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Sex Trafficking in a Border Community: A Field Study of Sex Trafficking in Tijuana, Mexico

Final Report

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**SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

FOREWORD

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Study Objectives

Sex trafficking has caught worldwide attention in recent years, often being portrayed as modern-day slavery. The United States, along with many countries, has taken an aggressive position on pursuing sex traffickers, pimps, and sex tourists, making the nation among the most inhospitable to human trafficking and prostitution. Despite widespread attention on sex trafficking, there has been little empirical research on the nature and process of sex trafficking activities. Most existing studies have relied on so-called expert sources (i.e., advocacy groups, shelters, and law enforcement agencies). This study gathered information from the two sources closest to this illicit enterprise - (1) prostitutes; and (2) pimps (or sex trade facilitators).

Data for this study were primarily gathered in Tijuana, Mexico. It was hypothesized that human traffickers and sex industry operators might find Tijuana's socio-political environment conducive to trafficking activities. Tijuana, the largest city on Mexico's northern border, has long been a major tourism and weekend destination for Southern Californians. Its red light district draws a large number of visitors from both sides of the border. With more than 60 million people crossing the busiest international border annually, there is no shortage of demand for fringe services. Despite its geopolitical significance and the potential of spillover effects, to date there has been no empirical study on sex trafficking activities in Tijuana. This study is the first known empirical effort to fill this knowledge gap. The main questions in this study included:

1. To what extent, at what stage, and on what premises are deception, fraud, force, or coercion being used in the transportation of prostitutes into Tijuana?
2. To what extent and with what methods are human traffickers and sex industry operators managing trafficking activities and controlling prostitutes?

3. How do human traffickers and sex industry operators organize themselves and engage in business transactions?
4. What policy implications can be drawn to improve efforts by U.S. law enforcement and social service agencies to deter human trafficking and assist victims?

Method and Data Collection

This study followed the qualitative research traditions of in-depth interviews with semi-structured and open-ended questions, field observations, and naturalistic conversations with major players in the prostitution business, law enforcement and advocacy groups. The main emphasis of subject recruitment was to maximize the range and variety of the search for discernable patterns of trafficking activities and the operation of the sex industry in Tijuana. Although hundreds of interviews were conducted with a wide variety of individuals, this study does not pretend to produce statistical estimates about the scope of sex trafficking activities or any other aspect of the sex industry in Tijuana. Findings discussed in this report are primarily descriptive rather than inferential.

Furthermore, recruitment procedures used in this study were not based on probability sampling, but on a combination of location-based approach sampling and referrals from the social networks of those involved in this project. Due to the restrictions imposed by the university Institutional Review Board (IRB), the recruitment of women in the sex industry was mostly conducted at a government-run health clinic where the “sanitary control card” is issued to registered sex workers in Tijuana. Data in this study can only represent to some extent those who chose to use the health services at the clinic or those who came to the clinic for interviews through referrals.

Included in the data are interviews with 220 women from Tijuana's sex industry, 92 pimps and sex trade facilitators (defined as anyone who solicited customers, arranged transactions, or otherwise enabled prostitution for a fee), 30 government and law enforcement officials, and 20 community-based service providers. To explore possible spillover effects from transnational sex trade activities, the study also conducted interviews on the U.S. side (almost all in San Diego) with law enforcement representatives, social service providers, and 72 exotic dancers in the city of San Diego. Field observations were also conducted in Tijuana and interior Mexico in states with established illegal U.S.-bound migration activities.

Findings

This study found that women from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds entered into commercial sex. The men using women to advance their financial interests also comprised a diverse group. Law enforcement agencies and advocacy groups interviewed exhibited great concern about women being forced into prostitution. It remains an issue of debate whether current anti-trafficking efforts are adequate given the size of the problem, and whether current anti-trafficking strategies are appropriate for the identified patterns of sexual exploitation of women.

The vast majority of the women interviewed in this study chose prostitution as a means to achieve personal and familial financial ends, however they chose to rationalize their participation in the sex industry. It was clear that many of these women were under tremendous financial pressure to keep their children fed and clothed or to assist their families in interior Mexico. With limited education and few employable skills, these women applied the only resource readily available (namely their bodies) to achieve the best financial outcome they thought possible. Each

story, as told by these subjects, represented a woman's struggle to exercise agency, to negotiate the best possible deal in life, or simply to survive in her circumstances.

On the higher end of the sex trade, a group of escort girls appeared to relish their ability to command high earnings and support their extravagant lifestyle. However, regardless of their status in the business, most subjects were aware of the social stigma attached to prostitution and many had clear plans to leave the business. On a darker note, this study was able to interview 26 subjects (about 12 percent of the sample) who were clearly forced into prostitution, at least initially, by their "boyfriends," "husbands," or pimps. These men employed a wide range of techniques to manipulate or physically force the women into the sex trade. Nine of the subjects indicated that they were unable to go places without permission from or being accompanied by their pimps. These women were socially isolated and deprived of support from or connections with their families. They distrusted the authorities and felt too ashamed to call their families for help.

The sex trade facilitators, according to their self reports and the reports of the prostitutes, appeared to be primarily enterprising individuals who relied on either existing businesses in the red light district or initiating their own entrée into the sex trade. Those who operated at stable locations such strip clubs, brothel hotels, or massage parlors, also seemed to have relatively routine operations. Pimps without stable work locations seemed busy hustling on a daily basis to pander their women. With rare exceptions, these sex facilitators appeared not to be connected with or controlled by organized crime. There were no self reports of prostitutes or pimps having to pay for protection or paying dues to "mafia bosses."

Law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border expressed concern about sex trafficking, and the majority of these officials believed much more could be done to curtail sex

trafficking activities. On the U.S. side, legal ambiguity and the lack of victim cooperation remain the two biggest challenges for successful prosecution of sex traffickers. Neither of these problems appeared to have immediate solutions. Until these obstacles can be adequately addressed, most U.S. law enforcement officials interviewed in this study believed that the number of sex trafficking cases would remain relatively small. With few workable cases being brought to the justice system, any hope for increased resources or even on-going anti-trafficking efforts may be difficult to sustain.

Social service providers and advocacy groups, here collectively called non-government organizations (NGOs), were the most vocal respondents in this study. According to these social service agencies, sex trafficking in Tijuana was rampant and victims were numerous. Their moral certainty and passionate belief in their rescue missions were palpable, and they serve a vital function in alerting society to the plight of a segment of the prostitute population, however small and invisible, who otherwise would never be heard.

Discussion

Sex Trafficking and Organized Crime. This study found that sex trafficking was indeed happening in Tijuana's sex industry. But the identified cases were limited to individual pimps (male and female) who were adept at seeking out women in vulnerable situations and controlling them through emotional manipulation, social isolation, and/or violence. In explaining why little evidence was found to suggest any systematic involvement of organized crime in sex trafficking in Tijuana, a conceptual paradigm (i.e., the *Trafficking Propensity Square*) was proposed. This theory posits that large-scale transnational sex trafficking activities, a process in which any sizeable number of women are being subject to sexual exploitation through force or

deceit either transitionally or domestically, are unlikely due to four contrarian market conditions (hence a *Trafficking Propensity Square*): (1) the pool of potential victims is small due to the predominant migration pattern for women; (2) massive use of force and fraud, the two key elements defining sex trafficking, are difficult to sustain over protracted periods of time and long distances; (3) transporting and managing human beings in any significant numbers are inherently difficult endeavors; and (4) continued moral and legal campaigns by advocacy groups and government agencies create a hostile market environment that discourages any organized involvement by crime syndicates.

The Moral Dilemma. Findings in this study clearly point to a complex social and legal problem brought about by an increasingly globalized and commercialized world. How and why women in Tijuana or elsewhere find themselves in the socially stigmatized, if not legally prohibited, commercial sexual activity is far more complex than what is frequently portrayed in the news media or by advocacy groups. This study found that some women were indeed deceived and coerced into prostitution by men skilled at exploiting their victims' emotional and financial vulnerabilities. Others escaped abusive family relationships only to find themselves ensnared by pimps. Still others simply found the high earning potential of prostitution difficult to resist. The majority of women in this study chose to engage in commercial sex as a way to improve their life circumstances. There were simply few other employment alternatives from which they could extract comparable income. A few of the subjects even relished their ability to control their work schedule and enjoyed their material successes. Uniting these diverse players and their varied motivations was a common desire to achieve a standard of living that they deemed tolerable.

Policy Implications. Current anti-trafficking campaigns can be improved in the following five areas. First, governments of the U.S. and Mexico need to focus on disruption-oriented law enforcement policies and strategies that seek out individual entrepreneurs who engage in sex trafficking activities. As hypothesized in the *Trafficking Propensity Square* model, there are simply too many formidable market constraints for criminal organizations to profit from sex trafficking activities. If this is the case, then perhaps the anti-trafficking campaign on either side of the border should focus its attention and resources on a narrowly-defined target population, instead of portraying the entire sex trade as being gripped by organized crime and flooded with trafficking victims. At the tactical level, law enforcement agencies need to focus on disruption, rather than prolonged and in-depth investigation, to produce an intended market impact that is not only immediate but perhaps just as effective.

Second, to increase the cost of doing business for these entrepreneurs, legislative changes are needed which specifically target the final outcome of human trafficking, i.e., asset forfeiture. Some state legislatures, such as California and Maryland, are already moving to devise laws to make it easier for authorities to seize ill-gained properties from convicted traffickers.

Third, significant resources and efforts are needed for bilateral collaborations to educate and train law enforcement agencies as well as medical and social service providers on how to recognize and respond to sex trafficking activities and victims.

Fourth, among the most effective ways to reduce sex trafficking is perhaps through a public awareness campaign—flyers, billboards, and radio/TV announcements. Anti-trafficking messages need to be disseminated via public and commercial airwaves, billboard spaces, and included in brochures to be handed out by medical and social service agencies and at major transportation stations (e.g., airports, bus and train stations). The idea is to create and maintain a

hostile socio-legal environment for sex traffickers and increase victims awareness of available services.

Fifth, a major anti-trafficking strategy missing from current movement is the lack of political will and resource allocations to secure and offer long-term solutions that can persuade women to exit the sex trade. Mental health and social service professionals should welcome the challenge to compete against the pimps in offering these women viable alternatives.

Future Research on Sex Trafficking. Regardless of how and where one chooses to enter into the migration process, force and fraud can quickly compel people to engage in activities that they would otherwise not have chosen of their own free will. However, the range of implications that can be derived from the findings in this study was constrained by the restrictions imposed by the IRB in its data collection, and by methodological limitations. Should similar studies be conducted in the future, much more rigorous methods in ethnography must be pursued. Extended periods of field observations in red light districts and interacting with brothel owners/traffickers as well as with prostitutes should be carried out. Without prolonged fieldwork, our knowledge and concerns about sex trafficking will continue to be trapped in the proverbial “black box.”

Furthermore, if the findings in this study are any indication, the number of sex trafficking victims is sizeable. In fact, these women were not difficult to find in Tijuana’s sex industry. This study by design was unable to provide population estimates to address one key question that continues to nag the anti-trafficking campaign—what is the scope of the problem? Future research needs to employ designs and data collection strategies that can provide statistically sound estimates about the prevalence of victimization in certain geographical locations. The lack of valid estimates of the scope of the problem exposes policy makers to varied perceptions based

on wild speculation. Without valid and repeated measures of prevalence, the current anti-trafficking campaign will continue along a path that is heavy on rhetoric but anemic in empirical evidence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
I. INTRODUCTION	15
I.A. BACKGROUND.....	15
I.B. STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING.....	17
I.C. CRITIQUE OF CURRENT RESEARCH ON SEX TRAFFICKING.....	21
II. METHODS	22
II.A. SITE SELECTION—TIJUANA, MEXICO.....	22
II.B. THE ISSUE OF PROPER TERMINOLOGY FOR WOMEN IN THE SEX INDUSTRY	25
II.C. STUDY DESIGN	27
II.D. INSTRUMENTATION.....	29
II.E. DOMAINS OF INFORMATION	30
II.F. DATA COLLECTION	32
II.F.1. Primary Data Collection.....	32
II.F.2. Subject Recruitment.....	33
II.F.3. Field Observations	35
II.F.4. Secondary Data Collection.....	36
II.G. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS	37
II.H. STUDY DESIGN LIMITATIONS.	38
III. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	41
III.A. WOMEN IN THE SEX INDUSTRY	41
III.A.1. The Women in this Study.....	41
III.A.2. Migration to Tijuana	45
III.A.3. Entry into the Sex Industry	50
III.A.4. Working in the Sex Industry	57
III.A.5. Control and Decision Making in Commercial Sex	60
III.A.6. Perceptions of the Sex Trade and Future Plans.....	62
III.A.7. Of Agency and Resiliency	64
III.B. INTERVIEWS WITH THE SEX TRADE FACILITATORS.....	68
III.B.1. The Demographic Profiles of Sex Trade Facilitators.....	68
III.B.2. Becoming a Pimp	69
III.B.3. Life as a Pimp.....	71
III.B.4. Recruiting Women for Sex Work.....	73
III.B.5. Sex Trafficking and Organized Crime	81
III.C. THE ADVOCACY GROUPS	88
III.D. SAN DIEGO EXOTIC DANCERS.....	92
IV. DISCUSSION	98
IV.A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	98

IV.B. OF MORALITY AND FINANCIAL NECESSITY	100
IV.C. SEX TRAFFICKING AND ORGANIZED CRIME	103
IV.D. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES	109
IV.E. FUTURE RESEARCH ON SEX TRAFFICKING.....	114
V. REFERENCES.....	117
VI. TABLES AND FIGURES.....	125
VII. APPENDICES.....	143
VII.A. INTERVIEW GUIDELINE FOR SEX WORKERS.....	143
VII.B. INTERVIEW GUIDELINE FOR PIMPS	151
VII.C. INTERVIEW GUIDELINE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS	158
VII.D. INTERVIEW GUIDELINE FOR NGOS.....	161

I. INTRODUCTION

I.A. Background

Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation has gained wide attention in both developed and developing countries over the past decade or so. Many academics, public officials, law enforcement authorities, and people in the news media believe human trafficking to be among the most tragic and horrendous transnational criminal activities facing us today (Altink 1995; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; Williams 1999; Brown 2000; Hughes 2000; International Organization for Migration 2000, 2001; Kyle and Koslowski 2001; Raymond and Hughes 2001; Hughes and Denisova 2001). Victims are transported from Eastern Europe to Western countries, and from Asia and Latin America to the U.S. It is a problem that recognizes no race, gender, or national boundary. Although leading the battle against transnational human trafficking, the United States has its own share of the problem (U.S. State Department 2005). For instance, on December 17, 2005, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales announced the breakup of a large prostitution ring involving more than 30 children as young as 12 who were transported to provide sexual services at truck stops, hotels, and brothels (Associated Press 2005). Multiple indictments were issued against the traffickers in states that included Michigan, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania for bringing children across state lines for prostitution.

The U.S. is among a handful of developed nations that take an aggressive stand against prostitution and related activities, including pimping, pandering, and operating brothels, which are considered a hotbed for sex trafficking. Since the passage of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, the U.S. government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in various domestic and international programs aimed at combating the problem. Not all countries share the United States' views regarding prostitution. Its neighbor to the South,

Mexico, for instance, has “tolerance zones” throughout the country where prostitution is permitted or legal.

Tijuana, a major northern Mexican city bordering San Diego, has a vibrant red light district, comprising a few square blocks adjacent to the main tourist zone, within walking distance from the San Ysidro border crossing. Advocacy groups claim that well-organized groups of human traffickers and sex industry operators stake out their territories to peddle services to American visitors as well as local johns (Ugarte, Zarate, and Farley 2003).

Thousands of prostitutes are reportedly transported from the interior of Mexico into Tijuana each year by traffickers and pimps. To complicate the problem further, Tijuana (and the greater Baja California) is also a major corridor for a variety of trans-border criminal activities, including drug trafficking and migrant smuggling, making it a major concern for U.S. homeland security (Castillo, Gomez and Delgado 1999). Regional law enforcement agencies such as the San Diego Police Department, the National City Police Department, the Chula Vista Police Department, and federal law enforcement agencies all have special details assigned to cross-border criminal activities.

Most of what we know about Tijuana’s sex industry comes from the news media. There is little empirical research on how women and children are recruited and transported into Tijuana, how sex industry facilitators interact with their local and American clients, and how women in the sex trade are managed and controlled by their handlers. Furthermore, there is little knowledge about whether sex traffickers are part of regular migrant smuggling or drug trafficking networks or whether they occupy separate spheres of the underground economy. Such a gap in our knowledge hinders social service, public health, and criminal justice efforts to combat the problem in both Mexico and the U.S.

Built upon previous NIJ projects on human smuggling and trafficking, this study examined the nature, process, and possible causal factors related to sex trafficking activities in Tijuana and assessed its implications on the United States' and Mexico's anti-trafficking efforts and policies. Four main questions guided this study:

1. To what extent, at what stage, and on what premises are deception, fraud, force, or coercion being used in the transportation of prostitutes into Tijuana?
2. To what extent and with what methods are human traffickers and sex industry operators managing trafficking activities and controlling prostitutes?
3. How do human traffickers and sex industry operators organize themselves and engage in business transactions?
4. What policy implications can be drawn to improve efforts by U.S. law enforcement and social service agencies to deter human trafficking and assist its victims?

I.B. State of Knowledge about Sex Trafficking

Trafficking of women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a serious violation of human rights and has attracted much global attention in recent years. Despite a general lack of empirical data, many claims have been made about the scope and seriousness of the problem. Some claim that it is the third-largest criminal industry in the world as of 2006-- behind only drugs and firearms trafficking, with profits in the billions of dollars each year (Siobhan 2006; Miko and Park 2002). The U.S. government estimates that human smuggling and trafficking generates \$9.5 billion annually (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2003). Around the world hundreds of thousands of women are trafficked into sex industry or other forms of indentured labor each year, and the United States is among the top destination

countries (U.S. State Department 2006). The illicit movement of people across borders not only violates the sovereign boundaries of affected nations, but also engenders economic dislocation and exploitation, political disputes, and human rights violations (Bales 1999, 2005). However, current research efforts on human trafficking are impeded by two main challenges: one is the blurry divide between smuggling and trafficking, and the other is the scarcity of empirical data.

Although trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation has been around for a long time, it was only in recent years that deliberate efforts were made to differentiate trafficking from irregular (or illegal) migration for economic reasons. Human smuggling typically involves willing and fee-paying illegal immigrants who seek to migrate to countries where there are better economic opportunities (Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center 2005). Human trafficking involves transporting or harboring human beings for financial gains through the use of fraud or force. Trafficking activities generally fall into two categories: (1) sex trafficking in which migrants (most women and children) are transported with the intent to perform sexual services at destination countries, and (2) trafficking of individuals for involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. Internationally, most nations have adopted the definition issued by the United Nations in December 2000, with the signing in Italy of the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons*, which requires such elements as the use of force, coercion, and deception for the purpose of sexual or labor exploitation (United Nations 2000).

In the U.S., sex trafficking is defined in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (VTVPA—Sec. 103.9.) as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act,” and applies a lower threshold to qualify such acts where force and fraud may or may not be present. Although VTVPA contains a section on *severe* forms of trafficking, which include the use of deception,

fraud, coercion and force, the general definition allows justice agencies greater flexibility in pursuing traffickers/smugglers who transport women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation (Hughes 2000). In practice, however, the operational definition of sex trafficking remains a messy process, because human smuggling and trafficking often overlap in many stages from recruitment to transportation and final delivery. Thus, definition of sex trafficking can be broad or narrow. In a broad sense, trafficking occurs when women are transported for the purpose of sexual exploitation even if the women consent to the process, in which case, pimps qualify as sex traffickers. The narrower definitions of trafficking require the use of force, coercion, and deception prior to the departure (Hughes 2000). As a result, the word “trafficking” can mean different things to different organizations and government agencies, resulting in different methods of gauging the extent of the problem (Hughes 2000; Raymond and Hughes 2001). For instance, as late as 2004, the confusion between smuggling and trafficking and the misuse of the two terms led the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the lead federal agency with jurisdiction over human trafficking, to miscount the total number of trafficking investigations and arrests (U.S. Department of Justice 2006: 12). As discussed later, these definitional complexities have also created operational difficulties for law enforcement agencies in the U.S.

In addition to the definitional complexity, exposing the nature and scope of sex trafficking and the extent of its victimization remains largely guesswork. There have been many published papers and reports on the subject, but few contain empirical data (Gozdziak and Bump 2008; Zhang 2009). For obvious reasons, it is difficult to gain access to the secretive world of human trafficking or the sex industry in general. Despite its secretive nature, many estimates on the scope of sex trafficking have been cited and recited in various publications. The most-quoted

figures are probably those included in the U.S. State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report (or the TIP report). The TIP report has been widely circulated by government agencies, NGOs, and researchers around the world.

As early as 1998, the U.S. Government estimated that 700,000 people are trafficked annually worldwide, and 45,000 to 50,000, predominantly women and children, are trafficked into the United States for sexual exploitation or forced labor (U.S. Department of Justice 2004: 7). Although estimates of global trafficking victims ranging from 600,000 to 800,000 have remained largely unchanged, the number of trafficking victims into the U.S. has been revised significantly. In 2003, the TIP report estimated that 18,000 to 20,000 people are trafficked annually into the United States, and the majority are women and children being brought in for sexual exploitation. By 2004, the figures were again revised to between 14,500 and 17,500 (U.S. Department of State 2004). The U.S. Government attributed these changes to improved data analysis (such as the application of Monte Carlo and Bayesian modeling to account for unknown and missing data) (U.S. Department of Justice 2004: 8). In the 2005 and 2006 TIP reports, estimates on the number of trafficking victims into the U.S. were omitted. A report issued by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (formerly General Accounting Office) raised questions about the accuracy and methodology of the TIP estimates. The GAO study challenged the figures issued by the U.S. government on the number of persons being trafficked across international borders or into the U.S. annually. The GAO report pointedly stated, "The U.S. government's estimate was developed by one person who did not document all his work, so the estimate may not be replicable, casting doubt on its reliability. Moreover, country data are not available, reliable, or comparable...the U.S. government has not yet established an effective mechanism for estimating the number of victims or for conducting ongoing analysis of

trafficking-related data that resides within government entities” (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2006: 2). Even the government agencies in charge of fighting human trafficking found it necessary to explain the noted disparity between the estimated number of victims and the few victims found and assisted each year (U.S. Department of Justice 2006: 9).

The purpose of this discussion is not to discredit existing literature but to highlight the lack of basic empirical knowledge on the scope and nature of sex trafficking into the United States or elsewhere, and to point out the fact that few reliable sources are available for researchers and policy analysts to engage in a meaningful discourse on the causes of trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation and appropriate responses.

I.C. Critique of Current Research on Sex Trafficking

Empirical research on sex trafficking is a daunting task. Most researchers are confronted with problems of access to either the victim population or the traffickers. However, these empirical challenges have not prevented government agencies and non-government organizations from publishing estimates or making claims about the characteristics of sex trafficking activities. A plethora of articles can be found through a simple search in any library or online database, most of which are produced by government analysts, law enforcement reports, advocacy groups, and most recently, academics. Some researchers have recently begun to question the empirical premises of many published claims on sex trafficking activities, pointing out major gaps in the findings and claims. Among the most critical is perhaps Professor Ronald Weitzer of George Washington University who accused the moral crusade of driving the current escalation of discussions on human trafficking in Western countries. According to Weitzer (2007: 448), advocacy groups have with their exaggerated claims and grossly generalized horror

stories, had remarkable success in getting their funds and their views incorporated in government policy, legislation, and law enforcement practices. Weitzer states that ‘in no area of the social sciences has ideology contaminated knowledge more pervasively than in writings on the sex industry. Too often in this area, the canons of scientific inquiry are suspended and research deliberately skewed to serve a particular political agenda (Weitzer 2005: 934).’

Weitzer is not alone. After an exhaustive review of most, if not all, published literature on sex trafficking, Goździak and Bump (2008), in their NIJ-supported study, found that few of the journal articles were empirically based. Of those that were based on some form of data collection, most relied heavily on anecdotal stories and interviews with “key stakeholders” (Goździak and Bump 2008: 9). Sanghera (2005:4) lamented that the current discourse on human trafficking is not driven by empirical research but grounded in the construction of a particular mythology.

It should be noted that it was not the intent of the present study to participate in the debate over the credence of either camp, but to explore strategies that can improve our empirical knowledge about sex trafficking. Regardless of one’s moral views, the discussion of human trafficking cannot become credible without serious empirical studies. After all, the fundamental ethos of American social science is its predisposition towards empirical verification.

II. METHODS

II.A. Site Selection—Tijuana, Mexico

The primary data collection for this study was conducted in Tijuana, where there is a booming sex industry. The selection of Tijuana as the main data gathering site was because of its geo-political location relevant to the problem of sex trafficking. With a population approaching

1.5 million, Tijuana is the West Coast's second largest city, second only to Los Angeles. The city has long been a major transit point for cross-border activities, legal or otherwise. The U.S. government has long claimed that women and children are trafficked from Mexico's poorest rural regions to urban centers and tourist areas for sexual exploitation, often through fraudulent offers of employment or threats of physical violence (U.S. Department of State 2006). Because of its geographical location, Tijuana has become a major way station for human smugglers and traffickers alike to stage their operations.

Tijuana has a particular draw for its sex industry. The city is a favorite weekend destination for U.S.-based sailors and soldiers stationed in San Diego, as well as college students who cross the border to drink alcohol because Mexico's legal drinking age is 18. There may be little incentive for sex traffickers to bring women into the U.S. when they can do the same work "legally" with similar earning potential on the other side of the border. According to one ranking state official in charge of pursuing sex offenders in California, sex traffickers occasionally bring in undocumented women to cater to undocumented migrants living in makeshift camps in the border regions. But most trafficking and prostitution activities take place in Tijuana where there is no shortage of customers from the U.S. and little risk of running into legal trouble.

Tijuana and San Diego form the busiest border crossing in the U.S., with more than 14 million vehicles and 40 million people crossing into the U.S. at the San Ysidro port of entry. The two cities have long had a symbiotic relationship. Historically, Tijuana's population was established largely for the demand generated by tourists from San Diego and Southern California. American tourists took horse-drawn carriages to the border for a variety of attractions such as horse races, bull fights, cock fights, and native dances (Taylor, 2002). The passage of the *Red Light Abatement Act of 1913* in California further drove the promoters of

gaming, liquor sales, and prostitution south of the border and helped Tijuana's already substantial reputation as a human, weapons, and drug trafficking bastion (McIllwain 2004; McIllwain 1998; Sandos 1984). For over 100 years, Tijuana has been a main tourist destination where Americans can visit and do things prohibited back home.

Tijuana's red-light district, also known as "*Zona Norte*" or "*La Coahuila*" or "*Zona de Tolerancia*," consists of a few square blocks near the Avenida Revolucion (the main tourist street lined with trinket stores, pharmacies, and restaurants). In Zona Norte, young women, some seemingly in their teens, line the streets beckoning to tourists. Men outside massage parlors invite passers-by to look at their fresh supply of girls. Loud music emanates from the narrow entrances of dim-lit venues into the streets. Some nightclubs such as *Adelita* and *Chicago* are well known for catering to American customers, while the Chinese tourists seem to frequent *Club Hong Kong*.

Prostitutes working in Tijuana have long been suspected of being lured from small towns in the interior of Mexico or other Latin American countries by traffickers and pimps. Local human rights groups and social service agencies claim that few women working on the street operate as freelancers. For instance, Ugarte, Zarate, and Farley (2003: 155) estimated that in the years 2000-2002 "approximately 135,000 Mexican children have been kidnapped and trafficked into illegal adoption, prostitution, and pornography."

The relationship between the sex industry and authorities has remained largely tacit, although pressure from the U.S. has pushed local authorities on occasion to try to improve the city's image as a tourism destination. In 2004, city officials attempted to force streetwalkers to confine their soliciting activities inside bars and hotels. The effort backfired when hundreds of prostitutes threatened to protest by taking off their clothes in front of the City Hall (Cearley

2004). In the fall of 2005, Tijuana authorities required all prostitutes to undergo monthly medical checkups and obtain sanitary control cards as proof of registration and documentation that they were free from sexually transmitted diseases. Although the move was promoted as making prostitution safer for sex workers and their customers, it was also an acknowledgement of the large number of unsafe and unregulated brothels. For years, the Mexican authorities have had unwritten rules requiring prostitutes to submit to regular health exams, including three HIV tests a year (Spagat 2005). According to government clinics, brothel owners have agreed to pay part of the health check costs and implement other hygienic practices to reduce the chances of spreading sexually transmitted diseases. No one knows the compliance rate, as many brothels such as massage parlors frequently move their location to avoid detection.

Statistics on the number of prostitutes in Tijuana also vary widely. Ugarte, Zarate, and Farley (2003: 147) cited “15,000 women in street prostitution in Tijuana with many more working in the city’s more than 200 brothels and clubs.” One source quoted a figure of 3,000 (Cearley 2004), and indicated that most prostitutes work in dance clubs, bars or massage parlors with only about 500 to 600 working the streets in the red light district. Another source put the figure at 4,700 (Spagat 2005). The community informants for this project put the estimate at around 6,000 and claimed that most of the women are from out of town, from states such as Michoacan, Puebla, Oaxaca, and Quintana Roo.

II.B. The Issue of Proper Terminology for Women in the Sex Industry

The term “prostitute” is used as much as possible in this report to refer to women who trade sexual services for money. To break the monotony, such terms as “subjects” or “the women” and occasionally “sex worker” are also used. Although the word “prostitute” or

“prostitution” conveys negative connotations, there are no easy and neutral alternatives. Terms such as “sex workers” or “sexually-exploited women” invite criticism from some groups of individuals who hold strong opinions about the sex industry. The use of the term “prostitute” will undoubtedly also invite criticism. Other generic terms such as “female subjects” or “female interviewees” are as awkward as they are confusing, because many of the NGO representatives, government and law enforcement officials, and key community informants who participated in this study are also female. Even the term “women who work in the sex trade” can be misleading, as the term may be applied to the many female pimps or sex trade facilitators interviewed in this study. When women who sold sex in Mexico were consulted as to which term they would prefer being called, the choice was rather telling. The term “prostitute” was almost always rejected or avoided not only by these women but also by social service providers, and even government and law enforcement officials in Mexico.

There were variations in the specific terms used. Depending on their business locations, women who worked in strip clubs (or table dancers) referred to themselves as exotic dancers (*bailarinas exóticas*) whether or not sex was part of the transaction. Some would just use the word “*bailarinas*” while others used both. Women in escort services would call themselves escorts. The women who worked on the street referred to themselves as *sexo servidoras* (sexual workers). Their indignation and wholesale objection to being called “prostitutes” were palpable during many of the interviews. When one of the project staff was inquiring about how “prostitutes” generally thought about their occupation, one subject retorted:

If I were sleeping around with men just to make myself feel good or hot, you could call me a slut, because I’d do it for fun. But don’t call me a prostitute because I am not selling myself cheap. I take my job seriously. I am a sex worker.

To the community informants in Mexico and others in Mexican government and justice agencies, the term “prostitute” was considered so prejudicial and derogatory that they’d rather use “sex workers” in spite of the term’s implied legitimacy. However, to the U.S. government and most anti-sex trafficking organizations, prostitution is not work. Women who trade sex for money are either victims of sex trafficking or exploited by their pimps and clients. Therefore “sex worker” is often avoided in reference to these women. The federal government requires that all federally-funded projects and agencies take an unequivocal stance against prostitution. The last thing any anti-sex trafficking organizations want is to legitimize a business which is at core of the global sex trafficking problem.

II.C. Study Design

This study combined ethnographic traditions with survey techniques in a single study (or more specifically a case study), thus drawing from the strengths of each while minimizing the weaknesses of the other. Such a combination can maximize the “depth, richness of context, the intuitive appeal of real life” while maintaining some degree of generalizability in the findings (Massey and Zenteno 2000: 767). Data gathered through such hybrid strategies have been found to have greater reliability and more internal validity than could be achieved using either method alone (Massey 1987, 1993). These field techniques include case study, ethnographic observations, survey research involving in-depth interviews, and content analysis of secondary sources. The eclectic methodological approach used in this study was determined by the nature of the subject matter. As discussed earlier, Tijuana is a special case that would require direct observations and systematic interviewing of individuals who had direct knowledge of the sex

industry and the smuggling/trafficking business. With these field strategies, this study was able to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin 1994: 6-13).

What makes Tijuana an interesting case study is its legal prostitution business, albeit with zoning restrictions. Some researchers suggest that the legalization of prostitution may be a solution to fight trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation (Kempadoo and Doezema 1998). Others argue the opposite and point to countries such as Australia and the Netherlands where legalized sex industries have supposedly become a magnet for human traffickers to bring in foreign and domestic women to fill the open demand (Raymond and Hughes 2001). Tijuana is also unique because the city is a major transit center for several other trans-border criminal activities, including migrant smuggling and drug trafficking. These intertwined relationships bear significant policy implications relevant to U.S. law enforcement efforts.

The flexibility of ethnographic techniques allowed this project to examine the myriad of factors contributing to sex trafficking and to explore complex relationships among trafficking victims, sex industry operators, smugglers and traffickers. Ethnographic techniques were also handy in allowing the researchers to observe night life in Tijuana and how various players including American tourists, local police, club owners, and prostitutes, converged and interacted. In its attempt to consider all possible aspects of human trafficking within the region, this study adopted a holistic approach in “covering as much territory as possible about a culture, subculture or program” in the city (Fetterman 1995: 11). Such intensity and thoroughness in field observations and interview activities were also possible due to the fact that the project was

primarily carried out in one location. To supplement these field activities, project staff also made trips to migrant-sending communities in the interior part of Mexico.

II.D. Instrumentation

Two bodies of literature guided the instrumentation of this study: (1) literature on illegal migrant smuggling and (2) recent NIJ-funded projects on human trafficking. The existing literature on human trafficking and smuggling offered some glimpses into how smugglers and traffickers operate (Chin 1999; Andreas 2000; Kyle and Koslowski 2001; Massey et al. 2002; Malarek 2003). Moving human beings in any sizeable number requires coordinated transportation schemes that may involve sea, land, and air routes. Some of the trafficking schemes may be as simple as luring victims with promises of well-paid jobs in urban centers, while other smuggling methods are more sophisticated. Victims can be trapped in an illegal migration environment where they have neither control over their destinations nor physical safety. They are deceived, coerced, or forced to provide sexual services to those who handle their transportation and eventually sold to brothel owners who continue the exploitation through violence or threats of violence, and prevent possible escape by withholding the victims' identity and travel documents.

The other source of literature that provided useful guidance for instrumentation purposes were the studies funded by NIJ (see Raymond and Hughes 2001; Estes and Weiner 2001; Bales and Lize 2005). According to these studies, sex traffickers consisted of diverse groups of individuals -- from amateurs, to small groups of entrepreneurs, to sophisticated transnational criminal organizations, and other differently configured variations. Traffickers came from both legitimate and illegitimate business sectors, and included recruiters, transporters, corrupt public

officials, informers, guides and crew members, enforcers, supporting personnel and specialists, debt collectors, and money movers (Estes and Weiner 2001: 20). Trafficking victims also come from diverse backgrounds. Some women left their home countries on their own and became victims along the way in the hands of unscrupulous traffickers, while others were “given” or sold to related or unrelated adults who promised education and jobs. As Bales and Lize (2005: 37-39) and Raymond and Hughes (2001: 59-68) found, sex traffickers employ a wide range of methods to control their victims, including physical violence, sexual assault, drugs and alcohol, control of money, isolation, withholding travel documents, and debt bondage. One common feature shared by all three studies was their heavy reliance on so-called “subject experts”—officials who were considered “experts” on the subject matter, instead of subjects who were in their natural environments. Although one may question its accuracy, data gathered from law enforcement agencies, NGOs, community experts, social service providers, and victims housed in shelters, these studies nevertheless provided valuable guidance as to where and how future studies on this topic should proceed.

II.E. Domains of Information

The main research instrument in this study was a semi-structured interview guideline for the prostitutes (see Appendix VII.A), combining both quantitative and qualitative measures. Structured questions (with fixed responses) were used to capture common elements for statistical analysis, such as demographics, common experiences during trafficking process, attitudes and motivation, as well as personal finance. Because of the uniqueness of individual experiences, many questions were open-ended with prompting phrases. The questions covered the following domains of information: (1) demographic characteristics, (2) recruitment stage, (3) reasons for

coming to Tijuana, (4) transportation stage, (5) arrival and settlement stage, (6) work as a prostitute, (7) income from prostitution, (8) routine and leisure activities, and (9) views on prostitution.

Interviews with pimps and other facilitators, the so-called sex trade facilitators, also followed a set of prompting questions (see Appendix VII.B). The main domains of information included: (1) individual characteristics, (2) interaction and transaction patterns in the sex trade, (3) prostitution in different venues, (4) patterns in recruiting and transporting women to prostitution venues, (5) financial matters, (6) problems encountered in the sex trade and the subjects' coping mechanisms, (7) involvement in other business activities, (8) affiliation with organized crime, and (9) views on the sex trade.

Interviews with law enforcement authorities, judges, prosecutors, and government officials focused on their assessment of the trafficking problems in their jurisdictions, strategies for suppressing the problem, and recommendations for improvement. They were asked to: (1) describe the sex trafficking situation in Tijuana or San Diego, (2) provide cases of arrests and prosecutions, (3) describe challenges and problems in current anti-trafficking efforts, and (4) recommend specific measures for improvement, particularly with regard to bilateral strategies to combat sex trafficking and the sex industry. An interview guideline was also used to facilitate these interviews (see Appendix VII.C).

Interviews with social service providers, NGOs, and advocacy groups focused on the following main domains of information: (1) the assessment of the sex trafficking situation in Tijuana or the border region, (2) their current roles and functions, (3) challenges of their agency services or functions, and (4) relationships with local government authorities. A copy of the interview guideline is included in Appendix VII.D.

II.F. Data Collection

II.F.1. Primary Data Collection

Two types of interviews were conducted in this study. One involved formal interviews in which the above described instrument was used, the other were mostly open-ended naturalistic conversations with key informants with a focus on their understanding and assessment of trafficking activities in their geographical areas. Formal interviews were all conducted in Tijuana, Mexico, the main research site of this study. The following table provides a breakdown of the main categories of subjects interviewed for this project.

Table 1 about here

As shown in the above table, most field activities took place in Tijuana, Mexico. A total of 220 interviews were conducted with women who worked in Tijuana's sex industry. Another 92 interviews were conducted with pimps or sex trade facilitators. These included pimps who directly controlled women and transported them to different prostitution venues on a daily basis, transporters who shuttled women from location to location, strip club owners and managers, and escort service coordinators. Dozens of government officials (mostly law enforcement officers) and non-government agency representatives were also interviewed for this study. A nominal fee was paid to both the prostitutes and the sex trade facilitators to encourage participation. No compensation was given to any public officials or representatives from the non-government organizations.

The interviews with prostitutes were conducted by a team of interviewers who were residents of Tijuana and all college educated. All were either already working in the social services (some in community medical clinics), or had prior experience working with women in the sex industry. Interviewers strove to take on an informal and non-threatening manner. Interviewers were allowed discretion as to how and when to ask sensitive questions (such as initial entry into prostitution, personal finance, prices for various sex acts, and condom use), while remaining true to the intention of the research questions. The subjects were also allowed to dictate the pace of the interview and expanded on issues not necessarily asked. Many of the interviewees were eager to tell their personal stories and appreciated the attention from our interview staff.

Training workshops were conducted to familiarize interviewers with the structure of the instrument and intent of the questions. Training was also provided on interviewing techniques, field protocols, and human subject protection procedures. All interviewers took the online tutorial about research involving human subjects at San Diego State University and passed the certification test. Frequent meetings were held by the PI to debrief the field staff in Tijuana.

II.F.2. Subject Recruitment

Because of the emphasis on obtaining first-hand information from those directly involved in the sex trade, this study did not seek any referrals from advocacy groups, law enforcement agencies, or women's shelters for subject recruitment purposes. Instead, subject recruitment took place primarily in two locations. Initially, a team of interviewers from a Tijuana local community health clinic started the interviews with clinic clients who were prostitutes. The health clinic is a well-known non-profit organization that provides reproductive and medical health care education

and services to Tijuana's poor and low-income women and families. Interviewers recruited participants during their routine outreach activities in the prostitution community in Tijuana's red light district. Multiple referrals were then generated through the initial few interviews. A total of 43 useable interviews were completed by the clinic's staff.

A series of events took place over the course of this project, including staff turnover at the clinic and rising drug-related violence in Tijuana. As a result, all field activities were suspended by the University for a period of six months. When the project resumed, recruitment activities were shifted to a municipal-run health clinic that was the primary clinic in charge of conducting physical checkups and issuing the sanitary control cards to registered sex workers in the city. This clinic is situated on the edge of the red light district, a convenient location where sex workers either apply for or renew their sanitary control cards. Because the clinic is primarily used by women, pimps or other male sex companions typically waited outside the facilities. Subjects were approached by the project staff in the waiting area inside the clinic and asked if they would be interested in participating in the study. Upon completion of the interview, subjects were then asked to refer friends who were also in the sex trade . Therefore a combination of convenience sampling and snowball referral was used in the recruitment of the prostitutes.

The recruitment of sex trade facilitators relied on the social networks of the project staff in Tijuana, especially friends with direct contacts in the red light district. Because prostitution is a large business in Tijuana, it was not difficult for native Tijuana residents, particularly those with certain social backgrounds, to find people in the sex trade. Furthermore, anyone who admitted providing direct services or playing direct roles in facilitating sex trade transactions would qualify as eligible subjects. The interviewers in charge of this portion of the study had extensive social contacts in Tijuana's sex industry, from brothel owners to local police and

public health officials. One interviewer was at one point working for a state government agency in charge of the procurement of penicillin, which was at the time supplied in large quantities to clinics treating sexually transmitted diseases in Tijuana. Their social contacts in turn served as referral sources for additional subjects. Interviews were conducted primarily in cafes, quiet eateries, or at the subjects' residences.

The team of interviewers in Tijuana also utilized their personal connections to reach police officers and government officials for interviews. They also reached out to non-government organizations that were providing medical and social services to women and children in Tijuana. Some of these organizations operated shelters or medical clinics, while others were primarily involved in human rights issues.

Finally, interviews were also conducted on the U.S. side of the border with representatives from advocacy groups, social service providers, and law enforcement agencies. Since these were all public agencies, requests for interviews were fairly easy to obtain.

II.F.3. Field Observations

Multiple field trips were made prior to and during the course of the project. Observations were made in and around the red light district in Tijuana, mainly to gauge the crowds in and out of the area and the number of prostitutes walking the streets. Field observations were also conducted in major migrant-sending states in interior Mexico, including Michoacán, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Mexico State, and Mexico City. Numerous conversations were held with locals during these field locations. Subjects were mostly representatives from local research institutions, government agencies, and social service agencies. The conversations mostly concerned local migration patterns, organized crime, economic situations, and sex industry. These field trips and

conversations with local researchers, community leaders, and even local merchants produced much-needed intuitive knowledge about the socio-cultural environment of these migrant-sending communities. More importantly, much local knowledge was gained about how migrants, especially women, would negotiate their migration path to the north. Regional differences in migration traditions and cultures in feeder communities were all found relevant to the explanations of how sex trafficking activities may be carried out and the extent to which such activities may be constrained or exacerbated.

Additional interviews were made by the PI with NGO representatives based in Washington D.C. to obtain national views on anti-trafficking campaigns, and with public security officials in China to explore trans-Pacific human trafficking activities involving bringing women to Latin America.

The selection of field observations followed the convention of qualitative methodology (Daly 1992), which strove to diversify field experiences by "maximizing range" (Weiss 1994: 23). This strategy allowed the PI to contrast these communities on major descriptive variables—such as degrees of urbanization, state of economic development, and ethnic compositions.

II.F.4. Secondary Data Collection

An extensive literature review was conducted to examine relevant studies published on the topic of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The review focused primarily on empirical studies concerning sex trafficking issues that were published in academic journals (Zhang 2009). Subsequently, with additional funding through a separate NIJ grant, the sex trafficking literature review was extended to include available Spanish-language publications

that were either produced in or pertained to Latin America. The goal was to capture as much current research knowledge on sex trafficking as possible through available data sources.

II.G. Validity and Reliability Considerations

A study on such a sensitive topic is vulnerable to various interpretations. Because of its qualitative design, the study was explorative in nature. Several strategies were employed in this study to improve its validity and reliability. First, unlike most sex trafficking studies published to date, this study shifted its recruitment focus away from the so-called expert sources (e.g., advocacy groups, women’s shelters, or law enforcement agencies) to women and pimps who were active in the sex industry. The goal was to capture firsthand data not yet “tainted” by any agency agendas.

Second, this study interviewed multiple categories of subjects to maximize the range of experiences. These subjects included different types of sex workers and pimps, different law enforcement agencies, and different social service and advocacy groups. These diverse subjects not only provided rich and varied observations on the nature and characteristics of sex trafficking activities in this border region, but also improved the internal validity of reported data by uncovering and cross-checking inconsistencies in subjects’ stories.

Third, significant efforts were made to ensure confidentiality and private interview settings with minimal interference from other parties. Human subject protection protocols were specifically developed to accommodate these interviewed subjects because of their life situations. During the course of hundreds of interviews conducted with these sensitive populations, not a single adverse event occurred. Interviewers were also asked to make

independent observations at the end of each interview to provide an assessment of the sincerity or perceived honesty of the subjects.

Fourth, additional data checking was done by comparing transcripts across different interviewers in order to identify inconsistencies or verify outlandish stories. They were also checked against the existing literature for comparison as well as validation purposes.

II.H. Study Design Limitations.

As with all empirical studies, this study was not without design problems. The honesty and sincerity of the respondents were difficult to verify. The emphasis on maximizing the range and diversity of subjects also introduced noise in the data that complicated story verification procedures. Despite the many strategies the interviewers employed (such as adjusting speech pattern and wearing dull casual outfits), it was difficult to determine the level of trust and rapport between the subjects and the interviewers. Considering the sensitive subject matter and precarious circumstances of many of these women, it was remarkable that these women were willing to talk at all in any length. This was particularly the case when the interviewers encountered women who had clearly been forced into prostitution.

Several factors may have contributed to the relative ease of subject recruitment. First and foremost, the location was rather neutral. Second, the tourism industry had all but collapsed due to a skyrocketing rate of homicides during the project period, drastically reducing the number of sex service buyers from the U.S.. Under these conditions, our nominal subject payment (\$50) perhaps became a substantial incentive for many women. Third, the interviews were carried out in a casual manner and around the schedule of the subjects. Despite the project staff's best intentions and skills, the subjects could still mislead them with false stories or exaggerations

and/or withhold information vital to the research questions. But the design and data gathering strategies proposed here are probably the only viable way to gain access and information about the secret world of sex trafficking.

Another shortcoming of the study design was its non-probability sampling. Non-representative sampling hampers inferential statistics. As discussed earlier in the methods section, this study did not employ any probability-based sampling strategies, thereby limiting its ability to generalize the findings. Subjects were recruited through convenience sampling, depending on who happened to visit the health clinics for a check-up, or the social networks one happened to refer to following the interview. Following the tradition of ethnographic research, deliberate efforts were made to maximize the variety of the subjects.

The specified recruitment locations also restricted access to women who did not come to the interview sites. It should be noted that the interview locations were stipulated by the San Diego State University IRB whose members repeatedly voiced grave concerns about the safety of these “victims” and the deadly consequences that would ensue if their traffickers discovered that they were talking to the researchers. According to the IRB’s collective wisdom, these women were incapable of exercising proper judgment as to whether it would be safe for them to talk to our research staff. Repeated attempts by the author to correct the obvious misconceptions about the sex industry, and organized crime in general, failed to persuade the IRB. After dozens of interviews had been completed without incident, the IRB became so convinced of its own assessment of the imminent dangers posed to the human subjects that this project was ordered to terminate its activities. After a series of bureaucratic maneuvering and assistance from people of administrative significance, the project was allowed to resume, albeit on a tight leash: interviews

could only take place at a government-run health clinic and the project was subjected to IRB review every three months (instead of the typical annual review).

Because the majority of the interviews with the sex workers took place at a municipal health clinic, the study sample could, at best, shed some light on those prostitutes who chose to come to the clinic. Although it was later found that many subjects came to be interviewed through referrals instead of seeking health services at the clinic, this study by design missed out on the sex workers who were not registered with the government. In addition to non-registered sex workers, the study also missed the “hidden” women—those held against their will behind closed doors. Although based on non-representative samples, this study nonetheless captured data on a sizeable group of prostitutes.

Despite claims among advocacy groups that there are as many registered prostitutes as unregistered ones in Tijuana, no one has offered either a theoretical or empirical argument as to why that might be the case. Since prostitution is legal in Tijuana, the sanitary control card effectively becomes a default advertisement for brothel owners to show that their girls are “clean” or “safe.” The lack of a sanitary control card may actually scare away customers, thus hurting business. It simply makes little business sense for any prostitute not to acquire a sanitary control card for the purpose of attracting or keeping clients.

There are, however, three possible groups of women who may choose not to acquire the sanitary control card: (1) women who have already contracted sexually transmitted diseases or tested positive for HIV, and therefore cannot pass the physical exam at the clinic; (2) women who work in exclusive men’s clubs where they have cultivated sufficient trust with the club owners and their clients; and (3) women who for reasons such as physique or age cannot attract

enough clients to justify the cost of obtaining a sanitary card. In any case, these women are likely to be in the minority.

III. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

III.A. Women in the Sex Industry

III.A.1. *The Women in this Study*

Place of origin. As shown in the following table, the vast majority of the women interviewed in this study (about 94 percent) were Mexican nationals. The remaining six percent came from countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Uruguay. Among Mexicans, the majority came from outside Baja California, the state where Tijuana is located. In fact, those who claimed to be from Baja California only made up about 16 percent of the sample (or 34 in total). The next four top migration states in the sample were Puebla (23, or 11 percent), Sinaloa (24, or 11 percent), Veracruz (14, or 6 percent), and Jalisco (13, or 6 percent). Following these states were Sonora, Michoacán, and Guerrero. These are all states with a long history of northbound labor migration.

Table 2 about here

Although efforts were made to seek out and interview foreign prostitutes, we were not successful. One may question whether perhaps many women simply lied about their nationality during the interview because they were in the country illegally. This was possible. The questionnaire included specific questions asking the subject the state and specific township where she was born and which state and township she would consider her home town. Some of these women may have been familiar with the Mexican geography and be able to answer these

questions without hesitation. Since the majority of these women migrated from other parts of Mexico, to the interviewers, they all sounded like “out-of-towners.” Unless the subjects volunteered their foreign identity, there was no other appropriate way for the interviewers to verify this information, especially those from other Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America.

Several factors may have contributed to our lack of success in recruiting foreign-born prostitutes. The first, and probably the most important, factor was the locations where most of the interviews were conducted: government-operated health clinics. Foreign women, to avoid unnecessary contact with people outside the sex industry, would be unlikely to come for physical checkups, particularly at a government-run clinic. They may go to private clinics for their medical services. Secondly, foreign prostitutes most likely do not possess legal work permits in Mexico and therefore need to acquire fraudulent papers to allow them to mingle with prostitutes from other states of Mexico. Third, as our community informants in Tijuana claimed on multiple occasions, foreign prostitutes, such as those from Asian countries and Russia, were typically kept in exclusive clubs and escort services, well-insulated from the open sex market where the commoners would visit. According to the community informants, in these exclusive clubs, escort girls frequently change and sanitary control cards were often disregarded.

Age. The majority (73.6 percent) of the women interviewed in this study were between the ages of 18 and 29. However, there were a few outliers. The oldest member of the sample was a 65-year-old woman from Zacatecas. Unlike most other prostitutes, she became a prostitute at a rather late age:

I left the hospital where I did laundry and cleaned rooms. I then started working in one of the doctors' home. After a while I had a problem with his wife and decided to leave.

Then I met a gardener who offered me a job. He took me to a hotel and I was thinking it

was a different kind of job, but at that moment he told me I was going to have sex with him so he would know all about me and could teach me things I needed to know to get involved in the sexual business. At the time I was 52 years old. He also stole my money when he left. I had not done this kind of job before I came to Tijuana. I didn't start out in the business by my own will, but I decided to do it because I needed the money. All I needed to be in this business was a health card. So I got one. I don't feel any difference between what I did then and what I do now.

At the other end of the age spectrum, this study was able to locate a small number (seven in total) of under-age prostitutes. The youngest was 15 years old, a sophomore in high school in Tijuana who worked as an escort girl and a part-time model. Through friends at the modeling agency and parties, this 15-year-old got to know a man who ran an escort service and was lured in by the amount of money she could make:

I decided to work in this (escort service) mainly because of the money. I did get paid at the modeling agency but nothing like Wow! Then when the friend that I work with told me she made a lot of money doing this I decided to do it also...she taught me most of the things I needed to know to start working. She said everything was super easy and that the first couple of times I would feel nervous and a little scared but that I would get used to it pretty quickly. Anyone could work in this as long as they get their (sanitary) control card and she has to be young. That's it. I work when I want to. When he hired me, he knew I was working for the modeling agency and he said it was fine because I like working there also. He also knew I was in school and he said he would work around my schedule.

Marital status. As expected from this group of largely young women, the majority (186 or 84.5 percent) were single. Another 16 (or 7.3 percent) were divorced or separated, and three were widowed. In other words, most subjects in this study were on their own. Of the whole sample, only 15 subjects (or 6.8 percent) were either married or cohabitating with someone at the time of the interview.

Number of children. Although the vast majority of the women were on their own, a sizeable of them had dependents to take care of. A total of 121 women, or 55% of the sample, had at least one child. A sizeable group, 31 (or 14.1 percent) women, had three or more children. With so many mouths to feed, the financial pressure motivating them was well understood. Such was the story of the woman from Sinaloa who worked in a strip club. At the age of 29, she was already a mother of five, and the father of her children was absent most of the time:

Four boys and one girl. The oldest just turned 15 and is in middle school, the girl is 12 and is in primary school...and the youngest is 6. He goes to kindergarten. I have to pay rent and all expenses because their father, even though he followed me here and every time we get together I get pregnant and when I get pregnant he disappears and he doesn't come back until the child is born. Because he doesn't help me with the expenses of the kids, nor food, school, clothes, nothing.

This woman only finished elementary school before she dropped out. With so many children and few employable skills to land a decent job, her options were limited. She worked at a *maquiladora* in Tijuana for some time, but could not stand the long hours and low pay. She decided to quit and find something that offered more pay and flexible hours. At the time of the interview, she was taking classes in an adult education program while attending a beauty school

to learn hair dressing and coloring skills. Her plan was to save enough to start her own beauty salon and finish high school.

Education. The majority of the women in this study (142 or 64.5 percent) received somewhere between a middle and high school education. What was interesting was that a sizeable group of the women, 30 (or 13.6 percent), received some college education. Among these subjects, there were more with some college education than without any formal education. It appeared those with higher education also tended to be those who worked in the escort service and commanded higher pay. Although non-representative in its sampling procedure, findings in this study suggest that women with higher education tend to work in more lucrative segments of the sex industry in Tijuana. It would make business sense for escort service owners to choose educated women who could hold conversations and appear competent as companions to the customers.

III.A.2. Migration to Tijuana

The journey to Tijuana for most women in this study was economically driven. Of the reasons listed, the majority (61 percent) were either pursuing a better life in the city or responded to job offers, as shown in the following table. A few others (11 percent) were planning to cross the border into the U.S. As expected, a sizeable of the group, roughly 20 percent, were local residents or those who followed their families to the city at a very young age.

Table 3 about here

As the largest Mexican city along the U.S.-Mexico border, Tijuana appeared to garner special appeal to migrants from other parts of the country, with a promise of greater opportunities. For the women who were already in the sex industry, Tijuana was an easy choice of destination because of the earning potential. A 31-year-old woman from Guatemala said her clients in her home country told her that the best money in the business was in the North where she could earn in dollars not pesos. She started working in a “gentlemen’s club” at age 21 as a waitress and remained in the business since then:

From being a waitress they promoted me to a masseuse in the club. Once I started as a masseuse, I started interacting with different clients and I ended up as a personal escort by the recommendation of a client. The money was much better. One of the clients I met at the club told me that he knew some people who could help me look for a place at a port city somewhere so I would be able to get clients from European countries and the pay would be much better. Like Mexico. He told me that I would be earning money in dollars. I first went to Cancun where I worked for three years as an escort/call girl and my economic situation improved.

However, migration is always a personal journey and financial reasons told only part of their stories. A woman who once worked as an accountant at a municipal mayor’s office (*presidencia municipal*) in the state of Durango told us why she came to Tijuana:

I moved to Tijuana for 2 reasons. My job with the municipality ended once the new government came into power. But the main reason I came was for my personal life. I had just gotten divorced and it was something very difficult for me. I was married for 4 years and I already had my children. I got divorced because he was a *vividor* (a man who lives

off others, doesn't do anything, and goes out to party). And I found out he cheated on me with one of my friends. I wanted to go as far away as possible from Durango and I decided to come to Tijuana because both my brothers lived here with their wives and kids. I thought that being here with them I would have their help and support... In the beginning I didn't like living here at all. I missed my friends. The climate was very different from Durango's. The good thing is that I had both my brothers and their families. Besides my brothers and their families, I didn't know anyone in this city.

In the majority of the cases, these women followed a familiar migration pattern—through existing kinship or social networks. When asked about the person who was most responsible for their northbound migration, the majority reported relying on their familial and social contacts, with friends being their first migration resource (nearly 26 percent), followed by immediate family members (16 percent), and relatives (16 percent).

There were few, if any, obstacles hindering people from traveling inside Mexico because the Mexican Constitution guarantees freedom of movement. Migration inside Mexico involved nothing more than finding the means of transportation that was either the most convenient or most affordable. For the majority of the respondents, traveling inside Mexico was mostly uneventful. The main means of transportation was by air (74 women of 159 who reported traveling via public transportation), followed by bus (54), and mixed means (23). For the vast majority, 214 out of the 220 women in the study (or 97 percent), no smuggling fee was paid to anyone. In other words, their journey was well-planned. Either they themselves or their helpers had the financial wherewithal to make their own travel arrangements. For these women, there

were few things remarkable about their trip or transportation, although not all were happy with what was waiting for them in Tijuana.

However, in a few cases, the journey to Mexico's northern border was far from uneventful. Five women interviewed in this study, two from El Salvador and three from Guatemala, reported that they had been raped, robbed, and/or assaulted on their journey to the North. One was raped by the smuggler who was paid to provide transportation services but decided to take advantage of the women along the way, while another was almost raped by a Mexican border patrol official. Some of these women endured hunger and thirst while walking barefoot for long stretches of road and others were robbed by armed gangsters roaming the roads along the Mexican southern border in search of easy prey. Subjecting themselves to sexual violence became a means of survival for these women.

All five of these women embarked on their journey to the North by venturing into the migration routes commonly used by their male counterparts. Without the protection of established familial and social migration networks the other women in the study had, these women were exposed to all kinds of hardships that their male counterparts endured, plus a gender-based vulnerability that gangsters, coyotes, and immigration officials alike were ready to exploit. Unlike many local residents or Mexican women in the study, these women had all attempted and failed to cross into the U.S. Without legal paperwork in Mexico, their means of survival was limited. They were in the sex trade to earn and save money while planning their next attempt at crossing the border again. Such was the story of a 21-year-old woman from Guatemala. She dropped out of school after fifth grade to help her family by cleaning hotel rooms and selling candy from a basket in a local market:

I decided to leave my city because my life was very sad and hard. There was no money there. The jobs didn't pay enough to eat well or live well. I lived with my mom, my brother and my sister in a house with a tiny kitchen, one room divided into two with a curtain and an outside bathroom. Sometimes we didn't have enough money to eat so we had to stretch the money however we could. We all put our money together so we could buy food and pay rent. We didn't work for ourselves and our pleasures. We worked for the family. The city where I used to live had a lot of violence. Then my sister got married and she left. So the money we had between the three of us was less. I either stayed there for the rest of my life with a bad job and no money or I took my chances and tried to cross into the United States to have a better life and help my mother and brother. If my brother finds someone and gets married, my mom will be by herself with no one to help her. She will be poorer than what we were before. Yes, I did work (prostitute) at other places in Mexico. I worked to be able to cross the border. Another time, I did it for a ride from a truck driver. And now, I am doing it to save money to cross the border again and send money to my mother.

From her hometown along the Mexican-Guatemalan border, she joined a group of friends to embark on the journey. Like so many migrants from Guatemala, she crossed the Rio Suchiate on a raft into Mexico, only to find a Mexican border police woman waiting there to collect her "toll"—150.00 pesos from each of the passengers. After some hard bargaining, she managed to get away with paying only 50.00 pesos. But her journey soon turned into a hellish ordeal marked by repeated rapes, robberies, and starvation. A journey that was planned to take days turned into

months. The group of migrants she joined paid a Mexican coyote who claimed to be able to sneak past the Mexican immigration check point to reach Tapachula, Chiapas:

After a 30-minute ride in this old van, he (the coyote) told us that an immigration checkpoint was near and the men must get off to walk around. But the women would have to stay with him because there were many muggers around in that area, and most girls who cross the area on foot get gang raped and beaten up. He told the men to leave most of their money with us and keep only a small amount to bribe the muggers. So the men got out of the car and we drove off. When we saw the immigration point, he drove his car off the main road and took a side road. Then at a rest stop, he told us that if we wanted to cross with him in his car without having to return us to La Arrocera (the starting point of the journey), we would have to have sex with him. We told him we had paid him for the transportation and he said that was only part of the deal. We couldn't turn back so we let it happen. Not once but twice, because he said that the men would take a while to cross that area on foot and we had time to spare. I felt so dirty and my tears wouldn't stop. So was the girl I was with. Finally he got on the road again and he did as he'd promised. He drove us past the immigration point. We waited a while for the men and finally they appeared. They had actually been robbed and one of them was beat up. We were all silent for a long time. I think the men knew what happened to us since our eyes were red from crying. We didn't ask them how it went for them since we had figured it out when they got in the car.

III.A.3. Entry into the Sex Industry

The women in this study reported multiple reasons for entry into the sex industry. Financial pressure and lack of other viable alternatives were the reasons most often cited. The accountant from Durango explained the circumstances under which she entered into the sex trade:

I had never done this type of work. I had always worked for the municipal office and that was it. But when I was working in the municipal office here in Tijuana, the hours were very long and I didn't spend much time with my children. At about the 5th or 6th month after we arrived in Tijuana, my twins got sick and the treatment was very expensive. I didn't make enough to pay for everything because the doctors in the free clinic didn't attend to my kids well. I had to take them to special doctors. I got behind with my payments for the rent, the water and electricity. I couldn't ask my brothers for money because they have their own families and expenses. Plus, one of them had already lent me 1,500 pesos and the other about 3,000 pesos. I was embarrassed to ask for more. And my sisters-in-law would tell their husbands not to lend me any more money because they have their own families to support and doubted that I was going to pay them back.

By this time, this woman had befriended the cousin of a colleague at the municipal office, who turned out to be an exotic dancer at an exclusive table dance in Tijuana.¹ It was an exclusive venue where "the richest clients visited." To enter the club, one must be invited by an existing client. She described:

My friend told me that if I wanted easy money fast I had to go with her and she would recommend me to the manager of the place. In the beginning I thought she was joking

¹ "Table dance" is a term commonly used in Tijuana referring to strip clubs or bars.

because I had never done any table dance and I was a little chubby. But then I convinced myself because the expenses kept accumulating for the doctors, the medicine, the rent, food, and expenses for school, clothes and shoes. I thought about it a lot and I finally decided to call my friend. She introduced me to the manager. But he hired me only as a waitress. The girls at the club had beautiful bodies. The manager told me I couldn't dance until I lose weight and learn the moves. I didn't leave my job at the municipal office until they let me go on stage on the pole. It took me about 8 to 9 months to lose weight and be ready. Once it started going well I left the municipal office. About a year later this club was closed and I found work in another place. Since then I haven't stopped dancing.

Of the 220 women interviewed in this study, the majority (163 or 74.1 percent) claimed to have made the choice to enter the sex industry by themselves because of the earning potential. According to these women, the sex industry offered them the best possible financial prospects for their circumstances. These women worked in a variety of sex trade venues, including strip clubs (or table dances), street prostitution, massage parlors, and escort services, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 about here

Efforts were made in this study to probe carefully into the circumstances under which the women entered into the sex trade. The female interviewers were carefully prepared through instructions as well as personal experiences not to place any value judgment or offer any opinions on the business of prostitution so as to avoid any possible influence over how the

subjects would respond to the questions. To find out if any of the subjects had been forced into prostitution, the interviewers in this study asked if anyone had used deception or force to get them to engage in commercial sex. To clarify what would constitute deception or physical violence, the interviewers in this study probed for specifics, such as asking the subject to report anyone who had “hit or threatened to hit you, slapped you, punched or kicked you, held you against your will, or made other physical threats.”

Although the majority of the women chose to enter into the sex trade on their own, 26 of the women (or 11.8 percent) reported that they had been either forced or at least pressured into prostitution. The perpetrators mentioned most were pimps, husbands/boyfriends, and male relatives. The methods used to coerce women into prostitution ranged from false promises of marriage to rape by male relatives to threats to tell the women’s families. Such was the story of a 17-year-old girl from Puebla who was taken in by a pimp who was perhaps scouting interior Mexico for easy prey:

I was going to my house after work one day. I took the bus home and sat next to a man. He said I looked tired and asked if I was coming from work. I said yes and he kept talking. He asked me where I worked and I told him I cleaned a house for a family. He just kept talking and asking questions. He said that if I wanted to, he could give me his phone number and I should call him because he knew a family that wanted to hire a live-in maid in Tijuana and the girls from here were very picky in what they worked and couldn’t do their job right. He said he would be in Puebla two more days and if I really wanted to go and make more money, call him before he left. I said I had to ask my parents. He said he and his wife could go to my house and talk to my parents so they wouldn’t be suspicious.

Following the brief interaction, the young woman actually became concerned and got off the bus at a different place from her usual stop to avoid being followed by the stranger. That night she waited until both of her parents returned home from work and told them about this stranger's offer to take her to Tijuana for a better job. Her father immediately rejected the idea and wanted her to finish school regardless how poor the family was. But her mother was ambivalent and was concerned that Tijuana was a big city and far away. But the young woman took her parents' reactions differently:

I was really mad because I thought it would be for the best because I was going to make more money. I even told them they were jealous because I could make more money than all of them put together. My dad said, "go to our room and when you come out you need to apologize to your mother." I didn't.

The young woman from Puebla called the man. He asked if her parents had agreed and if they would pay for her trip to Tijuana. When he found out that her parents did not agree to the plan and she had no money of her own, he offered to lend her the money, 2000.00 pesos, for the trip to Tijuana. But he wanted her to sign a paper indicating the amount of money she would borrow. He did not mention what kind of money she would be making except that it would be a lot more than she made in Puebla and she would be a live-in maid at some family's home. Believing in the local folklore that people pay more in the North (meaning Northern Mexico), she embarked on the journey with the man and his girlfriend, along with two other girls. After their arrival in Tijuana, the man began to change his story:

We were told to stay with them until the people that hired us called him so he could take us to their house. We thought nothing of it. Two days went by and finally we asked both of them what was happening and why we were still here with them. They first said that they hadn't been able to contact the family. They told us that two of us were going to work together and one of us was going to a different family. The girls and I started talking and learned that this guy told us all the same story. He had them sign the same paper saying that we had to pay him back the money when we started working.

Another week went by. The three girls kept waiting, not allowed to leave the house at all. Then on a Friday night, the man and his girlfriend came to inform the three Puebla women to change clothes because they were going out to a bar. Our subject recalled that day:

I told him I wasn't old enough to go to a bar since I wasn't 18 years old yet. He told me stop acting stupid. When we looked at the clothes he brought us, one of the girls started crying. She said these outfits looked like slut outfits and she was embarrassed to wear them. She left the room to tell the man, but was sent back and told that she better put it on and be ready in less than half an hour since some friends were waiting for us.

The rest of the story was predictable. The pimp kept the women in his place to accumulate a debt for the room and board and hygiene products. The three young women would have to pay off the debt they incurred. They were trapped in a stranger's house in a strange city. Isolated from their familial networks and the outside world, their only means of survival was to obey and follow the instructions of the pimp.

In addition to asking about their own experiences, this study also asked participants if they had heard of or personally knew other women who had been deceived or forced into prostitution. This was a common strategy used by ethnographers in the field, relying on the locals to act as informants. Despite the fact that the vast majority of women in this study denied that they had been forced into prostitution, a significant number of these women, 115 of them (or 52 percent), claimed that they had either heard about or personally known someone who was. When asked if she personally knew anyone who had been forced into prostitution, one woman from Puebla said:

Yes I have a friend who came from Puebla, and got involved with a man when she was only 17 years old and they came together to Tijuana and he made her work in the sex business. She used to cry about it and finally she returned to Puebla. I haven't talked to her lately. I think 6 out of 10 girls in this business are forced.

It was not clear whether such a high percentage of claims of knowledge about forced prostitution was in any way related to the heightened media exposure or public awareness campaigns launched by various advocacy groups or the government. There was clearly a sizeable discrepancy between what this project was able to find among the subjects and what these subjects claimed to know. But the high percentage reported is cause for concern and warrants additional research with different field strategies. In any case, it was clear that claims of forced prostitution were rather common among the subjects. The difficulty is in assessing the veracity of these claims. There was no time for the interviewers to carefully tease out the differences between stories from the news, gossip among prostitutes, or activities that they had actually

observed. As one 15-year-old prostitute in this study responded when asked if she was in any way deceived or coerced into prostitution:

Nah, I don't know of anyone that has been lied to. I know that a lot of girls are forced but I personally don't know of anyone. As a matter of fact, you hear about this type of thing in the news or in the newspaper. My brother-in-law does know of a girl that is being forced into it but she works at La Coahuila (Tijuana's red light district) and I don't know her. There are actually a lot of girls at that place being held against their will by mafias that specialize in prostituting women.

III.A.4. Working in the Sex Industry

As shown in Table 4, the largest number of women interviewed in this study, 47.3 percent (or 104 women) worked in strip clubs (or table dance), followed by 32.3 percent (or 71 women) who worked on the street. Subjects who worked in escort services accounted for 11.4 percent (or 25 women), and 12 women (5.5 percent) worked in massage parlors. Another 8 subjects worked in a mixture of places or had no regular locations (coded as "other").

As revealed through these women's stories, their experiences in the sex industry were complex and varied. It would be difficult to simply lump their diverse experiences into simple categories. But for the sake of presentation, some common aspects of their lives as prostitutes are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 about here

As the summary statistics show in Table 5, some of the prostitutes were so new, they had barely started working when they were interviewed in the municipal health clinic where they were waiting to obtain their sanitary control card. The longest-employed participant was a 62-year-old woman from Zacatecas who claimed to have been in the sex trade for 30 years (10 years on the street and 20 years in strip bars). Most of her clients these days were construction workers and men around her age. She claimed to work alone now and keep all her earnings. The median length of time participants had worked in the sex industry was 24 months. There were tremendous variations in these women's lengths of time in the sex business, with a standard deviation of 51.5 years for time in Tijuana and 59.0 years for lifetime career in prostitution, reflecting the diverse sample captured in this study.

In terms of working hours, there were also tremendous variations among the women. Some reported that they worked three hours a day. Some, such as those in select escort services, reported their work week comprised two days. But a good majority worked eight hours a day and seven days a week. In fact, the median number of hours worked per day was eight and the median number of working days per week for these women was six.

As for the number of clients these women received per week, there was some consistency. On average, these women received three to four clients per day. Some received none, but the highest number received per day was 20. Pricing for sex services varied tremendously depending on many factors, such as business locations and clientele (i.e., escort services, strip bars, massage parlors, and streets), age, and appearance. Prices also varied depending on what type of sex services or sex positions the client demanded, or whether condom use was required. Such variations represented different pricing criteria and opportunities for negotiation. In general, the greater the complexity or rarer the position, the higher the price.

Because many women mentioned a range of prices, two figures are presented in Table 5, capturing the highs and lows. On the low end, the median price per sex act or transaction was \$60, with some participants charging as little as \$5.00. On the high end, however, one call girl claimed to charge a minimum of \$2,000 per appointment and sometimes made \$4,000 per appointment, including tips, from select clients. In general, the women interviewed in this study were well aware of their own earning potential and what type of sex services or positions would command higher prices, and would not hesitate to demand different prices for different sex services. One 21-year-old woman from the port city of Puerto Vallarta in Jalisco gave out her pricing practice information without hesitation:

If I am at the table dance (i.e., strip club) I charge for the time and for the act. If they want a private dance with permission to touch me I charge between \$50 to \$60. If they want a good “poya” (oral sex) I charge \$120 and I pay \$20 to the house. If I go out from the table dance with a client I charge \$200 for one hour and \$400 for the whole night. If they take me out the table dance they also have to pay the house \$100. When they call me from the outside, I charge per hour. It can’t be less than 2 hours but it can be a whole day or whole night. I charge more because the client doesn’t pay anyone anything just me and the hotel room. I charge \$300 for 2 hours and a half, and \$600 for the whole day and night. This is when it gets better for me.

For one Puerto Vallarta woman, it was all business. She knew her prices well and she explained that most such pricing variations were well understood in Tijuana’s sex industry. Depending on the locations and type of prostitutes, she said prices varied widely:

These prices are common in this area. If you go to La Coahuila (a major street in Tijuana’s red light district) for the *paraditas* (street walkers) they charge much less. There for \$20 they can give you a “*ploya*” (oral sex)! I don’t compare my prices anymore. I know how much I could get with certain clients. In the beginning I did compare prices but not anymore. I learned to market myself and not give my ass for free or for \$20.

III.A.5. Control and Decision Making in Commercial Sex

The issue of how power and negotiations played out during prostitution transactions was explored in this study. As shown in Table 6, the majority of the women, 166 or 75.5 percent of the sample, decided on their own how much they would charge for their sex services. Although negotiation was always part of the business, these women were in full control of what sex acts they would perform and at what price. Twenty-seven participants reported that their pimps or the strip club owners set the prices. Others reported that they either followed existing practices already established by other women in similar settings or negotiated a mutually agreeable price.

Table 6 about here

A major indicator of sex trafficking is the eventual control of the earnings gained from prostitution. In this study, these women were asked not only about who determined the value of their sex services but also how much of their earnings they got to keep. It was found that 203 women or 92.3 percent of the sample got to keep the majority of their earnings. A small number of women, 11 (or 5 percent), reported that their pimps kept the majority of their earnings. In

extreme cases, two subjects claimed they received no money for their sexual services--their pimps kept all their money.

To further investigate any evidence of sex trafficking, this study also probed into whether any of the women had lost their freedom of movement. Freedom of movement was defined as being able to go places without supervision or being followed. Although the vast majority of the women interviewed (211 or 95.9 percent) claimed that they could go out or run errands without being watched, the remaining nine claimed that they were either constantly watched or could not go places without permission. In fact, during the interviews, a small number of these women claimed that their “boyfriends” or pimps were waiting for them outside the clinic. Such was the story of a 21-year-old woman from Guatemala, who was transported to Tijuana after being intercepted by sex traffickers in Oaxaca. She was traveling north planning to cross into Arizona. When asked if she could quit her current arrangement and move to another place or work for another pimp, she was quick to respond:

Oh no. I can't just get my things and leave. Number one, they would catch me probably before I could put a foot on the sidewalk. I was given to these people when I was in Oaxaca. I didn't even know I was coming here. I don't have any documents with me. I would like to go back to my country and escape the hell I am living and working in now. If I were to leave, it would probably be when they traded me to another pimp. I would most likely be doing the same thing. There are times when I'm running errands and I wish I could just take off running. But it's scary since I don't know who works for my boss or if any of the policemen I would ask for help also work for my boss. One day, I will take my chance.

III.A.6. Perceptions of the Sex Trade and Future Plans

Despite the claims of high earnings among some subjects, a significant number of women in this study had no plan to stay in the business for long. A total of 105 women, or 47.7 percent of the sample, claimed that they definitely wanted to leave the business. Some had specific plans about what they would do once they earned enough money, such as opening a grocery store or building a house for the family. Another 78 women reported no clear plans, while 11 other women wanted to stay in the business as long as the money was good. Far more women wanted to leave than those who wanted to stay. To these women, prostitution was merely a temporary state in their lives. They were fully aware of the dim prospects of this job and the social stigma it carries. Such was the story of a 26-year old woman from Chiapas, who was caught crossing into the U.S. and deported to Tijuana:

For me, it's a way to get money so I can feed my children. I know I could do a different type of job to support my children but I will never be able to save enough or provide the things they are entitled to, like a good education. I don't want my children to grow up like me. I want them to become educated adults so my son doesn't have to pick apples like my husband and my daughter doesn't have to sell her body for money. I never thought I would do this. I had never met anyone working as a prostitute before. When I applied for a job at the bar to work as a waitress I had never intended to become a prostitute. I did it because I figured it was an opportunity for me to make money faster.

Like many women in this study, this woman had clear plans for her future and was focused on getting there. She wanted to join her husband in Washington State. But for the time being, she had to support her children back home. Her two children were staying with her mother

and depended on her for financial support. She also needed to save enough money to hire a coyote for another attempt to cross into the U.S. She said:

I plan to cross the border again in September this year. If all goes well, I will meet with my husband, work with him and try to bring our children over. If for whatever reason, I can't make it again, I will bring my children to live with me in Tijuana. I don't know if I will keep doing this job because my children are old enough to know what a prostitute is and I don't ever want them to lose respect for me. I don't know yet. First I have to try to cross the border and then organize the rest.

Whether crossing the border, building a house, or opening a beauty salon, these women seemed committed to their financial goals and willing to endure the stigma and hardships of the business. As for her experiences in the sex trade, one woman from Chiapas said she thought about it from time to time. But most of the time, she had neither the time nor the luxury to entertain such moral introspection. Similar to many prostitutes who were Tijuana natives, this woman from Chiapas had grown to like the city and found the bustling border town fascinating:

It's a city that has welcomed me and I have made new friends here. I have a job here. I can make more money here. Even when I was working as a maid and as a waitress, they paid me double of what I would make in Chiapas or when I worked at the hotel in Mexico City. I heard lots of horror stories before coming here. But if you don't mess with other people, they don't mess with you. If other girls want to come to Tijuana, I would tell them that they should. Not to become prostitutes or to try to cross to the United States, but to come and work here and meet new people. The people in Tijuana have a different way of living than the people in Chiapas and Mexico City. Tijuana natives live

like the gringos. They even celebrate American holidays and a lot of men prefer American football to soccer!

III.A.7. Of Agency and Resiliency

It would be remiss for this report to overlook the many stories told by a sizeable number of women in this study that demonstrated high degrees of agency and resiliency in surviving this hazard-filled occupation. Their status within the sex industry seemed closely linked to the type of sex work (and sometimes work venues), from streets to strip clubs and from massage parlors to escort services. A few cases of coercion and fraud were found, and the victims of this were mostly trapped in the low end of the sex trade. In most strip bars and particularly in escort services, few women complained about the lack of control over price or work schedules. Greater control over one's "work" appeared to engender higher degrees of "job satisfaction" among these women. Needless to say, those who commanded higher prices for their services also tended to be content with their "work" arrangement. Such was the story of another woman from Chiapas. She studied business administration and was running a clothing store for her boss back in her city in Chiapas. After her boss' untimely death, she could not find anything that would satisfy her financial needs. She decided to come to Tijuana, a city she used to frequent during her trips to Los Angeles where she and her boss did the purchasing for the clothing boutique in Chiapas. She found work at a clothing store in Tijuana and soon befriended a customer who frequently made large purchases of expensive sexy outfits for women. In subsequent conversations and social visits, this customer of hers revealed that she was running an exclusive brothel, entertaining domestic and foreign businessmen and politicians from Mexico City. The subject recalled one fateful visit to the madam's impressive house:

She said her business was commonly known as a *casa de citas* and that she served very high ranked businessmen - national, local and foreign - as well as politicians from Mexico City, which was why she wanted high quality clothes...but she complained that her girls were not well-educated and her clients demanded a lot. At the end of our conversation she asked if I knew anyone that I could recommend to work for her...and then she said she had a proposition for me, but asked me not to take it the wrong way because she didn't want to hurt our friendship. She asked me to work for her one or two days a week without coming to the *casa de citas*. Instead she would call me if she needed an escort girl which means sleeping with the client, having sex, and going with him wherever he goes. She said she would guarantee to pay me \$2,000 per night and maybe more.

After a few more weeks of consideration and repeated delays in responding to the madam's proposition, this Chiapas woman decided to give it a try. She called the madam and told her she was interested. According to her, the madam was sensitive and respectful of her decision. The Chiapas woman then recalled her first appointment:

...eight days later, she called me to tell me the following week a foreigner was coming and offered to pay me \$2,500 for the service. She (the madam) said she would charge him ahead of time and that's what happened. I went to the appointment and I was very nervous because I had never done something like this before. I was very nice to him and he was the same to me. Before he left, he gave me a \$1,000 tip and told me he would be back soon so we could see each other again in Tijuana-- that is, if I accepted his

invitation. What's more, he would invite me to Las Vegas, Nevada where he was attending a convention, if I had time and wanted to.

The subject from Chiapas was apparently content with the arrangement she had with the madam. She emphasized that the madam would call and discuss with her the schedule and price for every appointment. The madam would take her to meet with the scheduled client in a public place where the two would go off on their own. Having full control over her work seemed to suit her well, as she was aware of the price she was able to command, and the type of money she must be making for her madam. She explained:

The lady pays me \$2,000 each time I go out and she always guarantees that amount. If not, I don't go out. There have been occasions when she asked for me urgently and even agreed to pay me \$4,000. I know that was because a client wanted me and had enough money to pay. And that was magnificent. The clients are generally businessmen or Mexican politicians or young men whose fathers who get them whatever they want at whatever price. These are guys that want to live their fantasy or dream, however they want to call it, and they pay me these sums of money.

As shown in Table 3, a large number of these women migrated to Tijuana in search of a better life, either on their own initiative or through existing kinship and social networks. Instead of viewing themselves as victims, they self-organized and assisted one another. With the exception of those who were lied to and coerced by their pimps and "husbands," most women in this study either already had friends in the sex trade or got to know them through fortuitous social networking after arriving in Tijuana.

With a highly visible and vibrant sex industry in the city, it was not difficult to find people who could show the way. Friends, male and female, became a common gateway into the sex trade. They provided referrals for each other and shared tips on how and where to find jobs, either as a stopgap measure to survive or a venue to make more money faster. Such was the story of a 26-year-old woman who was stranded in Tijuana because of her failed attempt to cross into the U.S. on her way to join her brothers in Canada. Traveling with a group of friends from San Salvador, she made her way slowly to the North, paying one *pollero* after another. In all, she spent \$6,000 for the entire journey, only to be caught by the U.S. Border Patrol in the hills near San Diego. She said she simply could not keep up with the traveling group, although the group did wait for her once, but had to continue. She said she would catch up but later was lost and caught by *la migras* (Border Patrol). After claiming she was Mexican, she was deported to Tijuana. Illegal in Mexico and penniless, she stayed in a migrant house (i.e., a shelter for poor migrants) for a short period of time, and decided to find work so she could save enough money to cross the border again:

Since no one would hire me without a valid official identification, I had to look for a job as a maid but I found one at a bar instead. I had never done this type of work before but I did it in order to survive and save enough money to try to cross again. One of the girls who was also staying at the migrant house said she had done this type of work before. She told me to go to the downtown area here in Tijuana and that any of the bar managers would hire me since they were always hiring new girls. She told me what the job was about. I did it because I knew no one would know what I was doing, since I didn't have any family or friends here.

III.B. Interviews with the Sex Trade Facilitators

A total of 92 sex trade facilitators were interviewed in this study. “Pimps” and “sex trade facilitators” are used interchangeably in this report, although the latter is a broader term. Anyone who engaged in activities directly associated with the sex industry for personal gain was considered eligible for subject recruitment purposes. Sex trade facilitators can be any of a wide range of individuals who facilitate the sex industry —pimps who control and manage prostitutes, taxi drivers who shuttle call girls or strip dancers to different locations, strip club and brothel hotel owners and managers, and massage parlor and escort service owners.

Unlike the women described earlier who were strangers to the project staff, the pimps interviewed here were all connected either directly or were one or two degrees apart from the social networks of our community informants or interviewers themselves. Because the red light district is a major business in Tijuana and employs roughly 6,000 registered prostitutes (and many more unregistered), the support network is extensive. It was not difficult for our project staff and community informants to find people who directly benefited from the sex trade. But not all who were involved in the sex trade wanted to share their “trade secrets.” The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, although a guaranteed precondition, was not the only essential in gaining access to the subjects for the interview. Successful recruitment of pimps required the use of one’s social capital. Our community contacts cashed in on their relationships with their friends. One interviewer who tried to recruit a 58-year part-time pimp said the only reason the subject accepted the interview was because of a favor the interviewer did for him some ten years ago and their long-time friendship.

III.B.1. The Demographic Profiles of Sex Trade Facilitators

As expected, the vast majority of the sex trade facilitators interviewed in this study were male, 77 out of 92 or about 84 percent. This study was able to interview 15 female sex trade facilitators. As shown in Table 7, these sex trade facilitators were, overall, older than the prostitutes. About 60 percent of them were in their 30s and 40s. More than 90 percent were 30 years of age or older. Roughly 22 percent of them were married, and the rest were either single, divorced/separated, or widowed.

Interestingly, due either to a seriously skewed sample or the reality, the pimping business appeared to be rather discriminating against foreign competitors. This study was unable to locate a single foreign sex facilitator. As an industry, the business was monopolized by Mexican nationals, and for obvious reasons. It would be difficult for foreign nationals to manage the logistics and politics involved in Tijuana's prostitution business. The business was not closed to Mexicans from other states. The top five states interviewed subjects came from were Sinaloa, Jalisco, Sonora, Guerrero and Chihuahua. Their overall educational attainment was higher than that of the prostitutes in this study. Close to 80 percent of them had a high school education or more.

Table 7 about here

III.B.2. Becoming a Pimp

When asked about how they first became involved in the sex trade, the majority (about 74 percent) claimed that their initial entry was through their social and kinship networks, as shown in Table 8. The rest of the group found their own way into the sex trade. One's kinship and social

networks seemed to provide the most direct entry into the business. Such was the story of a 44-year-old pimp from Sonora who described how he first became involved in the sex industry:

When I first started I wasn't working directly with the women, I was a young teen working for my uncle in one of his bars in Sonora. I was running errands and whatever things I was asked to do. I started working with him because we were a large family and money was tight, and that was a way I could help out. After I was working there for some time and I was a bit older, I started recruiting women on my own because I would get a commission for each one.

Table 8 about here

The motivations and reasons for doing sex business, as provided by the pimps, were uniform to the point of being mundane and predictable. It was simply a business in which these men found their niche and decided this was a good way to make money, either as a primary source of income or to supplement their other jobs. Few men seemed to have any moral qualms regarding the nature of this business. The 44-year-old pimp from Sonora who had been in the business for more than 15 years continued:

I've done this job since I was a youngster (*desde muy chiquillo*). When I started working for my uncle, it helped me to help my family. When I was married and I was living with my ex-wife and children, it helped me to support them and make sure they had everything they needed, and now it is helping me put my children through college and to support them and myself.

The entry-level roles of these sex trade facilitators often did not involve controlling any prostitutes. As shown in Table 8, the majority were recruiters, promoters, transporters, coordinators, or some other combination of roles. Pimps (here referring specifically to people who manage prostitutes) accounted for 15 percent of the sample. Interestingly, there seemed to be upward mobility among sex trade facilitators over time. For instance, recruiters were no longer a sizeable category at the stage when they were interviewed. Since their initial entry, they had gradually become more influential in the sex trade, becoming club owners, managers, or pimps. Of all the sex trade facilitators, two-thirds claimed they had jobs other than pimping. The remaining third depended entirely on the sex trade for their income. Although by design this study was not intended to estimate parametric boundaries of professional versus amateur pimps in Tijuana's sex industry, this study found a significant number of pimps who were in the sex industry as a side job. Future research efforts should explore just how many pimps the sex industry is able to sustain on a full-time basis and whether this encourages or discourages sex trafficking activities.

III.B.3. Life as a Pimp

A wide variety of experiences were captured among the 92 sex trade facilitators interviewed in this study, ranging from fresh amateurs who had been in the business for as little as one year to one veteran who had been profiting from prostitution for 39 years. As shown in Table 9, the median length of time in the sex industry was 14 years. In other words, a large number of these subjects were veterans in this business.

Table 9 about here

Of the 70 subjects who reported specific numbers of women under their “management,” the figures ranged from three to 80 women, with a median of 16. As for the number of business locations, the most a sex trade facilitator managed was six locations. The vast majority of facilitators typically worked at one location, sometimes two. Furthermore, a large number of these subjects (33 out of 84 or about 40 percent) reported that they worked alone. The average number of partners this group of sex trade facilitators reported was 1.3. The highest number of partners reported was six. In general, these sex trade facilitators reported working long hours, with most working six or more days a week. A beer salesman who later turned strip bar manager in Zona Norte described his “work” life in the sex industry:

I get home at 3:30 a.m. and I start working at 3:00 p.m. and I work 6 days a week. There are no vacations, I would like to take one in December, but I can't. We go in at 3:00 p.m., which is the time we have fewer customers and gives us a chance to check what we need, like refilling the refrigerators and buying anything necessary for maintenance. By 6:00 p.m. everything will be organized and ready to attend to our clients. Holidays don't exist for us, since the whole world knows that people don't work those days and they come to this type of places. So our sales are the best during holidays.

As for the amount of income earned from the sex trade, a large number of subjects declined to provide answers to this question. Only 36 of the total 92 subjects provided some figures. Based on their reported figures, the earnings from the sex industry seemed rather impressive. The average earning was more than \$93,000 a year, with a median of \$71,000. Five of the 36 subjects reported making \$200,000 or more a year. Two of them made \$250,000 per

year. Another seven sex trade facilitators reported earning more than \$100,000 a year from their businesses.

III.B.4. Recruiting Women for Sex Work

The majority of the sex trade facilitators interviewed in this study indicated that they initiated their recruitment activities largely based on the demand of their businesses. As shown in Table 10, women were brought into the sex business through a variety of channels. About 71 percent of the subjects claimed to initiate the recruitment on their own or to collaborate with club managers and partners. Another 14 percent followed instructions from their bosses. In close to 10 percent of the cases, women came to their businesses on their own looking for jobs. However, in four cases, the pimps claimed they used persuasion, flirtation, and other manipulative tricks to convince women to become prostitutes.

Table 10 about here

As for the locations where recruitment activities took place, there were no clear patterns. The largest group, 35 percent of the sex trade facilitators, claimed that they used no fixed locations to recruit women. The next group, roughly 34 percent of the sample, reported that their primary recruitment location was in Tijuana or somewhere nearby. Another 27 percent of the group said they recruit women from the interior of Mexico. Only three pimps reported seeking women from outside Mexico.

For strip clubs, the direct recruitment of strip dancers was often not necessary. There were established channels through which pimps (*jalador de mujeres* or literally women pullers)

brought the women to these clubs. In many cases, strip dancers themselves served as referrals for each other and their friends who wanted to work at different or additional venues. Since all such commercial establishments had widely fluctuating demands from time to time, the referral process also became highly adaptable. The marketplace for the strip clubs remained fluid, as described by a table dance manager discussing how his club hired dancers:

Sometimes women come on their own. When they don't come on their own we give commissions to the *jalador de mujeres* \$30.00 per woman. When a *jalador de mujeres* helps us bring in the women, we usually want to see the women first. If we approve of the women, we negotiate an agreement with the *jalador de mujeres* and the women begin work immediately. There is no regional preference where the women are from, as long as they can catch the clients' attention. We simply try to meet our clients' tastes. In many occasions I try to ask for referrals from my friends in other bars that have a lot of women. They then tell their women about my bar. A lot of times these women have friends or relatives that want to work in this area of the city because of the proximity to where they live.

It appeared to be an established practice in the sex industry in Tijuana that a bar or club must pay one-time commissions to whoever brings in the women. Some of the subjects believed that there might be additional money that women had to pay to their pimps for the referrals, as the above club manager explained:

I don't know if the women pay their pimps for finding work. Since we normally find the women through their friends or our friends from other businesses so we don't have to pay commissions. But in talking to some of the women, I have found that these women also

pay a percentage of their daily income to the pimps for helping them get the job, and that seems abusive to us. But that's their business, and we try to find these women directly and not through middlemen.

For many club owners and managers, it made little business sense for them to go out of their way to recruit dancers from any distance. There were always women who knocked on their doors looking for jobs or friends of other strip clubs or pimps (*jaladors*) who would bring their women. Suffice it to say, these strip clubs served as strong employment magnets in the red light district for pimps and prostitutes alike. A seven-year strip club manager from Zacatecas explained how he found the dancers for his club:

All the women who work in my club are from here in Tijuana. We can't bring them from outside the city because that would cost us too much. These women work as *ficheras* (women who earn commissions by selling drinks at inflated prices in a bar or cantina) and pay for *salidas* (exit fees). We don't bring anyone from outside the city. They are already here in the city. Some have been here for some time because they have relatives living here and they come looking for work, and they come on their own to the bars and sometimes the *jalador* brings them. But paying anyone to bring women from other places? No, that wouldn't be to our advantage, as it's so convenient to use a *jalador* here.

A 36-year old woman, who was originally from Sinaloa, managed a reportedly high-class *casa de citas* (i.e., brothel) in a good neighborhood catering to "distinguished" guests and politicians. She was first introduced into the sex industry through her girlfriend who owned the brothel. Rising through the ranks over the years, she became the supervisor of the house at the

time of the interview. Unlike other pimps, she boasted a long waiting list that women had to get on in order to work at the house. She claimed:

We always have a waiting list of women that we call because they are well paid. They show up in the house on their own and the owner talks to them and in some cases they negotiate agreements. If girls from other states want to come, we request that they send their pictures and videos ahead of time, so the owner can review them and get their consent before bringing them to the city. We have contacts in Mexico, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Acapulco, Mazatlan and San Diego because of its proximity. These contacts find girls in their locations and send us their pictures and videos. If the owner likes any, she will notify the recruiters. Travel arrangement is then made to bring the women in. On some occasions I myself have made travel arrangements for some of these women to come to Tijuana. All this is done by trust, since there is no way to guarantee that they will come to work for us.

Despite the emphasis of this study on maximizing the range of pimp experiences, with the exception of four cases, all subjects reported only dealing with “willing” participants. There are several possible explanations for such a small number of subjects who admitted to using fraudulent pretences to seduce women into prostitution. First, it is possible that this type of pimp is in the minority, which seems to also correspond with the small number of women who reportedly were deceived into prostitution. Their small numbers (of unknown parametric estimates) in the actual population also made it difficult for this study to capture through its snowball sampling technique.

Secondly, the subject recruitment method may also, unintentionally, have restricted our chances of finding such subjects. Because pimps who used fraud and force to manipulate their women were likely to be small-time and out-of-town individuals, they were unlikely to be part of Tijuana's established sex industry, such as brothel owners or escort service operators. As reported earlier, this study relied on the personal networks of our community informants and project staff to establish contacts with sex trade facilitators in Tijuana. Our project staff and community informants were also long-time Tijuana residents, which likely biased their networks towards local, more established pimps who may also deal mainly with other local pimps. Until these out-of-town pimps become more prominent in Tijuana, they will continue to be difficult to locate through any recruitment methods that rely on local social networks.

This method of subject recruitment, while necessary at the time when the project was implemented, was probably skewed in two ways. First, because the project's intent was to seek subjects who were directly involved in the sex industry, the pimps targeted were mostly local residents who had been in the business for some time. As discussed in the above section, they were following time-tested or established procedures for recruitment and delivery, in which unwilling women were avoided because of the potential headaches of dealing with "amateurs" and expense of bringing women from afar. It is simply inefficient and potentially costly to manage "unwilling" women when the "willing" ones were plentiful. Second, reliance on referrals from one's social network also made it awkward, if not inappropriate, to confront subjects about whether they had used force or deception to coerce women and children into prostitution. These self-incriminating questions may invite socially desirable answers or simply backfire with dishonest responses.

Based on self-reports from most pimps, particularly those who had been in the business for some years, the recruitment of women in Tijuana appeared to follow the route of least resistance. Although more prostitutes would mean more profits, most pimps preferred girls who were already in town and willing to start working. A 44-year-old pimp from Sonora explained:

The ones I get are usually already in Tijuana. They were already brought here and are looking for jobs. I don't go to other states or cities anymore. Clients may have many preferences, like thin and young women, but their regional preferences don't matter.

However, it was clear that pimps were aware of the many varied circumstances that may compel women into the sex trade. Not all women were "willing" participants in this business, as the above pimp elaborated:

Some of these girls are brought here because they want to go to the United States and end up staying here. Some girls are lied to. Other girls come with the intention to work as prostitutes and for me, and these are the best ones because I don't run into problems with them. They are here because they want to and that's that. They know the rules, they may have worked in this business in their home state and I don't have to babysit them. I don't pay for anyone to bring me prostitutes from other cities or states. When my two guys bring me someone, the girl is already living in Tijuana and that makes it easy for everyone.

Their answers could be due to the social desirability effect (i.e., the tendency towards responding in socially acceptable ways). However, these "willing" sex workers were not always easy to manage. As the 44-year-old pimp from Sonora bemoaned about his work life:

I work every day of the week because in this business, the days never stop. It's continuous work. Don't think I'm sitting at home and watching television all day waiting for the money to come in. No, I still try to get more girls, check up on them to see how they are doing. I get complaints from the girls, and sometime against each other. Then I try to solve their problems. These damn girls always seem to have one problem or another (*no, si las cabronas siempre traen un problema u otro*). There are many headaches. Fights break out between girls, like "she took my customer," "a customer didn't pay me." So many problems. Maybe once a year I can get to go somewhere nice for a vacation. But for the most part I'm here in Tijuana working and I don't go back to my home state because Tijuana is now my home.

Conversations about sex trafficking activities in Tijuana varied tremendously, depending on one's sources. Many claimed to have known such people in the business while others claimed to have read in the news or heard stories from friends. The individuals of diverse backgrounds who participated in this study alluded to a more sinister aspect of the underground sex industry, suggesting that any sex service could be bought for a price, from underage girls and boys to women from other countries.

In one case, a communication business owner claimed that sex trafficking has been going on for decades. When he was growing up in Tijuana, he learned that women were recruited into the city's sex industry. Years ago, he even got to know a high level madam who was in charge of a large escort business and many pimps worked for her. He recalled:

This woman saw nothing wrong with what she was doing. She would say, "I am giving these girls a great opportunity to make money. They get paid a lot more than they can get

doing other jobs. If they have something better or different opportunities to choose from, they would have gone elsewhere. No one is stopping them. Of course bad things happen in this business. If they cannot protect themselves in this business or don't listen to me, then they are too dumb to protect themselves.

According to this informant, what tourists see in Tijuana's red light district is only superficial. There is a lot more going on in the shadows, where any type of sexual service imaginable is available for a price. This informant said:

There is a small but highly-secluded class of individuals, flushed with money, that order up girls and children for exotic sexual services. Some even have their prostitutes killed as part of their sex games. No one will notice when these girls are missing since they were recruited from interior Mexico. They leave no traces. This underground business is so well protected that few can penetrate. But if anyone gets in their way or poses a risk, he will be killed. You see all the drug killings reported in the news. The same thing goes on in the sex industry. If you get in their way, they will kill you.

It was difficult to gauge the veracity of the stories told by these community informants. Since they were neither paid for their information nor placed in a position that they could benefit from the study findings in anyway, their claims may bear some credence. However, without a more rigorous research design and repeated observations, it is impossible to gauge how widespread such situations actually are. It is true that Mexico has a regulated sex industry and also true that women from the interior and urban areas become prostitutes primarily out of financial necessity. But to claim that large numbers of women are held against their will and

forced into prostitution requires far more empirical evidence than can be supported by the existing literature.

III.B.5. Sex Trafficking and Organized Crime

The connection between sex trafficking and organized crime was probed among all sex trade facilitators. As seen in Table 10, almost all of the sex trade facilitators interviewed in this study (90 of 92) denied any connection with criminal organizations. One declined to respond directly to the question. Another mentioned a few things which insinuated organized crime was involved in the sex industry. When asked if he was associated any criminal organizations (such as drug traffickers, coyotes, or gangsters in Tijuana or San Diego), this 35-year-old manager of a table dance club responded:

No comment. We all know what we do, so they don't rob our business. Because there are drug traffickers, coyotes, local gangsters in this area or from San Diego, who want to sell you protection. If you don't reach an agreement with them, they will cause problems and start fights in your bar with the women who work for you, hurting your business.

Therefore you have to let them work inside your business without bothering the clients and the women who work here. In short, this place is not associated with these kinds of people, but, as you know, you can't go to the police if these people cause problems. The gangster is the one that causes all the fights, since they make money off the drug traffickers and the coyotes.

Considering the pervasive violence in drug cartel struggles along the U.S.-Mexico border and cross-border human smuggling activities, it was surprising that criminal organizations had

not infiltrated into the sex industry. There were claims made by the community informants that drug traffickers and gangsters were branching into the sex industry in search of alternative income revenues because of the mounting challenges from the Mexican government against drug trafficking activities. With only two exceptions, all sex trade facilitators interviewed in this study seemed to conduct their businesses without any interference from criminal organizations (or at least their own business activities were unaffected by organized crime).

There are several factors that may explain the lack of association between criminal organizations and the sex industry in Tijuana. Pimping does not lend itself easily to criminal organizations because the activities are highly individualized. The day-to-day operations between prostitutes and their clients require little or no involvement from any organized criminal groups. However, the red light district itself is a fixed asset in a clearly marked neighborhood, over which protection is not only desired but also imperative for smooth transactions. According to Gambetta (1993), the hallmark of organized crime is not its capacity to operate vice enterprises, but to sell, and enforce, protection to those involved in an informal economy that is neither recognized nor protected by the legal market system.

It is unclear to what extent protection from any underworld organization is needed in Tijuana's red light district. It is a regulated and legal business in a city that depends heavily on tourists. Any disruptions, whether from rowdy customers or street gangs, are most likely not tolerated by sex business owners who will immediately call for police intervention. The last thing any sex business in the red light district wants is disruptive or violent activities that scare away customers. The presence of police in and around Tijuana's red light district was difficult to miss. Additionally there were bouncers in front of all strip clubs and brothel hotels. The combination of both private and public security measures seemed to have kept the red light

district fairly safe. Violence and fights were rarely reported either in the news or by the project staff who frequented the district during the project. About the biggest violent incident that occurred in Tijuana during this project involved two U.S. sailors who stabbed two prostitutes in a brothel (Martinez 2009). These two sailors were later found to be linked to another murder case involving a prostitute.

III.C. Views from Law Enforcement and Government Officials

In addition to the core interviews with pimps and prostitutes, this study also gathered opinions and impressions from law enforcement and other government officials about sex trafficking. On the Mexican side, a total of 30 government officials (mostly police officers) were interviewed. All interviews were conducted by the project’s Mexican staff who followed a consistent guideline. Of the 30 government officials, 29 were male and one female. Twenty-six of the subjects were police officers, one was a judge, and three were other government officials. Their work experience varied from 2-3 years on their current job assignment to more than eight years. Except for one subject, all were line officers without any supervisory responsibilities. Roughly half of the subjects were working for the Tijuana municipality and the rest worked either for the state or federal government, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11 about here

On the U.S. side, a total of 12 U.S. law enforcement officials spoke to the project staff. With a few exceptions, the majority of these interactions were informal interviews conducted by the Principal Investigator. Of the 12 U.S. officials, three were female and nine male. Ten of them

were police officers and two were judicial officers. The U.S. officials were more senior than their counterparts in Tijuana, with more years of work experience. Five of the 12 subjects (41.7 percent) held supervisory positions at the time of the interview. Four were from a municipal police force, five were from the county sheriff's department, and the remaining three were from federal agencies.

Overall, there was no shortage of concerns among law enforcement officials from both sides of the border about sex trafficking and potential problems it may create for the larger society. Most law enforcement and government officials were primarily concerned with sex trafficking problems within their own jurisdictions. Few subjects reported having direct experiences working on transnational investigations. Even among the U.S. federal law enforcement representatives, knowledge of cross-border trafficking activities seemed limited. There were simply too few cases for them to work on. Their primary investigative efforts were focused on activities within the U.S.

Two consistent themes emerged from the interviews with the U.S. law enforcement officials: (1) a lack of workable cases; (2) difficulty in convincing "victims" to testify against their pimps. There were relatively few cases of sex trafficking involving adults in the San Diego area. Many of the interviews on sex trafficking activities inevitably gravitated towards the sexual exploitation of children. Most recent attention turned to a crackdown on pimps working with under-aged minors in the local sex industry, actions which are automatically classified as sex trafficking offenses.

In nearly all trafficking cases that were brought to the authorities' attention, police experienced difficulties in getting corroborating statements (i.e., victim collaboration) from the victims. Most prostitutes, both women and children, were reluctant to turn on their pimps.

Without victim corroboration, few police or prosecutors were willing to move forward with the investigation regardless of what other evidence may have been available. This was also an area where some law enforcement officials called for changes in policy and law. For instance, a Sheriff's Deputy from a county in Southern California suggested changes be made similar to those made to domestic violence cases a few decades ago. This police official argued that by lowering the legal threshold, such as by passing cross-examination by the defendant, more cases could be brought to court. Considering the nature of the adversarial process and the many constitutional as well as procedural obstacles, most law enforcement and judicial officials forecast a remote prospect of such legislative changes. One deputy district attorney interviewed in this study explained that even in domestic violence cases, compelling reasons such as 911 calls and physical injuries must be used to bypass victim testimonies. She also cautioned that legislative changes usually took a long time:

It took decades for women's rights groups and legislative bodies around the country to bring about the changes in domestic violence cases. I think it will take 10 more years for us to get to that point with sex trafficking cases. We all know there are many rights and legal hurdles in the justice system. We have to bring forth the witness when the defense demands her testimony.

Having worked on only two sex trafficking cases in the past four years, this deputy district attorney lamented that the lack of cooperation from the victims presented the most serious obstacles to successful prosecution of these cases. The lack of cooperation was not without reasons. She explained:

Victims don't trust us. We have little to offer in the long run. Although we try to befriend them and visit them during their incarceration, most of us move on to other things after their cases are over. These women know we are only temporary in their lives. Guess who they turn to when they are released? Their pimps! The pimps are the only stable people in these girls' lives, the caring people who look after them.

On the Mexican side, nearly all government officials interviewed in this study considered sex trafficking a serious problem in Tijuana, as shown in Table 12. For a few years (from 2004 through 2007), Mexico was considered not in full compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking activities, and was placed on the Tier 2 Watch List as defined by the U.S. Government (see Department of State TIP reports 2004 through 2007). Pervasive corruption has been cited as a major problem that impedes investigations. These factors have made human trafficking a significant issue in Mexican political, public policy, human rights, and media circles. Perhaps due to on-going U.S. assistance to Mexican authorities and efforts by advocacy groups, all law enforcement and government officials interviewed in this study were aware of human trafficking issues and recognized the seriousness of the problem in Tijuana. It is clear that the Mexican authorities are serious about confronting human trafficking activities and associated organized crime.

However, as in the case of their U.S. counterparts, exactly how their serious intentions can be put into practice remains a challenging question. This study found that most Mexican law enforcement officials did not attempt to separate sex trafficking in which women were forced into prostitution through coercion or deception from simply bringing women into the sex industry in Tijuana. It was unclear whether the conceptual differentiation was important to these

officials. But the common view among these officials was that “sex trafficking activities,” however they were defined, were rampant in Tijuana and Mexico in general. When probed about the problem of sex trafficking in Tijuana, one criminal judge in Tijuana described the situation as follows:

All over Tijuana. Specifically in areas such Zona Norte, La Coahuila, and La Libertad. But now the problem has extended to other parts of Tijuana like the east part of it. It used to be only the girls standing outside (*las paraditas*) and the girls inside the bars in the tolerance zone (*zona de tolerancia*). Now, there are escorts, massage parlors, spas, beauty salons, etc. Sex trafficking is a very serious problem and it’s only getting worse. The problem escalates every day mainly due to the poor economy in Mexico. Prostitution is tolerated by the state as a “social problem,” and it is not considered a crime. Therefore, different types of mafias such as human smugglers (*polleros*), drug dealers (*narcos*), and pimps (*padrotes*) take advantage of the legal environment and exploit these women. These are well-organized mafia groups. A lot more minors and little girls are being enrolled and recruited for the sex business. The problem in Tijuana is also extending to young boys who are recruited. Ever since Tijuana was founded in the late 1800s and early 1900s, prostitution has been a economic base for the city. A lot of soldiers from San Diego would come to have a good time. Prostitution in Tijuana has now become a business and the government is not trying to stop it.

Table 12 about here

The conceptual ambiguity appeared to have broadened the scope of the problem to include any pandering or pimping to these Mexican officials. In fact, the legal concept of pandering and pimping, or *lenicidio*, was equated with sex trafficking. When asked how sex trafficking was handled, this criminal court judge responded:

How can I explain this to you? First, a pandering (*lenocidio*) crime is committed by the head person of a trafficking group or organization. He is the panderer (*lenon*). The law punishes these panderers, and gives them anywhere from three to fifteen years of prison time. An example of the panderers would be human traffickers such as pimps and polleros. Their activity is punishable by law, but the sex workers are not sanctioned. In any case, a municipal regulatory law does exist and it regulates sex workers. I don't know exactly how many sexual workers are regulated by the city or registered. There are an estimated 15,000 registered sex workers but I know that is only half.

Only a small number of the Mexican officials mentioned specific trafficking groups in Tijuana. The majority of these officers (86.7 percent) thought there had been some or significant changes in Tijuana's sex industry and most (90 percent) considered the current anti-trafficking measures largely ineffective. Although half of the Mexican officials were not knowledgeable enough to compare U.S. anti-trafficking efforts with their own, those who were, in general, preferred the U.S. policy to the Mexican policy.

III.C. The Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups were interviewed on both sides of the border. As expected, the information gathered from these advocacy groups was rather uniform with regard to the

perceived severity of sex trafficking problems in their regions. To these agencies, sex trafficking was not only serious but also widespread; victims were numerous and needs for services far outstripped what the community agencies could provide. Their desire and passion to save the women and girls from sex traffickers were so palpable during the interviews that one could not help but appreciate the intense energy underlying the current anti-trafficking campaign. Many of these agencies, particularly those on the U.S. side, were major regional players in initiating and organizing a wide variety of anti-trafficking activities, including law enforcement assistance in providing services to victims, community-based intelligence, on-going training workshops for law enforcement agencies, awareness campaigns for modern-day slavery, public speech events, and fund-raising activities.

As shown in Table 13, a total of 20 community-based organizations were interviewed on the Mexican side and eight on the U.S. side. Although multiple individuals were interviewed in these meetings, only the lead agency representatives were included in the following table to count the types of service. These service providers included: rescue agencies that provided multiple services either directly or through a network of agencies, residential services (or shelters), education and public awareness providers, medical clinics, and faith-based organizations.

Table 13 about here

Although much of the current anti-trafficking movement centers around women and girls, the majority of these organizations were open and willing to serve both men and women, and adults and children. Furthermore, most agencies were open to clients regardless of their national

origin. Because of their referral sources, some agencies may serve more domestic clients than immigrants or vice versa. A greater variety of agencies were interviewed on the Mexican side as sex trafficking was only one of the many missions undertaken by these community organizations. On the U.S. side, interviews were mostly conducted with anti-human trafficking agencies.

Record keeping and information sharing remained major obstacles for research and program evaluation purposes. For obvious reasons, much of the information gathered by these organizations remained confidential and inaccessible to researchers. The lack of independent verification of any such agency data raises questions about the veracity and validity of the numerous claims made by advocacy groups, because relatively few cases have been brought to the judicial process either locally or nationally. For instance, a local anti-human trafficking organization claimed, in the past few years, to have recorded in excess of three hundred cases of confirmed trafficking victims under a federally funded project. But according to a report issued by a state-wide California task force convened by the Governor and led by the state Attorney General's Office, a total of five federally-funded task forces in a three-year span reported only 559 *potential* victims (California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery Task Force 2007). As pointed out in this report, although there are several known sources of data on human trafficking, "most are not systematically collected nor are they collected using common categories and definitions" (California Alliance to Comb Trafficking and Slavery Task Forces 2007: 39). Much greater collaboration and perhaps trust between community-based agencies and independent researchers is needed to reach a better understanding of the scope and severity of sex trafficking activities in the region.

In addition to the lack of trust sex trafficking victims have in the justice system and rescue agencies, another explanation for the discrepancy between estimated and reported trafficking cases is provided by the anti-trafficking organizations in the U.S: the impact of brainwashing in the hands of pimps. As one representative from an advocacy group explained, pointing to the Biderman's Chart of Coercion:²

Most of these girls are brainwashed into believing that prostitution is their only choice in life. Right now I urgently need experts who specialize in reversing these damages from brainwashing by the pimps. These women have no idea how to get away from this life. Even if you put power in their hand, they wouldn't know what to do with it because they have been so conditioned to listen to their pimps and depend on their pimps for everything from daily activities, security, to emotional support. The traffickers and pimps control these girls' lives. These criminals are well-organized and good at what they are doing.

² Biderman's Chart of Coercion first appeared in an article documenting a study by the U.S. Air Force to account for the experiences of 235 personnel captured by the Chinese Communists during the Korean War who had been exposed to various coercions and extortions for confessions. In a chart entitled "Community Coercive Methods for Eliciting Individual Compliance" (Biderman 1957: 619), the Chinese Communists' methods of mind control consisted of isolation, monopolization of perception, induced debilitation/exhaustion, threats, occasional indulgences, demonstrating "omnipotence" and "omniscience," degradation, and enforcing trivial demands. Additional analysis of these brainwash techniques was later provided in a book by Meyers and Biderman (1968), in which the authors argued that the thought reform and control process developed and perfected by the Chinese Communists had achieved far greater control over the masses than any other totalitarian regimes. The so-called Biderman's Chart of Coercion has now been widely incorporated into services for domestic violence counseling, cult reserving, and most recently, rescuing efforts in anti-human trafficking movement.

In other words, the victims of sex trafficking are suffering, on a grand scale, from a state of false consciousness, failing to recognize the psychological and physical damages of prostitution and the gross exploitation by their pimps. While plausible, such claims of widespread brainwashing in prostitution or other forms of indentured labor require much needed empirical support.

III.D. San Diego Exotic Dancers

To search for possible spillover effects of the sex trade between Tijuana and San Diego, this project approached the Center for Behavioral Epidemiology and Community Health (CBEACH), a research center at San Diego State University, which at the time was conducting a pilot study to explore public health issues among exotic dancers in San Diego. The CBEACH pilot study was intended for methodological exploration and grant proposal development purposes. and interview instrument was already developed. Upon discussion with the project staff, additional items, specific to sex trafficking activities, were included in the CBEACH interview instrument.

The CBEACH staff agreed to interview an additional 100 exotic dancers at its recruitment site in the City of San Diego. The recruitment site was located at a city government facility where exotic dancers applied for or renewed their adult entertainer license.³ All

³ In the City of San Diego, a police-issued permit is required to work as an exotic dancer (or adult entertainer). One may work at a licensed nude entertainment business or as an outcall nude entertainer. In either case, a license is required from the police department, which is valid for one year. The licensing fees are \$364 for one to work at a fixed location and \$1,059 for an outcall licensee.

interviews were conducted in private settings by female project staff. In the end, a total of 72 interviews were completed (28 short of the target of 100 as originally planned). The interview activities ceased at the end of September 2009 due to staff changes as a result of the new school year, and the low number of exotic dancers willing to be interviewed. Because the overall design of the study was qualitative in nature and the pilot was based on convenience sampling, these interviews were intended to provide some glimpses of possible spillover effects of sex trafficking activities in the border region. Recall that the overarching design of the study was on maximizing the diversity of subject experiences as opposed to achieving population estimates.

As shown in Table 14, no subjects were under the age of 18. The majority, about 74 percent, were between the ages of 21 and 35. The youngest subject in the sample was 18 and the oldest was 51. In comparison, this group of subjects were much better educated than the Tijuana sample of sex workers. The vast majority of these women, about 93 percent, had a high school education or above. In fact, more than 70 percent of the group had at least some college education. About one third of the group were enrolled in school at the time of the interview. The vast majority of these women, about 93 percent, were either single or divorced. The majority of them, sixty of the 72 (83 percent), were born in the U.S. The remaining 12 were presumed to be in the U.S. legally, as full identification, including Social Security number and driver license, are checked and verified in order for them to obtain an adult entertainer license in San Diego.

Table 14 about here

The majority of these exotic dancers, about 60 percent, worked in both nude and topless clubs, as shown in Table 15. The rest of the subjects either worked in topless bars or nude clubs.

When inquired about the reasons for their choice of employment as exotic dancers, roughly 80 percent cited “to pay bills.” Furthermore, more than one third of these women, 27 of them, stated that they became exotic dancers to pay for school. Although it was customary for these exotic dancers to tip bouncers or other bar tenders, the majority of them, about 76 percent, also had to pay the club owners to work in their facilities. The most commonly cited amount of money paid to club owners was between \$25 and \$45. Self-reported annual earnings varied widely among this group of subjects. Slightly more than half of them, 51.4 percent, were able to make \$30,000 to \$70,000 per year from exotic dance alone. However, on the low end, 10 of the women (about 14 percent) made \$10,000 or less from dancing alone. On the high end, 11 of them (or slightly more than 15 percent) were able to make \$70,000 or more from dancing alone. Two of them claimed to break six digits in their annual earnings from exotic dancing alone.

Table 15 about here

The entry points into the adult entertainment business also varied widely among these women. As shown in Table 16, some of them claimed that they were introduced to the business by their friends, exotic dancers that they knew, former boyfriends, girlfriends, or even a customer at a gym where the exotic dancer used to work. But the majority of the subjects, 68 percent of the group, claimed that they self-initiated efforts to find work in the adult entertainment business and were not encouraged or persuaded by anyone.

To explore whether any of the exotic dancers had been compelled into this work under some type of coercion, the survey probed into issues about or relating to force, fraud, and sexual violence. With the exception of one woman, all claimed that their initial entry into the adult

entertainment business was by their own choice, not by force or coercion. Financial pressure was the number one motivation for these exotic dancers. According to anti-sex trafficking advocacy groups, many exotic dancers were frequently coerced into having sex with customers because the owners wanted to please their clients. One representative from a San Diego advocacy group claimed:

These girls are often given the ultimatum from their employers to either sleep with the client or don't bother coming back. Guess what these girls will choose? They have bills to pay and kids to feed. Many are supporting themselves through school. No coercion or actual violence is needed to compel them into prostitution. They are financially coerced. They are faced with financial coercion.

To find out whether these women ever experienced sexual harassment from their employers, the CBEACH survey included items that asked these women if club owners, their co-workers (such as bartenders or bouncers), or anyone outside of their significant others, ever forced them to have sex with anyone. Sexual violence did happen, albeit rarely, among this group of subjects. With the exception of one woman, all claimed that the club owners had never forced them to have sex with customers. Also, with the exception of one subject, all of the women claimed that their co-workers had never forced them to have sex with anyone. Two women out of the 72 claimed that someone other than their significant others had forced them to have sex.

However, it was not uncommon for these women to admit that they had engaged in activities that were in violation of the city ordinance regulating the adult entertainment business. According to the city ordinance, exotic dancers must remain six feet away from their customers

and there is a no-touch rule in all clubs. However, this survey found that physical contact between exotic dancers and their customers, especially those sexual in nature, were rather common. About 42 percent, 30 of the 72 subjects, reported that customers put something in their vagina or anus while they were dancing. One in four subjects reported that they had sex with customers for additional money.

Table 16 about here

As for cross-border activities related to adult entertainment, one third of the women in the survey claimed that some of their customers came from Tijuana, as shown in Table 17. Another one third of these women also claimed to have received customers from other parts of Mexico. Thirty-six percent of the group, or 26 of the 72, reported that some of their co-workers were from Tijuana. About 11 percent of the subjects claimed that they personally knew exotic dancers who worked in Tijuana's red light district. Eleven percent of the group also claimed to know exotic dancers in San Diego who crossed into Tijuana to dance.

Based on these findings, although U.S. tourists are known to frequent Tijuana's red light district, the reverse may also be true. Customers from both sides of the border showed up in adult entertainment facilities on the other side of the border. The exotic dancers also crossed the border to take advantage of business opportunities. Much more research is needed to measure the precise volume and direction of such cross-border flows and how these activities may be connected to any sex trafficking activities.

Table 17 about here

There were several noticeable contrasts between the prostitutes in Tijuana and the exotic dancers in San Diego. Although similar in their average age and marital status, significantly more women in the Tijuana group were 20 years of age or younger. In comparison, the exotic dancers tended to concentrate between the ages of 21 and 29, accounting for nearly 60 percent of the group. The exotic dancers in San Diego as a group were also more educated than their counterparts in Tijuana, which may help explain their higher earnings. As a group, the exotic dancers enjoyed much more control over their work life. They suffered far fewer incidents of sexual or physical abuse than the women in Tijuana. Not a single case of “true” sex trafficking was found among the San Diego exotic dancers. Although prostitution is illegal in San Diego, it was not uncommon to find exotic dancers who sold sex for money. Perhaps the illicit nature of these activities forced the exotic dancers to be more selective and careful in screening potential clients, thus restricting access and opportunities for prospective sex traffickers to infiltrate the business.

It should be noted, however, that one must not extrapolate too much from the survey findings. After all, all exotic dancers were interviewed at a government-run office where these women applied for the license to work in the legitimate adult entertainment businesses. Although many of these exotic dancers also sold sex for extra money, the more traditionally conceived prostitute population was not and could not be captured through this recruitment venue. Therefore, whether sex trafficking is happening in San Diego is anybody’s guess. The only tentative observation one can draw from the surveyed exotic dancers is that sex trafficking is unlikely in the legitimate adult entertainment business in San Diego. Any future efforts to investigate sex trafficking activities in San Diego should perhaps focus on the illegitimate sector.

IV. DISCUSSION

The following sections provide the highlights of this study's findings regarding the nature and process of trafficking activities in Tijuana's sex industry. Although non-representative in its sampling, the study nevertheless provided glimpses into the world of commercial sex in Tijuana and found examples of how force and fraud were used by pimps and traffickers to control their victims. These trafficking cases, although relatively small in number, were enough to suggest directions on how and under what circumstances sex trafficking is likely to occur. One section is devoted to the conceptualization of a theoretical paradigm that attempts to explain why these identified sex trafficking activities may be the exception rather than the norm among women who work in the sex trade. Another section is devoted to the discussion of policy implications and possible strategies that may improve law enforcement response to combat sex trafficking activities. Finally, suggestions for future research efforts are proposed.

IV.A. Summary of Findings

This study found that women from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds entered into commercial sex. At the same time, men of diverse backgrounds also exploited women to advance their financial interests. Both law enforcement agencies and advocacy groups were very concerned about women being forced into prostitution. It will remain an issue of contention whether the scope of the current anti-trafficking campaign is in proportion to the size of the problem and whether current strategies are appropriate for the identified patterns of sexual trafficking in this border region.

The vast majority of the women interviewed in this study chose prostitution simply as a means to financial ends, however they rationalized their participation in the sex industry. It was clear that many of these women were under tremendous financial pressure to earn money, either to keep their own children fed and clothed, to assist their families, or to maintain a desired standard of living. With little formal education and few employable skills, these women applied the only resource readily available to them (namely their bodies) to achieve their financial goals.

A few women, 12 percent of the sample, were forced into prostitution, at least initially, by their “boyfriends,” “husbands,” or pimps. The men involved in these situations employed a wide range of techniques to manipulate and coerce their women into the sex business for profit. Although no women were held in cages, the control was just as debilitating. These women were socially isolated and deprived of their ordinary peer support groups or common connections with their immediate families. They distrusted the authorities and felt too ashamed to call their families for help. These women were held hostage in a virtual prison created by their handlers.

The sex trade facilitators, according to their own self reports and the reports of the prostitutes, appeared to be mostly enterprising individuals. Facilitators who operated at stable locations such as strip clubs, brothel hotels, or massage parlors, also seemed to have established business procedures that attracted prostitutes and pimps alike. Pimps without stable work locations seemed busy hustling on a daily basis to pander their women. With rare exceptions, these sex trade facilitators were not connected to or controlled by organized crime. There were hardly any stories of prostitutes or pimps having to pay for protection or commissions to “mafia bosses.” They were mostly working for themselves.

Law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border were concerned about sex trafficking activities, and the majority of these officials believed much more could be done. On

the U.S. side, legal ambiguity and the lack of victim cooperation remained the two biggest challenges for successful prosecution of pimps, neither of which is easy to resolve. Most U.S. law enforcement officials interviewed in this study believed that until these two obstacles can be adequately addressed, sex trafficking cases will continue to remain relatively few. With few successful cases being prosecuted by the justice system, it remains unclear how long the current intense anti-trafficking campaign can be sustained.

Social service providers, collectively referred to as non-government organizations (NGOs), were the most vocal respondents in this study. According to these social service agencies, sex trafficking was rampant and victims were numerous. Their moral views and passionate belief in their rescue mission were evident, and they served a vital function in alerting the larger society to the plight of a segment of the prostitute population, however small and invisible, whose cries would otherwise never be heard.

IV.B. Of Morality and Financial Necessity

Sex trafficking coalesces closely with a stigmatized commercial activity that is prohibited in many countries but tolerated in others. All human societies throughout history have devised a multitude of rationales and strategies to manage and control their members' sexual behavior. The issue of whether sex in and of itself can or should be treated as a commodity or means to material ends, be they money, food, shelter, or gifts, or whether it should only be engaged in for purposes such as procreation, recreation, love, or legal obligation, is a highly charged and complex issue. It would be naïve to equate prostitution with rape or dominance of men over women.

Findings in this study clearly point to a complex social and legal problem that confronts an increasingly globalized world. How and why women enter into this socially stigmatized, if not legally prohibited, commercial activity is far more complex than what has been portrayed in the news and government reports. Some prostitutes are trafficked as children because they are desired in the twisted world of pedophiles. Others escape abusive family relationships only to find themselves ensnared by pimps who turn them into human ATM machines. Still others simply find the earning potential in prostitution difficult to turn away. Commercial sex is an enormously complex social phenomenon.

Moralists may consider any sexual intercourse stripped of love and romance inherently exploitative and dehumanizing. In their minds, the ideal sexual relationship must meet the following standards: pleasure-oriented, egalitarian, and commercial free. Regardless of whether one agrees with such ideal definitions, the open exchange of sex for money carries social stigma across most cultures around the world, not only because prostitutes behave in ways often deemed inappropriate for women in these cultures but also because the sexual relationship occurs outside the context of love or legal obligation. Such debate will go on forever. But the fact remains that many women, such as the majority in this study, choose prostitution simply as a way to improve their life circumstances. Within this economic context, in which many other forms of labor may be included, many women are actually content with their ability to stand on their own, free from familial dependency and male constraints. However, some also fall prey to men (and sometimes women) adept at taking advantage of the financial or emotional vulnerabilities of women and children. In between these two extremes of the continuum lie many more reasons how and why women enter the sex trade.

Few disagree that forcing women and children into trading sex for money is morally repulsive and must be confronted with a swift and coordinated response from governments across countries. However, taking a moral stand is much easier than applying it to controlling such activities. For the large number of women who strive to achieve or maintain their desired standard of living, moralizing their behavior and choice of occupation may do little to help their situation. Few advocacy groups or government agencies have been able to offer effective and practical alternatives to draw prostitutes away from the sex trade in any significant number, despite the reports of well-documented ravages that prostitution inflicts on women (see Farley 2003). Perhaps one should ponder a reality in which armies of well-trained and organized mental health and social service professionals with names dripping impressive titles, backed by government agencies and private foundations, not to mention the moral supremacy, have persistent problems ‘rescuing’ prostitutes from their seemingly disorganized and forever persecuted pimps and madams.

To ask these women to simply get an education, find a job, or adjust to a different lifestyle is as intellectually naïve as it is politically ineffective. To accuse the economic and political system for failing to pay these women living wages in other careers thus compelling them into prostitution is equally unproductive, for there are many other people scraping at the bottom of the society without resorting to selling sex. Such moral high-horsing glosses over the vastly complex nature of the sex trade that attracts people of diverse backgrounds and motivations.

For example, a sizeable number of women, as found in this study, may actually be content with the level of control over their work and the financial returns provided working in escort services. These women exude agency and resiliency, as opposed to self-pity or blame in

their struggle to make the best out of their circumstances. Many women in this study were found to be self-organizing, acting as referral sources for and looking after one another. Few of them seemed to have been brainwashed by pimps or dependent on them for everything. Even after repeated probing by the interviewers, the majority of these women did not perceive themselves as helpless victims of any abuse. This observation does not imply that the prostitutes in this study loved what they were doing and didn't want to quit. Quite the contrary, more than half of them had definite plans to leave this business. They were clear headed and focused. They knew that prostitution was not the life they wanted to live for long.

IV.C. Sex Trafficking and Organized Crime

There are several ways to define what is or is not organized crime. Suffice it to say the research community is still debating on what to include in the study of organized crime so that people do not call it organized crime when a few burglars work together to break into a house or rob a bank (see Finckenauer 2009 for a more detailed discussion of these definitional problems). In many parts of the world where prostitution is illegal, crime literature often considers the illicit sex trade to be controlled by or associated with criminal organizations.

The question on affiliation with criminal organizations was posed to all sex trade facilitators in this study. With the exception of two subjects, all subjects denied any connection with organized crime. Nor did any of the prostitutes report being controlled by organized crime groups. One could argue several possible explanations as to why little evidence of systematic involvement by organized crime in Tijuana's sex trade was uncovered from these subjects. One is that perhaps the subjects in this study were too removed from the actual interactions between the crime syndicates and the sex trade bosses to notice such activities. Another is that these

subjects, fearing for their personal safety, were too scared to report any such activities. Neither explanation seems plausible, as none of the project staff sensed any such apprehension during the interviews, which were held in private settings and often with members of their social networks. None of the community informants reported any monopolistic practices by any crime syndicates in Tijuana's sex industry, although some of them claimed that well-known underworld figures also operated strip clubs inside the red light district. The pimps and brothel owners all formed and relied on their own networks to acquire women to meet their business demand, without seeking permission from anyone or having to work within predefined contexts. Several other key indicators of systematic involvement of organized crime were also missing: any systematic collection of protection money (i.e. extortion) from pimps and prostitutes, and the presence of guards or bouncers belonging to groups not controlled by strip club owners.

One must then explain why organized crime (here measured by the presence of monopolistic business practices or widespread practice of extortion) has not infiltrated Tijuana's sex industry and related sex trafficking activities. A conceptual paradigm is proposed here to argue that large-scale trafficking and continued control of women for sexual exploitation, as targeted by the Trafficking Victims Protection (TVPA) or the UN Palermo Convention, do not fit the common practices of most ordinary commercial sex trade. Instead, sex trafficking activities appear limited to individual pimps (male and female) who are adept at seeking out women in vulnerable situations and controlling their victims through emotional manipulation, social isolation, and violence. In other words, the transnational or widespread trafficking activities implied in and targeted by these legal definitions are improbable in logistics and impractical as business practices.

Before this paradigm is delineated, it should be made clear that sex trafficking does happen, as found in this study. Nor are the victims difficult to find in Tijuana's sex industry. This conceptual framework is by no means meant to downplay the gross violations of human rights women may face in the hands of pimps. Instead it attempts to provide theoretical explanations as to why, despite wild claims made by government and non-government agencies about sex trafficking activities, few cases have been brought to justice relative to other forms of criminal offenses such as homicides, aggravated assaults, or rapes.

This conceptual framework, tentatively called the *Trafficking Propensity Square*, argues that large-scale transnational sex trafficking activities, a process in which sizeable numbers of women are subjected to sexual exploitation under force or deceit, are unlikely due to four contrarian market conditions. In other words, the propensity of becoming victimized by sex traffickers increases or decreases depending on the convergence of these four key determinants at the same time and space, hence the *Trafficking Propensity Square*, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

The *Trafficking Propensity Square* posits that: (1) the strength and kinship fortification of existing migration channels determine the level of protection and regulate risks in domestic and transnational migration, particularly for women; (2) the degree of social and informational isolation determines the length of deception and coercive control; (3) the number of unwilling participants proportionally increases logistical challenges for human traffickers; and (4) transactional atmosphere deteriorates in the face of continued moral and legal campaigns by advocacy groups and government agencies, leading to a hostile market environment that

discourages systematic involvement by organized crime groups. Based on these four key contrarian market determinants, this author believes that large-scale sex trafficking activities from Mexico or elsewhere to the U.S. and the infiltration of sex trafficking activities by criminal organizations in any organized manner are unlikely. The remainder of this section provides further delineations of the *Trafficking Propensity Square*.

A limited victim pool. The most important factor of this paradigm is to understand who is likely to fall prey to sex traffickers and how large the likely victim pool may be. Research on transnational human smuggling has long shown that kinship and community ties serve as the primary factors in determining the migration route and settlement pattern of transnational migrants (Pieke 1999; Zhang 2007). Furthermore, legal barriers and the capabilities of human smugglers, airlines, railways and shipping companies, and even law firms, human rights groups, and anti-immigration activists all influence directly or indirectly the flow and direction of legal and illegal migration.

In practice, most migrants follow existing networks to particular destinations rather than simply moving to a country where most money can be made. This is particularly the case for migrants from Mexico, who rely heavily on familial and social networks. Their migratory decisions and paths hew closely to their existing social networks in the United States. Finding jobs and choosing places to settle are a result of consultation with friends and family members already in the United States, or in this case, Tijuana. The same is also true for Chinese migrants. Emigrants from Zhejiang Province favor Spain and Italy, whereas most migrants from Fujian Province prefer to go to New York City (Pieke 1999; Zhang 2008). The roles of kinship and the network of fellow villagers are more important factors for Mexican and Chinese migrants when deciding where to migrate and to settle than the mere availability of better-paying jobs. This is

particularly the case when women are migrating. Because of gender-based expectations and cultural practices, Mexican women are less likely to migrate outside the established channels and watchful eyes of their kinship and social networks, thus restricting the pool of potential victims vulnerable to sex traffickers.

Decades of research on Mexican migration indicates that women rarely strike out on their own or form peer groups to migrate to other locations for jobs or to cross into the U.S. Instead, familial and social networks typically play a vital role in assisting women to migrate and these women often apply their accumulated social capital to assist their male family members as well (Wilson 2009). The social networks built and maintained by Mexican women (and most likely women from other Latin American countries as well) significantly affect how and where they may choose to migrate. More importantly, in recent years, migration researchers have also recognized the increasing role of women in accessing their individual networks to facilitate their brothers' transnational migration, and the role of marriage in expanding new transnational migration networks (Pessar 1999). However, such migration resources are not always evenly distributed. Men and women without such social capital must endure greater challenges and hardships to cross into the U.S. or settle domestically, as shown in this study in which women were defrauded and forced into prostitution.

An improbable feat of protracted mass deception and coercion. Continued deception and physical coercion, the two key elements defining human trafficking, are difficult to sustain over protracted periods of time or over long distances. This is a particularly difficult feat when a large number of people (women in this case) are involved and when they live in a society permeated with modern telecommunication and mass media. The sex industry in Tijuana is located in a highly congested area and serves customers who are there most likely to have a good

time and least likely to protect any specific brothels. Not only do johns share information about commercial sex shops, but the prostitutes (coerced or otherwise) mingle in strip clubs or on the street. Whatever deceptive schemes or physical force originally used to subdue the victims would require ongoing isolation or a highly controlled environment in order to be effective. Once victims start interacting with customers and mingling with other prostitutes, chances for exposure increase. Information about pricing and work conditions is exchanged, which quickly improves a prostitute's market knowledge and occupational savvy. However, continued coercion may still go on through individualized and personalized manipulations and in limited contexts where pimps or brothel owners are able to maintain a high degree of social isolation.

Logistical challenges in trafficking and managing human beings. Transporting and managing unwilling or reluctant human beings in any significant number are inherently difficult endeavors for individuals as well as for groups however well-organized. Most cases reported in the news, government reports, and in this study, indicated that sex trafficking involved mostly sporadic entrepreneurs who managed small groups of women, one to three women at any time. Their manipulative techniques also relied heavily on individual and personal persuasion, at least initially. The victims were invariably in a state of severe emotional or financial vulnerability. Such trafficking schemes are highly individualized and seem only workable in small and limited contexts. These traffickers most likely are only peripheral to the mainstream sex industry. Although it is possible that individual members of criminal organizations may be involved commercial sex, it is unlikely that criminal organizations participate in the trafficking business in any systematic manner.

Furthermore, there are many basic needs that make human beings less easy to control and transport than advocacy groups would like us to believe. Large-scale trafficking activities

involving force (actual or implied) and coercion make little business sense because it is logistically impractical if not impossible to manage and coordinate large numbers of women or men in this manner. However, as found in this study, individual women in vulnerable circumstances do fall prey to unscrupulous pimps who have developed cunning expertise in coaxing women into believing that the love was “true” in their relationships and that marriage was in the offing. While much more research is needed to explore and identify women who are likely to become victimized, findings in this study point to several common characteristics associated with an increased risk of becoming a trafficking victim: (1) migrating without or outside established familial or kinship networks, (2) illiteracy or low literacy, (3) desirable age group, and (4) severe financial or emotional difficulties.

Hostile market environment. Thanks to continued anti-trafficking campaigns by advocacy groups and government agencies, prostitution remains illegal in many Western countries. This is especially the case in the U.S. where the anti-trafficking movement carries clear and explicit moral and legal messages. Any systematic involvement in trafficking activities invites unwanted attention from the community and law enforcement agencies. As a result, thus far, trafficking cases that have caught the authorities’ attention mostly involved individual entrepreneurs. Such hostile market conditions tend to discourage criminal organizations.

IV.D. Implications for Policy and Law Enforcement Practices

Three approaches to confronting sex trafficking have been around for some time: (1) legalizing prostitution to reduce the harm posed by illicit transportation of women; (2) following the example of the Swedish policy that penalizes johns while decriminalizing prostitution, and (3) abolishing commercial sex. In the United States, with the exception of the state of Nevada,

prostitution is illegal. While moralists and philosophers can continue their debate on the acceptable boundaries of human sexuality, most would agree that any deliberate recruitment of human beings through force and fraud into the sex industry constitutes a gross violation of basic human rights and thus must be swiftly and effectively eradicated regardless of its scale or prevalence. Findings from this study point to a few practical ways to improve our current efforts in combating sex trafficking activities.

Disruption-oriented law enforcement. Much information has been gathered in this study about the recruitment and movement of women and children into the sex trade in Tijuana. This study was able to find a sizeable group of women and children who had been coaxed and coerced into the sex trade, indicating that sex trafficking was indeed happening in Tijuana. However, the perpetrators were mostly individual entrepreneurs, surviving mostly on personal slyness and operating on the fringes of the sex industry. Although individual members of organized crime groups may operate prostitution businesses (an assertion that could not be substantiated in this study), it is unlikely that any criminal organizations were actively involved in trafficking or harboring these women and children. As hypothesized earlier in the *Trafficking Propensity Square*, there appear to be too many formidable market constraints for any criminal organizations to profit from sex trafficking activities. If this is the case, then perhaps the anti-trafficking campaigns, on either side of the border, should concentrate their resources on a narrowly defined target population. As found in research on transnational human smuggling, entrepreneurs involved in smuggling operations because of their dyadic mode of transactions, are most vulnerable to market and law enforcement disruptions (Zhang and Chin 2002, 2003). If sex traffickers work primarily in small groups, then the removal of any member of the group will most likely bring down the entire operation. Therefore, at a tactical level, law enforcement

agencies should focus on disrupting individual operations to produce an impact that is not only immediate but perhaps just as effective as prolonged in-depth investigations.

Legislative efforts to increase the cost of doing business. To increase the cost of doing business for these entrepreneurs, legislative changes are needed to target specifically the final outcome of sex trafficking—asset forfeiture. Since prostitution is illegal in most states in the United States, legislative changes to increase fines or lower the threshold for property seizure can send shockwaves of deterrence throughout the illicit sex industry. Several states, such as California and Maryland are already moving in this direction, revising and expanding their anti-trafficking laws to make it easy for authorities to seize property from convicted traffickers.⁴

On-going training for law enforcement and social service agencies. Most law enforcement agencies in the United States are aware of the issues of sex trafficking. Some agencies, at least those in the San Diego area, have conducted training workshops to instruct police personnel on how to identify trafficking activities. However, except for a few sporadic efforts initiated by advocacy groups, the same cannot be said about Mexican law enforcement agencies. This is one area where bilateral collaborations should be expanded. Although these training workshops may not immediately improve arrest and prosecution rates, they are important in sensitizing law enforcement personnel to the various aspects of trafficking activities. Although law enforcement agencies are often the default responders to trafficking

⁴ For a review of proposed legislative changes on anti-trafficking laws in California, refer to the non-partisan Legislative Analyst Office website at <http://www.lao.ca.gov/ballot/2009/090850.aspx>. In Maryland's legislature, two bills are currently under consideration, one from the House (HB514) and one from the Senate (SB 463), that authorize property seizures on convicted traffickers. The development of these two bills can be monitored at <http://mlis.state.md.us/index.html#bill>.

cases, many other social service agencies are just as likely to encounter trafficking victims, particularly Family Welfare and Child Protective Services. These agencies also need to be included in anti-trafficking workshops.

Raising public awareness. Among the most effective ways to reduce sex trafficking is perhaps public awareness campaigns—flyers, billboards, and radio/TV announcements. Anti-trafficking messages, including threats from law enforcement agencies, methods for identifying signs of trafficking, and available rescue services, need to be disseminated periodically through public and commercial airwaves, billboard spaces, and brochures to be handed out by medical and social service agencies and at major transportation stations (e.g., airports, bus and train stations). The idea is to create and maintain a hostile environment that deters sex traffickers and makes victims aware of the available services and resources for help. Special trafficking-related workshops can also be designed and disseminated along with public health education at Tijuana’s public health clinics, making it a mandatory part of the sanitary control card renewal procedure and sensitizing the applicants to the issues of coercion and deceit. In San Diego, similar workshops or materials can also be designed and disseminated to people who want to acquire or renew their adult entertainer licenses.

It does little good for pimps to keep sex trafficking victims in cages or in total social isolation. These women must meet customers - lots of them - for the pimps and traffickers to turn a profit, thus creating opportunities of exposure to outside information. For instance, none of the victims identified in this study were kept in total social isolation. They were brought to the municipal health clinic to obtain the sanitary card, and hence had interactions with health care professionals and municipal officials. During the downtime at the brothels, these women reported that they were allowed to listen to pop music and watch soap operas on TV. These TV

soap operas and pop music radio stations are among the best venues to reach this hidden population.

Commitment to long-term care and service. According to law enforcement representatives in the U.S., few trafficking victims were found to be willing to turn on their pimps and assist the prosecution. Much of their reluctance was blamed on the pimps for brainwashing the victims. If this is the case, one obvious solution for the rescue industry and government agencies is to offer something attractive and competitive to victims, such a long-term commitment of services, to persuade these women to rebuild their trust in conventional social relationships. Unfortunately, this is much easier said than done. Long-term commitment to trafficking victims means committed resources and dedicated social service staff. Social service agencies and mental health professionals should perhaps welcome the challenge to verify how their efforts can convince prostitutes to leave their current occupation.

One bright example is the GenerateHope program located in San Diego. Opened on March 1, 2010, the program provides dedicated housing and comprehensive services for women, ages eighteen to thirty, who have been sexually exploited and/or trafficked. The key feature of the program that sets it apart from the other providers is the length of time committed to each individual. GenerateHope allows for up to seven years of support for prostitutes and their children, with a focus on encouraging them to live independently and become positive examples for other women in the sex industry.⁵ The shelter provides the following services for up to seven years:

- Safe Housing

⁵ Additional information about the shelter can be found at: <http://www.generatehope.org/>.

- A Learning Center - Groups and support for life skills, communication and relationship skills, parenting skills, healing from the trauma of child sexual abuse and the sex trade, poor self-esteem, and more.
- Child Care - for the women who are parents
- Education - high school, college, or trade school
- Job Training and Job Shadowing

This program provides an exciting opportunity for evaluation purposes. With comprehensive mental and social services, the shelter's seven-year commitment should produce a significant impact on sexually-exploited women.

IV.E. Future Research on Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking happens in Tijuana, Mexico. Making up about 12 percent of the study sample, these women were actually not difficult to find in the city's sex industry. The central intent of the study design was to cast a wide net to capture the maximum range of experiences in the sex industry. As discussed earlier, this study suffered from several methodological deficiencies, thus limiting the range of implications that could be derived from the findings. Although following the qualitative research traditions such as in-depth interviews and field observations, all contacts with relevant subjects in this study were rather brief and fleeting. In other words, data collection in this study can only be considered superficial. Should similar studies be replicated in the future, much more rigorous methods in ethnography must be pursued. Extended periods of field observations in red light districts and co-mingling with brothel owners/traffickers as well as prostitutes should be carried out. Without prolonged field-work, our

knowledge and concerns about sex trafficking, such as that seen in the 12 percent of subjects in this study, will continue to be trapped in the proverbial “black box.”

There is one other key question that this study was unable to answer: How prevalent is the problem? Measures of population parameters require a different approach in study design and data collection. A recent sampling strategy developed by Douglas Heckathorn (2002), namely the respondent driven sampling (RDS), is attracting growing attention among criminologists interested in studying hidden populations. For instance, Ric Curtis at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and his colleagues successfully implemented RDS in a study of underage prostitution in New York City (Curtis et al. 2008). The study tracked and interviewed a total of 329 minors through a structured referral process, which allowed the team to estimate the size and characteristics of the teenage prostitute populations in New York City.

For the RDS to be carried out properly, the structured chain referral process must be followed rigorously so that homophily can be minimized and equilibrium (i.e., initial samples no longer resemble later samples) can be achieved. This referral process cannot be altered midstream in favor of accommodating emerging theoretical interests. The qualitative research method’s emphasis on maximizing the range and variety, instead, encourages researchers to develop and follow leads where different and nuanced experiences can be captured in detail.

Although conceptually straightforward, to implement an RDS study requires careful planning and precise field execution, all of which imply significant costs. This present study was primarily qualitative in nature, attempting mainly to achieve some levels of reliability and internal validity through various strategies (e.g., case study, ethnographic observations, and in-depth interviews). Future research on sex trafficking needs to employ RDS or some other probability-based sampling strategies to produce parametric estimates of the hidden population -

that is, the size, prevalence, or scale of victimization in a given geographical location. Without valid estimates of population parameters and characteristics, the anti-trafficking campaign will continue along a path that is heavy on rhetoric but anemic in empirical credibility. The lack of empirical knowledge of the scope of the problem exposes policy makers to varied persuasions based on wild speculation.

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VI. TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Interview Locations and Number of Subjects

	Main Interview Locations (N=524)				
	Tijuana, BC	Mexico	San Diego, CA	U.S.A.	Other Locations
<u>Subject Category:</u>					
1. Women in Sex Industry	220		72*		
2. Pimps and Sex Trade Facilitators	92				
3. Law Enforcement & Government Officials	30		12		
4. NGOs	20		5	3	
5. Community Informants	9	23	2		6
<i>Total</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>6</i>

Notes: *All women subjects interviewed in San Diego were exotic dancers.

Table 2. Demographic Profiles of the Interviewed Prostitutes

	Frequency	Percent
Country of Origin:		
1. Other-than-Mexican	14	6.4
2. Mexico	206	93.6
Top Five Mex. States*		
a. Baja California	a. 34	15.5
b. Puebla	b. 23	10.5
c. Sinaloa	c. 23	10.5
d. Veracruz	d. 14	6.4
e. Jalisco	e. 13	5.9
Age:		
1. Under 18	7	3.2
2. 18-20	68	30.9
3. 21-29	94	42.7
4. 30-35	28	12.7
5. over 35	23	10.5
Marital Status:		
1. Single	186	84.5
2. Married	9	4.1
3. Divorced/Separated	16	7.3
4. Widowed	3	1.4
5. Cohabitation	6	2.7
Education:		
1. College graduate	6	2.7
2. Some college	24	10.9
3. High school	74	33.6
4. Middle school	68	30.9
5. Elementary school	34	15.5
6. No formal education	8	3.6
7. Missing/refused to answer	6	2.8
Number of Children:		
1. None	99	45.0
2. One	51	23.2
3. Two	39	17.7
4. Three or more	31	14.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: * Frequency and percentage reflect individual state's size of the total sample.

Table 3. Journey to Tijuana

	Frequency	Percent
Primary reason for migration to Tijuana		
1. Job offer	43	19.5
2. Relative or friend asked	20	9.1
3. Pursue a better life	89	40.5
4. Possible migration to U.S.	25	11.4
5. Not applicable*	43	19.5
Person most responsible for leaving hometown:		
1. Immediate family members	37	16.8
2. Relatives	37	16.8
3. Friends	57	25.9
4. Acquaintances	15	6.8
5. Coyotes	3	1.4
6. Self-initiated	18	8.2
7. Not applicable or unknown**	53	24.1
Main method of transport:		
1. Mainly by plane	74	33.6
2. Mainly by bus	54	24.5
3. Mainly by train	2	.9
4. By train and bus	1	.5
5. By bus and plane	5	2.3
6. Mixed	23	10.5
7. Not applicable or unknown	61	27.8
Paid smuggling fee:		
1. Yes	6	2.7
2. No	214	97.3
Physically or sexually assaulted during journey to Tijuana:		
1. Sexually assaulted	1	.5
2. Physically and sexually assaulted	4	1.8
3. None or not reported	215	97.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: *Subjects who were born in Tijuana or came to Tijuana with families at a young age.

**Subjects who were native to Baja California or did not know the responsible parties.

Table 4. Trafficking and Prostitution

	Frequency	Percent
Initial entry into prostitution:		
1. Self-initiated	163	74.1
2. Recruited by sex industry	7	3.2
3. Pressured by husband/boyfriend	12	5.5
4. Pressured by debtor (e.g., coyote)	11	5.0
5. Talked into prostitution by friends/acquaintances	27	12.3
Ever been forced into prostitution		
1. Yes	26	11.8
2. No	194	88.2
If forced into prostitution, by whom?		
1. Not applicable (Self initiated)	191	86.8
2. Pimp/coyote	10	4.5
3. Husband/boyfriend	7	3.2
4. Friends	3	1.4
5. Other	9	4.1
Primary work location:		
1. Strip clubs	104	47.3
2. Street	71	32.3
3. Massage parlors	12	5.5
4. Escort service	25	11.4
5. Other	8	3.6
Violence in current work:		
1. Yes	47	21.4
2. No	173	78.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 5. Life in the Sex Trade (N=220)

Length of time in prostitution (in months):	Summary Statistics	
	Career	In Tijuana
1. Mean	45.8	39.6
2. Median	24.0	24.0
3. Std. Deviation	59.0	51.5
4. Minimum	.00	.00
5. Maximum	360.0	360.0
Number of work hours per day:		
1. Mean	8.04	
2. Median	8.00	
3. Std. Deviation	1.585	
4. Minimum	3	
5. Maximum	14	
Number of work days per week:		
1. Mean	5.73	
2. Median	6.00	
3. Std. Deviation	.970	
4. Minimum	2	
5. Maximum	7	
Number of clients per day:		
	Low*	High
1. Mean	3.29	4.51
2. Median	3.00	4.00
3. Std. Deviation	2.476	2.821
4. Minimum	0	1
5. Maximum	20	20
Price per sex act or occasion:		
	Low	High
1. Mean	\$97.2	\$162.5
2. Median	\$60.0	\$100.0
3. Std. Deviation	204.9	358.4
4. Minimum	\$5.0	\$5.0
5. Maximum	\$2,000.0	\$4,000.0

Notes: Subject often provided a range of numbers. Both ends of the reported figures are summarized here.

Table 6. Control of Sex Work and Freedom of Movement

	Frequency	Percent
Decision on price of sex work:		
1. Mutually agreed	7	3.2
2. Determined by existing practice	13	5.9
3. Mainly determined by pimp/club owner	27	12.3
4. Mainly determined by self	166	75.5
5. Other	7	3.2
Portion of earnings kept:		
1. Subject keeps majority	203	92.3
2. Majority goes to others (pimps/club owners/bouncers)	11	5.0
3. Subjects gets no money	2	.9
4. Other	4	1.8
Freedom of movement:		
1. Yes	211	95.9
2. No	9	4.1
Clients ever get violent:		
1. Never	156	70.9
2. Once a year or occasional	14	6.4
3. Once every six months or sometimes	13	5.9
4. Other	37	16.8
Clear plan for the future:		
1. Definitely quit prostitution	105	47.7
2. No clear future plan	78	35.5
3. Stay in sex industry as long as money is good	11	5.0
4. Other	26	11.8
<i>Total</i>	220	100.0

Table 7. Demographic Profiles of the Pimps

	Frequency	Percent
Gender:		
1. Male	77	83.7
2. Female	15	16.3
Age:		
1. 20-29	17	18.5
2. 30-39	32	34.8
3. 40-49	23	25.0
4. 50 and older	20	21.7
Marital Status:		
1. Single	27	29.3
2. Married	20	21.7
3. Divorced	21	22.8
4. Separated	18	19.6
5. Widowed	6	6.5
Top five states:*		
1. Sinaloa	12	13.0
2. Jalisco	10	10.9
3. Sonora	9	9.8
4. Guerrero	8	8.7
5. Chihuahua	7	7.6
6. Other states	46	50.0
Education:		
1. Elementary school	2	2.2
2. Junior high	17	18.5
3. High school	32	34.8
4. Beyond high school	41	44.6
<i>Total</i>	92	100.0

Notes: * All pimps in this study are Mexican nationals.

Table 8. Entering the Sex Trade

	Frequency	Percent
Entry into sex trade:		
1. Business associates	13	14.1
2. Family members	10	10.9
3. Friends	45	48.9
4. Looking for a job	6	6.5
5. Self-initiated	18	19.6
Initial role in sex trade:		
1. Recruiter	19	20.7
2. Promoter	3	3.3
3. Pimp	14	15.2
4. Transporter	3	3.3
5. Strip bar owner/partner	27	29.3
6. Multiple roles	16	17.4
7. Coordinator	10	10.9
Current role in sex trade:		
1. Escort owner/partner	3	3.3
2. Manager	17	18.5
3. Club owner/partner	26	28.3
4. Pimp	19	20.6
5. Recruiter/promoter/security	23	25.0
6. Taxi driver/transporter	4	4.3
Other jobs than sex trade:		
1. Has other jobs	62	67.4
2. No other jobs	30	32.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: *Subjects who were born in Tijuana or came to Tijuana with families at a young age.

**Subjects who were native to Baja California or did not know the responsible parties.

Table 9. Pimps in the Sex Trade

<u>Years in sex trade (N=92):</u>	
Mean	15.27
Median	14.00
Std. Deviation	8.964
Minimum	1
Maximum	39
<u>Number of girls under management (N=70):</u>	
Mean	16.3
Median	15.5
Std. Deviation	11.0
Minimum	3
Maximum	80
<u>Number of work days per week in sex trade (N=71):</u>	
Mean	6.45
Median	6.00
Std. Deviation	.529
Minimum	5
Maximum	7
<u>Number of locales (N=41):</u>	
Mean	1.3
Median	1.0
Std. Deviation	1.1
Minimum	1
Maximum	6
<u>Annual income from sex trade (N=36):</u>	
Mean	\$93,430.6
Median	\$71,000.0
Std. Deviation	75,689.4
Minimum	\$350
Maximum	\$250,000
<u>Number of partners (N=84):</u>	
Mean	1.3
Median	1.0
Std. Deviation	1.3
Minimum	0
Maximum	6

Table 10. Working the Sex Trade

	Summary Statistics	
	Career	In Tijuana
<u>Recruiting women for Sex Trade (N=83):</u>		
1. Self-initiated per business demand	40	48.2
2. Collaborate with partners/manager	19	22.9
3. Following instructions from boss	12	14.5
4. Women came on their own	8	9.6
5. Pimp convinces women	4	4.8
<u>Regions where women were recruited (N=74):</u>		
1. Mostly from Tijuana	23	31.1
2. Mainly from outside Tijuana--but regionally	2	2.7
3. Mainly from interior Mexico	20	27.0
4. Mainly from outside Mexico	3	4.1
5. Varies--from different regions	26	35.2
<u>Life improvement as a result of sex trade:</u>		
1. Remained about the same	4	4.3
2. Somewhat improved	21	22.8
3. Significantly improved	67	72.8
<u>Connected with organized crime:</u>		
1. None	90	97.8
2. Declines to respond	3	2.2
<u>Have friends in government:</u>		
1. No	7	7.6
2. Yes	84	91.3
3. Declined to answer	1	1.1
<u>Perception of sex trade:</u>		
1. It is just a business	32	34.8
2. In favor of sex trade	58	63.0
3. Negative perception of sex trade	2	2.2
<u>Plan to quit sex trade:</u>		
1. No plan to leave	85	93.4
2. Not sure	6	6.5
3. Clear plan to leave	1	1.1
<i>Total</i>	92	100.0

Table 11. Profiles of Law Enforcement Subjects*

	Mexico		U.S.	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender:				
1. Male	29	96.7	9	75.0
2. Female	1	3.3	3	25.0
Government assignments:				
1. Police	26	86.7	10	83.3
2. Court official	1	3.3	2	16.7
3. Government official	3	10.0	0	10.0
Years in government jobs:				
1. 2-3 years	6	20.0	0	0
2. 4-5 years	10	33.4	2	16.7
3. 6-7 years	6	20.0	0	0
4. 8 or more years	8	26.6	10	83.3
Supervisory position:				
1. Non-supervisor	29	96.7	7	58.3
2. Supervise others	1	3.3	5	41.7
Official agencies:				
1. Municipal	16	53.3	4	33.3
2. State/County	9	30.0	5	41.7
3. Federal	5	16.7	3	25.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: All subjects interviewed were male, and interviewed as public officials. No age or any personal information was gathered.

Table 12. Mexican Law Enforcement on Sex Trafficking Activities

	Frequency	Percent
<u>View on sex trafficking in Tijuana:</u>		
1. A problem but not too serious	1	3.3
2. A serious problem	29	96.7
<u>Knowledge of any specific trafficking groups:</u>		
1. No mention of specific groups	9	30.0
2. Mentioned groups in general or outside TJ	17	56.7
3. Mentioned specific groups in TJ	4	13.3
<u>Location of trafficking groups:</u>		
1. Locally based	14	46.7
2. No specific geographical base	9	30.0
3. Transnational	7	23.3
<u>Changes in recent years in sex trafficking:</u>		
1. No specific change mentioned	4	13.3
2. Some changes mentioned	17	56.7
3. Major changes mentioned	9	30.0
<u>Perception of current anti-trafficking measures:</u>		
1. Not effective	27	90.0
2. Somewhat effective/hard to say	2	6.7
3. Effective	1	3.3
<u>Bi-national anti-trafficking comparison:</u>		
1. No specific knowledge	15	50.0
2. Favorable view to both nations' policies	4	13.3
3. Prefer U.S. policy	8	26.7
4. Prefer Mexican policy	3	10.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 13. Profiles of NGO Representatives*

	Mexico		U.S.	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender:				
1. Male	9	45.0	3	44.4
2. Female	11	55.0	5	56.6
Main Service:				
1. Rescue agency (multi-service with network of providers)	6	30.0	3	37.5
2. Residential/Shelter	1	5.0	1	12.5
3. Education/Public awareness	3	15.0	3	37.5
4. Medical clinic	5	25.0	0	0
5. Spiritual guidance	5	25.0	1	12.5
Main clientele:				
1. Both adult and children	13	65.0	5	62.5
2. Mainly children	4	20.0	3	37.5
3. Mainly adult	3	15.0	0	0
Clientele gender:				
1. Women and girls	6	30.0	4	50.0
2. Both genders or not specified	14	70.0	4	50.0
Regions clients from:				
1. Mainly domestic	4	20.0	3	37.5
2. Mainly immigrants	2	10.0	2	25.0
3. Both	14	70.0	3	37.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: * Individuals included in the table represent distinct non-government organizations. Only the lead subject from an organization was counted here when more than one was present during interviews.

Table 14. Demographic Profiles of the Exotic Dancers in San Diego

	Frequency	Percent
Age:		
1. 18-20	12	16.5
2. 21-29	43	59.7
3. 30-35	10	14.0
4. Over 35	7	9.8
Education:		
1. Some high school	5	6.9
2. HS or GED	15	20.8
3. 1-3 yrs college	29	40.3
4. Completed trade/Vocational	6	8.3
5. Completed 2yr Associate Degree	6	8.3
6. Completed 4yr College	5	6.9
7. Some graduate courses	1	1.4
8. Other	5	6.9
Marital status:		
1. Married	5	6.9
2. Divorced/Separated	12	16.7
3. Single but involved	33	45.8
4. Single, not involved	22	30.6
Born in the U.S.:		
1. Yes	60	83.3
2. No	12	16.7
Currently enrolled in school:		
1. Yes	24	33.3
2. No	48	66.7
<i>Total</i>	72	100.0

Table 15. Working as an Exotic Dancer

	Frequency	Percent
Type of exotic dance club:		
1. Nude only	10	13.9
1. Topless only	18	25.0
2. Nude and topless	43	59.7
3. Fantasy show	1	1.4
Doing exotic dance to pay bills:		
1. Yes	57	79.2
2. No	15	20.8
Doing exotic dance to pay for school:		
1. Yes	27	37.5
2. No	45	62.5
How much paid to owner for working shift (in dollars):		
1. None	17	23.6
2. Up to \$25	13	18.1
3. \$26 to \$45	29	40.2
4. \$46-\$75	9	12.5
5. Over \$75	4	5.6
Annual income from dancing alone:		
1. Missing	1	1.4
2. under \$10,000	10	13.9
3. \$10,000-\$19,999	8	11.1
4. \$20,000-\$29,999	5	6.9
5. \$30,000-\$39,999	12	16.7
6. \$40,000-\$49,999	11	15.3
7. \$50,000-\$59,999	8	11.1
8. \$60,000-\$69,999	6	8.3
9. \$70,000-\$79,999	5	6.9
10. \$80,000-\$89,999	4	5.6
11. \$100,000-\$109,999	2	2.8
<i>Total</i>	72	100.0

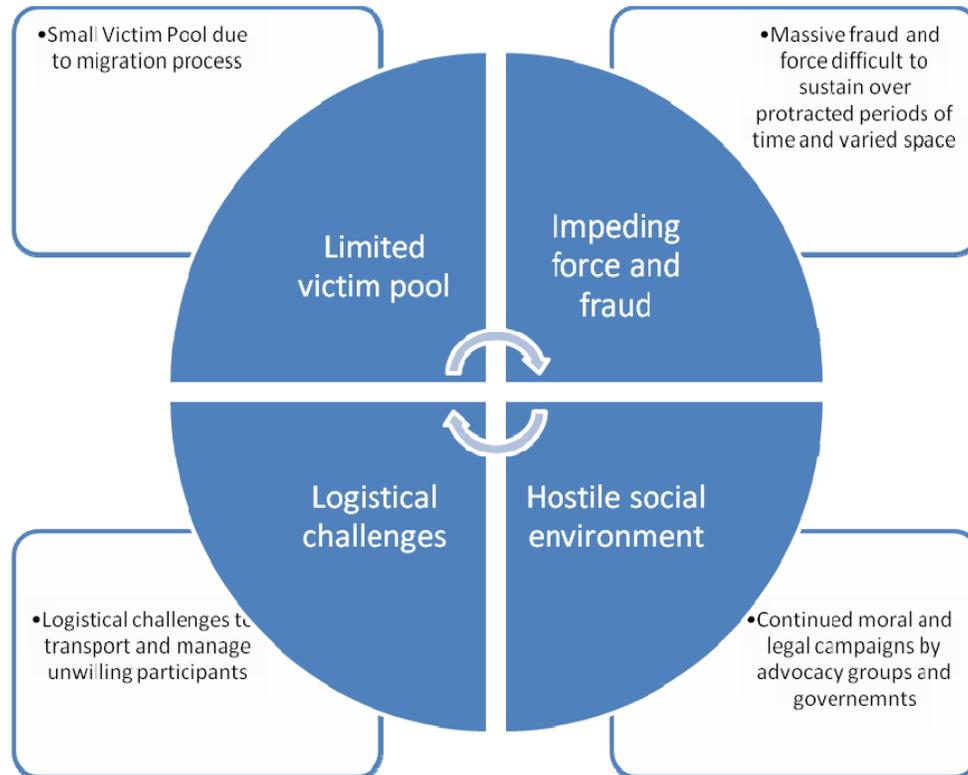
Table 16. Sex Trafficking Activities in Exotic Dance Business

	Frequency	Percent
Initially encouraged by whom into exotic dance:		
1. Customer at gym she worked	1	1.4
2. Employees at a club	1	1.4
3. Friend	8	11.1
4. Other dancers/Peers	2	2.8
5. Ex-boyfriend	3	4.2
6. Girlfriend	2	2.8
7. Boyfriends/Best friends/Brother	1	1.4
8. Guy she was seeing	2	2.8
9. Best friend	1	1.4
10. Girlfriend who danced	1	1.4
11. Girlfriend from ballet class and her boyfriend	1	1.4
12. Self-initiated, not persuaded or encouraged by anyone	49	68.1
Forced or coerced into exotic dance:		
4. Yes	1	1.4
5. No	71	98.6
Boss at the club forced you to have sex with someone:		
1. Yes	1	1.4
2. No	70	97.2
3. Missing	1	1.4
Co-workers ever forced you to have sex with anyone:		
1. Yes	1	1.4
2. No	69	95.8
3. Missing	2	2.8
Anyone outside of a significant other forced you to have sex:		
4. Yes	2	2.8
5. No	69	95.8
6. Missing	1	1.4
Customers ever put something in your vagina/anus while dancing:		
1. Yes	30	41.7
2. No	42	58.3
Ever received additional money to have sex with customers:		
1. Yes	18	25.0
2. No	52	72.2
3. Missing	2	2.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 17. Cross-Border Activities in Commercial Sex Trade

	Frequency	Percent
Any customers from Tijuana:		
1. Yes	24	33.3
2. No	39	54.2
3. Don't know	9	12.5
Any customers from other parts of Mexico:		
1. Yes	25	34.7
2. No	29	40.3
3. Don't know	18	25.0
Any co-workers (exotic dancers) who are from Tijuana:		
4. Yes	26	36.1
5. Don't know	46	63.9
Personally know exotic dancers in Tijuana:		
1. Yes	8	11.1
2. No	62	86.1
3. Don't know	2	2.8
Know exotic dancers who go to Tijuana to dance:		
1. Yes	8	11.1
2. No	54	75.0
3. Don't know	9	12.5
4. Missing	1	1.4
<i>Total</i>	72	100.0

Figure 1. The Trafficking Propensity Square



VII. APPENDICES

VII.A. Interview Guideline for Sex Workers

Interview Guideline for Sex Workers

(INSTRUCTION TO INTERVIEWER: Follow approved IRB procedures to explain the purpose of this interview and confidentiality protection procedures. Obtain definitive consent prior to interview.)

I. Background Information

READ: First, I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself and your family.

1. Where were you born?
2. Where would you consider to be your hometown?
3. Prior to coming to Tijuana, where did you spend most of your life?
4. How old are you now? (If refuse to tell age, probe for age group)
Under 18 ____
18-21 ____
22-29 ____
30-35 ____
Over 35 ____
5. What's your marital status?
Single ____
Married ____
Divorced ____
Widowed ____
6. Do you have children? ____ Number of Children (enter "0" for none).
7. Did you go to school? What was your last grade? ____ (enter "0" for no formal education)
8. Do you have any siblings? (If yes) how old are they and what are they doing now?
9. What do your parents do for a living?
Mother ____
Father ____
10. Are you in frequent contact with your parents or siblings?

II. Life in your hometown

Read: Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your growing up in _____ and the reasons for coming to Tijuana.

11. Before coming to Tijuana, were you working? Tell me all the jobs you did before coming to Tijuana.

12. Have you been to other places in Mexico? Other countries? Were you doing the same job (prostitution, bar tending, massage, etc.) at each of these places?

Place #1 (specify) _____; Jobs there _____

Place #2 (specify) _____; Jobs there _____

Place #3 (specify) _____; Jobs there _____

13. When did you first come to Tijuana? Why did you decide to come to Tijuana? (PROBE: because of a relative? Looking for a better job? Closer to the U.S. for possible immigration? Because of a friend? Etc.

Year _____

14. Do you live here now as a relatively permanent place, or do you travel in and out of the city?

15. (If permanent) can you tell me do you rent or live with someone else. Tell me about your life situation. (If temporary or seasonal) Can you tell me your travel pattern? When do you come and how long do you stay? Where do you go after Tijuana typically?

16. (If non-Mexican, reassure confidentiality protection), were you legally in Mexico?

III. Leaving hometown

Read: Now, I would like to ask you about the circumstances and arrangements you had when leaving your hometown. Reassure confidentiality.

17. Can you tell me the story how you decided to leave your hometown? (PROBE: for sex workers who had worked elsewhere, traced back to her original departure from hometown; skip this question if Tijuana was their only work place).

18. Who was most responsible for helping you leave your hometown, can you tell me about this person. How did you get to know him/her? What did he/she do to convince you to leave?

19. Can you tell me about any other people who helped you leave your hometown? Who were these people? Were they local in your township? Were they human smugglers (*coyotes*)?

20. During the first few meetings between you and those who were helping you leave your hometown, what did you discuss? (PROBE: Did you discuss what you will be doing in Tijuana or the town you were going to, how much money it will cost you, how to pay the fees, what kinds of travel documents were needed and how to obtain them, the routes to take, the risk associated with the trip, the length of time it takes to get to this country)

21. Did you and the people who helped you discuss what type of job you would be doing or the kind of people they know after you arrive in Tijuana? If yes, did they tell you what you would be doing in Tijuana and how much money you would be making?

22. How long did it take these people to arrange for your departure?

23. Can you tell me about the trip from your hometown to Tijuana? (PROBE: What transportation did you take? How long did you travel? Did you stop along the way, where and what kind of accommodations?) Tell me like a story.

24. Did you travel with other girls like you? How many? Do you know their stories?

IV. Questions for non-Mexicans (if Mexican, skip this section)

READ: Now I'd like to ask you about how you entered this country and what happened soon after your arrival.

25. How did you enter Mexico? (PROBE: Did you enter this country by boat, car, airplane, or on foot? Did you possess any travel documents and what kinds of documents? Through which city did you enter this country? Who else was with you? How many organizers were there?)

26. When you arrived in this country, did anybody here greet you at the port of entry? If yes, who were these people? How many?

27. How was trip from your home country to Tijuana? (PROBE: hard and long, very risky, etc. Were you fearful? Were you abused (physically or sexually)? How? Did you feel exploited? How? Carefully explore if exploitations might have taken place.)

28. Tell me what happened during the first few days after you arrived here. (PROBE: Were you sent to work right away? Were you sold to another party? Were you locked up? Were you trained to fit into a new environment? Did you look for a job yourself? Did you enroll in a school?)

29. How much did the people who helped you charge you for the trip? (If you can't remember the sum, perhaps you can tell me how much each segment of the trip cost).

30. When and how did you pay them the money? Where was the money from?

31. Do you still owe these people money? If yes, how much? What was the payment plan? If no, how long did it take to pay off?

V: Entry into Sex Work

32. At what point did you know that you will be involved in sex work? Were you in this type of job before you came to Tijuana? If yes, how long? Can you tell me how you first got involved in sex work? What was your life situation?

33. How long have you been in this line of work? ____ (specify years or months)

34. How long (even on and off) have you been in the sex industry in Tijuana?

____ (specify years or months)

35. Has anyone used physical force to get you to do this work? (hit or threatened to hit you, slapped you, punched or kicked you, held you against your will, or made other physical threats, etc.) If yes, how does that work?

36. Has anyone lied to you to get you to do this work? (told you you would be doing some other kinds of work, said it would only be for a short time, said you would receive more money than you are, etc.) If yes, how does it work?

37. Has anyone forced you into this type of work? If yes, how? (threatened to report you to the police or authorities, threatened your family, said you are a criminal, kept your money, etc.)

38. If you entered this line of work on your own (no to above questions), how did you decide to enter this line of work in Tijuana? Tell me how you started the first day (PROBE: How was it arranged? Who arranged for you? Did anyone give you any training? How much did you know to charge your customers? How did you find this job? What did it take to be in this line of work? Any difference between what you do now and at the beginning?)

39. Did you know of anyone, your friends or other people in this line of work, who were lied about this job and found it out too late? Or anyone who was forced into this business? What did you hear about their circumstances?

40. How many of these girls are there among the people who were lied about or forced into the sex business? Would you say one out of every 10 or 50 or 100?

41. Do you know of anyone who is kept by her trafficker/handler and forced to do this kind of work every day? How does the handler/trafficker keep her under control? (PROBE: any connection with the mafia? Do musclemen keep an eye on these girls when they are on the street or club? Do they know where to get help? Etc.)

VI. More on Sex Work

42. Tell me the type of place you work? How is the business organized and operated? How open is the business?

43. What are your typical working hours? How many days do you work each week? Do you take holidays or vacations away from Tijuana? Let's see, about how many days do you work in a year?

44. Describe a typical day in your life now in Tijuana. (PROBE: What time you get up, what do you do after that, when do you go to work, when you are not with a customer, what do you do, what time do you get out of work, what do you do after that?)

45. Do you rely on referrals and other people to stay in this business? (PROBE: boss, driver, agent, pimp, guard, telephone operator, cop)

46. How much money do you usually charge a customer to have sex with you? Do you charge by each sex act or by time? Tell me how this works—do you negotiate with customers?

46A: How often do your customers use condoms? (PROBE: For which sexual acts are condoms typically used?)

46B. Do you ever use condoms without your customers knowing? (PROBE: For which sexual act(s) does this most typically occur? What are your strategies for doing this?)

46C. Do you ever use female condoms? If so, how often?

47. Is the price you charge standard in the business? Do you compare the prices with others? Who decides how much to charge?

47A. Are there price differences for sex without a condom vs. sex with a condom? If yes, please explain.

48. How many customers do you typically receive each day?

49. How much of the money you make goes to these other people who help you in this business (such as your drivers, pimps, hotel owners, etc.)? Who decides on who gets what? Can you change the way the money is split?

50. Let's say you are not happy with the business arrangement. Can you quit and move on to another place? Can you move around as you please? If you want to go to another night club or street, can you do it? How so? (PROBE: for non-Mexican girls, do you have your travel documents with you? If no, who keep them? Can you get them if you want? Why?)

51. How do you usually spend your money? Do you send money home to your parents or relatives at hometown? (PROBE: sent home, deposited in a local bank, spent it all)

52. On average, how many customers do you have in a typical day? Describe these customers to me. What are they like? (PROBE: they are local people or Americans, are they professionals or blue-collar workers, what's their age, how would you characterize the customers' attitudes towards you? Are you forced to do things you are uncomfortable with?)

53. Did your customer ever get violent against you? If yes, do you have any protection? What safety precautions do you take to protect yourself?

54. What are your major concerns in this business?

55. Have you ever been assaulted in the past 12 months by customers, or pimps or others?

_____ (times, enter "0" for no)

55a. If yes, tell me what happened this last time?

56. Have you ever been arrested? If yes, how did it happen?

57. What do you think of the sex business? Do you have a lot of stress? Have you ever used drugs or alcohol or taken medication. If yes, please explain.

58. What are your future plans? (PROBE: Do you plan to go back home or stay here, or do you plan to travel back and forth between places, or go to the U.S.?)

59. Do you have any final thoughts about your coming to Tijuana and being involved in what you are doing now? If there are other girls like you in your hometown who want to come to Tijuana also, what would you tell them?

READ: We have completed the interview. Thank you for your time!

VII.B. Interview Guideline for Pimps

Interview Guideline for Sex Industry Facilitators

(INSTRUCTION TO INTERVIEWER: Follow approved IRB procedures to explain the purpose of this interview and confidentiality protection procedures. Obtain definitive consent prior to interview.)

I. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. First of all, let me ask you a few personal questions.

1. Sex: 1 . Male; 2 . Female

2. How old are you?

_____ year-old

3. Your marital status is (*Circle answer*)

1. Single; 2 . Married; 3. Divorced; 4. Separated; 5. Widowed

4. Where were you born?

Country _____; Province _____; County/City _____; Township _____

5. What would you consider your ethnic identify?

6. What is your citizenship?

U.S. ___; Mexico _____; Other _____ (specify)

7. What is your education level?

- 1 Illiterate
- 2 Self-study
- 3 Some elementary school
- 4 Elementary school graduated
- 5 Some junior high school
- 6 Junior high school graduated
- 7 Some senior high school
- 8 Senior high school graduated
- 9 Others (Please specify _____)

8. Do you have other jobs besides the sex business?

1 Yes Occupation _____ Monthly income _____
2 No

II. Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about your initial involvement in the sex trade (or trafficking). Please keep in mind that we will not share any of your information with anyone else. Also, remember that what I am asking has already happened. I don't want to know what you plan to do specifically in the near future.

9. At what year were you first involved in this business?

Year _____

10. Can you describe how you first got involved in the sex business? (*Probe: who introduced him/her? What were the facilitating factors? Were there many partners? How they differentiate with one another with regard to payment, compensation, leadership, etc.*)

11. What did you do in the beginning (or sex trafficking)? (*PROBE: ask to describe time and locations—how far from home or work unit or hometown.*)

12. What is the fee arrangement between you and the girls working for you? Do you charge per customer a girl receives or a fixed amount per day?

13. How many girls work under you now?

14. Describe what a typically day is like for you? (when do you get up, when do you start working? How many days do you work each week? Do you take vacations or holidays off, like going home towards the end of December and Beginning of January?)

15. How is your business now? (*Probe: scope of the business, annual income, number of people forking for him/her? Number of store fronts?*)

16. Do you work with partners? Where did you find them? How do you work with these partners, in terms of delegating or assigning work? Who are these partners (your relatives? Friends? Schoolmates? Classmates?)?

17. Who decides to do what, at what time, and get what pay?

18. Can you describe a typical transaction you did with these business associates? Who initiated and who decided on pricing and location of delivery?

19. How are prostitutes recruited? By whom? Any incentives? Regional preferences? Clientele preferences?

20. How are these women brought into Tijuana? Through what means? Who organize their transportation? How much does it usually cost to bring a prostitute?

21. What is a typical financial arrangement between a brothel (club) owner, a trafficker, and a prostitute? What decide the price and where to get the girls? Do you have someone in the background to guarantee that payment is made?

22. Are there rules in this business that people just know what to do? What is your worst headache? Tell me a few stories about the problems you have run into?

23. Did you ever get in a fight or argument with your business partners over anything, such as payment issues? Why? How was it settled? Tell me a case where you had payment disputes with your partners.

24. How did you and your partners usually communicate with one another? Do you have a special ways of telling each other in case of emergency? Any special signals to tell your partners not to move or come forward? Tell me a story.

25. Did you hire people to help you with this business? If you did, what did they actually do for you? (*Probe*: drive a car, guard a safehouse, etc.)

26. How has your life changed since you got into this business? (*PROBE*: having cars, property, sending kids to private schools, etc.)

27. What other types of business do you do, legal or illegal?

28. How much money do you make from these other businesses?

29. Are you associated with other criminal groups, like drug traffickers, regular *coyotes*, or gangsters in Tijuana or San Diego? Do not tell me any specific individual names.

30. What do you think of your business (sex trafficking or prostitution)? What are the pros and cons of being involved in this business?

31. Do you plan to leave this business? Any future business plan in the making?

32. Do you have friends who are police or work for the government? How useful it is to have these friends? Give me a few examples? But do not tell me specific names or government branches or locations they are connected. How much does it cost you to keep these friends? Do you have to pay them on a regular basis?

33. Do you have close friends who are well connected with the police or government officials? Do you know how they develop such relationships? How much do they have to spend to keep these friends? Please do not tell me any specific names or government branches.

34. Finally, I want to ask you your viewpoint on anti-sex trafficking efforts by the U.S. government or Mexican government.

The American government has been trying to crack down on sex trafficking for many years. Do you think it is a problem? Is it getting worse or better?

Thank you for your time!

Interviewer: _____

Interview Date ____/____/____
(month) (day) (year)

Interviewer's Observations:

Overall, in your opinion, was the subject cooperative?

- 1 Very cooperative
- 2 Relatively cooperative
- 3 Not that cooperative
- 4 Very uncooperative
- 8 Not sure

Please describe the appearance, dress, and mood of the subject and the interview process.

VII.C. Interview Guideline for Law Enforcement and Government Officials

Interview Guideline for Law Enforcement Officials

(INSTRUCTION TO INTERVIEWER: Follow approved IRB procedures to explain the purpose of this interview and confidentiality protection procedures. Obtain definitive consent prior to interview.)

I. OFFICIAL INTERVIEW

1. Please tell me about your work (e.g., official function, job title, how many people under his/her supervision). How long have you worked on this assignment? Prior experiences or other law enforcement experiences?

2. Tell me your daily routine and describe your jurisdiction (e.g., basic demographic characteristics of the region and major cultural/political forces).

3. (*Interviewer: This is an important question.*) What is your view on sex trafficking? Can you tell me the difference between human trafficking and human smuggling? Does sex trafficking exist in Tijuana? How about elsewhere in Mexico? Name a few places where you believe sex trafficking is happening (that women are being forced or deceived into the sex industry).

- 3a. How serious is sex trafficking (or women participating in sex industry) in your jurisdiction (in Tijuana)? (ask to provide assessment of the problem—any figures on arrests, etc.; any historical background to the current trafficking problems? Anything unique about this region as opposed to the rest of country or neighboring counties?)

4. Are there major or well known sex trafficking groups in your jurisdiction or nearby? (ask to describe how potential victims are gathered or transported; any historical backgrounds? Anything unique about how sex trafficking is operated in this region as opposed to other places?).

5. Where are these groups located or based? How do these groups operate and respond to market demands and law enforcement activities?

6. Describe current strategies in preventing, interdicting, and prosecuting human traffickers.

7. How have these strategies worked? To what extent one would you describe the current strategies as successful or otherwise?

8. How would one describe the sex trafficking policies in the U.S. or Mexico (top-down approach or proactive at the local level or national level)? And how are these policies formulated? Give some examples. Any new strategies and plans for the future?

9. Describe some historical development of how sex trafficking activities have evolved over time in the past decade. What was it like before and what has changed?

10. What are some of the major challenges or headaches you have encountered in fighting sex trafficking?

11. What is your anti-trafficking budget? How big is your staff (e.g., full time, part time, or some mixed assignment)? Any special budget or equipment?

12. What legal, prosecutorial, and administrative tools are available to law enforcement agencies in dealing with human traffickers? Challenges and difficulties—give examples. Key problems encountered in investigating traffickers and their operations.

13. Any collaborative efforts with neighboring counties/countries. How do these collaborative efforts work out? Give some examples.

14. In your view, what are some of the best strategies to crackdown on sex trafficking activities?

15. If you were at a policy making position, what would you like to see changed and how would you go about solving the problems you just described?

II. OFF-THE-RECORD OBSERVATIONS:

Gender: (1) Male ____
 (2) Female ____

Interviewer: _____

Interview Date ____/____/____
 (month) (day) (year)

Did the subject appear to know issues related to cross-border sex trafficking?

1. Very knowledgeable ____
2. Relatively knowledgeable ____
3. Not very knowledgeable ____
4. Not knowledgeable ____

How many other people were present at the interview scene?

1. Alone
2. More than one person present at interview
3. open office setting with people in & out

Other observations (appearance, dress, and mood of the subject and the interview setting and process), and knowledge of the topic.

VII.D. Interview Guideline for NGOs

Interview Guideline for NGO Representatives

(INSTRUCTION TO INTERVIEWER: Follow approved IRB procedures to explain the purpose of this interview and confidentiality protection procedures. Obtain definitive consent prior to interview.)

I. OFFICIAL INTERVIEW

1. Please tell me about your organization (e.g., official functions, job title, how many people in the organization). How long has your agency (organization) been in existence?
2. What services do you provide, to whom and where? Are there any outreach activities?
3. To what extent would you describe your current services as successful or otherwise?
4. How long have you worked in this organization? Prior experiences or other NGO or social service experiences? Education/training related to sex trafficking or victim protection?
5. Tell me what is your daily routine (e.g., basic demographic characteristics of the clients your organization serve).
6. What is your agency operation budget? What are your funding sources?
7. Can you tell me how serious is sex trafficking in this area (e.g., Tijuana, San Diego, etc)? How did you arrive at the assessment of the problem? (Probe methods of assessment)
8. Can you give me some historical background to the current trafficking problems? Was it a problem before? Was it always this serious? Anything unique about trafficking in this region as opposed to the rest of country or neighboring counties?
9. Can you tell me how sex trafficking works in this area (Probe for description of how women are gathered or transported).
10. How did you learn about the sex trafficking business? Through interactions with prostitutes, sex trade operators, newspapers, observations, etc.?

11. What are some of the major stages in the trafficking business? What stages are most obvious in this region?
12. What are some of the sex trafficking groups in (Tijuana or San Diego, etc) that you are aware of?
13. How do these groups operate and respond to market demands and law enforcement activities?
14. How would one describe the sex trafficking policies in the U.S. or Mexico? Have these policies been successful in curtailing the growth of the trafficking business?
15. Based on your experience, how has sex trafficking, as a business, changed over the past few years? What was it like before and what are some of the causes that prompted the change?
16. Describe any new strategies and plans for the future in your agency.
17. Challenges and difficulties in fighting sex trafficking—give examples.
18. Any collaborative efforts with other agencies in San Diego or Tijuana (or other counties/countries). How have these collaborative efforts worked out? Give some examples.
19. In your view, what are some of the best strategies to crackdown on sex trafficking activities?

II. OFF-THE-RECORD OBSERVATIONS:

Subject Gender:

- (1) Male _____
(2) Female _____

Interview Date _____ / _____ / _____
(month) (day) (year)

Interviewer _____

Did the subject appear to know issues related to cross-border sex trafficking?

- a. Very knowledgeable _____
b. Relatively knowledgeable _____
c. Not very knowledgeable _____
d. Not knowledgeable _____

How many other people were present at the interview and who were these people, in relation to the interviewee (subordinates, superiors, same rank officials).

Other observations (appearance, dress, mood of the subject and the interview setting and process, assessment of subject's knowledge of the topic).