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Becky Bergeron
*Providence College*

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# AN ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL WORKER ATTITUDES REGARDING THE DOMESTIC SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN AMERICA

A project based upon an independent investigation, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

Becky Bergeron

Providence College
Providence Rhode Island

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# ABSTRACT

Human sex trafficking, defined as a "modern-day form of slavery in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years" (USDHHS, 2009) is a problem that many people do not think is issue in America, but in fact is. This study investigated the attitudes of social workers towards domestically sex trafficked children in the United States, as well as towards pimps and johns, and federal and state policies regarding the safety of sex trafficked children. It was hypothesized that social workers who work in child welfare would have a greater knowledge of domestic sex trafficking of children in America than those social workers who work with adults. It was also hypothesized that overall, social workers would have a greater knowledge of international sex trafficking than of domestic sex trafficking. To test these hypotheses, a survey was distributed to 42 social workers at different agencies who were gathered through snowball sampling. Results found that overall, males had a slightly higher opinion of children who were sex trafficked and a lesser opinion of pimps and johns than females. The results found that social workers' attitudes towards trafficked children and those who traffic them varied among questions, based on the social worker's field setting. Social workers need to be aware of the impact of sex trafficking so they can advocate for children who have been sex trafficked and so they can provide effective therapeutic services to those effected by sex trafficking.

*Introduction*

Human sex trafficking is a controversial issue that has affected individuals in many countries around the world in the past, and continues to be prevalent internationally today. Sex trafficking is defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) as a "modern-day form of slavery in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years" (2009). Currently, it is estimated that about 27 million people are enslaved in modern-day forms of slavery throughout the world, and according to the International Labor Organization, between 1995 and 2005, 2.4 million of those people alone were subject to sex trafficking (Polaris Project, 2007). The Polaris Project also estimates that approximately 161 countries are affected by sex trafficking: 121 as countries where the victims are initially enslaved, 98 as countries of transit that the victims travel through to be sold, and 137 as countries that are the victim's destination to perform sexual acts (Polaris Project, 2007).

While evident from these statistics that human sex trafficking is an international problem, this study will primarily examine the domestic sex trafficking of children in the United States. It will provide a comprehensive review of what sex trafficked children are subjected to, both during their time of enslavement and after. This study will also look at existing services and laws in regards to human sex trafficking in the United States and evaluate what services might be helpful in the future.

In the social work profession, it is critical that social workers be aware of human sex trafficking and what each victim may be subject to before and after their enslavement. Social workers may have clients that have been through this form of sexual

slavery or clients who have family members who have been trafficked, thus making at least a base knowledge of human sex trafficking and its implications on victims crucial for all social workers. If a worker does not understand the repercussions of being sexually enslaved, they may not be effective in trying to help their client. An increased knowledge of the workings of sex trafficking will help the social worker with their client and will aid them in the beginning stages of work. Awareness will also help the worker anticipate emotional pitfalls the client might face, like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Having an acute awareness of some of the effects sex trafficking can have on its victims could help the worker feel better prepared to work with their client effectively.

Social workers must also possess at least a base knowledge of the implications of human sex trafficking so they can advocate for their clients. Clients may not be in a close proximity to services that help those who have been victimized by sex trafficking since it is considered a taboo problem in America. Clients may also be unaware of services that are available to them. Social workers need to make victims of sex trafficking aware of these services. There may not be many programs that specialize in helping those who have been subjected to sexual slavery and social workers need to advocate for them for the well being of their client. Effectively advocating for these programs would require knowledge of what the client was possibly subjected to during their enslavement so the proper services could be provided to the target population.

Advocating for clients not only locally, but also nationally and internationally is a task that socials workers need to also undertake. Some states in America, and some countries, have laws that legalize human sex trafficking or make indoor prostitution legal. Legislatively, social workers will need to advocate for their clients and attempt to

persuade policy makers to change those laws. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) mission statement states that the organization sets out to, “seek to enhance the effective functioning and well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy,” therefore making it a social worker’s obligation to fight unjust policies (2009). Human trafficking dehumanizes and abuses all of those victimized by it and is detrimental to the well-being of the individual enslaved and their family, thus rendering human sex trafficking an important issue for social workers to speak out against. Social workers have both the community organizing skills to be able to organize people to fight against the issue and the expertise to communicate concerns effectively to politicians. Without a social worker’s training in community organizing, people may not come together to legislatively fight laws that condone sex trafficking.

Social workers also have a duty to increase awareness about unjust issues. Social workers can run seminars and workshops on the effects of human sex trafficking on those victimized by it, and raise awareness in the community so more people will take a stand against it. Without knowledge of the issue, the problem can never be resolved. Without large groups to advocate against human sex trafficking, legislators will not feel the push to make any policy changes. Social workers must raise awareness of human sex trafficking, in order to give those victimized by it the freedom and life they once had.

Attitudes of social workers towards the domestic sex trafficking of children in America must also be identified and accounted for. Social workers cannot expect to make effective changes in the lives of sex trafficking victims without first examining their own personal biases around the subject. Once social workers have recognized their own

biases, they may be able to address them and ensure that they do not hinder them from helping clients make substantive steps in the healing process.

This study will emphasize the issues that children who have been sex trafficked in the United States face, both during and post enslavement, and services that are available to them. Recommendations will also be made as to how to perhaps improve those services, and fight the issue of human sex trafficking. Attitudes of social workers towards this population will be quantitatively assessed, as well.

## *Literature Review*

### *Statistics and General Information*

It is estimated that internationally, one million children are exploited by the sex industry every year (Polaris Project, 2007, as cited in the United States Department of State, 2005). According to End Child Prostitution and Trafficking United States of America (ECPAT-USA) some researchers believe that over 200,000 children are at risk of sexual exploitation in the United States alone (2005, as cited in Estes and Weiner, 2001). Other researchers have lower estimates, and estimate that 500,000 to 600,000 children are prostituted in the United States (Friedman, 2005, as cited in Flowers, 1998). ECPAT-USA found that the average age for children entering prostitution is around thirteen or fourteen, although some children enter when they are as young as ten or eleven (2005). The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) estimates that one in five girls and one in ten boys are sexually assaulted or abused before they reach adulthood (United States Department of Justice, 2007). NCMEC also estimated that less than 35 percent of those cases are ever reported to authorities (United States Department of Justice, 2007).

*Trafficking Children Into a Life of Prostitution*

In order to gather as many children as possible to market for their sexual services, pimps and johns use a variety of techniques to lure the children into a trusting relationship with them (Friedman, 2005). Some pimps make the promise of a good job to the child (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). One child, Sonya, who had been trafficked at the age of twelve, recounts that a woman on a bus had asked her if she wanted a job; when Sonya said that she did, the woman took her to her house and had her clean (Friedman, 2005). Sonya was only paid in drugs, but she recalled enjoying the company of the woman and looking up to her as a mother figure since she would talk to her, “about things that moms are supposed to talk about with their kids” (Friedman, 2005). After the woman had gained Sonya’s trust, she allowed her cousin, Tommy, to forcibly rape Sonya (Friedman, 2005). Eventually, Sonya considered Tommy her boyfriend (Friedman, 2005). Whenever men would gawk at Sonya on the street, Tommy would force Sonya to have sex with them and began selling her services (Friedman, 2005). Sonya was stuck in a life of trafficking for seven years after she was led to believe that the woman she met on the bus was going to give her a decent job (Friedman, 2005).

Children are most vulnerable to being sex trafficked after running away from home (Friedman, 2005). The National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway Children (NISMART) estimates that about 1,682,900 children in the United States ran away from home in 1999 (2002). Another study found that within 48 hours of leaving home, approximately one out of every three teens is lured towards prostitution (Friedman, 2005). NISMART supported this statistic by performing a study

that found that an estimated 71 percent of the approximately 1,682,900 children who ran away in 1999 were potentially “endangered by hard drugs, sexual or physical abuse or presence in a place where criminal activity was taking place (2002). In Sonya’s case, she was approached by the woman on the bus immediately after she had run away from home (Friedman, 2005). Children are the most vulnerable after running away because they are without supervision and are looking for guidance; this makes them easy prey for pimps.

Not surprisingly, pimps often choose places where teenage girls socialize to try to traffic them (Friedman, 2005). Bus stations, parties, the mall, the movies, the street, groups homes, jail, and even inside and outside of schools are some of the places where pimps try to traffic young girls (Friedman, 2005). Some pimps use girls they have already trafficked to convince other girls to trust the pimp (Friedman, 2005). The pimps have the experienced girl show the potential victim how to make easy money by selling their sexual services, and instruct the already trafficked girl to buy the prospective girl new jeans or jewelry (Friedman, 2005). By the time the pimp introduces themselves to the new girl, the girl is already seduced by the new material goods he has bought her (Friedman, 2005). Other times, the pimp recruits girls by having one of his already trafficked girls brag about her boyfriend in a group home and convinces them to run away with them (Friedman, 2005). Some pimps also tell the child that they will send pictures of the child having sex to magazines or their family if they do not comply with the pimp’s wishes (United States Department of Justice, 2007). Once children are trafficked into the life of a prostitute, however, they find it difficult to leave (Friedman, 2005).

*Treatment of Children While Held in Sexual Enslavement*

After a child has been initially trafficked, they are initiated into the life of a prostitute (Friedman, 2005). Some pimps have an actual handbook they give their trafficked children, detailing the list of prices for his or her services and the time allowed for specific sexual acts (Friedman, 2005). Each child is instructed to earn a minimum amount per client and is told to not look at any of the other pimps (Friedman, 2005). Some children are even branded with tattoos to mark them as the pimp's possession (Friedman, 2005). New children are also given new street names, fake IDs, and are instructed on how to withhold information from the police and courts (Friedman, 2005). Pimps see rape as a method to teach children how to have sex (NASW, 2007). Pimps may initiate child prostitutes by coercing them into "performing pornographic sexual acts as a way to normalize prostitution and lower the child's resistance" (Flowers, 2001, as cited in Rickel and Hendren, 1993). Gang rapes are another method of conditioning the children to become more submissive to sex (Friedman, 2005).

Once being initiated into the life of a trafficked prostitute, children are forced to work for the pimp indefinitely (Friedman, 2005). According to Hodge, victims of sex trafficking have little control over what hours they work (2008). Victims are forced to service customers whenever the pimp wants, no matter what condition they are in (NASW, 2007). One child, fourteen year old Rosa, recounts that while she was enslaved, she was in high demand with customers because she was so young (NASW, 2007). Many of the men she had sex with did not wear condoms, and she eventually became pregnant (NASW, 2007). Rosa's pimp forced her to have an abortion, but instead of giving her a chance to recover, he forced her back to the brothel "almost immediately" (NASW, 2007,

p. 1). A great deal of sex trafficked girls are subjected to similar situations and face multiple pregnancies and abortions, and many are forced to have an abortion and return to performing sexual services immediately (USDHHS, n.d.).

The abuse does not stop there, however. While in captivity, sex trafficked children are constantly physically, emotionally, and mentally abused (Friedman, 2005). According to Hodge, sometimes children are “handcuffed and compelled to have sex with dogs and then forced to eat from dog food bowls and drink from toilets,” although this is an extreme measure (2008). Such behavior shows that sex trafficked children can be treated more like animals than human beings. Albanese, from the National Institute of Justice, states that there have been reports that children have been, “held captive in basements and other slave-like conditions where they are beaten, malnourished, threatened, and sexually exploited” (2007, p. 1). Rosa stated that she was also forced to sleep every night in the same bed that she had “serviced customers all day” in (NASW, 2007). Having a child sleep where they were forced to have sex multiple times each day is psychologically degrading and harmful for the child. Simultaneously, while doling out these abuses, pimps increasingly make the girls more dependent on them by telling them that they are the only one who loves her, and that she is useless and worthless without him (Friedman, 2005). In addition, pimps may also beat, torture, or even murder their sex trafficked children for any alleged infraction of the rules (Friedman, 2005). Such violence can occur especially when the child has a money shortage for their services or attempts to run away; other times, the pimp might beat the child just to keep them in line (Friedman, 2005). As reported by ECPAT-USA, many pimps tell the children that they deserve the punishment they receive (2005).

Children may also be murdered if they refuse to engage in sexual acts with a client (Hughes, 2001) or report their pimps for enslaving children (Friedman, 2005). In Sonya's personal narrative, she states that she ran away from her pimp and made it all of the way home, while he was arrested for drug dealing (Friedman, 2005). While in jail, Sonya's pimp called her and told her to go visit his sick mother in the hospital (Friedman, 2005). When Sonya arrived at the hospital room, she found a girl with large patches of her hair gone and her ribs caved in (Friedman, 2005). "She was almost dead," Sonya stated (Friedman, 2005). As soon as Sonya arrived back at home, she received a call from her pimp (Friedman, 2005). He simply said to her, "If you ever say anything, that's what will happen to you. Bitch!" (Friedman, 2005, p. 12). Many children are threatened in order to keep them submissive and from reporting to the police, or anyone for that matter, the physical, mental, and emotional torture their pimps have put them through (Friedman, 2005).

Some children are even taught to lie to the police (Friedman, 2005). Girls are told to use their fake IDs to help them pass as someone over 18 years old (Friedman, 2005). Once over 18, a person must be tried in the adult court and criminal justice system, and often the worst sentence they will get for prostitution is a night in jail (Friedman, 2005). After that one night, the children are back with the pimps servicing customers, and are perpetually trapped in a cycle between being imprisoned and being at the mercy of their pimp (Friedman, 2005).

Typically, sex trafficked children do not stay in one area for an extended amount of time (Hodge, 2008). Children are held in isolated areas and are frequently moved to new territories in order to get fresh customers (Hodge, 2008). Rosa stated that she was

taken to a different trailer every fifteen days (NASW, 2009). ECPAT-USA also reports that 80 percent of the girls prostituted in California are moved by their pimps among different counties (2005, as cited in Freeman, n.d.).

*Child Pornography*

Children may also be sex trafficked for the purposes of child pornography (Hodge, 2008). Child pornography can include "photographs, magazines, books, videotapes, audiotapes, motion pictures, and images on Web site on the Internet that depict children in sexually explicit acts with other children, adults, animals, and/or foreign objects" (Flowers, 2001, p. 151). According to the statistics, most children are usually trafficked after the age of nine, but younger children are often times trafficked for child pornography (Hodge, 2008). According to Flowers, at least 264 different magazines depicting children engaging in sexual acts are distributed each month in the United States (2001). These magazines are cheap to produce, with each magazine only costing fifty cents to manufacture, and are often times sold for twenty times that price (Hodge, 2008, as cited in Flowers, 2001). Because there is a decent amount of money to be made in the child pornography industry with a relatively low financial cost, more pimps may be enticed to recruit children for pornography production than for prostitution.

*Trafficking Routes in the United States*

As noted earlier, a child is rarely kept in one place for an extended amount of time during their prostitution (Hodge, 2008). In the United States, there are a series of regular circuits that pimps travel with their sex trafficked children in every part of the country (Friedman, 2005). The Southwest circuit covers Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Reno, while the Northwest circuit extends from Hawaii to California (Friedman, 2005). Finally, the

Northern and Eastern circuits cover New England and New York, all the way south to Florida (Friedman, 2005). Throughout these routes, pimps often times stop over in cities with large stadiums for sporting events and conventions, like Atlanta, as there is a large potential for customers there (Friedman, 2005).

Trafficking over state borders does not leave the child unaffected (Friedman, 2005). Children trafficked between states may feel severe disorientation and be unaware as to where they are (Friedman, 2005). Attempting to run away from a pimp also may seem like less of an option to a child as they are in an unfamiliar city with no contacts and nowhere to run (Friedman, 2005). Because of this, children may feel as if prostitution is their only option, and stay with their pimp (Friedman, 2005).

Almost every state also has laws that strictly prohibit sex trafficking (Friedman, 2005). Until recently, Rhode Island and a few counties in Nevada were the only places in the United States that did not have sex trafficking laws enacted (Friedman, 2005). On October 30, 2009, however, the Rhode Island Senate approved a bill that rendered indoor prostitution illegal throughout the state (Arditi, 2009). Slowly, an increasing amount of action is being taken throughout the country to abolish the problem of human sex trafficking.

*Exiting a Life of Prostitution*

For many children, it is difficult to exit the life of prostitution once they have entered it (Friedman, 2005). ECPAT-USA found that the length of time children spent in a life of prostitution after being sex trafficked was anywhere from a few months to twenty years (2005). In the case of Sonya, she experienced seven years of prostitution and twenty pimps before she was able to leave the life (Friedman, 2005). She states that a

few of the reasons she had a difficult time leaving was because she had nowhere to go and thought no one would want her, and she feared that her pimps would find her and beat her up (Friedman, 2005). She also hoped that one of her pimps would "deliver on their promises of undying love and many mansions; nice clothes and fancy restaurants" (Friedman, 2005, p. 37). Many girls begin to feel loyal to their pimps, and even refuse attempts to be rescued so they can stand by "their man like he's daddy" (Friedman, 2005, p. 36).

Other children cannot leave the life of prostitution because of a supposed "debt" imposed by the pimp, who has decided that the child needs to pay off an imagined sum of money (Hodge and Lietz, 2007). According to Hodge and Lietz, "it is not uncommon for it to take a thousand sex acts to pay off the accumulated debt" (2007, p. 168, as cited in Beyrer, 2001). For many women trafficked from poor, foreign countries, they are unable to count and are therefore unable to keep track of their debt or wages (Hodge and Lietz, 2007). The same theory could be applied to young children who have not yet been taught to do math or are academically behind peers their age. Without the skills to calculate a day's wages or the debt still left to pay, a child may be perpetually trapped in sexual enslavement with their pimp or any other number of pimps.

*The Physical and Psychological Repercussions of Trafficking on Child Victims*

After a child does eventually escape the life of prostitution, they are faced with a myriad of physical, mental, and emotional problems (Friedman, 2005). Physically, a child may be left with sleeping and eating disorders, or sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, pelvic pain, rectal trauma, and urinary difficulties (USDHHS, 2009), as well as herpes, Chlamydia, crabs, gonorrhea, and syphilis (Flowers, 2001).

HIV/AIDS is particularly prevalent among child prostitutes (Flowers, 2001). Flowers states that many pimps favor young child prostitutes because they are less likely than adult prostitutes to have HIV/AIDS, but in reality, young children are actually more likely than adults to contract the disease (2001). Children's bodies have not finished fully developing, and therefore children have weaker immune systems than adults and are more susceptible to injuries and lesions acquired from sexual relations (Flowers, 2001, as cited in Hodgson, 1994; Serrill, 1993). Adults are also more likely to be able to bargain with their customer to wear a condom and practice safe sex than children are, thus leaving children with a higher chance of contracting HIV/AIDS or another sexually transmitted disease (Flowers, 2001).

Psychologically, a child may experience fear and anxiety, depression, mood changes, guilt and shame, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic bonding with the trafficker, low self-esteem or attempted suicide after being trafficked (USDHHS, 2009; Flowers, 2001). Flashbacks, nightmares, numbness, stigma from peers, and disassociation especially during sex or any stressful period have also been found to manifest themselves during the remainder of the victim's childhood and sometimes into adulthood (Friedman, 2005). Research has shown that two thirds of prostituted girls and women have experienced PTSD as opposed to less than five percent of the general population who have suffered from it (Friedman, 2005, as cited in Farley, 1998). It was found that these children experienced a more severe form of PTSD than Vietnam War veterans did (Friedman, 2005, as cited in Farley, 1998). Many children subject to sex trafficking also refuse to see themselves as victims (Friedman, 2005). ECPAT-USA found that over 75 percent of the girls they studied claimed that they "chose" to enter into

a life of prostitution, and would not identify themselves as a victim (2005, p. 28). ECPAT-USA also reports that they found that children who have been sexually exploited live for immediate satisfaction and do not have a sense of the future (2005).

*Characteristics of Children Who Are Sex Trafficked*

When looking at the characteristics of the children who have been sex trafficked throughout America, one might assume that they all were not Caucasian, and came from poor families with little morality. NCMEC found, however, that there was no causal relationship between socioeconomic class and the children that were sex trafficked (Friedman, 2005, as cited in NCMEC, 2002). In 2004, it was reported to *Newsweek* that there was a 70 percent increase over three years in the amount of middle and upper class children who were sex trafficked (Friedman, 2005). Most of the girls arrested, however, seemed to come from poor families (Friedman, 2005).

In regards to race, Eileen Jacob, the director of the FBI Operation Innocence Lost program, states that most of the children who runaway from home are white, and that pimps value white girls because “they are worth more” (Friedman, 2005, p. 25). The race of the children sex trafficked, though, depends on the region of the country (Friedman, 2005). ECPAT-USA reports that most girls who are sex trafficked from the Midwest are Caucasian, while girls from urban areas tend to be African American (2005). Latina girls are also most likely to be found in cantinas where they are expected to “model” onstage and dance with male clients (Friedman, 2005).

ECPAT-USA also found that children who had been sexually abused are 28 times more likely to be arrested for prostitution at some point in their lives than those who did not suffer abuse (2005). Huckleberry House, an adolescent facility in San Francisco,

supported this statistic by finding that ninety percent of the girls in their program who were prostitutes had been sexually molested (Friedman, 2005, as cited in Flowers, 1998). Another study performed in San Francisco found that out of the 130 prostitutes surveyed, 57 percent has been sexually abused as a child by an average of three perpetrators (Friedman, 2005, as cited in Farley, 1998). ECPAT-USA conjectures that due to this abuse, children who have been abused desperately search for love, care and protection to offset it; this search can make these children easy prey for sex traffickers to win over by treating them like they'd like to be treated (2005).

*Trafficking Laws and Government Response*

One of the most extensive laws regarding human sex trafficking in the United States is the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA 2000), and the reauthorization of it in 2003 with the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (Hodge, 2008). According to the Collier County Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CCCAHT), prior to 2000, a comprehensive federal law regarding human sex trafficking and the prosecution of sex traffickers did not exist (n.d.). The TVPA 2000 recognizes that often times, victims of sex trafficking are treated more severely than their traffickers for crimes they were forced to commit (Hodge, 2008). The passage of the TVPA 2000 implemented the policy that those who have been trafficked should not be inappropriately punished for crimes their traffickers made them commit (Hodge, 2008).

The TVPA 2000 also spurred the creation of "T-visas," or visas that allow those who have been subjected to severe forms of trafficking, or children under eighteen years of age who have been trafficked, to remain in the U.S. and aid authorities with the

prosecution of their trafficker (Hodge, 2008). Those who take advantage of the T-visas also have the option to use the Witness Protection Program, and after three years, may be granted permanent residency in the U.S. (Hodge, 2008).

The TVPA 2000 not only protects international children, however, but also helps protect sexually exploited children who are U.S. citizens (Friedman, 2005). Prior to the passage of the TVPA 2000, underage prostitution was not a federal crime unless state borders were crossed; the ratification of the TVPA 2000 amended that law (Friedman, 2005). The TVPA 2000 also created harsher penalties for those who sex trafficked children as well (CCCAHT, n.d.) For instance, a trafficker could be sentenced to life in jail if a trafficking crime resulted in the death of the victim, or included kidnapping, an attempted kidnapping, aggravated sexual abuse, attempted aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill (CCCAHT, n.d.). Traffickers who use force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of sex trafficking of a child under the age of 14 can also face life in prison (CCCAHT, n.d.). If the child is between 14 and 18 and the trafficker did not use force, fraud or coercion for the purposes of sex trafficking, they can be sentenced to up to twenty years in prison (CCCAHT, n.d.).

The Mann Act, enacted in 1910, is another act that addresses child prostitution in the United States (Law Library, 2010; Tunick, 1996). The Mann Act renders it illegal to traffic a minor across state borders for the reason of prostitution and anyone who does so can be imprisoned for up to five years (Tunick, 1996).

One governmental program aimed specifically at children, Operation Innocence Lost, was created in 2003 by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (ECPAT-USA, 2005). This program is a partnership between the Criminal Investigation Division, the

Child Exploitation-Obscenity Section of the Department of Justice, and the nonprofit National Center for Missing & Exploited Children that is aimed at bringing together federal and state law enforcement, social services, and prosecutors to address the problem of child prostitution in America (FBI, 2008). As of June 2008, the initiative had rescued over 400 children and helped convict 308 traffickers (FBI, 2008).

*Services and Intervention Strategies for Victims of Sex Trafficking*

A multitude of services are offered for victims of human sex trafficking. The United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a large provider of services for these victims after they have escaped of the life of prostitution (UNICEF, 2006). UNICEF takes action to try to ensure that prostituted girls and their babies born while in prostitution stay together, and tries to make certain that the interviewing process of children about their experiences of trafficking is as painless as possible for the child (UNICEF, 2006). For example, UNICEF believes that children who have been sex trafficked should only be interviewed once, if possible, to avoid continually discussing a traumatic topic, and that only one person should interview the child so they don't feel bombarded and overwhelmed (UNICEF, 2006). They also believe that children should be fully informed about all legal proceedings regarding their trafficker before they decide whether or not to testify against them (UNICEF, 2006). If the child should agree to testify against their trafficker, safety shall try to be ensured to the child and their family members through special protection measures (UNICEF, 2006).

*Social Worker Knowledge on Child Sex Trafficking in the United States*

While reviewing the literature, it was found that there was a noticeable lack of articles dedicated to research on the domestic sex trafficking of children in the United

States. Most of the studies published focus on the international sex trafficking of women and children; any time the United States is mentioned, it is usually in regards to women and children being trafficked into the country from other nations, or the United State's large involvement with the pornography industry. The lack of studies on domestic children trafficked in the U.S. could be due to social norms in America. For instance, the topic of sex trafficking of children in the U.S. is considered taboo by many, and may therefore contribute to the lack of studies on the subject. Many Americans may also be unaware that local children are sex trafficked all over the country. This dearth of knowledge could be connected to the scarcity of research available on domestic child sex trafficking in the U.S.

Often times, the people who carry out studies on social justice issues are social workers, so the fact that there are few studies on the topic of domestic child sex trafficking indicates that the knowledge of the social work profession as a whole on this topic is inadequate. If knowledge about the issue is not reaching social workers, they may not be able to effectively work with children who have been sex trafficked, or may not be able to provide the support services they need.

## *Literature Review: Opposing Points*

### *Demand for Child Pornography*

As previously stated, the child pornography industry is thriving all across the world (Flowers, 2001). One of the main reasons the child pornography industry thrives, however, is because of the demand U.S. citizens create for it (Hughes, 2002). Hughes reports that, "the U.S. causes the trafficking of children in other parts of the world" because its "citizens are buying the child pornography and creating the demand for

trafficked children" (2002, p. 3). According to Flowers, the U.S. generates an estimated six billion dollars a year alone for the child pornography industry (2001). Flowers also states that about 85 percent of the worldwide sales of child pornography come from the United States (2001). Much of the pornography is produced in foreign countries, though, due to less restrictive laws on the production of child pornography (Hughes, 2002). Many countries, like Russia, have inadequate laws, which in turn cause many of the child pornographic magazines and videos viewed in America to be made in other countries like Russia (Hughes, 2002). This does not, however, cease the production of child pornography in America (Flowers, 2001). It is estimated that each year, 30,000 children are used in the creation of child pornography in Los Angeles alone (Flowers, 2001). Despite the fact that the United States may have stricter laws regarding child pornography than other countries, the use of the internet is making it increasingly harder for authorities to track down child pornographers and easier for the perpetrators to continue with and expand their practice while remaining unidentified (Flowers, 2001).

If the demand for child pornography did not exist throughout the world, particularly in America, perhaps the practice of sex trafficking children would cease or at least decrease. In a capitalistic society, if there is no demand for a particular service, then there is no money made providing that service and the practice of it ceases to exist. If everyone who views child pornography stopped viewing it, the number of children sex trafficked in America and throughout the world would mostly likely diminish significantly.

*Economic Implications*

The sex trafficking of children might also cease to exist if the trade were not so profitable for the economy. According to Flowers, many countries have "entered the sex tourism industry in recent years as a means to generate revenue, stimulate the economy, and exploit women and children by flesh peddling them to foreign or local businessmen with deep pockets" (2001, p. 151). While the United States does not have as high of sex tourism rates as other countries, the buying and selling of children for sexual purposes still stimulates the economy (Flowers, 2001). For those involved in organized crime, sex trafficking children is the third largest money maker, next to selling narcotics and arms (Hodge and Lietz, 2007). Sexual services provided by children can also be sold to customers multiple times, while narcotics and arms can only be sold once (Hodge and Lietz, 2007). In fact, Barnitz reports that fourteen year old girls have been found to bring in about five hundred dollars a night in the United States for pimps (1998). The large amount of money being made in the sex trafficking industry can be put back into the economy through the buying of items, thus stimulating the economy. The high prices of sex trafficked children may help keep the U.S. economy afloat, and perhaps aid in keeping the country out of economic hard times.

Not only does sex trafficking stimulate the national economy, however, but also funds the livelihoods of some sex trafficked children and their families. Even though sex trafficked children often times get very little, if anything, for providing sexual services to clients, children sometimes enter the sex trade to help provide for their impoverished families (Friedman, 2005; Hodge, 2008). Without child sex trafficking, some families might not have the revenue needed for survival.

## *Hypotheses*

After an extensive review of the literature, it can be hypothesized that social workers will have little knowledge of the domestic sex trafficking of children in the United States and will have a greater knowledge of international sex trafficking. Social workers who work with adults will also most likely have less knowledge of the domestic sex trafficking of children than those social workers who work with children. It can be hypothesized, as well, that social workers who work with children in urban areas are more likely to have some knowledge of the domestic sex trafficking of children than those social workers who work with children in rural areas.

## *Methodology*

### *Participants*

Participants for this study were gathered though snowball and convenience sampling. The survey instrument was distributed to social workers employed at an agency which provides adoption services in Rhode Island as well as to social workers at other agencies who distributed the surveys to other social workers that they knew. Additionally, the instrument was distributed to other social work students to distribute to social workers at their practicum sites. Social work professors at a medium sized Catholic college in the Northeast also participated in the study by distributing the survey to social workers they knew. Each survey had a letter of informed consent attached to describe the purpose of the study. The letter also informed the participant that the survey was anonymous and was not to be returned with their name on it in order to ensure confidentiality. It was also stated in the letter that there was no expected risk associated

with taking the survey and that participating in the study was entirely voluntary (See Appendix I).

*Instrument*

The first section of the survey pertained to the demographics of the sample population. Participants were instructed to fill in the blanks on demographics such as the kind of work setting they were in, how many years they had been a practicing social worker and their degree level.

The next section of the survey contained a series of statements that reflected attitudes social workers may have towards domestic sex trafficking of children in America. Participants were asked to read the statement (i.e. children who have been sex trafficked deserve to be treated with respect, pimps and johns should face time in prison for sex trafficking children) and circle a number on a four-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) that adequately reflected their feelings on the statement. All twelve of these statements were developed by the researcher.

Next, participants were asked about their experience working with children who have been sex trafficked. Participants were asked to circle “yes” or “no” in response to each statement about their possible experience with sex trafficked children. This section of the survey was influenced by a previous study done on sex trafficking at a medium sized private Catholic college in the Northeast by Tiffany Polanco (Polanco, 2007).

Finally, participants were asked where they obtained their knowledge about sex trafficking. Participants were also asked if they wanted to learn more about the sex

trafficking of children in America, and if they thought that learning more about sex trafficked children in America would be beneficial to their practice.

*Data Analysis*

After all completed surveys were returned, they were analyzed using SPSS. A Kendall's Tau was performed in order to find statistically significant relationships between different variables. Means graphs were also produced to provide a visual representation of how participants of different degree levels and who work in different settings responses compared.

## *Results*

Overall, 42 surveys were completed and returned. Eight males participated in the study and 33 females. Thirty-three of the participants were Caucasian, five were African American, two were Hispanic, and one participant said that they were Brazilian; one participant did not indicate their race or ethnicity. When asked to fill in a blank with their degree level, 15 participants said that their highest degree was a bachelor's degree in social work, and 23 participants indicated that they has a master's degree in social work; another four participants said that they were licensed clinicians. For their current work setting, thirteen participants reported that they worked in a micro practice setting, eight said they worked in a macro practice setting, and twenty indicated that their current work setting was both micro and macro; one person did not indicate the type of practice setting their they worked in. As for years of experience, participants reported between one and 35 years of experience in the social work field. Twenty-one participants indicated that they worked in child welfare related agencies, five participants reported that they worked

in an agency with a purpose other than child welfare, and sixteen participants did not report what type of agency they worked at.

An independent sample t-test was used to determine whether there was a difference in means between the statement, “Sex trafficked children are entitled to therapeutic services after they leave the sex trafficking life,” and gender. It revealed a significant difference $t = 1.144$, $p < .05$, with male social workers having a significantly higher means than female social workers (males $M = 4$, females $M = 3.6667$). A t-test also determined that their was a significant difference in the means between the statement indicating that pimps and johns should spend time in prison for sex trafficking children and gender. The t-test showed that there was a significant difference $t = .991$, $p < .05$, with male social workers again having a slightly higher means than female social workers (males $M = 4$, females $M = 3.7879$). Finally, a t-test showed a significant relationship between a social worker’s gender and the statement, “the sex trafficking of children is not a problem in America.” A significant difference $t = 1.843$, $p < .001$, with male social workers having a higher mean score than female social workers ( males $M = 1.75$, females $M = 1.33$).

Additionally, an independent samples t-test was performed with regards to highest degree level and sex trafficked children deserving to be treated with respect. The t-test revealed a significant difference $t = 1.018$, $p < .05$, with bachelor’s degree level social workers having a significantly higher mean than those social workers with a master’s degree (bachelor’s $M = 3.9333$, master’s $M = 3.6957$). Another t-test proved there was a statistically significant difference in means between degree level and a statement about pimps and johns being entitled to therapeutic services. The t-test showed a significant

difference $t = -1.672$, $p < .05$, with social worker's who had a master's degree having a higher mean score than those with a bachelor's degree (bachelor's $M = 2.8667$, master's $M = 3.2609$). A t-test also showed a significant difference in means between degree level and the statement, "Pimps and johns need to sex traffic children to make a living." The t-test showed a significant difference $t = -1.595$, $p < .001$, with social workers with a master's degree having a significantly higher means score than social workers with a bachelor's degree (bachelor's $M = 1.0667$, master's $M = 1.3478$).

An independent samples t-test was done, as well, that proved a statistically significant difference in means between a social worker's work setting and the statement, "Children who are sex trafficked choose to enter prostitution." The t-test revealed the difference $t = 1.271$, $p < .01$, with social workers who worked in an agency with a purpose other than child welfare having a significantly higher mean score than social workers who worked in child welfare (child welfare $M = 1.3333$, other $M = 1$). Another t-test showed that a statistically significant relationship existed between work setting and a statement indicating that sex trafficked children should be entitled to therapeutic services. The t-test revealed a significant mean difference $t = -1.042$, $p < .05$, with those who work in agencies with purposes other than child welfare having a higher mean score than those who work in a child welfare agency (child welfare $M = 3.619$, other $M = 4$).

A paired samples t-test was also performed and showed that a significant relationship existed between years of practice and sex trafficked children being entitled to therapeutic services on the $p < .001$ level. Another significant relationship existed between years of practice and pimps and johns deserving to serve prison time for the sex trafficking of children on the $p < .05$ level.

Finally, significant relationships were measured between the attitude statements themselves by running a Kendall's tau test. It was found that a significant relationship existed between sex trafficked children being entitled to therapeutic services and children who are sex trafficked choosing to enter prostitution on the $p < .05$ level with a correlation of -.338. Another statistically significant relationship existed between sex trafficked children being entitled to therapeutic services and children who have been sex trafficked deserving to be treated with respect on the $p < .001$ level with a correlation of .547. Pimps and johns deserving to face time in prison for sex trafficking children was found to be statistically significant with regards to children who are sex trafficked deserving to be treated with respect on the $p < .001$ level with a correlation of .524. Also on the $p < .001$ level is the relationship between pimps and johns deserving to face time in prison for sex trafficking children and sex trafficked children being entitled to therapeutic services with a correlation of .594. Another significant correlation of .386 existed on the $p < .01$ level between pimps and johns being entitled to therapeutic and rehabilitative services and sex trafficked children needing therapeutic services for the rest of their lives.

Children who are sex trafficked choosing to enter prostitution and pimps and johns needing to sex traffic children in order to make a living were significantly correlated, as well, on the level of $p < .01$ and with a correlation of .354. On the $p < .01$ level, children deserving to be treated with respect and pimps and johns needing to sex traffic children to make a living were significantly correlated with a correlation of -.442. A significant relationship also existed between there being ample therapeutic services available to children who have been sex trafficked and sex trafficking not being a

problem in America on the $p < .05$ level with a correlation of .372. Yet another statistically significant relationship existed between sex trafficked children being entitled to therapeutic services and sex trafficking children in America not being a problem on the $p < .05$ level with a correlation of -.339. A statistically significant relationship also existed between there being ample therapeutic services for sex trafficked children and children who are freed from a life of sex trafficking but choose to go back to prostitution being looked down upon on the $p < .05$ level with a correlation of .347. The statement that the sex trafficking of children is not a problem in America was also significantly correlated to the statement "the federal and state governments are doing enough to ensure the safety of children after leaving a life of sex trafficking" on the $p < .05$ level and with a correlation of .433. The statement "the federal and state governments are doing enough to try free children from a life of sex trafficking" was significantly related to the statement that the sex trafficking of children is not a problem in America on the $p < .05$ level with a correlation of .371. A correlation of .872 on the $p < .001$ existed between the statements that the federal and state governments are doing enough to ensure the safety of sex trafficked children after they leave the life of prostitution as well as the statement that the governments are doing enough to free children from a life of sex trafficking. The statement that "children who are freed from a life of sex trafficking and decide to go back to prostitution are to be looked down upon by society" was also found to be significantly correlated to the statement "the sex trafficking of children is not a problem in America" on the $p < .05$ level and a correlation of .333. Finally, a statistically significant relationship existed between children needing therapeutic services for all of their lives

and children who are freed from a life of sex trafficking but choose to go back to prostitution being looked down upon on the $p < .05$ level with a correlation of .288.

Social workers' experiences with sex trafficked children was also measured in this study. Many of the social workers surveyed stated that they had not encountered a child who was an American citizen and was sex trafficked to their knowledge, but 38.1 percent stated that they had. Fifty percent of those surveyed said that they have encountered children in their practice that have been abused by pimps, while another 47.6 percent said that they have not. Thirty-one percent of the participants also said that they had encountered children who have had pay withheld from them by pimps, and 35.7 percent said that they had encountered children in their practice who have believed that they have had a monetary debt to pay to their pimp.

When asked about the federal and state governments' role in ensuring the safety of sex trafficked children, most social workers believed that the governments were not taking enough action. Fifty percent of respondents said that they strongly disagreed that, "the federal and state governments are doing enough to ensure the safety of children after leaving a life of sex trafficking," and 38.1 percent disagreed. Only a combined 7.2 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Respondents also answered about the statement, "the federal and state governments are doing enough to try to free children from a life of sex trafficking;" 42.9 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed and 40.5 percent disagreed, while only a combined 9.5 percent either agreed or strongly agreed.

The way in which social workers gained knowledge about the domestic sex trafficking of children was measured as well. It was found that most information social

workers had about the domestic sex trafficking of children in America was gathered from journal articles (45.2 percent) and through newspapers and televised broadcasts (69 percent).

*Discussion*

In this study, the attitudes of social workers on the domestic sex trafficking of children in the United States were analyzed. The lack of literature on this topic revealed that social workers are not likely to have much knowledge on the domestic sex trafficking of children in America and the horrors that they experience at the hands of their pimps and johns. Due to this lack of knowledge, it is important to assess what social workers do actually know and the attitudes they have towards children who are sex trafficked, as well as the pimps and johns who traffic them. After the general attitudes of social workers on this topic are assessed, those in the field can become more aware of their own personal biases towards those who are involved with sex trafficking in any way and can become more informed about sex trafficking in their own country.

Originally, the hypotheses in this study focused on the knowledge of social workers regarding domestic sex trafficking of children in America, but it was soon realized that measuring the knowledge of social workers on the topic adequately was nearly impossible with the resources available. The study turned its focus to the attitudes of social workers towards the domestic sex trafficking of children in America. One hypothesis of the study stated that social workers who worked with adults would be likely to know less on the domestic sex trafficking of children in America than those who worked with children. After analyzing the surveys given to 42 social workers, it is difficult to determine what kind of knowledge social workers who work in child welfare

agencies have compared to those who work in agencies with other purposes, but it could be determined that surprisingly, those who worked in a child welfare setting were less likely to strongly disagree that sex trafficked children chose to enter prostitution than those who worked in other agencies. Social workers who worked with children were also less likely than those who worked with other populations to strongly agree that sex trafficked children should be entitled to therapeutic services. Although the difference between the mean scores for each of the statements was small, it can be determined from these results that social workers who work with adults or a population other than children have slightly more positive attitudes towards children who have been domestically sex trafficked. One reason that social workers who work in an agency with a purpose other than child welfare may have more positive attitudes may be because those who have worked in child welfare agencies have worked with children who have chosen to enter prostitution on their own free will or have chosen to return to prostitution after leaving a life of sex trafficking, as noted by Friedman and Hodge (2005, 2008). Social workers therefore may not think that all sex trafficked children were forced into prostitution or deserve to be offered therapeutic services.

The results of the correlations between gender and the attitude statements also proved to be interesting. Thirty-three female social workers were surveyed while only eight male social workers were surveyed. Male social workers were more likely to have a more positive attitude towards sex trafficked children and a more negative attitude towards pimps and johns than female social workers, but were less likely to know about domestic sex trafficking of children in the United States. Men may be less likely to know of the issue because they may have encountered fewer sex trafficked children in their

practice who were sex trafficked within the country, or because males are fifty percent less likely to be sexually assaulted or abused than females and thus are less likely to have experienced sex trafficking firsthand than female social workers (United States Department of Justice, 2007). Such factors may have influenced the results of this study.

In respect to degree level, it was found that those with a bachelor's degree in social work were more likely to have positive attitudes towards sex trafficked children and negative attitudes towards pimps and johns than those with a master's degree in social work. Thirty-three percent of those surveyed said that they learned about the sex trafficking of children while studying for their master's degree while only 21.4 percent of those surveyed said they learned about the issue while studying for their bachelor's degree. Those who learned about the sex trafficking of children during their master's program may have had more experience in the field than those who learned about it during their bachelor's program, which may have influenced social workers' opinions about sex trafficked children, pimps, and johns. Social workers who were educated about the issue during their master's program may have had more firsthand experience with pimps and johns, which may, in turn, have caused these students to believe that pimps and johns are more deserving of rehabilitative services. Simply hearing about what pimps and johns do to children could make social workers immediately write pimps off as horrible people who cannot be helped, but when an actual human is encountered and a face and a story can be put with the issue, it may make social workers more likely to believe that these people can be rehabilitated. Master's level social workers may have also encountered more children who have chosen to enter prostitution, which could influence their attitudes more negatively on sex trafficked children.

Some of the correlations between the attitudes statements also were surprising. Many of the correlations made sense and were predictable, like the correlation between children who were sex trafficked being entitled to therapeutic services and also deserving of being treated with respect; however, other correlations were less predictable, like ample services being available to sex trafficked children and sex trafficking not being a problem in America. It is unknown why some of these attitude statements are significantly correlated, as they seem to contradict each other. Perhaps the abovementioned correlation could be accounted for by social workers believing that there are enough services available to internationally sex trafficked children in America, but that American children are not sex trafficked domestically around the country. For some of the attitude statement correlations, it is difficult to reason as to why they exist.

*Limitations*

Unfortunately, this study was limited by the small overall sample size, as well as the small samples size of males and those who work in agencies with purposes other than child welfare. Because snowball sampling was used, many of the surveys were distributed within the same few agencies and a variety of field settings was not obtained.

A wider geographical distribution should be considered for future studies in this area. Most of the surveys were distributed in urban areas, so it may be beneficial to future research to distribute them in more rural areas and see if geographical location affects the attitudes of social workers regarding domestic sex trafficking of children in the United States. Greater funds may allow such a sample to be gathered.

Another limitation to this study may be the way some of the questions were worded on the survey. For example, in the demographics section of the survey, the

respondents were asked to write in their “work setting;” some participants wrote responses like “micro setting” or “non-profit” when the responses that were expected would have been what kind of agency they worked at and what it’s purpose was, like “homeless shelter” or “adoption agency.” Such ambiguity in some of the questions did not always produce the kind of information that was anticipated. Another aspect of a question that was unclear to participants was when they were asked if they learned about the domestic sex trafficking of children through “personal experience.” Many people interpreted “personal experience” as their own firsthand experience of being sex trafficked instead of their personal experience of working with clients who had been sex trafficked. This interpretation of the option was shown when participants checked “other” and wrote that they learned about the domestic sex trafficking of children from working with clients; such an interpretation may have skewed the results for that section. Future studies would need to try to ensure that each question is clear and can only be interpreted in the way the researcher intends it to be interpreted.

*Implications for Social Work and Social Policy*

It can be concluded from this study that the vast majority of social workers are unimpressed with the efforts of the state and federal governments to ensure the safety of sex trafficked children and feel that further efforts must be made. Along with Operation Innocence Lost, the federal and state governments could ensure that each state, depending on the size of the state, has an adequate number of centers and agencies devoted to providing services to children who have been sex trafficked. For those who do not have any family, shelter could be provided or for those who can not locate their family, services to help them find relatives could be supplied. Weekly or monthly check-ins may

also be provided to children who have recently left a life of sex trafficking and are not living at a shelter; these check-ins may help ensure the safety of the child. For each child who is rescued from a life of sex trafficking, a safety evaluation should be done to ensure that the child is with adults who will try to help keep them safe, that the child is not a safety risk to themselves, and that their previous pimps and johns will not be able to harm them again. Professionals who are trained in working with those who have been sex trafficked should also be available at centers to provide counseling and emotional support to children who have been sex trafficked.

Federal and state governments should also mandate that police forces be trained to be alert to the signs that a child has been sex trafficked. A federal law should be passed, as well, mandating that police open and actively pursue a case to free the child and arrest the pimp or john when they believe a child has been sex trafficked. Passing such a law would prevent police forces from ignoring the issue of sex trafficking and start an active crusade to stop the practice of it.

Social workers themselves should be trained to work with sex trafficked children. This study has supported that social workers from the specific population studied do not learn about the domestic sex trafficking of children in their bachelor's or master's degree education. It is important for social workers to receive this training as they could encounter someone who has been sex trafficked or has been affected by sex trafficking while working with almost any population. Without the proper training, social workers are at risk of doing more harm to clients with regards to the issue of sex trafficking than good. In order to be effective when working with this population, colleges and universities should incorporate a unit or course on sex trafficking in the United States into

their bachelor's and master's degree programs to train social work students in the techniques needed to appropriately and effectively work with those who have been sex trafficked. Without the proper training, social workers could be creating more problems than they solve.

In conclusion, the attitudes of social workers towards sex trafficked children and those who sex traffic them vary significantly depending on field setting, degree level, and gender. It was found in this study that the social workers surveyed were dissatisfied with federal and state attempts to free sex trafficked children from prostitution and to ensure the safety of the children after they leave prostitution. In order to be able to advocate for sex trafficked children federally and locally, as well as work effectively with the children themselves, it is strongly suggested that social workers be educated on the issue of domestic sex trafficking in both their bachelor's and master's degree programs.

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Appendix I

February, 2010

Dear Respondent,

My name is Becky Bergeron and I am a Bachelor's of Social Work student at Providence College. I am inviting you to participate in a study for my undergraduate thesis on the domestic sex trafficking of children in America. Through this study, I hope to gain a better understanding of the attitudes of social workers on the topic.

This survey is anonymous and should be returned without your name on it in order to ensure confidentiality. This study is also completely voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not wish to participate. There is no expected risk in taking this survey. If you should choose to participate in this study, please return the survey to the person who distributed the survey to you or to Becky Bergeron at Box 183081 Providence College, Providence 02918. I hope you take the time to participate and I look forward to reading your responses. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,
Becky Bergeron
Providence College Bachelor's of Social Work Student
rbergero@friars.providence.edu

**Please circle your choice or fill in the blank:**

Male or Female Race/Ethnicity: _____ Degree Level: _____

Micro or Macro Practice Years of Practice: _____ Work Setting: _____

Private or Non-Profit Organization

**Please answer the following questions using this Likert scale:**
**1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Agree 4- Strongly Agree**

1. Children who are sex trafficked choose to enter prostitution.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

2. Children who have been sex trafficked deserve to be treated with respect.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

3. There are ample therapeutic services available to children who have been sex trafficked.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

4. Sex trafficked children are entitled to therapeutic services after they leave the sex trafficking life.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

5. Sex trafficked children will need therapeutic services available to them for all of their lives.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

6. Pimps and johns should face time in prison for sex trafficking children.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

7. Pimps and johns should be entitled to therapeutic and rehabilitative services.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

8. Pimps and johns need to sex traffic children to make a living.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

9. The sex trafficking of children is not a problem in America.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

10. The federal and state governments are doing enough to ensure the safety of children after leaving a life of sex trafficking.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

11. The federal and state governments are doing enough to try to free children from a life of sex trafficking.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

12. Children who are freed from a life of sex trafficking and decide to go back to prostitution are to be looked down upon by society.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| SD | D | A | SA |

**Please answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions:**

1. I have encountered a child who I know has been a victim of sex trafficking. _____
2. I have encountered a child who is an American citizen that I know has been a victim of sex trafficking. _____
3. I have encountered a child who was forced to work in pornographic films, strip clubs, or other sexual businesses against their will. _____
4. I have encountered children who worked for pimps. _____
5. I have encountered children who have had pay withheld from them by pimps for providing sexual services to clients. _____
6. I have encountered children who believed they had a monetary debt to pay to their pimp. _____

7. I have encountered children who were abused by pimps. _____
8. I have encountered children who were deceived into working in the sex industry. ____

**Please answer the following questions:**

1. Where and how did you learn what you know about the sex trafficking of children? Please check all that apply:

____ Undergraduate studies ____ Graduate studies

____ Job training ____ Research project

____ Journal articles ____ Newspapers/televised news broadcast

____ The internet ____ Personal experience

____ Other (please explain below)

2. Would you like to learn more about the sex trafficking of children in America? Yes or No

3. Do you think learning more about the sex trafficking of children in America would be helpful to your practice? Yes or No