

Human Trafficking

Jim Martinez

Abstract

Human Trafficking is a global wide, multi-million dollar industry and is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. The purpose of this article is to determine the extent of Human Trafficking in the state of Florida. Surveys were sent out to 180 Law Enforcement agencies around the state of Florida with a return rate of 60%. The purpose of the surveys was to identify agencies having this problem and how they are dealing with it. This article will examine how people are brought into this state and how they are exploited and what Law Enforcement is doing to combat the problem.

Introduction

Human Trafficking has become a multi-billion dollar industry around the globe. Some of the Myths and Misconceptions of Human Trafficking are:

- The victim knew what they were getting into
- The victim committed unlawful acts
- The victim was paid for services
- The victim had freedom of movement
- There were opportunities to escape but the victim didn't
- Trafficking involves the crossing of borders
- U.S. citizens can't be trafficked
- The trafficker's actions are culturally appropriate
- It can't be trafficking when the trafficker and victim are related or married. (Newman, 2006).

Florida is the second largest hub of human trafficking in the U.S. However, only 6 cases of slavery have actually been brought before the Federal Court since 1966. Because of the growing problem with human trafficking,

Florida has formed task forces and work groups to do training and address human trafficking in the state (The Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking, 2008).

There are over 400 law enforcement agencies in the State of Florida (FDLE, 2008). Surveys were sent out to 180 randomly picked law enforcement agencies in the state of Florida to help determine what agencies and areas are dealing with or investigating human trafficking. Other information included on the surveys includes agencies' ability to identify and deal with this crime and what they can do to combat the problem.

Literature Review

We do not know how many people are trafficked into the U.S. annually. Recent estimates range from 18,000 to 50,000. Because human trafficking is clandestine and victims are hidden and afraid to come forward, there is much that we do not know. We know that people, who do not speak English, are very poor, or in any way vulnerable due to age, disability or education, are often preyed upon by traffickers. Human trafficking cases represent three main types of exploitation: sex trafficking, forced labor and domestic servitude (Florida Responds to Human Trafficking, 2003).

As part of my research, I conducted an interview with Vania Llovera from the FSU Center for the Advancement of Human Rights. Mrs. Llovera is currently involved in helping three victims of Human Trafficking in Tallahassee. Mrs. Llovera explained that victims of Human Trafficking are not always brought into the United States from other countries. She explained that children are often adopted and kidnapped within the United States. Victims are forced into prostitution or hired out to labor camps. She advised that human trafficking is a growing crime that needs to be stopped. She further advised that there are many organizations in the U.S. that were established to help victims of human trafficking. Mrs. Llovera states that the main problem with human trafficking is the fear imbedded into the victims, which prevents them from reporting the crime. (V. Llovera, personal communication, November 23, 2008)

The following are some examples of human trafficking cases that were prosecuted in Florida:

1. Mrs. Llovera advised that one individual had recruited women from countries in Central and South America smuggling them in the U.S. and ultimately to Florida for the purpose of prostitution. One of the women was able to escape, when she was left alone, and summoned the police. The victim advised that when they arrived in Florida they were taken to trailers and were ordered to have sex with clients of their abductor. Victims were able to show investigators the locations of where they were taken, which helped U.S. Attorney Gregory Miller prosecute the case. (V. Llovera, personal communications, November 23, 2008). The suspect

faces a term of 15 years to life imprisonment with up to 2.7 million dollars in fines. The Clearwater Area Human Trafficking Task Force, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Tallahassee Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations conducted the investigation (Bastin, 2008)

2. One case involving sex trafficking was United States vs. Cadena. In this case, Cadena and his family, between 1996-1997, trafficked over 60 girls and young women into South Florida and subjected them to forced prostitution. Some of the victims were as young as 14. Victims were from poor neighborhoods in Vera Cruz, Mexico. They were beaten, raped and confined to trailers that were often moved on a weekly basis to keep them disoriented and compliant. Out of the \$20 traffickers charged each client, only \$2 was given to the victim to send back home to their families. Cadena was found guilty in the U.S. federal court (Dept. of Justice News Release, 2008).
3. United States vs. Juan Ramos was involving a forced labor case. The Ramos brothers were Florida labor contractors who supplied migrant farm laborers to citrus growers. Undocumented Mexican citizens were transported to Florida to work for the Ramos brothers. Once in Florida they were forced to work off their transportation debt and threatened with violence if they tried to leave. On June 28, 2002, following a four-week trial, the jury found the brothers guilty of conspiring to hold workers in involuntary servitude and harboring undocumented workers (Dept. of Justice New Release, 2004).
4. Another case is United States vs. Yelena Telichenko. In this case, Yelena met the victim in Philadelphia where she persuaded the victim to move to Orlando, Florida. Once in Orlando, the victim was forced by being brutally beaten to engage in prostitution in order to earn money. This case was prosecuted by U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and prosecuted by the attorneys from the Civil Rights Division and U.S. Attorneys Office (Dept. of Justice News Release, 2006).

Method

The purpose of this research is to bring attention to human trafficking, a multi-million dollar global industry. The research will focus in the state of Florida and will assist law enforcement in identifying human trafficking crimes and providing solutions on how to deal with it. In order to find out if law enforcement agencies are aware and dealing with this hidden crime, a survey was sent to numerous law enforcement agencies in Florida.

There are over 400 law enforcement agencies in the state of Florida. In order to provide a large, yet manageable pool of returned data, 180 surveys were sent to a sampling of these law enforcement agencies. Agencies were selected based on geographical locations in order to receive a good variation of data. The survey had a 60% response rate. The survey identified agencies that have some knowledge of or have dealt with crimes of human trafficking.

In an effort to determine the best statistics (age of victims, environment status, and methods of becoming victims) of human trafficking, interviews were conducted with law enforcement investigators and centers that deal with human trafficking.

An interview was conducted with Vania Llovera, with The Center for the Advancement of Human Rights at Florida State University, who has assisted many people who have become victims of Human Trafficking.

Some questions that were asked in the surveys and interviews were:

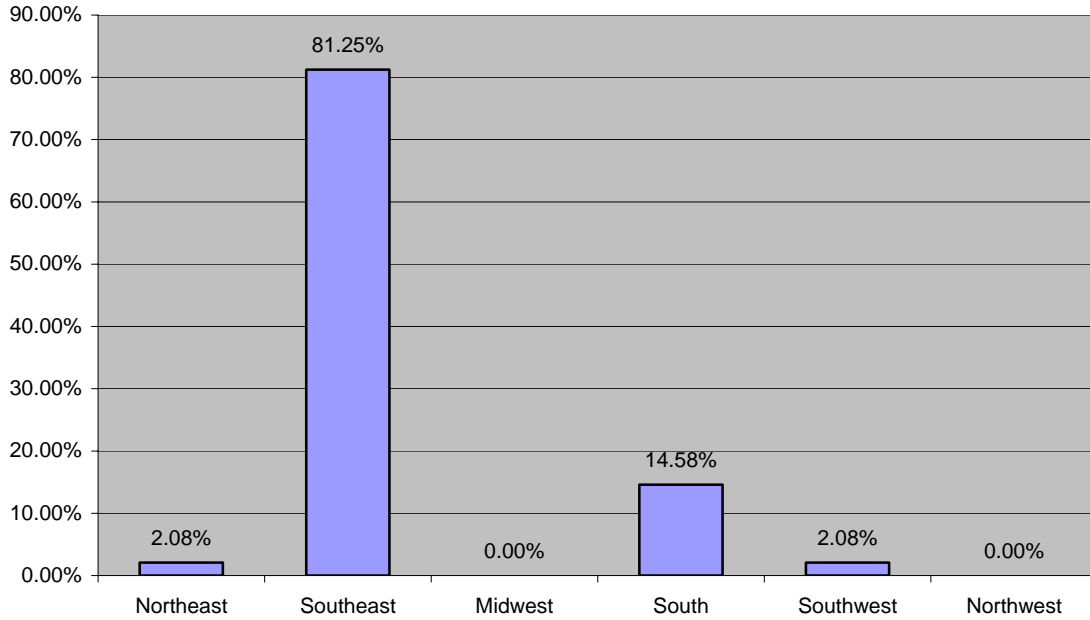
- How do agencies identify victims and or suspects of human trafficking in their areas and how do they handle the investigation?
- What are the qualifications and training of officers or investigators that dealt with victims and or suspects?
- What methods and resources have been used in training of officers and investigators in investigating human trafficking?

Names of victims and other pertinent information were not used in the research paper due to client confidentiality. Due to asking agencies if they have had human trafficking cases and not asking specifically how many human trafficking cases they have had, the number of cases of human trafficking in Florida could not be determined from the agencies who responded to this survey.

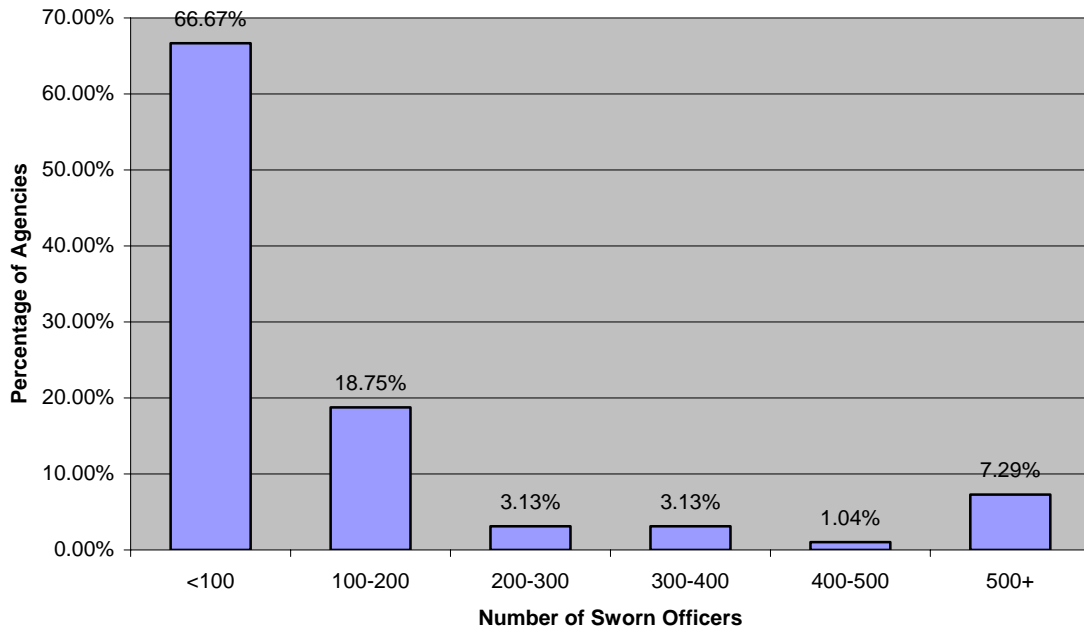
Results

The following graphs depict the background geographic and demographic information of the agencies surveyed:

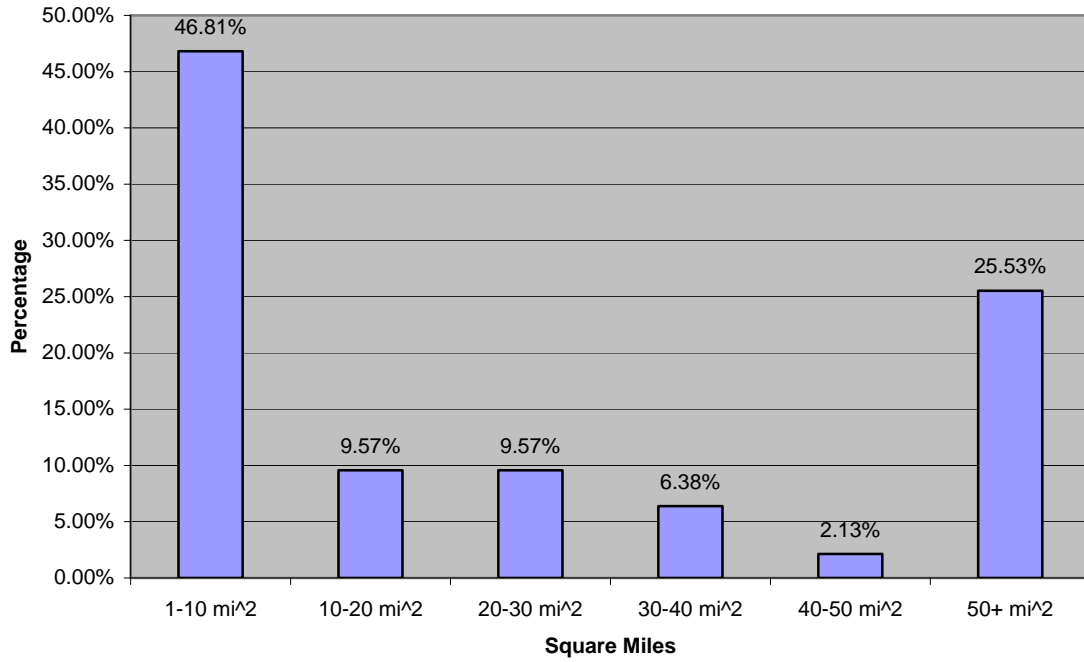
Agency Location



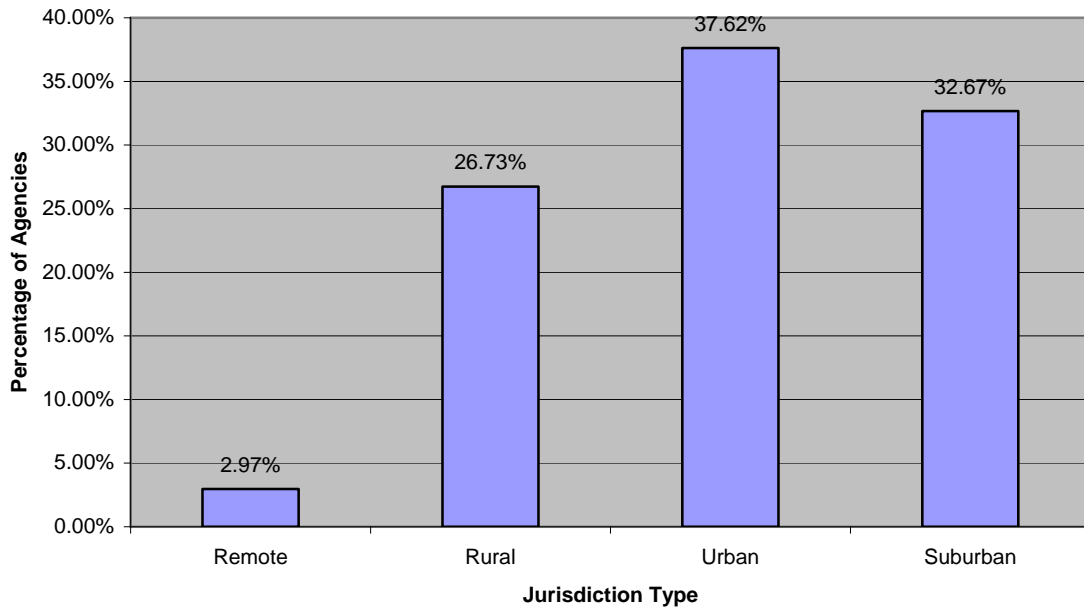
Number of Sworn Officers



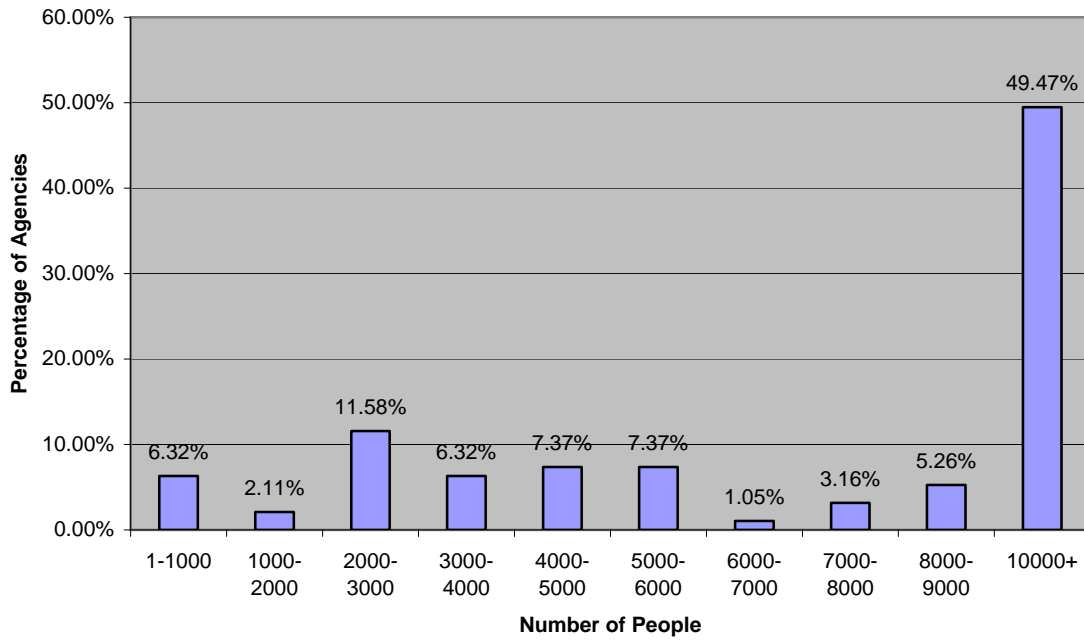
Size of Jurisdiction



Type of Jurisdiction

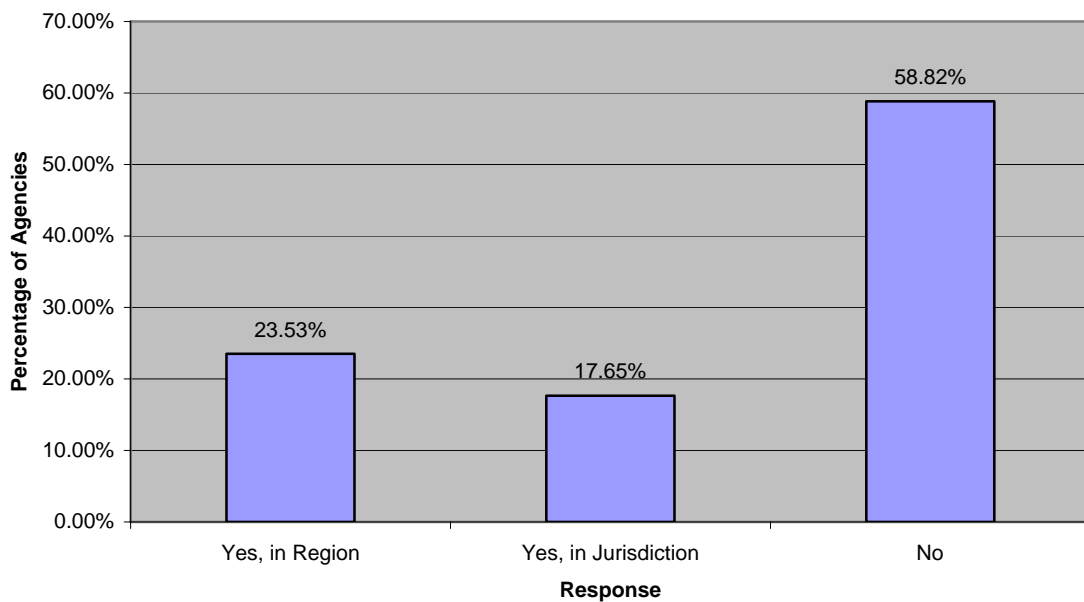


Population Served by Agency

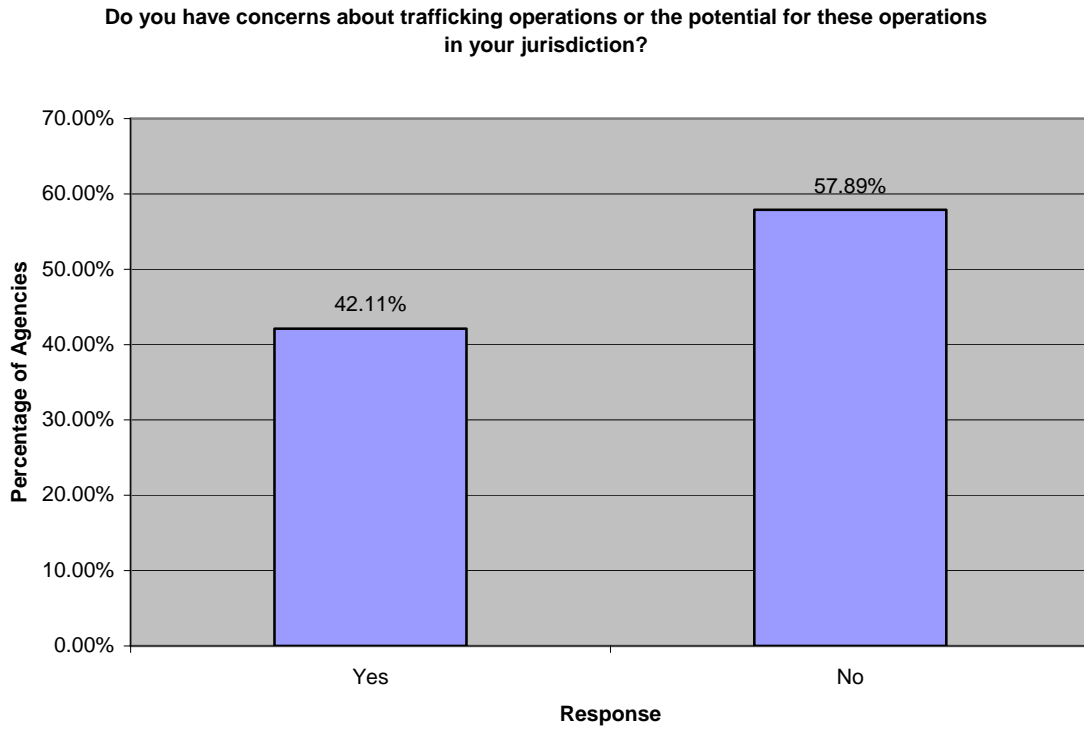


The following graph depicts the responses to the second question, "Are you aware of any trafficking investigations that have taken place in the recent past (8-10 years)?"

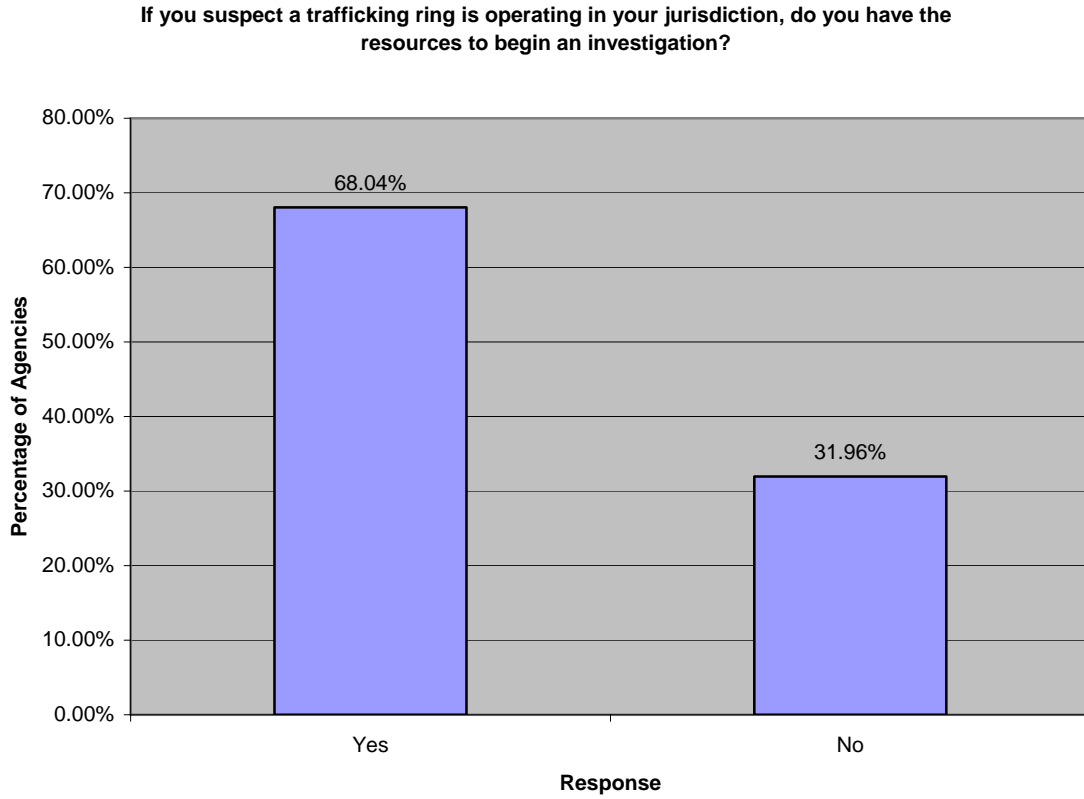
Are you aware of any trafficking investigations that have taken place in the past 10 years?



The following graph depicts the response to the third question “Do you have concerns about trafficking operations or the potential of these operations in your jurisdiction?”

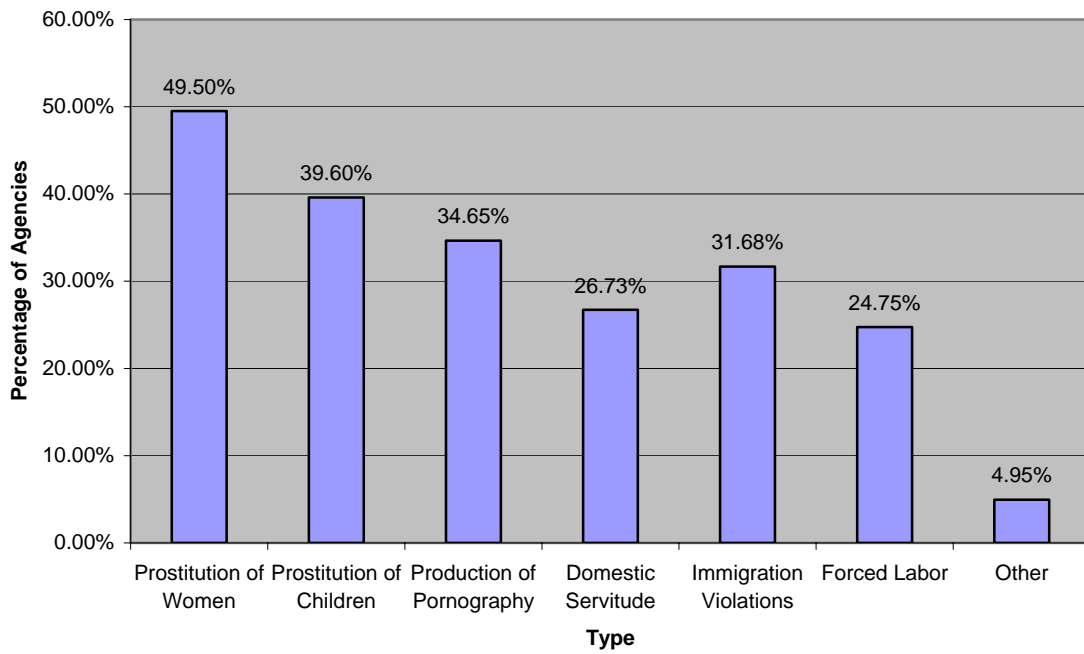


The following graph depicts the response to the fourth question “If you suspect a trafficking ring is operating in your jurisdiction, do you have the resources to begin an investigation?”

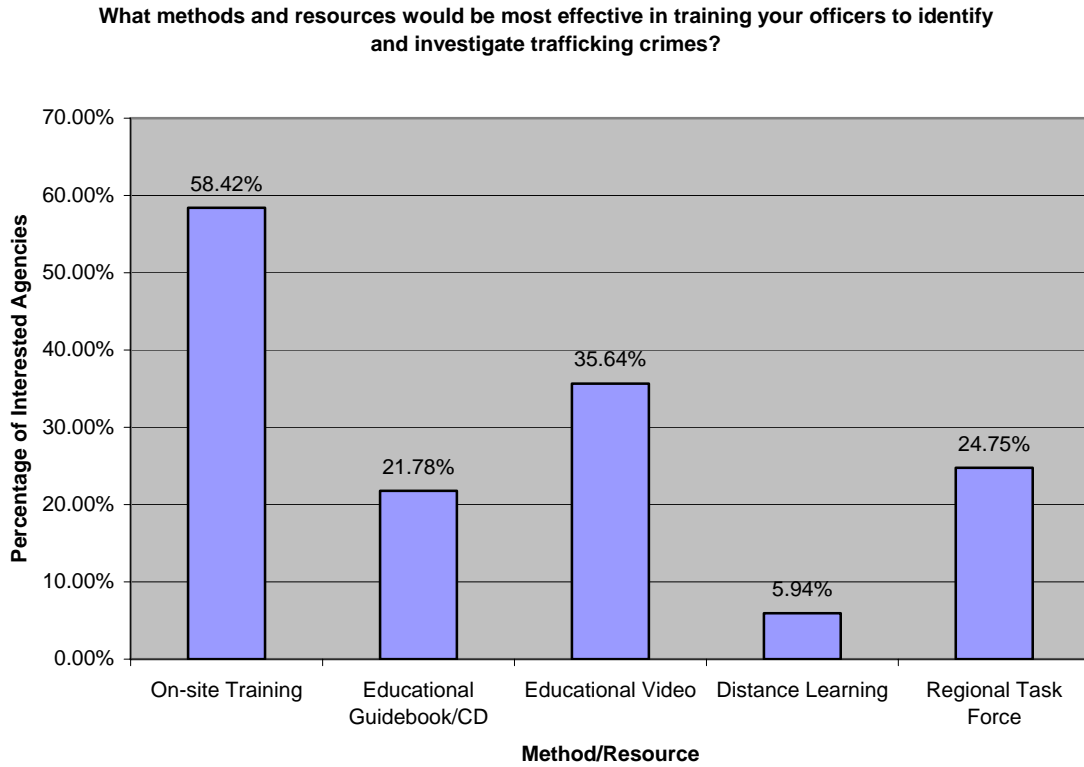


The following graph depicts the response to the fifth question “Have your officers been sufficiently trained to identify trafficking operations that may be masked as:”

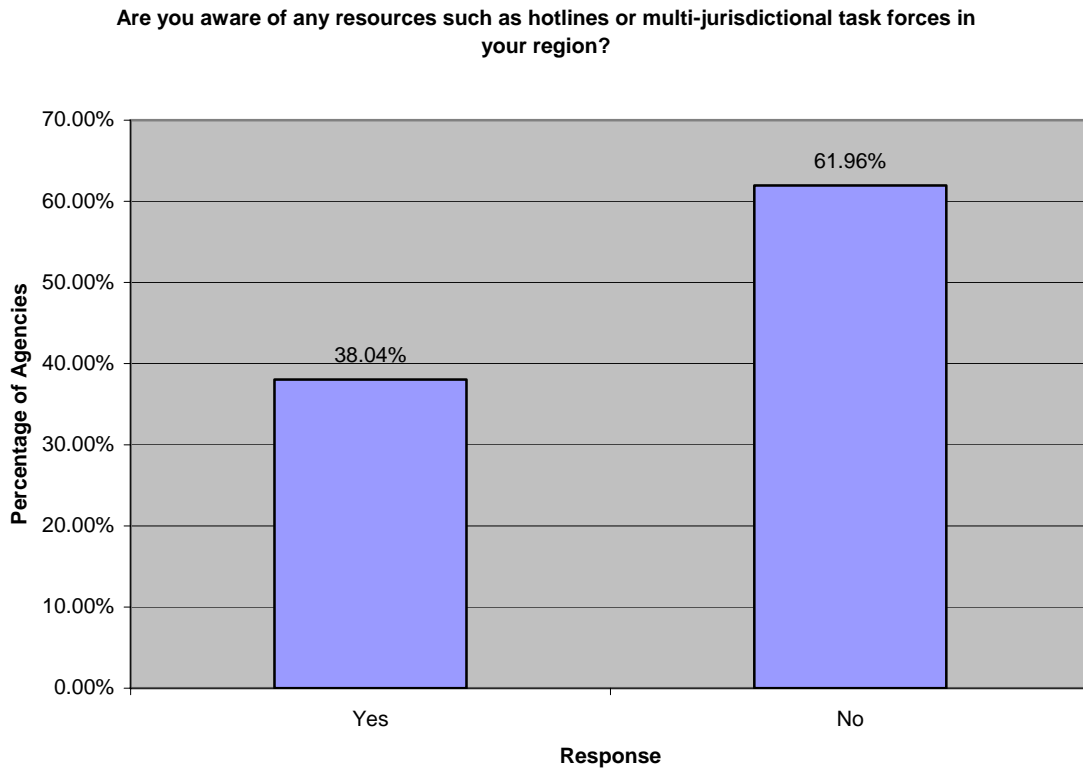
Have your officers been sufficiently trained to identify trafficking operations that may be masked as:



The following graph depicts the response to the sixth question “What methods and resources would be the most effective in training your officers to identify and investigate trafficking crimes?”



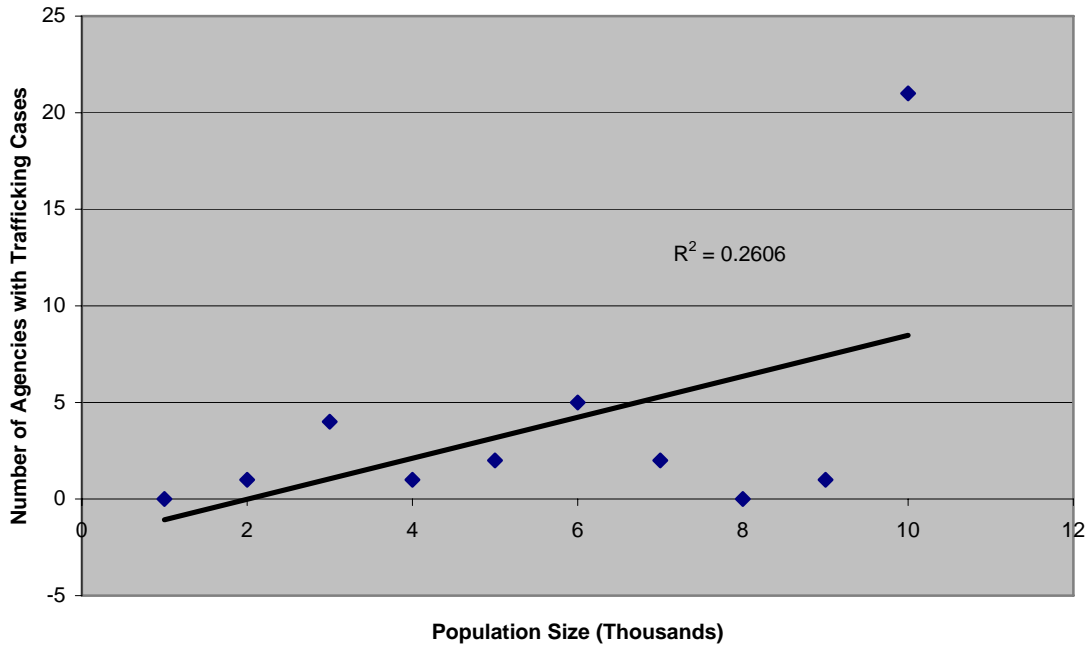
The following graph depicts the response to the final question (“Are you aware of any resources such as hotlines or multi-jurisdictional task forces in your region?”)



Discussion

After receiving 108 surveys yielding a 60% response rate, I was surprised to find so many agencies dealing with human trafficking in the state of Florida. I did not realize that so much human trafficking was actually detected and dealt with in the state. After examining the various population sizes that the agencies are responsible for and the number of trafficking cases, there was very little correlation (see graph below). This would indicate that trafficking occurs regardless of the population size of the jurisdiction.

Trafficking Cases in Different Populations



After speaking with Mrs. Llovera (FSU Center for the Advancement of Human Rights), I know how difficult it is to actually prosecute for the crime of human trafficking. I would have been curious to determine the true amount of human trafficking in the state, aside from what the survey responses indicated.

According to my returned surveys, 23.53% of agencies are aware of trafficking in their region and 17.65% of the agencies are actually dealing with human trafficking in their jurisdiction. An amazing 58.82% of the agencies answered “ No” to their agencies being aware of any human trafficking in their region or jurisdiction. It is unknown if it doesn’t exist in their jurisdictions or if they are not aware of what to look for in identifying human trafficking.

When the question was asked if the agencies had any concerns on human trafficking in their areas, 57.89% stated “No,” indicating that they either are not educated or are aware of human trafficking in their areas and 42.11% of the agencies stated that they do have concerns about human trafficking and are taking steps to combat the problem.

This response was surprising to me because I was not aware that so many agencies were actually dealing with or even were aware of human trafficking because it never made the news as far as I’m aware of. A high percentage of agencies (58.42%) would prefer on site training where if distance traveling was involved in learning, a surprising low percentage was indicated in the surveys (5.94%). An average percent of agencies would prefer to learn through videos, guidebooks, and regional task forces.

Agencies were asked the question if officers have been trained to identify trafficking operations that may be masked, 49.50% of agencies train their officers

to identify masked cases (women, children, pornography, servitude, immigration violations, and forced labor) and only 38.4 percent of agencies are aware of trafficking resources. A shocking 61.96 percent of the agencies have resources to begin an investigation on a trafficking ring.

Question five of my survey asked what type of human trafficking they encountered the most and their response was prostitution of women, which was at 49.50 percent. Prostitution has always been the top list for the human trafficking of women. Children was the second highest at 39.6 percent, followed by pornography, domestic servitude, immigration violations, forced labor and other types.

The portion of the state of Florida dealing with the highest percentage of human trafficking was the southern part of the state, southeast being the highest at 81.25% of human trafficking and the lowest being the Northeast at 2.08%.

46.81% percent agencies surveyed covered a 1-10 square mile radius and 25.53% was second covering 50+ square miles and the rest of the agencies covering less square miles. 37.62 percent of agencies were located in the urban area, with suburban area at 32.67, rural at 26.73 and remote being at 2.97.

Since starting this survey, it has been very interesting to find out how global wide this human trafficking organization is. I personally did not know how much of this was going on in the world. A lot of agencies are already aware of human trafficking according to my surveys and I'm sure some agencies don't have the resources to deal with problems like this. I'm sure a lot of people perceive immigrant people they see in isolated areas as just migrant workers, when in actuality they could be victims to human trafficking.

Some of the signs to detect possible human trafficking are signs of a fenced in area preventing workers from leaving the area or if they do leave to go somewhere, the traffickers always escort them. Victims are brought to this country through lies that the captors feed their victims. They offer them a better life and more money, which make the victims more willing to follow the captors. Once the women are brought into this country, they are raped and beaten and told they will be killed if they do not do what they are told. Others are told that they need to repay their captors for bringing them into this country; however the victims can never repay their captors because their debt keeps continuing every day they are held captive.

For women forced into prostitution, it is hard to detect because they are constantly moved from city to city. This is done to prevent the women from becoming familiar with the town and their surroundings. They are constantly threatened with harm to them or their families. When they are no longer useful, due to pregnancy or sickness, the traffickers discard them, sometimes even killing them. Some women have been able to escape their captors and risk being sent back to their country by reporting the crime to law enforcement.

In conclusion, upon completion of this research, I have noticed several documentaries on television dealing with human trafficking and making the public aware of its existence. Apparently it is becoming more known that it is real and it does exist in this country instead of the myth that slavery no longer exists.

Recommendations

1. I would recommend that websites be established to assist law enforcement agencies in becoming more familiar with Human Trafficking in the states.
2. Another recommendation would be that classes be offered to assist and train officers on how to detect and investigate the different types of human trafficking (Women, Children, etc.) by working with investigators already involved in investigating this crime.
3. Have the media be more informed on human trafficking so they can make citizens aware that this crime does exist and what signs citizens can look for so they can get involved and report any suspect crime of human trafficking.

Lieutenant Jim Martinez has been with the Tallahassee Police Department since 1990. As a Sergeant, Jim supervised a patrol squad, the robbery task force unit, the burglary unit and has served as assistant district commander for the northeast section of Tallahassee. Jim was promoted to Lieutenant in 2007 and worked as watch commander. Jim currently is in the Administrative Services area supervising the communications section, records department and building maintenance. Jim has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from Mankato State University.

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Appendix A

Cover Letter

To: Chief
Police Department

Dear Chief,

I am Lieutenant James Martinez working for the Tallahassee Police Department.

Chief, I am currently enrolled in the Senior Leadership Class at FDLE Criminal Justice Institute. I am currently doing a research paper, which is required in our class, and a survey questionnaire is also required on our topic. My topic is Human Trafficking and I would like to find out if police agencies in the state of Florida are aware of this crime or have dealt with any investigations in human trafficking. I would appreciate if you or someone in your agency could take this short survey and send it back to me. It would greatly be appreciated. Thank you Chief and if you ever need any assistance from our agency or me do not hesitate to call.

Lieutenant Martinez
Administrative Services
Tallahassee Police Department
Work 891-4740
Cell 251-3438

Appendix B

Survey Paper

We appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire.

- 1) Is your agency located ____ Within the U.S.? ____ Outside of the U.S.?
____ **(1)** Northeast ____ **(3)** Midwest ____ **(5)** Southwest
____ **(2)** Southeast ____ **(4)** South ____ **(6)** Northwest

What is the number of sworn officers in your agency?

- (1)** Less than 100 **(2)** Between 100-200 **(3)** 200-300 **(4)** 300-400 **(5)** 400-500 **(6)** More than 500

What is the size of your jurisdiction?

- (1)** 1-10 square miles **(2)** 10-20 square miles **(3)** 20-30 square miles **(4)** 30-40 square miles **(5)** 40-50 square miles **(6)** more than 50 square miles

Is your jurisdiction: ____ urban ____ suburban ____ rural ____ remote

What is the size of population your agency serves?

- (1)** 1-1000 people **(2)** 1000-2000 citizens **(3)** 2000-3000 **(4)** 3000-4000 citizens **(5)** 4000-5000 **(6)** 5000-6000 **(7)** 6000-7000 **(8)** 7000-8000 **(9)** 7000-8000 **(10)** 8000-9000 **(11)** 1000,00 or more

- 2) Are you aware of any trafficking investigations that have taken place in the recent past (8-10 years):
____ Yes, in your region
____ Yes, in your jurisdiction
____ No
- 3) Do you have concerns about trafficking operations or the potential for these operations in your jurisdiction?
____ Yes
____ No
- 4) If you suspect a trafficking ring is operating in your jurisdiction, do you have the resources to begin an investigation?
____ Yes
____ No

- 5) Have your officers been sufficiently trained to identify trafficking operations that may be masked as: (check as many as are appropriate)
- (1) Prostitution of women
 - (2) Prostitution of children
 - (3) Production of pornography
 - Domestic servitude
 - Immigration violations
 - Forced labor
 - Other
- 6) What methods and resources would be most effective in training your officers to identify and investigate trafficking crimes?
- On-site training
 - Educational guidebook/CD
 - Educational video
 - Distance learning
 - Regional task force
- 7) Are you aware of any resources such as hotlines or multi-jurisdictional task forces in your region?
- Yes - Please specify

 - No

Please Fax Completed Surveys to (850) 891-4627