

1-1-2002

## Increased Demand Resulting in the Flourishing Recruitment and Trafficking of Women and Girls: Related Child Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Women

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### Recommended Citation

Norma Hotaling and Leslie Levitas-Martin, *Increased Demand Resulting in the Flourishing Recruitment and Trafficking of Women and Girls: Related Child Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Women*, 13 *Hastings Women's L. R.* 117 (2002).  
Available at: <http://repository.uchastings.edu/hwlj/vol13/iss1/8>

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The personal knowledge and experience many of the staff possess enables them to effectively provide support and engender trust without re-traumatizing even the most fragile of clients. Through advocacy, education programs, and direct services, SAGE has raised public awareness concerning the sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls, as well as many other related issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder and the need for a comprehensive range of services for this traditionally neglected population.<sup>2</sup>

The direct service programs offered by SAGE often focus on the most exploited victims who are, therefore, the highest users of the medical, social, mental health, and criminal justice systems. Since 1993, as a result of SAGE's interventions, hundreds of women and girls have received assistance in either exiting the criminal justice system, escaping prostitution, recovering from abuse, and acquiring appropriate services such as medical and mental health care, substance abuse treatment, housing, legal immigration status, case management, and educational and vocational training.<sup>3</sup>

SAGE succeeds through a unique collaboration between private and public agencies, such as the San Francisco Sheriff's Department and the Department of Public Health, among others. This collaboration has shifted the local government's approach to prostitution, aided women and girls in either exiting the criminal justice system permanently, escaping prostitution and trafficking, or working more safely in the sex industry. SAGE offers a dynamic departure from the traditional practice of revolving door arrests and recidivism among prostitutes in a system that has traditionally provided little or no services for women and girls. Criminalization of these individuals does not address the root causes, and thereby contributes to continuing sexual exploitation and violence, and enormous costs to the criminal justice, public health, and social service systems.

This essay examines the relationship between the supply and demand of women and girls in the sex industry as well as the industry's relationship with child sexual abuse and violence. It explores the idea that the expectation of services by customers of adult and child prostitutes is one of the primary contributing factors to this complex social phenomenon.

## II. RECRUITMENT: SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The education and advocacy work done by SAGE draws attention to the relationship between the demand for sexual services provided by women and girls and their subsequent presence in the sex industry to meet those demands. Recruitment into prostitution flourishes in proportion to an increased demand, and the demand for trafficked women and girls

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2. *Id.*

3. Josh Richman, *Former Prostitutes Get SAGE Advice*, OAKLAND TRIB., April 12, 1999, at News-1.

increases due to a variety and combination of factors including:

- accessibility to and promotion of the multi-billion dollar sex industry;<sup>4</sup>
- relaxed social norms concerning the sex industry;
- profitability for individuals, organized groups, and governments (estimated to be between seven and twelve billion dollars annually);<sup>5</sup>
- increased tourism and increased military personnel stationed in Europe, Asia and Latin America;
- non-existent, weak, or unenforced legal interventions combating trafficking;
- criminal justice systems that focus on arresting and prosecuting women and girls involved in prostitution but not their male customers;
- educational systems that lack interventions promoting equality between girls and boys/men and women and decrease misogyny;
- learned exploitation and violence;
- lack of adequate sex education in schools;
- collusion with and among exploiters.

On a national and international level, trafficking is characterized by a cycle of supply and demand typical of any commodity. Reports from the 1994 International Conference on Traffic in Persons concluded that “[t]raffic in women is a manifestation of violence against women,” and that “the element that defines traffic is force . . . and not the nature of labour to be performed . . .”<sup>6</sup>

An estimated thirty million women and girls have been sold world wide since the mid-1970s,<sup>7</sup> including naïve, young girls recruited via brutal and cunning approaches from schools, streets and shopping malls across the United States and Canada and delivered to major cities to fill the needs of an unwavering consumer base. This has resulted in an estimated hundreds of thousands of underage prostitutes in the U.S. alone.<sup>8</sup>

In other parts of the world, an increase in prostitution, sexual tourism

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4. This includes but is not limited to strip clubs, escort services, massage parlors, pornography, brothels, street prostitution, and the recently burgeoning area of online sex trade.

5. Donna M. Hughes, *The Natasha Trade: The Transnational Shadow Market of Trafficking in Women*, 53 J. OF INT’L AFFAIRS, 625, 625 (2000) (quoting *UN Official Warns of Rise of New Slaves of Prostitutes*, XINHUA NEWS AGENCY, Sept. 21, 1999, available at LEXIS, News Library, Xinhua General News Service).

6. *Conference on Traffic in Persons*, available at <http://www.bayswan.org/Utrecht.html> (last visited Mar. 27, 2002).

7. Margot Hornblower Paris, *The Skin Trade*, TIME, June 21, 1993, at 44, 46.

8. *Rescuing Child Prostitutes in America*, MARIE CLAIRE, June 1999, at 64.

and trafficking has taken place since the early 1980s.<sup>9</sup> Traffickers smuggle, kidnap, rape, trick, and coerce poor and defenseless Asian, South and Central American, and Russian women and girls into the highly invisible and mobile sex trade. In 1994, there were an estimated 800,000 child prostitutes in Thailand, 250,000 in Brazil and 60,000 in the Philippines.<sup>10</sup> In India, "an estimated 2.3 million women are prostitutes and a quarter of them are minors, many of whom are sold by their parents, lured away with fake job offers and marriage proposals or simply kidnapped."<sup>11</sup>

While recruitment techniques vary, they frequently target "emotionally vulnerable and/or economically desperate females, fostering trust and dependency by feigning love or friendship and or using overt acts of physical and sexual abuse."<sup>12</sup> The response to these techniques is often complicated by what a prostitute may come to perceive as "a unique and interdependent alliance where her pimp is an integral part of her social network and often her security system."<sup>13</sup>

Prostitution exposes the fragility of the human mind. Perpetrators often manipulate and mold their victims to serve their purposes. Almost universally when violence and drugs are involved, women are targeted, blamed, and punished by social, mental health, medical, and criminal justice systems.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, their customers tend to be viewed as acceptable or even glorified. Traditionally, as Susan Edwards states, "[t]he might of the law has been directed against female street prostitutes, rather than . . . against the client or controller."<sup>15</sup>

### III. ADDRESSING THE DEMAND: FOPP

San Francisco is the first jurisdiction ever to focus its law enforcement efforts on the demand side of prostitution. The First Offender Prostitution Program ("FOPP"),<sup>16</sup> which was co-founded in 1995 by SAGE along with the San Francisco Police Department and the San Francisco District

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9. Maggie O'Neil, *Prostitute Women Now*, in RETHINKING PROSTITUTION: PURCHASING SEX IN THE 1990S, 3, 16 (Scrambler and Scrambler, eds., 1997).

10. Judith Mirkinson, *Red Light, Green Light: The Global Trafficking of Women*, available at [www.captivedaughters.org/Information/Generalinfo/mirkinson\\_Sep\\_13\\_1994.htm](http://www.captivedaughters.org/Information/Generalinfo/mirkinson_Sep_13_1994.htm).

11. Paul Watson, *Ex-Hooker Describes Sex Trade Tragedy*, TORONTO STAR, Sept. 5, 1995, at A14.

12. Kathleen Berry, *The Underground Economic System of Pimping*, J. OF INT'L AFFAIRS (1981).

13. Jean Faugier & Mary Sergeant, *Boyfriends, 'Pimps' and Clients*, in RETHINKING PROSTITUTION: PURCHASING SEX IN THE 1990S, 121,123 (Scrambler and Scrambler, eds., 1997).

14. Norma Hotaling, *Women, Violence and Drug Use*, THE S.F. EXAMINER, Dec. 29, 1994, at A19.

15. Edwards, Susan, *The Legal Regulation of Prostitution: A Human Rights Issue*, in RETHINKING PROSTITUTION: PURCHASING SEX IN THE 1990S, 57,60 (Scrambler and Scrambler, eds., 1997).

16. FOPP is also referred to as "The John School."

Attorney's Office, has diverted thousands of customers<sup>17</sup> of prostitutes from the court system to an educational and rehabilitation experience in lieu of criminal prosecution. A \$500 fee collected from these men, the customers, and the completion of a daylong class wipes a first arrest off the books<sup>18</sup> and goes to fund services, including help with domestic violence, substance abuse and a variety of health issues such as HIV, Hepatitis C and post traumatic stress disorder, designed to assist women and girls engaged in or trying to escape from prostitution and sexual exploitation.<sup>19</sup> Through this program, efforts are ongoing to gather data on customers in order to increase efficacy. Little research in this area existed prior to the design and implementation of FOPP.

Who creates the demand? Who is buying women, girls and boys? The demand is comprised of men of all colors, races, and cultural, educational and socio-economic backgrounds. They are our husbands, sons and brothers, our supervisors, CEO's and CFO's, and our local, state, and federal politicians. FOPP undercover vice "have arrested secret service agents, prominent doctors, leaders of business and industry along with the unemployed and blue collar working stiff's."<sup>20</sup> These individuals are predominately men<sup>21</sup> who learned or were socialized to think that they have a right to sexual services in a way that results in ignorance regarding the development of relationships based on equality, truth, intimacy and commitment. They have made a decision, consciously or unconsciously, to cross the line into prostitution. Unconsciously, perhaps, because they are the target of a multi-billion dollar sex industry and a gender-biased socialization that teaches them to "acquiesce in [and support, defend, and cling to] their own set of social roles, and a code of honor that defines and obligates these roles."<sup>22</sup>

Well-intentioned researchers, many of whom are feminists, began conducting research on prostitution in the early 1980s. The studies were designed to show that women's vaginas either did or did not carry and spread sexually transmitted diseases ("STDs") and HIV. This research aimed to destigmatize women involved in prostitution and protect men and boys. A recent search did not uncover a single article, among the thousands that exist on the topic of prostitution, that addressed the risky sexual practices of customers of prostitutes, including condom use or the

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17. Customers are also referred to as "johns" or "tricks."

18. Richman, *supra* note 2.

19. Carla Marinucci, *International Praise for S.F. 'School for Johns'*, S.F. EXAMINER, Nov. 15, 1995, at A2.

20. Scott Burnside, *Johns Are Going to Be Taught a Lesson*, TORONTO SUN, Feb. 4, 1996, at 16.

21. While research shows a small number of women as consumers of prostitutes' services, this paper focuses on male customers who have had instilled in them a belief system that supports male role violence.

22. JAMES GILLIGAN, M.D., *VIOLENCE: OUR DEADLY EPIDEMIC AND ITS CAUSES* 230 (1996).

prevalence of disease and transmission among this group.

Research gathered from FOPP and interviews conducted with prostitutes demonstrates that thirty to fifty percent of customers of prostitutes do not want to use condoms with their partners or prostitutes.<sup>23</sup> In fact, customers "will often pay an extra \$50 or \$100 for sex without protection."<sup>24</sup> Most of the men in the FOPP program are high sexual risk takers, meaning that they have between five and ten sexual partners per year, which makes them very vulnerable to having and spreading diseases. The majority of men in the program are very uninformed and uneducated concerning disease.<sup>25</sup> In fact, their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs concerning STDs and HIV match those of individuals who are entering the public health system for the treatment of STDs.<sup>26</sup>

With its unique emphasis on addressing the demand while encouraging safety for both working prostitutes and customers, FOPP has both a qualitative and quantitative impact which is demonstrated by the fact that "of the 2,200 men who have taken the all-day class in the last four years , only 18 have been rearrested as johns."<sup>27</sup>

#### IV. THE LINK BETWEEN THE USE OF ADULT PROSTITUTES AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

People who engage the services of prostitutes bring with them very complex emotional, psychological, sexual, and practical needs as indicated by questionnaires filled out by FOPP participants. The questionnaires list some of the reasons given for engaging the services of prostitutes: there is no commitment; they do not get nagged afterward; it fits into their schedule; the sense of adventure; or because there is no emotional attachment.<sup>28</sup>

In some cases, customers attempt to satisfy these needs with young adults, whom they pay to essentially lie to them by creating a false sense of intimacy.<sup>29</sup> When this proves unsatisfactory, they may progress to younger and younger children, fueled by a belief that they have a right to service and pleasure at any cost.

There are many rationalizations a consumer may use to justify these actions such as "these girls are poor and I am feeding them," or "they keep

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23. SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ("DPH"), *SEXUAL RISK TAKING AMONG MEN WHO SOLICIT PROSTITUTES* (n.d.) [hereinafter DPH].

24. Tanya Schevitz, *ACLU Program Allows Students to Get a Look at Forces Behind Prostitution*, S. F. CHRON., Nov. 12, 2001, at A14.

25. DPH, *supra* note 23.

26. *Id.*

27. Josh Richman, *John School Tries to Curb Prostitution Via Demand Side*, OAKLAND TRIB., Apr. 12, 1999, at News-7.

28. Paul Watson, *Ex-Hooker Describes Sex Trade Tragedy*, TORONTO STAR, Sept. 5, 1995, at A14.

29. Julia O'Connell, *The Sex Exploiter*, available at <http://www.usis.usemb.se/children/csec/thsexexploiter.html> (last visited Mar. 27, 2002).

coming back, therefore, they must like it,” or “having sex with younger children helps to prevent STDs or HIV.” Perhaps most disturbing is the belief that they have a right because they are men and men have much greater sex drives than women, and that those drives or “needs” override the needs and the rights of others. Most are completely indiscriminate as to how this “need” is satisfied and by whom.

Although some children are prostituted by and/or specifically for pedophiles and preferential abusers,<sup>30</sup> the majority of the several million men who annually exploit prostitutes under the age of eighteen are first and foremost prostitute users who become child sexual abusers through their prostitute use, rather than the other way around.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the recruitment techniques described above, “[y]oung people can become involved in prostitution through emotional neediness and vulnerability as well as homelessness and poverty.”<sup>32</sup> Most child prostitutes are integrated into the mainstream sex industry and tend to be concentrated in the cheaper end of the prostitution market, where conditions are worse and the concentration of customers is the highest.<sup>33</sup>

The world of prostitution, whether legal or illegal, provides an arena whereby abusers can evade laws, rules, and social mores that constrain sex with minors. For example, in parts of Asia where foreign armed services or U.N. contingents were stationed for long periods, the combination of loneliness and unfamiliarity contributed to an arena where “sexual practices that did occur in the host society, but which were considered exceptional or wrong, now seem not so unusual and therefore more acceptable.”<sup>34</sup> Laws and social conventions make it difficult and dangerous for individuals to buy children for sexual purposes in other contexts, but prostitution potentially provides instant access, often to a selection of children.

## V. PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE AND/OR SEXUAL ASSAULT AND THE CONNECTION TO PROSTITUTION

While routes into prostitution vary, “the average age of entry into prostitution is fourteen.”<sup>35</sup> Violence against young women in this arena is especially acute with 93 percent of juvenile prostitutes report being beaten by a trick and over half report being regularly beaten by their pimp.<sup>36</sup>

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30. Julia O’Connell uses the term “preferential child sex abuser” to refer to those individuals whose preferred sexual objects are children who have reached or passed puberty. *Id.*

31. *Id.*

32. O’Neill, *supra* note 9, at 14.

33. O’Connell, *supra* note 29.

34. United States Embassy Stockholm, *Contributing Factors*, available at <http://www.usemb.se/children/csec/cfactors.html>.

35. Evelina Giobbbe, *Juvenile Prostitution: A Profile of Recruitment*, WHISPER (Women Hurt In Systems of Prostitution Engaged In Revolt, W.H.I.S.P.E.R., St. Paul, Minn.), Winter 1993.

36. *Facts About Juvenile Prostitution*, WHISPER (Women Hurt In Systems of Prostitution Engaged In Revolt, W.H.I.S.P.E.R., St. Paul, Minn.), Winter 1993.

These statistics raise both the issues of violence against women and sexual abuse of children related to trafficking in young girls.

Vanessa, who came to SAGE at age eighteen, said, "My pimp knocked me out with a baseball bat. I woke up and he was sewing my head up. He wouldn't even take me to the hospital. How could I get away? He'd kill me first, besides he was all I knew. I had been with him since I was twelve."<sup>37</sup>

In further examining the dynamics between pimp and prostitute, "the tactics of power and control . . . use[d] to recruit and keep a woman trapped in prostitution closely parallel those used by batterers to ensure the compliance of their wives or intimate partners."<sup>38</sup>

After twenty years of building services such as hot lines, shelters, legal services, increased protection and support, members of the domestic violence movement have analyzed the success of this approach. Research shows that women are still being abused and killed at the same rate as they were before the domestic violence movement began twenty years ago.

The strategy of addressing only women's needs was ineffective because it did not deal with the perpetrator of violence and did nothing to address the socialization of men towards violence. Now there is a growing movement aimed at preventing violence by resocializing men and boys, intervening early with men and boys that perpetrate violence, and treating offenders with stronger and stronger mandatory interventions both in and out of custody. Formerly violent men who have successfully completed batterer intervention programs facilitate many of the current programs, such as the San Francisco Sheriff's Department's program, Resolve to Stop the Violence Project ("RSVP"), aimed at decreasing male violence.

One of the characteristics commonly found among men who perpetrate violence is an expectation of service. It is in this area that the movement to prevent child prostitution and the domestic violence movement which emphasizes treating the batterer diverge from the movement to legitimize prostitution. In the child prostitution prevention and domestic violence movements, the expectation of services is viewed as a characteristic that leads to violence and exploitation. But in the movement to legitimize prostitution, the expectation of services is promoted and this can contribute further to the likelihood that violence or child sexual assault will occur.

Recently released statistics show that about 22 percent of all women have been sexually assaulted.<sup>39</sup> While this figure paints a disturbing picture about the extent of learned violence in our society, the incidence of violence toward prostitutes is even more alarming. In a study of abuse experienced by female prostitutes in San Francisco, it was documented that

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37. Interview with Vanessa, SAGE client (n.d.).

38. Evelina Giobbe, *An Analysis of Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Pimping*, 1 MICH. J. GENDER & L. 33, 45-46 (1993).

39. DAVID SATCHER, SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT ON SEX EDUCATION 8 (2001), available at <http://www.sg.gov/library/sexualhealth/call.pdf>.

70 percent of those interviewed had encountered violence by both customers and pimps, being beaten, robbed, raped and abused.<sup>40</sup> This again points to the need for resocialization and reeducation of men and boys so that they do not learn that it is their right to be violent and to engage in exploitive behaviors. Because violence and exploitation are learned, they can also be unlearned.

## VI. CONCLUSION

A combination of factors, including new research on child prostitution, debate over methods of treatment for batterers, gender bias in research on prostitution, gender bias in arrests, lack of services for women and girls, and the profit making of individuals, countries, and governments, creates bias and misunderstanding and highlights the need to redefine the problem of trafficking and prostitution and heighten the level of dialogue. Prevention, early intervention, and treatment programs cannot be truly effective until we clearly define the problem.

The issues presented are complex on the part of all involved and are integrated throughout all strata of society. The plight of sexually abused children and victims of violence create a staggering social impact, which raise more questions than answers and generate a need for action. While there are ongoing debates regarding decriminalization and/or legalization of prostitution among consenting adults, a similar argument concerning children would shock politicians, the courts or members of the general public into realizing the need for action. In short, no one is going to take a stand in support of child abuse. And while one may argue, depending on point of view, that prostitution is either inherently exploitative or liberating, there is no room for a debate on the issue of violence against women or children.

The work being done by SAGE and its collaborators sheds light on a subject that thrives in darkness, secrecy, silence and shame. To further this work we must ask how we can promote gender equality while keeping women and girls who are unable or unwilling to leave the sex industry safe from perpetrators and police. We need to ask how we can begin the process of socializing men and boys to prevent them from believing that it is their right to commit violence against women and girls. We need to ask how we can engage cities, counties, states and countries in funding the needed services for women and girls who are trafficked, or subjected to violence through their involvement in the sex industry.

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40. Faugier & Sergeant, *supra* note 13 at 123-124.

