

A Model for Assessing the Risk of Human Trafficking on a Local Level

Amanda Colegrove

Dr. Matt Foulkes, Thesis Advisor

Abstract

Human trafficking is a human rights violation that is difficult to quantify. Models for estimating the number of victims of trafficking presented by previous researchers depend on inconsistent, poor quality data. As an intermediate step to help current efforts by nonprofits to combat human trafficking, this project presents a model that is not dependent on quantitative data specific to human trafficking, but rather profiles the risk of human trafficking at the local level through causative factors. Businesses, indicated by the literature, were weighted based on the presence of characteristics that increase the likelihood of trafficking in persons. The mean risk was calculated by census tract to reveal the multiplicity of risk levels in both rural and urban settings. Results indicate that labor trafficking may be a more diffuse problem in Missouri than sex trafficking. Additionally, spatial patterns of risk remained largely the same regardless of adjustments made to the model.