Global Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children

Summary

The term commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) refers to the for-profit sexual exploitation of children and youth through buying, trading, or selling sexual acts. CSEC is a subset of children and youth who are victims of human trafficking or trafficking in persons (TIP). The Stockholm Declaration defines CSEC as a form of coercion and violence against children that amounts to forced labor and a contemporary form of slavery; there are many forms of CSEC, including child prostitution, child marriage, early marriage, forced marriage, temporary marriage, mail-order brides, child labor, child servitude, domestic servitude, begging, massage, sex tourism, child pornography, online streaming of sexual abuse, sexual extortion of children, and sexual solicitation of children. Not all experiences of sexual servitude are globally recognized. It is critical to explore the concepts of race, inequality, power, culture, and globalization and how they impact the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Keywords

human trafficking, CSEC, commercial sexual exploitation of children, CSEC regionally, CSEC in Europe, CSEC in the United States, CSEC in Latin America, CSEC in sub-Saharan Africa, CSEC in the Middle East, CSEC in Asia, CSEC in Australia

Definitions and Conceptual Issues

Despite slavery being illegal in every country in the world, estimates suggest that today, there are more people trafficked for servitude than ever before in history (Free the Slaves, n.d.). Slavery has been present for millennia, and the institution itself has seen dramatic changes with modernity. Its persistence is proof of this criminality's ability not only to survive, but to thrive, fueled by increasing levels of poverty, migration, and the vulnerability of humans (Hepburn & Simon, 2013). Modern slavery is composed of the sale, transfer, and receipt of human beings, known today as human trafficking or trafficking in persons (TIP), and entraps people through infinitely varied forms of force, fraud, and/or coercion (Laser-Maira, Huey, Castro, & Ehrlich, 2016; Laser-Maira, Huey, Castro, Ehrlich, & Nicotera, 2018). According to the United Nations (UN), TIP generates $32 billion to $36 billion in profit annually, third only to drug and arms trafficking (UN, 2014), and that market is rapidly growing. The relatively low risk and operational costs of TIP, compared to drug and arms trafficking (Haynes, 2004; Hepburn & Simon, 2013), suggest that this illicit industry will continue to see rapid growth for the foreseeable future.

Human trafficking is clandestine, and reliable statistics are often difficult to obtain (Tyldum, 2010). The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) reports that across the world, 46% of victims were trafficked domestically, thus never leaving their country (2016). Therefore, many victims and traffickers share a language and ethnicity (UNODC, 2016). That similarity makes exploitation by traffickers easier, since they can generate greater trust and may even be acquainted with the victim's family (Laser-Maira et al., 2016; UNODC, 2016). Additionally, being of the same gender also facilitates trafficking, with many girls and women being trafficked by other girls or women (UNODC, 2016). However, 54% of trafficking victims are coming from another country and are crossing borders due to conflict, violence, persecution, human rights violations, or economic devastation (Hepburn & Simon, 2013; UNODC, 2016). These victims can be seen as foreign, different, or coming from religious traditions that reduce traffickers' feelings of compassion and may increase brutality (Burke, 2015; Global Detention Project, 2018; Walk Free, 2018). The foreign victim of human

trafficking can also experience isolation and fear of deportation (Burke, 2015; Laser-Maira & Campos, 2018; Polaris, 2010).

Victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation (54%), forced labor (38%), and other forms (8%, including removal of organs or tissue, selling babies/children, forced marriage, forced begging, and child soldiers; UNDOC, 2016). Trafficking victims were found to be women (51%), men (21%), girls (20%), and boys (8%) (UNODC, 2016). Adult victims (victims over 18) often have less access to resources and supports than children, thus creating greater barriers for assistance for youth over 18 years old. Adult victims are also required to acknowledge their experience of force, fraud, or coercion to prove TIP had occurred. However, that is irrelevant when determining TIP for children and youth under 18 years (UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol, 2000). The vulnerability and lack of power or influence of children and youth make TIP a particularly tragic circumstance for this population (Laser-Maira, Peach, & Hounmenou, 2019). The rest of this article will focus on the 28% of trafficking victims who are children and youth (UNODC, 2016).

The term commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) refers to the for-profit sexual exploitation of children, youth, and transgender youth through buying, trading, or selling sexual acts (Innocence Lost, 2010). Thus, CSEC is a subset of children and youth who are victims of TIP. The Stockholm Declaration adopted at the World Congress in 1996 defines the CSEC as a form of coercion and violence against children that amounts to forced labor and a contemporary form of slavery (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2019a). There are many forms of CSEC, although not all experiences of sexual servitude are globally recognized as such. They include: child prostitution, child marriage, early marriage, forced marriage, temporary marriage, mail-order brides, child labor, child servitude, domestic servants, child begging, child massage, child sex tourism, child pornography, online streaming of sexual abuse, sexual extortion of children, sexual solicitation of children, sex shows of children online or in person (Every Child Protected Against Trafficking [ECPAT], 2015, 2018, 2019a, 2019b; ILO, 2019a). CSEC may result in unwanted pregnancies, premature childbearing, HIV/AIDS, STIs (sexually transmitted infections), and negative impacts on mental health and physical health and may cause female genital mutilation (Albright, Greenbaum, Edwards, & Tsai, 2020; ECPAT, 2015). The victims of CSEC range from infants and toddlers to teens, with 80% being 10 years old or younger (ECPAT, 2018).

Historical Perspective

Slavery is, by its very nature, the imprisonment of people for their exploitation for the economic benefit of others, by abuse of their labor and/or their sexuality. The perception and experience of sexual slavery are evident across time and place. An ancient civilization that produced art and writing was “Mesopotamia” (Western Asia), where archaeological excavation of the city of Uruk (ca. 5000–4100 BC) found symbolic depictions of the term slave (Charvát, 2002). Evidence of organized and state-sanctioned sexual slavery has existed, often veiled behind terms such as prostitution, as early as 4000 BC (Charvát, 2002). The existence of sexual slavery originates within a myriad of state regulations that are designed to enforce endogamous restrictions concerning racial, class, and ethnic relationships (Limoncelli, 2010). Those victimized by sexual slavery are mostly, but not entirely, adult females. However, closer inspection of the oppression and sexual slavery of women often reveals the presence of children. The exploitation of children was documented in the 4th century by St Augustine (354–430 AD), who wrote a letter that referenced children as kidnapped for slavery (McGinn, 2004).

In the early modern period, the age of sail facilitated the European colonialization of Latin America and the Caribbean, which saw the rape of women and girls as a means of increasing the number of

slaves (Beckles, 1995; Winer, 2017). Despite estimates that children accounted for between 19 and 27% of those enslaved from Africa (Diptee, 2010), their stories remain largely unexamined (Jones, 2006). In addition to economic oppression, the white man's "fetishized" desire for black pubescent female bodies entwines with sexual slavery (Sandiford, 2000, p. 31). Male-gendered dominance in sexual slavery is profound and collusive. An international movement to eliminate prostitution began with the formation of the British and Continental Federation for the Abolition of Government Regulation of Vice in 1875, which later became known as the Fédération Abolitioniste Internationale (FAI) (Outshoorn, 2004). After World War I, in 1921, the FAI passed the Convention to Combat the Trafficking of Women and Children. Despite these progressive acts, Japan's WWII Imperial Forces imposed sexual slavery on women and girls (Tanaka, 2003). Furthermore, subsequent occupation of U.S., British, and Australian forces permitted the continuation of that military enforced sexual slavery (Tanaka, 2003). More specifically, for children, the disruption and confusion created during war added to their vulnerability for exploitation (Brown & Butler, 2002).

In the middle of the 20th century, feminist voices began to gain momentum, offering a critique of patriarchal dominated narratives of morality, the control of disease, and blame (Brown & Barrett, 2002; Outshoorn, 2004). The application of theoretical perspectives such as critical race feminist theory to examine prostitution and sex trafficking helped to interrogate notions of choice and the romanticizing of sex work (Butler, 2016). A greater understanding of the victimization of organized crime has seen discourse transition from prostitution and extend to include forced marriage and commercial child sexual exploitation. However, the underlying criminality of these terms can still include slavery. Thus, it is important to mitigate any assertion of a child's agency and criminal responsibility while enslaved. There has been a growing realization of the public health responsibilities to prevent and respond to the negative and enduring impact of childhood sexual abuse and exploitation (Singh, Parsekar, & Nair, 2014).

Across the late 20th century, multiple global and national organizations emerged to assess the scope of the problem of child exploitation and promote the rights of the child. In 1989 there was the introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), with 54 articles detailing how governments should ensure that all children have access to their rights. Soon afterward, a leading children's rights organization, Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT), was founded, followed in 1999 by the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC). The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) work collaboratively with these organizations to further the importance of understanding and responding to the needs of those who experience CSEC.

Despite the progress made across the centuries, the 21st century continues to witness a rise in the number of people enslaved. The International Labor Organization (2017) estimates that between 2011 and 2016, 89 million people were enslaved, of whom 25% were children. Women and girls are overrepresented in the figures, with them accounting for 71% of the 40.3 million people enslaved in 2016 (ILO, 2017). There has been an expansion in the methods by which criminals perpetuate trafficking crimes in line with the development of digital technology and the Internet. That increased potential for (re)victimization requires globally agreed-on support for legal, financial, and policy collaboration. However, history tells us that the underpinning causes of child sexual abuse and exploitation are exacerbated by war, greed, and misogyny, each of which continues to thrive in the 21st century. It is unsurprising that despite the efforts across the centuries to combat sexual exploitation, in the 21st century, it remains a global and criminal industry estimated to be worth $150 billion (ILO, 2017).

Europe

Defining what is Europe, both in the number of countries that constitute this unique continent and in their varied amalgamations with different governance and bureaucratic structures, remains complex. The number of countries currently recognized as constituting the continent of Europe is dependent upon different organizational data. The United Nations recognizes 41 different countries and the World Health Organization (WHO, Europe Regional Office) list 53 different countries, not including Vatican City. Notably, some countries such as Turkey and the Russian Federation are transcontinental, spanning both Europe and Asia (Eurasia). Some European countries are well developed, with progressive wealth, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and France, while others have a poor gross domestic product (GDP), such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Kosovo (ECPAT International, 2014b; World Bank Group, 2018). Poverty exacerbates the fragility of societal peace and well-being; notable social and economic threats further increase the vulnerability of children (ECPAT International, 2014b). Additionally, being at war negates the state's willingness or ability to provide the infrastructure necessary to secure children's safety (ECPAT International, 2014b).

The different inclusions are important when considering the associated statistics for child sexual exploitation and subsequent preventative strategies. It is estimated that almost 18 million children have been subject to child sexual abuse and exploitation in Europe, with girls more than twice as likely to be victimized as boys (COE, 2018). The governance and policy across Europe to address CSEC is steered by the post-WWII reconciliation model of cooperation known as the Council of Europe (COE). The COE currently has 47 member states. An economic union between European countries developed adjacent to the COE, and expanded to include political, migration, and security matters. The subsequent European Union (EU) currently has 28 member states.

In 2008, The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings came into influence, monitored by a Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in human beings (aka, GRETA). To date, GRETA has met 36 times and produced multiple reports, including a thematic chapter on child trafficking (COE, 2018). One of the key features in response to CSEC is to collate statistical data and to monitor the number of victims (COE, 2018). To date, only 12 of the 47 COE states, including some of the poorest, have reported back to GRETA and have identified 4,361 children subjected to trafficking between 2012 and 2015. From those figures, children represent 43% of all identified human trafficking cases (COE, 2018), which could suggest that children, or adults trafficked with children, are more visible to protective agencies.

For children and young people entering into care, their initial health assessment fails to explore the incidence of child sexual exploitation (Williams, Stutchbury, Bateman, & Brown, 2017). Once a child is placed in state care, their vulnerability to abuse and trafficking remain, with a greater incidence than other children of being reported as missing from home to the police (Hutchings, Browne, Chou, & Wade, 2019).

There remain significant concerns about the response to victims, with an increase in the number of unaccompanied minors who go missing from reception units (COE, 2018). The younger age of exploited children arriving in Europe is also of increasing concern (COE, 2018). There is much to be worried about, such as reports from Bulgaria that sexually exploited boys are not referred to supportive and protective services (COE, 2018). It is unlikely that Bulgaria is an isolated example. GRETA has urged due care, and integral, holistic services are available to meet the needs of children who have been subject to exploitation (COE, 2018). It is important to note the impact of European policies that further dehumanize African migrants who wish to flee persecution, arguably limiting their right to global citizenship (Landau, 2019). These defensive policies serve to simultaneously impede illicit trafficking of children and diminish their hope of European refuge.

Positively, many countries have produced a range of awareness campaigns to support the prevention of exploitation (COE, 2018). That information and other data enable GRETA to offer insight and advice across European states to increase the effectiveness of their strategies. However, the absence of involvement from the majority of European states (35 of 47 countries) counters the development of a continent-wide strategy to track perpetrators of human trafficking and protect those whom they victimize. Helpfully, the European Union's European Commission (EC, 2018) has also collected data regarding human trafficking from its 28 member states since 2008. That research highlights that CSE victims are less likely to be found in traditional urban street settings and more often discovered in private residences and rural communities (EC, 2018). The greater invisibility from public view and the expansion of digital technology frustrate the ability of law enforcement to combat CSEC in Europe (ECPAT International, 2018).

Across time and place, economic, political, and warfare factors always underlie the vulnerabilities experienced by many people and can lead to increased vulnerabilities for children. These include children separated from their parents, although there is no reliable data on child migration or the number of children left behind in their home countries (ECPAT International, 2014a). However, at the turn of the 21st century, it was estimated that 100,000 children experienced separation from parents or other caregivers (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2008). Since that time, the EU experienced significant enlargement and a swell in migration. Concerns about the vulnerability to sexual exploitation increase for children from ethnic minority groups, particularly Roma children and those with disabilities (ECPAT International, 2014b). Additionally, the online exploitation of children, sharing abusive images and even facilitating young people sending indecent images of themselves and others, is of increasing concern in Europe and beyond (ECPAT International, 2014a).

United States

CSEC has been reported in all 50 states (UNICEF, 2019). It has been estimated that in the United States, there are 403,000 victims of modern-day slavery (Walk Free, 2018). Sadly, among many U.S. citizens, there is a common misconception that the majority of children and youth being trafficked in the United States are undocumented immigrants. However, in reality, trafficking within the United States is happening largely to its citizens (UNICEF, 2019) with 84% of sex trafficking victims in the United States being U.S. citizens (Kraemer, 2013). The term Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) has been used to define this U.S. population of CSEC (Cecchet & Thorburn, 2014). In other U.S. literature, the term survival sex has been used to denote youth (primarily homeless) who trade sexual acts for food, shelter, clothing, money, or drugs (Sapiro, Johnson, Postmus, & Simmel, 2016). Therefore, the terms CSEC, DMST, and youth survival sex are really speaking about the same population of children and youth in the United States. CSEC in the United States is found in escort services, residences, hotels, street prostitution, pornography (online and print), massage parlors, strip clubs, and truck stops (Polaris, 2019; Truckers Against Trafficking, 2019).

Exploiters/traffickers of CSEC in the United States often target children and youth who are the most vulnerable, have the fewest social supports, and lack self-esteem. In the United States, frequently, exploiters/traffickers peruse malls, arcades, parks, playgrounds, online social media, and other venues where children and youth congregate to look for disenfranchised children and youth (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2019). A history of sexual abuse and or physical abuse, homelessness, parental conflict, parents' unwillingness to accept a child's or youth's sexual orientation or identity, substance abuse, being a victim of bullying, running away from home, and being in foster care all increase the child or youth's vulnerability to trafficking (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2019; Polaris, 2019, UNICEF, 2019; Walk Free, 2018).

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was enacted in the United States in 2000 (Pub. L. No. 106-386). Under the TVPA, individuals under the age of 18 years who were involved in trading/selling sex of any kind or for any reason are identified and labeled as victims of a crime (Pub. L. No. 106-386, 2000). This policy removed the burden from law enforcement agencies to prove that there was force, fraud, or coercion (Pub. L. No. 106-386, 2000). However, to date, Safe Harbor Laws, which disallow the prosecution of youth for prostitution or survival sex, have not been passed in all states (Polaris, 2015). Thus, many children and youth in the United States who are victims of CSEC are still prosecuted. Additionally, the U.S. State Department publishes the TIP (Trafficking in Persons) Report yearly to evaluate the world's progress in ending human trafficking (U.S. Department of State, 2020). However, the TIP has received criticism that it evaluates countries who are friends of the United States more favorably than those who are not.

Latin America

Latin America consists of 20 countries in North America, Central America, and South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela (World Population Review, 2019). Latin America is a region of destination, origin, and transit of men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking (ECPAT International, 2014c; Seelke, 2016).

In particular, it is estimated that over one million children work as domestic servants in Latin America (Seelke, 2016). Holiday resort cities throughout Latin America have high rates of children being trafficked for sex tourism (ECPAT International, 2014b; Seelke, 2016). Other children in Latin America are trafficked for illegal adoption, child soldiers, forced begging, and work in the agricultural or mining industries (Laser-Maira et al., 2016, 2018; Seelke, 2016).

It is estimated that over two million Latin American children are victims of CSEC (ECPAT, 2014b). Children of this region who are most vulnerable to CSEC are more frequently street or orphaned children, are indigenous or Afro-Latino, live in poverty, have infrequent school attendance, have experienced physical or sexual abuse, have experienced substance abuse addiction, or are involved with youth gangs (ECPAT, 2014b; Laser-Maira et al., 2016, 2018; Seelke, 2016). These victims are often enticed by traffickers through false offers of work, false "padrinos" (pretending to be a distant relative of a family to obtain the victim), and "coyotes" (human smugglers) (Laser-Maira & Campos, 2018; Laser-Maira et al., 2016, 2018).

Although the countries of Latin America have well-considered National Plans of Action to confront CSEC, many countries contend with corrupt law enforcement, gang or organized criminal networks' involvement in CSEC, and poor application and enforcement of the laws by legislators and law enforcement (ECPAT, 2014b; Laser-Maira et al., 2018). There are some other factors that further erode Latin American law enforcement's ability to mount a credible attack on CSEC: borders between countries are porous, there is a high prevalence of crime and violence in many urban centers, there is political instability and unrest in many countries, and there is a high mobility of youth migration to urban centers (ECPAT, 2014b; Laser-Maira et al., 2018). Additionally, some countries still persist in traditional cultural norms and practices that tolerate violence against women and children, allowing for greater victimization and fewer supports created (ECPAT, 2014b). However, there are many nonprofit organizations that work to educate the public to know the signs of human trafficking and how to intervene (Capital Humano y Social [CHS], 2019).

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) includes 46 countries, several of which are considered as among the world's poorest and least developed (Hawke & Raphael, 2016). In this region, as recently as the early 2010s, knowledge about CSEC was not only limited but also dispersed (Ennew, 2008; Hounmenou, 2018). Yet, the growing research being conducted on the problem in the region recently provides a distinctive understanding of some aspects of CSEC often highlighted in the mainstream literature. Key aspects of CSEC in SSA include factors of vulnerabilities, origin of victims, boy victimization, intermediaries in CSEC, increase of child sex tourism, and health and violence issues in CSEC.

CSEC in SSA has, to varying extents, similarities with its occurrences in Europe and the United States. For instance, research shows that the majority of children in situations of CSEC in any region are victims of domestic trafficking, that is, they are citizens of the countries where they are exploited (Curtis, Terry, Dank, Dombrowski, & Khan, 2008; ECPAT International, 2014c; Hounmenou & Her, 2018). It was found that 60–90% of the child victims of CSEC in West Africa were natives (Hounmenou & Her, 2018). While poverty is found to be a major factor in the vulnerability of children to CSEC at the global level, it is an underlying cause of the problem in SSA (Bantebya, Ochen, Pereznieto, & Walker, 2014; Crispin & Mann, 2016; ECPAT International, 2014c; M'jid, 2008). Many child victims in SSA will engage in the sex trade not only for survival, but also to provide economic assistance for family dependents (ECPAT International, 2014c; Hounmenou, 2019). For instance, 19% of 261 child victims surveyed in Benin, 39% of 243 child victims surveyed in Burkina Faso, and 40% of the 205 child victims in Niger provided economic support to one to five family dependents (Hounmenou, 2019). Contrary to other countries discussed, the majority of the victims of CSEC in SSA were still living with their families (52% in Benin, and 69% in Niger; Hounmenou, 2019). Not only does the latter finding indicate family poverty, but also family childcare disengagement, or involvement in CSEC as intermediaries (Crispin & Mann, 2016). In fact, while the mainstream literature from the Global North indicates an overwhelming presence of pimps/traffickers in CSEC (Huber, 2014; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002), studies conducted in SSA show limited presence of pimps/traffickers (Hawke & Raphael, 2016; Hounmenou, 2018; Hounmenou & Her, 2018). In fact, many child victims of CSEC in SSA reside with their families or family acquaintances, primarily for schooling, training, or servant work, with the sex trade being a secondary occupation.

Most CSEC victims in SSA show agency in sexual transactions. For instance, only 48 of 261 child victims of CSEC (17%) in Benin and 8% in Niger reported having pimps/traffickers (Hounmenou, 2019). Likewise, Uganda Youth Development Link (2011) found that just 17% of the 529 child victims of CSEC interviewed in Uganda worked with pimps/traffickers. The limited presence of pimps/traffickers in CSEC in SSA could be related to the fact that many victims lived in their social communities, with their families, and were not runaway, throwaway, or homeless children, contrary to what the literature indicates about children in the Global North. Limited pimping in CSEC can also explain very limited literature about mental health issues such as CSEC-related trauma in the region. Distinctly different from the Global North, child victims of CSEC interviewed in three countries in West Africa, Benin, Niger, and Burkina Faso were not found to need mental health care (N = 709; Hounmenou, 2018).

While pimping/trafficking may not be a grave concern of CSEC in SSA, gender-based violence occurring through cultural practices continues to harm children in the region. Religious and cultural practices in the region, which have been used to disguise or facilitate CSEC in SSA, include child marriage, female genital mutilation, and placement of female children with people in urban areas for domestic servitude (ECPAT International, 2014c). Child marriage accounted for 14% of the adverse childhood events before CSEC among child victims surveyed in Benin, and 16% among

surveyed victims in Niger (Hounmenou, 2019). There is also the shared false belief that having sex with children could prevent or cure HIV/AIDS (Busza, Mtetwa, Chirawu, & Cowan, 2014; Ennew, 2008; Hounmenou, 2016). That belief, among other reasons, could explain a high demand for sex with children in the region (Ennew, 2008).

One particular form of CSEC, not as prevalent in countries such as the United States but rampant in Latin America and Africa, is child sex tourism, also known as sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (Greijer & Doek, 2016). Recent studies in Gambia, Ghana, and Senegal (West Africa); South Africa, Zambia, and Madagascar (Southern Africa); and Kenya (East Africa) found child sex tourism to be a significant and growing challenge in most African countries (Crispin & Mann, 2016; ECPAT Netherlands, 2014; Hawke & Raphael, 2016). Nontraditional areas in which children are becoming more and more vulnerable in many African countries include the Internet and mobile technology, which have become very accessible in SSA (Hawke & Raphael, 2016). Another important finding from the research on child sex tourism in SSA is related to concepts of agency and the motivations of children and youth. SSA girls were more willing to engage in commercial sex with tourists because foreigners were willing to pay large sums of money and were considered less abusive than their African clients (ECPAT Netherlands, 2014). Additionally, these girls believed that if they established a relationship with these foreigners, it might lead to marriage and a journey abroad (ECPAT Netherlands, 2014).

Although there are anecdotal stories of boys involved in child sex tourism, there is scant empirical research on the commercial sexual exploitation of boys in SSA (Adjei & Saewyc, 2017; ECPAT International, 2014c; ECPAT Netherlands, 2014; Hounmenou, 2017; RAPCAN, 2011; Uganda Youth Development Link, 2011). Uganda Youth Development Link (2011) explored an increasing trend of boys engaging in the sex trade with older and wealthier women, locally known as “sugar mummies” in Uganda. The limited CSEC research in SSA continues to view boys more as exploiters than as exploited (Adjei & Saewyc, 2017). However, it was found that the odds of trading sex were significantly more elevated for previously traumatized boys than for their female counterparts (Adjei & Saewyc, 2017). Thus, more research needs to be conducted to understand the depth and breadth of CSEC with boys.

Middle East

The region of the world known as the Middle East includes 13 countries: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (ILO, 2019b). The greater Middle East regions also include Northern Africa and are referred to by the acronym MENA (ECPAT, 2016b). The human trafficking–related literature in countries in this region is often written in native languages, which creates further barriers to what is already a paucity of research on the occurrence of CSEC and its regional manifestations within this part of the world. Thus, non-native researchers have to rely on translation, which is frequently not available and thereby limits global understanding.

Additionally, there are significant geopolitical and humanitarian challenges in the Middle East that limit the collation and dissemination of knowledge about children’s experience of CSEC (ECPAT International, 2016b). The Syrian conflict alone has led to over 2.3 million child refugees (Bartels et al., 2018). The ILO (2019b) identifies significant concerns regarding exploitation for all children, for labor, child soldiers, and a particular vulnerability for girls being subjected to forced marriage and sexual abuse and trafficking. Often families find themselves compelled to permit older men to marry their daughters to diminish other risks from assault, stigmatization, and poverty (Bartels et al., 2018; McAlpine, Hossain, & Zimmerman, 2016. The ILO notes sexual exploitation being part of a

“temporary marriage” phenomenon (ILO, 2019b, p. 74), with ever-widening age gaps between Jordanian men and Syrian girls (McAlpine et al., 2016). The ILO (2019b) reports that ISIS perpetrates the CSEC of girls across widespread regions of Iraq and Syria.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that children can be subjected to multiple forms of exploitation. McAlpine et al. (2016) note that 22–36% of female combatants report sexual exploitation, as do a wide-ranging 5–57% of male child soldiers (McAlpine et al., 2016). There remains a difference between the number of identified child victims and the estimated scale of exploitation. Research undertaken in Israel identified 700 children as victims of mainly domestic CSEC but suggests thousands of child victims have not been identified (Peled & Lugasi, 2015).

Asia

There are 36 countries in Asia comprising approximately 4 billion people (World Atlas, 2019b). It is estimated that two thirds of all human trafficking victims (25 million victims) live in Asia (Caballero-Anthony, 2018; Walk Free, 2018). It is estimated that one third of these 25 million trafficking victims are children (Caballero-Anthony, 2018). In the entire world, North Korea has the largest percentage of its population (4.37%) in modern-day slavery, and China has an estimated 3,888,400 in slavery (Walk Free, 2018). China, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand are destination countries for trafficking victims from surrounding areas in Asia (Caballero-Anthony, 2018). All types of human trafficking are present in Asia: forced labor, domestic servitude, child soldiers, forced marriage, and CSEC (Walk Free, 2018). In China, the legacy of the one-child policy has created trafficking of women and girls to be brides in China (Barton, 2014; Caballero-Anthony, 2018; Cuddy & Loughlin, 2016; Gannon, 2019). In Japan, Enjo Kousai (school girl/boy prostitution) has been found to involve one out of 10 males and one out of 25 females (Laser-Maira, 2018).

Southeast Asia, formally known as Indochina, consisting of Singapore, Philippines, East Timor, Brunei, Cocos Islands, Christmas Island, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, West Malaysia, and Vietnam (World Atlas, 2019b), is one of the most affected regions worldwide for child prostitution and child sex tourism, two major of forms of CSEC (Akullo, 2016; Cotter, 2009; Curley, 2014; ECPAT International, 2016a; UNICEF, 2009). Child prostitution is rampant in Thailand and the Philippines (Cotter, 2009; Montgomery, 2007; Rittenhouse, 2015; Urada, Silverman, Cordisco, & Morisky, 2014). Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines are some of the most popular destinations for sex tourism in the world, where tourists will choose a man, woman, girl, or boy to abuse for hours or days (Grant, 2017; UNICEF, 2013). It is estimated that more than 130 million girls in Southeast Asia will have entered into forced marriages by 2030 (UN Population Fund, 2016).

CSEC in Southeast Asia shares many aspects with other regions in the Global South, especially Africa and Latin America. The risk factors identified for CSEC in Southeast Asia were intersecting vulnerabilities such as poverty, inequality, migration, low levels of education, and violence against women and children (ECPAT International, 2014d, 2014e, 2016;; Rafferty, 2007; UNICEF, 2011). Similar to Latin America, Asia has very porous borders with high levels of crime in many urban centers and organized crime (Caballero-Anthony, 2018; Walk Free, 2018). Unique to Southeast Asia, the effects of climate change have created an increase in typhoons, which in turn increases numbers of displaced people, including unaccompanied minors and orphans who are being trafficked (Caballero-Anthony, 2018; Walk Free, 2018). Additionally, conflict in Myanmar and the southern Philippines has also increased trafficking in the region (Caballero-Anthony, 2018).

Some of the countries in the world taking the least action to combat human trafficking are also in Asia: North Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea (Walk Free, 2018). The prevalence

of child sex tourism in countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines points to a push factor and high demand for sex with minors (Curley, 2014; Davy, 2017; ECPAT International, 2016). Lack of enforcement of anti-trafficking laws in countries like Thailand results in the trafficking of children from rural areas to cities for the purpose of sexual exploitation through sex tourism. However, the Philippines has been lauded for its stance combating human trafficking (Walk Free, 2018). In 2015, Southeast Asia adopted the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which condemned the practice (ASEAN, 2015). Similar to sub-Saharan Africa, limited consideration is given to CSEC-related health and mental health issues in Southeast Asia (Kiss et al., 2015). In fact, health care services for CSEC victims in the countries of Asia were criticized for their lack of trauma-informed care and the limited length of time of care (Urada et al., 2014). Child protection professionals were often not often part of assistance programs for CSEC victims in Asia (Rittenhouse, 2015), therefore creating little support for victims.

Australia

Australia is a destination country for people being trafficked from Asia, primarily Thailand, Korea, Philippines, and Malaysia (Australian Federal Police, 2019). Human trafficking in Australia includes servitude, slavery, forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage, and organ harvesting (Australian Federal Police, 2019). At the start of the 21st century, transnational trafficking of children for the purpose of sexual exploitation into Australia was rarely identified (Grant, David, & Grabosky, 2001). However, an increased number of adults and children are being recognized as victims (Davy, 2017b). Although the numbers are still relatively low (469 people between 2004 and 2014), it is common for such figures to be an underrepresentation (Davy, 2017b). One of the challenges of research into human trafficking in Australia is the lack of reporting of the methodology that estimates the number of potential figures, alongside the difficulty of investigating international organized crime (Putt, 2007). It has been argued that the underreporting of sexual slavery in Australia is due to the country's hostile migration policies (Leishman, 2007). The resulting inhibition to report can also mean that children who were trafficked became adults before the authorities were aware of their presence (Leishman, 2007).

More specifically, in relation to CSEC in Australia, the limited research available reflects similar patterns of vulnerability across the globe, with children in the care of the state being most vulnerable to child sexual exploitation (McKibbin, 2017). Surprisingly, the geographical isolation of Australia does not protect its children from online CSEC, which is an increasing threat (Hillman, Hooper, & Choo, 2014). In Australia, between 2014 and 2015, there were more than 5,000 investigations of people in possession of online child abuse material (Hillman et al., 2014). Online CSEC offenders investigated by the Australian Federal Police had an average of 1,000 items of CSEC material, with 10% of their sample having more than 10,000 items (Krone & Smith, 2017). The majority of those offenders did not have a previous criminal record, adding to the difficulties of the criminal justice system to identify potential offenders (Krone & Smith, 2017). It is argued that Australia should adopt a public health approach to CSEC, which would place a greater focus on meeting the needs of those victimized (George, McNaughton, & Tsourtos, 2017). Australia does have a well stated criminal code, Division 270 and 271 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act of 1995, that stipulates the penalties associated with trafficking, including 12 years in prison for trafficking of persons, 25 years in prison for trafficking of children, 12 years in prison for domestic trafficking, and 12 months for debt bondage (Australian Federal Police, 2019). It is one of the few countries that openly publish their penalties for human trafficking as a deterrent (Australian Federal Police, 2019).

Race, Inequality, Power, Culture, and Globalization in CSEC

Race has historically justified or reinforced issues of inequality, privileges, and power in our society. Human trafficking is not immune from racialization in countries with racial minorities such as the United States. In her seminal (2015) article, "The Racial Roots of Human Trafficking," Cheryl Nelson Butler (2015) argued that "Race intersects with other forms of subordination . . . to push people of color disproportionately into prostitution and keep them trapped in the commercial sex industry. Its intersectional oppression is fueled by the persistence of myths about minority teen sexuality" (p. 1468). African American children are often overrepresented in almost every statistic on CSEC in the United States (Bell, 2015; Butler, 2015; Young, Johnson, Bidorini, & Williamson, 2019). Native Americans perceive a strong connection between colonization and a tireless targeting of native people for prostitution (Butler, 2015). Structural racism drives women of color to engage in prostitution (Butler, 2015). African American children are overwhelmingly represented in both children at risk and victims of CSEC (Butler, 2015).

Inequality creates a power imbalance between races. Patriarchal society creates inequality between genders. That inequality can be felt in the way girls and women are viewed and treated as sexual commodities in almost every region, especially in Africa (ECPAT International, 2014c). Girls are often seen as commodities, to be sold, traded, or given away, used to settle debts or disputes or to gain access to land or chieftaincies (ECPAT International, 2014c). For instance, in some countries in Africa, child marriage gives men full control over girls' life for a nominal cost (Hawke & Raphael, 2016). Some child brides in Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Niger are sold by their husbands into the sex trade, whereas those who run away from abusive child marriages often are pulled into prostitution because of rejection by their families and their communities (Hawke & Raphael, 2016). In the United States, perceptions of power and gender inequality can be noticed in the fact that girls and women are often pimped while boys and men in the sex trade are perceived to have agency in their sexual transactions (Hounmenou, 2019).

For a long time, research that focuses on sexually exploited boys has been very limited because a female gender bias often overlooks male vulnerability to CSEC (Hounmenou, 2017; Mitchell, et al., 2017). In fact, studies about CSEC most often focus on girls and fail to recognize the experiences of sexually exploited boys (Mitchell et al., 2017). There is a shared assumption that only girls and women are commercially sexually exploited, and only boys and men buy sex (Chin, 2014; Hounmenou, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2017). Data on victims of CSEC has rarely been disaggregated based on gender or sex, which makes it difficult to determine whether boys' sexual exploitation experiences differ from those of girls.

Yet, the data currently available suggests that a substantial proportion of victims of CSEC are boys (Chin, 2014; Curtis et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 2017; Swaner, Labriola, Rempel, Walker, & Spadafore, 2016). The Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) found that the proportion of boy victims of sexual exploitation has taken a gradual upward trend (CTDC, n.d.). While most victims of CSEC are girls and women trafficked into prostitution, there is a higher proportion of male victims among people who are trafficked for pornography and private sexual services (CTDC, n.d.). The CTDC data showed that just over half (53%) of the male victims trafficked into sexual exploitation were children. Earlier, Curtis et al. (2008) found that boys composed about 50% of sexually exploited children in a study done in New York City. Willis, Robert, and Friedman (2013) found that boys and young men are seldom identified or rescued as CSEC victims but are arrested more for petty crimes such as shoplifting.

Globalization has impacted the different forms of CSEC. Research shows the connection between CSEC and child migration inside and outside their countries (Hounmenou, 2019; Laser-Maira et al., 2016). High demands for sex with children, coupled with an increase in child pornography

worldwide, have led to high-volume online sex, which has moved onto the Dark Web today (Westlake, 2019). Likewise, advances in the Internet and mobile technology systems increase children's vulnerability to child sex tourism (Crispin & Mann, 2016).

Societal Responses

The first World Congress against commercial sexual child exploitation occurred in 1996. A second World Congress was convened in 2001, after which it was decided to remove the term "commercial" from CSEC; it was not present in the third World Congress held in 2008 (ECPAT, 2016). The use of language and terminology is important for those who are victimized, and for the agencies that aim to protect them and work across disciplines and geographical regions. However, ECPAT (2016) notes that there is no internationally recognized legal terminology for the trafficking of children for the purpose of sexual exploitation. As global alliances seek to find ways to combat CSEC, with the advancement of digital technology and the Internet, the capacity for children to be sexually exploited across the world becomes instantaneously possible.

At the forefront of the measures to combat International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE), Interpol has developed a database to support investigators in 50 countries (Interpol, 2018). That database has more than 1.5million images, but only 19,400 victims have been identified (Interpol, 2018). For its purposes, Interpol distinguishes between definitions of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and child sexual exploitation material (CSEM). The former is a suggested alternative to "child pornography"; therefore, images that depict sexual acts or genitalia and CSEM include CSAM and any other sexualized material that includes children (Interpol, 2018, p. viii).

To better understand the amount of CSEC that is occurring and to better understand those involved in CSEC (both victims and offenders), governments are being asked to create national databases, which could be linked to one another to track nationally and globally victims and offenders (ECPAT, 2018). Though this is in its infancy, this will help better understand and combat CSEC. There has also been an emphasis to support legislation worldwide on the minimum age of marriage, and the free and full consent to marriage by all parties (ECPAT, 2015). Along with greater legal protections, there has been importance placed on educating girls to defer marriage and educating them on reproductive health (ECPAT, 2015).

Some countries have tried to combat CSEC by legalizing prostitution of adults (Cho, Dreher, & Neumayer, 2013). However, in a 150-country survey, it was found that legal prostitution also increased the incidence of in-country human trafficking (Cho et al., 2013). As an alternative, Partial Decriminalization, also known as the Equality Model, or the Nordic Model, where the purchase of sex is criminalized and sex buyers are prosecuted, has been found to have merit (My Life My Choice, 2019; Scandinavian Human Rights Lawyers, 2015). In 1999, Sweden became the first country to legislate the Nordic Model and has since experienced over a 50% decrease in demand for prostitution and a shift in social attitudes that supports the continued ban on prostitution (Scandinavian Human Rights Lawyers, 2015). Norway, Iceland, Canada, and France have also followed with legislation (Berlin & Spagnolo, 2019). It is unclear how the Nordic Model would work in a less developed country.

Conclusion

CSEC is present in every region of the world, creating millions of victims worldwide. These victims share a common experience of exploitation, humiliation, and abuse. Though CSEC has been present for millennia, there is an increasing global consensus and understanding that CSEC is wrong and

should end. Greater global legislation, information sharing, prevention and awareness policies, and prosecution of CSEC will help eradicate CSEC.

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