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and best practices in support of specific policy recommendations.

Shelley passionately concludes that “[h]uman trafficking will remain a defining problem of the twenty-first century as the Cold War was in the twentieth century and colonialism in the nineteenth,”¹⁵ but she also asserts that the problem has not been widely recognized. Her effort to improve on the frequently cited “large and detailed literature”¹⁶ suffers from over reliance on and questionable use of sensational reports in the media that overwhelm the more reliable, authoritative sources found in her extensive research.

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Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Day Slavery* (Columbia University Press 2009), 298 pages, ISBN 9780231139601.

I. INTRODUCTION

Siddharth Kara’s book is a welcome addition to the thin literature on the international enterprise of sex trafficking—a form of modern day slavery. There is no question that this book will become

the “go-to” resource for anti-trafficking researchers and activists both inside and outside governmental and international bodies. Kara’s research is thorough, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods from a myriad of sources, and his prose is eloquent, provoking readers to tears, rage, and even sometimes laughter.¹

Kara brilliantly captures the complexity of the issue not only with the vast amount of data he brings to bear, but also through his stylistic techniques. On one axis, he narrates journeys, both his own and those of victims and survivors. On the other axis, he provides context in the form of historical, cultural, and economic analysis. This literary style is highly effective. By interweaving first and third person narrative with socio-economic context, Kara personalizes and internationalizes sex trafficking, painting this form of slavery as relatively basic in some ways, yet highly complex in others.

II. NARRATIVE

A. Personal Narrative

With respect to his personal stories, Kara shares his perilous—and sometimes thrilling—research experiences. These include being chased by thugs on Falkland Road,² being intimidated by the border patrol’s semiautomatic Uzis at the Moldovan-Transdniestr border,³ becoming intoxicated after meeting a victim in a brothel in Thailand,⁴ chopping down rainforest

15. *Id.* at 298–99.

16. *Id.* at 304.

1. SIDDHARTH KARA, *SEX TRAFFICKING: INSIDE THE BUSINESS OF MODERN DAY SLAVERY* 131 (2009).

2. *Id.* at 57.

3. *Id.* at 118.

4. *Id.* at 160.

with machetes in Burma,⁵ and spying at Vlora harbor in Albania.⁶ These and other exploits keep readers on the edge of their seats. Kara also details his thoughts and feelings with brutal honesty. At various points, he wanted “the heads of those men on a platter,”⁷ questioned cultural mores,⁸ felt “ashamed to be male,”⁹ and acknowledged internal conflict about complicated moral decisions.¹⁰ Kara’s courage to conduct such dirty and dangerous fieldwork with such emotional transparency is inspiring and laudable.

B. Victim Narrative

In addition to his own narrative, Kara shares the stories of numerous victims and survivors of the sex trade. From virtually every region and country he explored, Kara documents real-life testimonials from women of different ages, religions, ethnicities, races, and nationalities who have been brutalized, abused, drugged, raped, and sold. The victims’ stories personalize the crime for the readers, eliciting both compassion and outrage. Kara often posed as a buyer as a means to gain access to victims, and he also interviewed survivors in shelters. Both modes of data gathering, albeit controversial, exemplify Kara’s commitment to fully understand the multiplicity of factors that brought these victims to this place of exploitation. He also does an exceptional job demonstrating to skeptics why trafficked women are victims,

not criminals. This truth destroys the reasoning by which the public and law enforcement have justified their apathy, and also helps readers understand how this misconception has caused victims to distrust law enforcement and refuse to comply with investigations.

III. CONTEXT

A. Historical/Cultural Context

Kara also provides an impressive level of context that sets the backdrop for how and why this illicit industry thrives. At one end of this contextual axis is history and culture. In every chapter, Kara provides some historical context for the sex trafficking plague in that country. From the Rana dynasty in Nepal that gained power in 1846¹¹ to Albania’s history of occupation that ultimately led to economic despair,¹² Kara melds the past with the present, illustrating that this evil did not spring up overnight and must be understood in the context of a country’s historical legacy.

Similarly, Kara documents some of the most endemic cultural factors that allow the sex trafficking industry to flourish. Among the most basic, and common, is deeply entrenched misogyny. Kara states: “Millions of women [live] in a world that overwhelmingly disdain[s] them.”¹³ Upwards of 500,000 female fetuses in rural India are aborted per year.¹⁴ The women in

5. *Id.* at 163.

6. *Id.* at 138.

7. *Id.* at 160.

8. *Id.* at 133.

9. *Id.* at 71.

10. *Id.* at 182.

11. *Id.* at 75.

12. *Id.* at 141–42.

13. *Id.* at 76.

14. *Id.* at 31.

Sindhupalchok said, “[t]his is our culture,” and “[m]en want women as slaves.”¹⁵ Nepalese trafficking victims perform jujitsu rites prior to their forced departure in which “the woman’s pubic hair, nails, and menstrual blood are collected and placed before a traditional shrine.”¹⁶ In Moldova, a US-based fast food chain used marketing slogans with trafficking innuendos,¹⁷ and the Orthodox Russian influence meant that women “were not even allowed near the church altar because they were impure.”¹⁸ In Albania’s rural regions, Kara describes the disadvantages of being a woman and the process by which females become male by “swearing virginity and renouncing all aspects of life related to femaleness.”¹⁹ An educated Thai woman explained to Kara that the Theravada Buddhist tradition in Thailand leaves some Thai women believing that “the best thing a woman can do is be reborn a man.”²⁰ In short, a disdain for females emerges as a common theme the world over.

The second cultural factor is government corruption. In Italy, a girl trafficked from Russia said, “The police are the main clients,”²¹ obviously problematic when the police represent the supposed front line in the enforcement of anti-trafficking laws. Bribery, too, is rampant. From law enforcement to judges, bribing public officials allows slavery to continue to exist with impunity. Kara could not escape this issue anywhere he traveled.

B. Economic Context

In addition to historical and cultural context, Kara interweaves a great deal

of economic context throughout. In the first chapter, Kara sets forth his main thesis: “the enormity and pervasiveness of sex trafficking is a direct result of the *immense profits* to be derived from *selling inexpensive sex* around the world.”²² As this statement and the book title connote, despite the historical and cultural factors Kara acknowledges as having contributed to the sex trafficking industry, his aim is to pin primary responsibility for sex trafficking on micro and macroeconomic factors. He argues that the microeconomics of supply and demand function in this manner for the sex trade: desperate females are exploited and enslaved by traffickers, and slave owners supply the cheap sex that men demand. The macroeconomic factors contributing to the surge of sex trafficking, Kara argues, are the post-Soviet Union monetary policies of the United States and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Given Kara’s main thesis, he believes that the most effective defense against sex trafficking would be a sharp focus on the supply-side microeconomics that drive the industry. In particular, he wants to increase the risk for slave owners to operate by pushing for greater enforcement of trafficking laws and tougher monetary penalties. He believes that the high risk calculation will force slave owners to increase the price of sex, which will decrease demand by pricing many consumers out of the market. The effectiveness of Kara’s supply-side approach, however, hinges on one strong assumption (based on a demand curve generated from four customers at one brothel in Kamathipura): *that the demand for sex is elastic*. When

15. *Id.* at 78.

16. *Id.* at 90.

17. *Id.* at 113.

18. *Id.* at 124.

19. *Id.* at 130.

20. *Id.* at 174.

21. *Id.* at 85.

22. *Id.* at 3–4 (emphasis added).

the price is low, demand is high; when the price is high, demand significantly decreases. This assumption and its logical corollaries generate nontrivial questions regarding Kara's theory and corresponding policy prescriptions.

In order to convince readers that the most effective short-term strategy to combat sex trafficking is a supply-side approach that increases the risk of operating for the slave-owner, Kara minimizes real demand for sex. Kara states that male demand for sex merely "helps to drive the sex industry."²³ He strategically downplays demand for sex in two primary ways: by assuming that sex is elastic, and by omitting any potential connection between pornography and demand for sex. The following will address each in turn.

The main problem with the assumption that demand for sex is elastic is that it implicitly rejects the possibility that, for certain individuals, purchasing sex may not be simply an issue of price. Kara compares the stiff monetary penalties associated with drug trafficking to the meager monetary penalties associated with sex trafficking,²⁴ but he does not demonstrate that tough monetary penalties have effectively decreased demand for drugs. In fact, despite these penalties, the drug trafficking trade continues to flourish, in large part because demand for drugs is inelastic for many users. Drug addicts often forfeit all they own to feed their habit. This argument can increasingly be applied to the demand for purchasing sex. A growing body of neurological research on sex and sex addiction hints at similarities, not differences, between

the drug and sex trades. Demand for sex is inelastic for sex addicts.

In addition, demand for sex may also be inelastic for wealthy consumers. Throughout his narrative, Kara describes a number of affluent consumers²⁵ and "polished men in BMWs"²⁶ who can afford sex at higher prices. While an increase in price may certainly price some of the low-income, non-sex addict consumers out of the market (and therefore require a lesser quantity of female sex slaves), wealthy consumers would remain, paying higher and compensatory prices. In short, Kara's assumption about the elasticity of demand for sex is the lynch pin holding together his supply-side theory and policy focus. However, this assumption can and should be further tested and scrutinized before recommending or implementing broad-based policies that are based on it.

Beyond this critical assumption, Kara also minimizes real demand by estimating that, worldwide, demand for sex slaves is relatively low. He states that between "6 percent to 9 percent of males in the world over the age of eighteen actually purchase sex from slaves at some point each year."²⁷ Understandably, Kara's definition of "actually purchas[ing] sex from slaves" is a narrow one—an actual sexual encounter between a slave and a paying customer. However, if he broadened his definition only slightly, this estimate would be much higher. Specifically, a growing body of research implicates pornography for driving the demand for prostituted women.²⁸ Despite this, Kara views the pornography and sex trafficking industries as discrete, calling

23. *Id.* at 106 (emphasis added).

24. *Id.* at 209.

25. *Id.* at 111 (e.g. a lawyer).

26. *Id.* at 84.

27. *Id.* at 33.

28. See *Captive Daughters, Reading List* (2011) available at <http://www.captivedaughters.org/readinglist.htm>.

pornography a “substitute” for purchasing sex.²⁹ On the other hand, his narrative describes sex establishments displaying pornography³⁰ and suitcases filled with pornography belonging to United States men en route to East Asia to have sex with children.³¹ Pornography appears to be more than a discrete substitute; more accurately, it belongs on the continuum of “actually purchas[ing] sex from slaves.” Defined this way, demand for the purchase of sex is much greater.

Regarding macroeconomic policies, Kara blasts the IMF. He succinctly summarizes the IMF’s policies after the collapse of the Soviet Union and argues that these policies led to soaring poverty levels for women, children, and minorities (the most disenfranchised groups), generating a large supply pool from which traffickers could seduce the most vulnerable. While most economists agree that globalization has led to greater disparities between the rich and the poor, there is scant evidence to suggest that there is a direct relationship between globalization and poverty. Economists have identified a number of confounding factors that have effectively rendered a direct cause and effect argument mostly ineffectual. Moreover, even if globalization led to increased wealth for “everyone,” it would most likely not extend to women, children and minorities due to rigid cultural biases, and the supply of sex slaves would remain while more men had more disposable income with which to purchase cheap sex. Thus, regardless of whether globalization leads to poverty or riches the sex trade would

likely endure relatively unscathed.

In addition to the IMF, Kara also places direct blame on the United States. He says, “The United States is more responsible than any other nation for the inimical accretion in human exploitation, trafficking, and slavery since the fall of the Berlin Wall”³² because of the way it “rapidly imposed its particular brand of unfettered market economics upon the developing world.”³³ Understandably, Kara wants to hold the US government accountable for the propagation and alleged effects of its monetary policies; however, if he shifted the focus away from economics and towards the sociopolitical issues associated with human trafficking, he would be forced to take a different stance. Kara states that “trafficking for sexual exploitation is not a fast-growing epidemic within U.S. borders”³⁴ and gives three primary reasons: greater distance from origin countries, relatively less corruption, and the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act leading to increased prosecutions and convictions. Two of these three factors are cultural—there is low tolerance for corruption and impunity. Another cultural factor is greater gender equity, which is why Kara accurately states, “The United States is not responsible for the acute levels of gender bias and minority disenfranchisement that promote sex trafficking.”³⁵ Thus, while the United States may be culpable for its economic policies, it also deserves due credit for fighting human trafficking through raising global and domestic awareness, enforcing its trafficking laws,

29. KARA, *supra* note 1, at 37.

30. *Id.* at 57.

31. *Id.* at 195.

32. *Id.* at 196.

33. *Id.* at 197.

34. *Id.* at 183.

35. *Id.* at 197.

and moving towards a culture that values gender equity and punishes corruption.

That being said, the United States has a human trafficking problem of its own that should not be downplayed. Kara argues that sexual exploitation is not a rapidly growing epidemic in the United States, in part based on his “subjective assessment that there is less real demand for sex services among U.S. males than there is among males in other countries.”³⁶ If he defined pornography as more than a substitute for sexual exploitation, this assessment would be quite different. The pornography industry, headquartered primarily in Southern California (though increasingly decentralized), is complicit in the success of the global sex trafficking industry. The objectification and commodification of women propagated by the pornography industry not only perpetuates cultural misogyny, but also neurologically desensitizes the brain into desiring increasingly base sexual behavior. While it is unclear whether a different US economic policy would have slowed the international sex slave trade, a tough governmental policy against the pornography industry may through decreasing demand for the purchase of sex and exporting an attitude of intolerance for violence against women. Moreover, if pornography is defined as a “sex service,” then real demand for sex services among US men should be considered just as high as anywhere else.

IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the final chapter, Kara provides a “framework for abolition.” He believes that focusing on the victim through awareness campaigns and poverty reduction techniques may be helpful in

the long-term, but is not going to make a sufficient dent in the economics of trafficking soon enough. He argues that a focus on the traffickers is ineffective because the movement of slaves is too easy. Thus, Kara states that the immediate enforcement approach should be on the slave owner and the consumer. He wants to raise the cost of operating to a “profit-compromising level” through higher penalties and increased prosecutions. He believes this will raise the price for sex to a level that will price consumers out of the market.

In order to accomplish this goal, Kara provides a formula for determining what a profit-compromising level is for a slave owner. He then states that countries need to increase their “paper penalties” to a rate higher than the “exploitation value” of a sex slave, and then increase their prosecution rates. He suggests that an extra governmental “Coalition of Freedom” be formed dedicated to abolishing all forms of slavery. The coalition would liaise with the United Nations to operate a trafficking inspection unit, comprised of international and local law enforcement. He also proposes coordinating with “Community Vigilance Committees” that could possibly be paid by the coalition, conducting raids, and paying higher salaries to prosecutors and judges to make them less likely to accept bribes. Finally, he proposes a witness protection program that includes witnesses taking on new identities and vocations.

While these recommendations are a helpful starting point, there are several questions that should be considered as experts look to implement these proposals. First, Kara rightly implicates military and peacekeeping personnel for perpetuating the problem.³⁷ What checks will be in place to ensure that coalition personnel

36. *Id.* at 184.

37. *Id.* at 145.

are not doing the same? The same holds true for the trafficking inspection unit that would work with UN officials, as well as local law enforcement. What vetting and accountability procedures will be implemented?

Second, how does the coalition justify paying some community vigilance committees and not others, and how does the coalition ensure these individuals are not using this money as a bargaining chip to receive bribes from traffickers? In addition, if community vigilance committee members were properly vetted to receive payment from the coalition to report suspicious activity, what measures would protect these individuals from retaliatory traffickers?

Third, his prescription for increasing prosecutions rests on the assumption that higher salaries will effectively eliminate the need for bribery. While low salaries might play a role, Kara continually refers to the rampant corruption that undergirds a system of bribery and impunity. Simply increasing remuneration of public officials is unlikely to eliminate a complicity rooted in moral turpitude. As long as these establishments remain open, the police maintain easy access to both sex and cash with a low likelihood of being punished. How will the coalition vet public officials and ensure that, despite their increased salaries, they are not still accepting bribes?

Fourth, a witness protection program is absolutely necessary in order for victims and their families to cooperate with law enforcement and assist in the prosecutions. How will the coalition go about convincing individuals to leave everything they have ever known and relocate with a new identity and vocation? Kara's suggestion is a good one on

paper, but will most likely prove difficult in practice.

Finally, perhaps the most implicating evidence that raises questions about his economic thesis and supply-side prescriptions is Kara's own inability to minimize the role of entrenched cultural factors driving both supply and demand, namely misogyny and corruption. Kara believes that his approach "would prove more effective in the short-term at lowering consumer demand than would attempts to educate men that they are not entitled to gratify their sexual needs by purchasing female bodies."³⁸ Yet, his "short-term" economic approach requires vast socio-political reforms, including "increas[ing] investigations and address[ing] law enforcement and judicial corruption."³⁹ For decades, a myriad of NGOs have been working on judicial reform and anti-corruption efforts around the world, but progress is slow. Efforts that address cultural misogyny *and* corruption are central to any anti-trafficking effort and both will help decrease demand over time; but both these efforts will take patience and perseverance. Cultural reform is not short-term.

V. CONCLUSION

Kara's book is unique in its depth, approach, and contribution to the anti-trafficking establishment for a number of reasons, yet his steadfast commitment to his central thesis implicitly undermines the compelling business of the rest of the book. He does not waver in contending that economic globalization, made possible through the post-Cold War monetary policies of the United States and IMF, is the primary culprit for the poverty that

38. *Id.* at 213.

39. *Id.* at 209.

made more women vulnerable to sexual exploitation and the riches that provided more men resources with which to purchase sex. He maintains this stalwart stance despite the resounding themes of cultural misogyny and corruption that he clearly cannot escape. While this stance may be effective in advancing high-level policy discussions regarding the anti-trafficking agenda, it may simultaneously overwhelm and discourage the average individual. If human trafficking is the result of a large macroeconomic conspiracy to promote a western brand of free market capitalism, then the average person is left feeling helpless to effect change, despite Kara's exhortation in the first chapter for people to get involved. For all these reasons, Kara's primary thesis should be seriously scrutinized not only in terms of its academic veracity, but also in terms of its motivational usefulness.

Holding loosely to this thesis, however, Kara's book does what no other book on the global sex trade has done before. He models the "anatomy of sex trafficking" in a clear and concise manner and breaks down different components of the industry in an organized and systematic way. He also brings to bear real data that quantifies for various countries and regions the microeconomics of contemporary slavery. All of this is extremely valuable as the international community continues to develop and implement a comprehensive and strategic counteroffensive to defeat the slave trade.

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Celeste Newbrough, *The Archetype Strikes Back* (Berkeley: One Craft Publishing House 2010), 120 pages, no ISBN.

This book of poems is not overtly concerned with human rights as a broad, political concept, though elements of it can be said to indirectly relate to rights concerning gender, sexuality, religion, and quality of life vis-à-vis a well-tended environment. There are other poets—Czeslaw Milosz, Wislawa Szymborska, Adrienne Rich, Carolyn Forché, Denise Levertov, and Margaret Atwood to name a (gender biased) few—whose work would more immediately fall within a human rights aesthetic, if such an aesthetic exists apart from the sometimes contentious categories of political poetry, war poetry, social justice poetry, prison poetry, poetry of witness, and post-9/11 poetry. Reading this book, however, does lead one to consider the boundaries of what that aesthetic might be.

Although the book is not marketed this way, it reads like a "Selected and New" volume. *Archetype* includes thirteen poems previously published in Newbrough's first two books, *Pagan Psalms* and *The ZanScripts*,¹ the titles of which suggest her ongoing spiritual motif. Many of these poems have been revised over the years. The book also includes twenty-four new poems, as well as other poems published previously in online and print journals

1. CELESTE NEWBROUGH, *PAGAN PSALMS* (1982); CELESTE NEWBROUGH, *THE ZANSCRIPTS* (1999).