

ABSTRACT

HISTORICAL CONSEQUENCES: THE LEGACY OF SEXISM AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND THEIR LINK TO CONTEMPORARY SEX TRAFFICKING IN RUSSIA

Sex trafficking is a serious and devastating threat to Russian women today. After the fall of socialist systems and the country's subsequent transition into the global economy, the combination of economic instability, gender discrimination, and social obligation forced many women to look for employment in the west, rendering them vulnerable to the sophisticated, exploitive, and violent organized criminal operations that commoditize their bodies and export them into the sex trade. However, Russian women's vulnerability is not without its historical bases: political, social, and cultural sexist ideology and discrimination have facilitated this latest influx of former Soviet women into today's global sex trafficking market. In this work, I not only discuss the devastating impact the sex trade has had upon Russian women, but also investigate particular historical circumstances that contribute to its success and make it extremely difficult for modern women's organizations to develop programs for prevention and assistance.

Shawna Herzog
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