Sex Trafficking: Supply and Demand

Sexual Trafficking: Breaking the Crisis of Silence

Donna M. Hughes, PhD
Professor & Carlson Endowed Chair
Women’s Studies Program
University of Rhode Island

April 8, 2006
The Trade in Women and Children

• Based on **supply** and **demand** from sending and receiving countries, regions, or cities
Supply of Victims

- Sending/Source countries, regions, or cities
  - Kidnapping and raids during armed conflict
  - Traffickers target cities, regions based on the ease of recruiting/capturing victims
Supply of Victims

• Easy recruitment of women and girls
  – Poverty
  – Unemployment
  – War
  – Lack of opportunity or a promising future
  – Love and security
  – Eager for Western lifestyle
Domestic Victims in the U.S.

• 25% grew up without a mother in the house
• 59% grew up without a father in the house
• 40% someone died in their home while they were growing up
• 22% the person who raised them leave for more than one year
• 33% someone in the household incarcerated
Domestic Victims in the U.S.

- 27% someone in the home had a major illness or disability
- 62% someone in the home was frequently hit, slapped, pushed
- 40% someone in the home was kicked, beaten, raped, threatened and/or attacked with a weapon
Domestic Victims in the U.S.

- 83% drug or alcohol abuse in home
- 86% used drugs or alcohol themselves
- 56% ran away from home at least once, mean age 13
- 28% were told to leave home by parent or guardian, mean age 15
Domestic Victims in the U.S.

- 33% someone in home in prostitution regularly
- 71% people in the neighborhood or friends in prostitution regularly
- 71% someone suggested to them they should become a prostitute
Domestic Victims in the U.S.

- 65 - 80% victims of child sexual abuse, rape, or incest
- 50 - 75% victims of physical abuse as a child

*Memories of a Child Prostitute*, Judith Schaechter, 1994
Recruiting the Supply of Victims from Abroad

- Offers for jobs abroad
  - “Friend,” family member, “boyfriend” or acquaintance
- Operate through employment and tour agencies
- Previous trafficked woman return to recruit new victims
- “Marriage” agencies
- Most crucial factor: Activity of traffickers
  - Traffickers take advantage of poverty and desire for a better future
Recruiting the Supply of Domestic Victims

- Pimps prey on emotionally vulnerable girls
- “Groom” girls with attention, gifts, and “affection”
- Give them drugs, alcohol
- Create an emotional bonding/loyalty
- Become violent when girls resist
The Demand Side of Sex Trafficking

- Receiving/destination countries, regions, cities
  - Legal or tolerated sex industries and prostitution
- Sex trafficking process begins with the demand for victims
- Few women will enter prostitution if they have other choices
- Pimps cannot recruit enough local women
Political Criminal Nexus

- Extends from the highest levels of government to lowliest criminals
- Government officials, law enforcement personnel, legal and illegal businesses, individual criminals, organized crime groups, foreign governments, nongovernmental organizations
The Global Sex Trade

- Turnover of victims is high
- Steady supply of victims needed
Demand for Victims

• Victims have a limited useful life
  – Poor physical health; disease, infection, or injury; emotional collapse; addiction

St. Petersburg Florida Police Department

Melissa at 18  Melissa at 21

St. Petersburg Florida Police Department
Demand for Victims

• Victims are murdered

Tiffany Mason, San Francisco, murdered by “john” at age 15 (August 2001)
The Global Sex Trade

- Victims are deported

Nigerian deportees from Italy
Demand for Victims

- Victims are lost due to illness, loss of appearance, and death from AIDS
- Mortality rate is 40 times that of persons of similar age and race
Demand Factors

• 1) Men who purchase sex acts

• 2) Exploiters who make up sex industry and supporting services – Profiteers

• 3) States (countries) that profit, particularly the destination countries

• 4) Culture that glamorizes, eroticizes & romanticizes the sex trade
Men Who Purchase Sex Acts

• Usually faceless and nameless
• The ultimate consumers of trafficked women and children
• Many myths about men who buy sex acts
• They are seeking sex without relationship responsibilities
• They do not respect women
• Seeking power and control over those they purchase for a short time
The Exploiters

• Traffickers, pimps, brothel owners, mafia members, corrupt officials, support services – hotels, taxi drivers

• They make money from the sale of sex acts, providing rooms, transportation, & services – Can be a significant part of the tourist industry of a country
The Business of Trafficking

- Goal is to make money
- Low risk, high profit enterprise
- Criminal penalties are relatively low compared to the amount of profit made and the harm done to victims
Profit from the Global Sex Trade

• $75,000 to $250,000 per victim/year (INTERPOL)
Profit from the Sex Trade – Southeast Asia

• Thailand: Estimated income from prostitution from 1993 to 1995 was $22.5 billion - $27 billion/year

• Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, & Philippines: 2 – 14% of the Gross Domestic Product
Profit from the Global Sex Trade - Japan

- Japan: ¥10,000bn (US$83 billion/year)
- Estimated 150,000 foreign women in the sex industry
- Many trafficked from the Philippines, Korea, Russia, and Latin America

Hostess Clubs
Profit from the Sex Trade - Germany

- Germany: Annual turnover of €14 billion (US$18 billion)
- Estimated 400,000 women serve 1.2 million men a day
- Majority is trafficked from Eastern Europe
Profit from Domestic Sex Trafficking

• 2002, Oakland, California:
  – 218 minors prostituted by 155 pimps
  – Girls were 11-15 years old
  – Quota of $500 a day
  – 218 girls multiplied by 330 days a year at $500/day
    = $35,970,000/year

• “Oakland fights to turn tide of rising child prostitution,” *Oakland Tribune*, July 31, 2004
The State

• By tolerating or legalizing prostitution, the state helps create a demand for victims
  – Thailand and the Netherlands – sex tourist industries

• Some governments tax sex businesses to make money from it, i.e. Germany

• Strategies are created to protect sex industry
  – Canadian exotic dancer visa
The Culture

- Culture, mass media play a role in normalizing prostitution
The Culture

- Pimp culture in music & video
- Pimp celebrities
The Culture

• Internet increased availability and amount of pornography, marketing of prostitution, & online live sex shows
World Cup Games 2006 - Germany

• Prostitution and brothels – legal since 2001
  – Law makers expected tax revenue from sex industry

• Germany has a severe problem of sex trafficking
  – Most victims trafficked from Eastern and Central Europe

• World Cup Games in 12 cities
  – Expect 3 million men to buy sex at least once
  – Expect 40,000 women to be brought to Germany
World Cup Games 2006 - Germany

• City officials are building “sex huts” easily accessible for male fans
  – Designed to protect men’s anonymity

• Distribution of 100,000 condoms around the Olympic stadium

• Cities will issue special licenses for prostitution on the street (Berlin)

• Alarms and emergency exits installed in brothels and huts

• Pragmatic approach
Contact Details

Donna M. Hughes
Professor & Carlson Endowed Chair
316 Eleanor Roosevelt Hall
University of Rhode Island
http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes
dhughes@uri.edu