to discover if there is a certain strategy that is used regarding sex trafficking investigation. Is there a guideline that must be followed when working on a case of this nature? It would be good to find out how sex trafficking has been addressed in different agencies and precincts, and if it is of more concern in one locale over another. Are there certain areas that should be watched over more than others or spend a greater amount of time and resources dedicated to sex trafficking work?

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

To study this, I have chosen the agencies and precincts that I would want to take part in the study to represent as many New York state agencies as possible. They are from many different areas that way we can get an in-depth perspective on sex trafficking from those who work most closely with it on a daily basis. This gives me the opportunity to discuss with those who had knowledge of the criminal justice field and the issues that might be faced in investigating sex trafficking workers.

Given the exploratory nature of this research, I have developed a questionnaire which will give me a better understanding of how involved the agencies are when it comes to sex trafficking. Each question is intended to elicit a response that provides information about the state of sex trafficking investigations in New York state. To study this, I have created a questionnaire with a total of nine questions:

1. How many sex trafficking cases do you see or hear about in your precinct on average per month?
2. Is there a certain team in the police department that handles these cases or is every officer in the station trained in the matter?
3. Are there outreach tactics in the community that are making people aware of this issue? If so, what kind?
4. Are there any programs that have been set up to help sex trafficking victims once they have been rescued?
5. Is there a particular racial or ethnic group that you see targeted more than others by sex trafficking?
6. Are homeless children and runaways targeted more than other children?

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

7. Have you noticed a pattern of particular characteristics that a sex traffic owner looks for when abducting these children?
8. How often are sex traffickers and pimp owners caught?
9. Which agency were you an officer with when you had the experience with a sex trafficking case?

These are all questions that need to be answered to better understand this issue in the areas near where I live. Based off the fact that sex trafficking is not something that has been talked about too often in upstate New York, it seems as though a lot of the surrounding areas will say that they have possibly little to no cases at all regarding this issue. However, this study may provide an opportunity to hear from those who would be conducting these investigations to perhaps change the narrative about how often these issues are present in upstate New York. Additionally, the findings could provide a context for lawmakers to perfect the currently established laws so they are better able to identify victims and apprehend/punish offenders by speaking with those working in the field on this topic.

A lot of times so much of this is talked about in different countries more than anything else. We do not have a full understanding of if this is something that could be happening in our own backyards or neighborhoods without us even knowing about it. Additionally, most of the research to date has focused on women as victims of sex trafficking, so the current study expands this research by investigating minor involvement in sex trafficking within the US as well. Most importantly I want to learn how often this happens in our communities and if it does happen, are there any programs to help those minors and prevent this from getting any worse? Changes are frequently discussed, but what changes are actually being made so that many youths do not continue to make the same problems over and over again?



## **Conclusion**

Sex trafficking is a problem that is going to take some time to get rid of. In the meantime, there are many young boys and girls out there who need our help, who have to fight for their lives on a daily basis. They are being put to work to have sex with many different people all because they were lured or tricked into the sex industry business (Macy & Graham, 2012). We have to care more about the future of the children and we need to start working together as a community to make a change. Parents need to pay closer attention to their children and possibly monitor what they do on a deeper level. The government needs to work more on trying to arrest some of these traffickers and find an appropriate punishment and deterrent. If more people pull together we can prevent things like this from happening in our future. Only time will tell, but young people's lives are important and although it is not talked about as much with minors in sex trafficking as it is with women, it is still a problem that needs to be fixed.

**References**

- Albonetti, C. (2014). Changes in federal sentencing for forced labor trafficking and for sex trafficking: A ten-year assessment. *Crime Law and Social Change*, *61*, 179-204. doi: 10.1007/s10611-013-9507-1
- Andrews, S., K. (2004). U.S. domestic prosecution of the American international sex tourist: efforts to protect children from sexual exploitation. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, *94*(2), 415-454. doi: 10.2307/3491375
- Attwood, R. (2015). Lock up your daughters! Male activists, 'patriotic domesticity' and the fight against sex trafficking in England. *Gender and History*, *27*(3), 611-627. doi: 10.1111/1468-0424.12153
- Burkhalter, H. (2012). Sex trafficking, law enforcement and perpetrator accountability. *Anti-Trafficking Review*, *1*(1), 122-133. doi: 10.14197/atr.201217
- Brunovskis, A., & Skilbrei, M. (2016). Two birds with one stone? Implications of conditional assistance in victim protection and prosecution of traffickers. *Anti-Trafficking Review*, *6*(1), 13-30. doi: 10.14197/atr.20121662
- Ernewein, C., & Nieves, R. (2015). Human sex trafficking: recognition, treatment, and referral of pediatric victims. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, *11*(8), 797-803. doi: 10.1016/j.nurpra.2015.06.005
- Hosang, D., M., & Yamin, P. (2016). Constructing the sex trafficker: spectral figures and sexual violence in California's proposition 35. *New Political Science*, *38*(3), 390-410. doi: 10.1080/07393148.2016.1190172

## Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

- Kortla, K. (2010). Domestic minor sex trafficking in the United States. *National Association of Social Workers, 55*(2), 181-187. No doi
- Macy, R. J., & Graham, L. M. (2012). Identifying domestic and international sex-trafficking victims during human service provision. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, 13*(2), 59-76. doi: 10.1177/1524838012440340
- Mathews, S. (2005). International trafficking in children: will new U.S. legislation provide an ending to the story?. *Houston Journal of International Law, 27*(3), 650- 702. No doi
- Nawyn, S., Birdal, N., & Glogower, N. (2013). Estimating the Extent of Sex Trafficking. *International Journal of Sociology, 43*(3), 55-71. No doi
- Reid, J. A. (2014). Entrapment and enmeshment schemes used by sex traffickers. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 28*(6), 491-511. doi: 10.1177/10796063214544334
- Schaffner, J. (2014). Optimal deterrence: A law and economics assessment of sex and labor trafficking law in the United States. *Houston Law Review, 51*(5), 1519- 1548. No doi
- Schauer, E. J., & Wheaton, E. M. (2006). Sex trafficking into the United States: A literature review. *Criminal Justice Review, 31*(2), 146- 169. doi: 10.1177/0734016806290136
- Squillante, D. (2014). Single, young female- seeking asylum: The struggles victims of sex trafficking face under current United States refugee law. *St. John's Law Review, 88*(1), 223-253. No doi
- Wheaton, E., M., & Schauer, E. J., & Galli, T. V. (2010). Economics of human trafficking. *International Migration, 48*(4), 114-141. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00592.x

Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York State

Yen, I. (2008). Of vice and men: A new approach to eradicating sex trafficking by reducing male demand through educational programs and abolitionist legislation. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 98(2), 1-34. No doi