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From Victim to Volunteer: A Life Course Perspective and the Transition to Adulthood for Individuals Who Have Sold Sex

Julianne M. Siegfriedt

FROM VICTIM TO VOLUNTEER: A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE AND THE

TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SOLD SEX

A Dissertation Presented
by
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ABSTRACT

FROM VICTIM TO VOLUNTEER: A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE AND THE

TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SOLD SEX

May 2019

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Under the United States definition of sex trafficking, one is considered a sex trafficking

victim if she or he sells sex under 18 years old. Once someone turns 18, in order to claim

trafficking status force, fraud, or coercion must be proven or that person falls under the

illegal status of sex worker (VTVPA 2000). If one can go from being a victim of a crime

to a perpetrator of a crime by having a birthday, what does the transition to adulthood and

turning 18 look like for those who sell or exchange sex or are at risk of selling and

exchanging sex? And how might institutional factors change upon the transition to

adulthood that contribute to a pathway of selling sex? Using a life course perspective, this

study explores the transition to adulthood for individuals who have sold or exchanged sex

at any point in their lives to determine what role the institutions of the family, education

system, work/economy, and the criminal justice have on this population along the life course and during the transition to adulthood. The study includes interviews with service providers working with individuals who have sold or exchanged sex in the City of Boston (N=13) and an original online national survey of individuals who have sold or exchanged sex (N=97). Using qualitative and quantitative data, results analyzed include an event history analysis of the predictors and timing for entering the commercial sex trade, discussion of labels about sex trafficking and sex work, and qualitative analysis from both service provider interviews and survey questions from individuals who have sold or exchanged sex. Life events through the stages of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood are framed as institutional influences to better understand the barriers and supports that exist for this population throughout the life course and where pathways into the commercial sex trade are formed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A definitional dilemma

When I first started this research, I ran into an immediate definitional dilemma. Upon

conducting initial pilot interviews with social service agencies servicing sex trafficking

victims, a theme started to emerge within the interviews that there was a drop-off in

social services and societal support when someone who sells sex or was at risk for selling

sex turns 18. I wanted to capture and understand this phenomenon and problem more

fully and turned to the literature to get a grasp on the existing research. There are many

definitions and labels for teens who sell sex from sex trafficking victim to a commercially

sexually exploited child to a refocusing of the behavior as a form of survival and use of

the term *survival sex*. However, what I wanted to know is what happened once these

adolescents became adults. Or why those who started selling sex in their early adulthood

might be driven to do so given the lack of institutional support so obviously laid out in

those early interviews.

What I found in my initial and subsequent literature combing was that in order to

discover the outcomes for those who sell sex in adulthood (and may or may not have sold

sex in adolescence), I needed to change the definition of my search from *sex trafficking* to

sex work despite being curious about one singular population and behavior. The academic

exercise of conducting background research on this topic actually mirrored the

experiences of the population being studied – once 18, *sex trafficking victim* changed meaning and that population became known as *sex workers*. Even though many sex workers cite their first experiences of selling/exchanging sex as being before their 18th birthday (Dewey, Hankel, and Brown, 2017; Kotrla, 2010), their status as victim disappeared as arbitrarily as their new prescribed identity emerged as a *sex worker,* or so it appeared in those early searches of the work social scientists before me had conducted.

Research about those who experience mental illness or drug use, for instance, does not rely on a definition that changes depending on the age of the subjects or the perceived *choice* of the subjects being studied. If one wants to look up childhood risk factors of adult substance use, they do not need to shift the definition of the population. But this is how we view selling sex in our culture and that definition is based upon a construct of *choice.* How much does the act of selling sex rely on the personal autonomy and choice of the individual? Your answer will determine whether you are looking up information about a sex trafficking victim or a sex worker. One cannot search for information about those who sell sex without engaging in this debate about choice. Granted, choice and autonomy is a worthy subject of study however I would like to call into question its role as a distinguishing factor of how a population is defined and therein lies the problem.

What I did not know in my initial searches for existing literature about this topic was that what could be seen as a minor definitional dilemma was actually an indicator of a larger systemic problem of society's approach to selling and exchanging sex. If we relied on different definitions for drug addiction, splitting the population of those who are addicted

into those defined as being coerced into taking drugs for the first time and those who were exploring substances on their own, it would seem arbitrary to the discussion of treatment and determining the best policy approach. *We do not need to divide a population by a definition of choice in order to better understand the context in which they live.* And in fact, that reliance on choice as part of the definition, even within social science research, clouds the discovery process. If we need to define whether or not someone chooses to sell sex in order to determine the group we are learning about (speaking here in terms of looking at domestic sex trafficking vs. sex work) – and more accurately, whether or not society sees that act as a choice, not necessarily the individual – then aren't we as researchers already approaching our investigation with a highly biased perspective?

A new perspective

My aim with this section is to introduce a new line of thinking when it comes to studying those who have sold sex that moves away from the use of *choice* in defining a group of people. Choice is subjective and its use and application within the realm of selling sex has been both inconsistent and at times harmful in perceiving individual lives and experiences. Both those who have been sex trafficked and those identified as sex workers can be defined as *someone who has sold or exchanged sex* and this is the terminology that will be used in this research. The background literature about this population includes studies on those who fall under both of these labels. I will use the terms such as "minors who sell sex," "adults who sell sex," and "individuals who sell sex" to identify these populations. With this terminology, I am not suggesting that minors who sell sex are not

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victims or are not "commercially sexually exploited children." Using labels like "sex worker," "sex-trafficked person," and "commercially sexually exploited child," however, perpetuates the idea that exploitation ends once one enters adulthood or that choice and agency begins at 18. Refraining from using such labels is a disengagement with the politicization that occurs when such terms are used. An individual who has sold sex is simply that: *someone who has sold sex or been sold at some point in her or his lifetime.* Minors who sell sex and adults who sell sex are not two different populations but the same population experiencing different stages along the life course. Focusing on the transition to adulthood will provide insight to the ways individuals are treated, the institutional hurdles they face, and how those barriers shift as adults. Before institutional barriers can be addressed, an evaluation of the existing laws must be understood which is where the rest of this dissertation begins.

Overview of the remaining chapters

Chapter 2 provides a background of the existing trafficking laws in the United States with particular attention to the federal Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000 as it was this act that provided definitions for trafficking that shape our perceptions of the trafficking versus sex work today. Chapter 2 also introduces the institutional influences that contribute to selling or exchanging sex including the family, education, work/economy and the criminal justice system connecting literature to highlight the interconnected nature that exists on their influence on individual lives. Finally, also included in this background overview are the roles of race, class, and gender on those institutionalized forces and individual effects while also discussing the limitations of the

current exploitation versus empowerment debate currently dominating sex trafficking and sex work.

In Chapter 3, the literature review is continued to provide an overview of the transition to adulthood for vulnerable populations. This area of research has been well documented in applying a Life Course Approach to determine how the transition to adulthood looks different for vulnerable populations compared to non-vulnerable populations. Largely missing from this literature is the recognition of individuals who sell sex as a relevant population that should be studied with this lens though the populations often covered overlap with those who sell sex including minors involved in the juvenile justice system, homeless youth, and children and adolescents involved in the foster care system. For these populations and I argue for individuals who sell sex as well, the transition to adulthood takes an accelerated path with increased vulnerabilities and negative outcomes in later adulthood. The lessons learned from studying these populations are helpful in hypothesizing what will be found in the current study and also outlines an area where this research could help fill a necessary gap.

In Chapter 4 the methods included in both the pilot study and survey are discussed. This study utilizes a mixed method design and the initial interviews from service providers helped inform not only the research questions for this project but the online survey content and structure as well that was distributed to individuals who have sold or exchanged sex. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis is included and this chapter introduces some initial demographic information that is expanded upon in Chapter 5.

Finally, this chapter includes the details about recruitment, consent, data analysis, and the position of the researcher as well as study limitations.

Chapter 5 is focused exclusively on the pilot data where I interviewed 13 agencies and the emerging themes from the interviews are explored. Of the themes introduced are the role of the foster care system, the significance of turning 18 as revealed in the interviews as a drop-off in services and funding, and the ways in which institutional forces within the family, education system, work/economy, and criminal justice system were discussed among service providers as influencing the trajectory of individuals (primarily youth) who had sold or exchanged sex or were at risk of selling or exchanging sex. Excerpts from those interviews are included and discussed.

Before beginning the results chapters, an overview of the survey data is provided in Chapter 6. This chapter includes detailed descriptive information about the survey population including information on gender and race and the interaction of those two factors, the ways in which survey respondents chose to identify and describe their roles in the commercial sex trade, as well as detail about age of entry, duration, and rates of various life events that connect to the institutional factors highlighted in earlier chapters and at what life stages those events occur. Finally, discussion about supports and services provides a window in to what social supports this population reports having and the services received as well as services that were reportedly difficult to access or where individuals faced discrimination.

Chapter 7 is devoted to adverse childhood events and marks the first of three results chapters of the survey data. A description of the Adverse Child Experiences (ACE) measure is included which was utilized in the survey and has been linked to various social, behavioral, and health outcomes. The ACE scores of the study population are compared to those of the general population and a breakdown of different adverse experiences is discussed including child abuse and neglect, lack of love and support, and other family dysfunction. Discussion of the significance of ACE scores in this particular study is included and is set up for their inclusion as a factor in later chapters.

In Chapter 8 the transition to adulthood is explored in depth. The transition is put into context among this population and the connections between the transition to adulthood and entry into the commercial sex trade are introduced with the data though a more thorough analysis is used in Chapter 9 regarding the connection between those two events. Specific events that correspond with the transition to adulthood are included such as living on ones own and graduating from high school. Substance use and mental health are also included factors in this chapter as the transition to adulthood corresponds with increased vulnerabilities in these areas. Qualitative analysis is also included in this chapter surrounding participants' descriptions in their own words about what turning 18 was like.

The final results chapter, Chapter 9, is focused exclusively on entry into the commercial sex trade. This chapter includes event history analyses to determine the hazard rate of factors influencing individuals' entry into the commercial sex trade as well as discussion

of qualitative data about reasons for entering into the commercial sex trade and even returning back to "the life" for individuals who left and went back.

Chapter 10 is the concluding chapter of this dissertation and it brings final connections of the research and discussion of labels as well as the need for an intersectional approach to understanding sex work and sex trafficking. Policy and future research suggestions are explored.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND ON SEX TRAFFICKING AND SEX WORK

Legal Definitions

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000

The US Government defines sex trafficking as "a commercial sex act [that] is induced by

force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act *has not*

attained 18 years of age [emphasis added]" (Victims of Trafficking and Violence

Prevention Act, 2000). Within this definition a clear distinction is made between minors

and adults. Trafficking victim status is automatically applied to anyone under 18 who is

involved in the commercial sex trade but for those 18 or older, proof of "force, fraud, or

coercion" must be present to obtain the same "victim" status (US Department of State

2008). Given the importance of age in the trafficking definition, a natural question

emerges: what happens when a minor who sells sex turns 18? Some areas, like Boston,

define all acts of prostitution as "trafficking," stating that individuals are coerced or

recruited into prostitution whether by traffickers or by an economic system that limits

choice and offers few alternatives. However, adults still face arrest in Boston and, I

hypothesize, also battle institutional barriers to exiting despite this nuanced view. I will

look at the institution of the family specifically and its connection to additional

breakdowns of other institutions over the life course. The scope of the commercial sex

trafficking of children and adults in the US is largely unknown and difficult to track.

Federal task forces investigated 1,218 accounts of suspected adult sex trafficking cases and 1,016 accounts of suspected child sex trafficking cases between 2008 and 2010 (Banks and Kyckellhahn 2011). Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center has reported 14,588 cases of sex trafficking hotline calls in the US (Polaris, 2015). While many associate the term "sex trafficking" with foreign-born individuals, US-born men and women are trafficked every day. Many of these US-born cases fall within the definition of "prostitution," especially when the lines of force, fraud, or coercion are not immediately obvious. Though we don't know the number of US-born individuals who are sex-trafficked, we do know that around 44,000 individuals are charged with prostitution per year (Gerassi 2015).

In 2000, the 106th Congress enacted the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) with the intent to "combat trafficking in persons, especially into the sex trade, slavery, and involuntary servitude, to reauthorize certain Federal programs to prevent violence against women, and for other purposes". This Act was divided into three provisions: the Trafficking Victims Protections Act (TVPA), the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and Miscellaneous Provisions. The VTVPA specifically describes trafficking as:

"Sec. 1591. Sex trafficking of children or by force, fraud or coercion
`(a) Whoever knowingly--
`(1) in or affecting interstate commerce, recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, or obtains by any means a person; or

`(2) benefits, financially or by receiving anything of value, from participation in a venture which has engaged in an act described in violation of paragraph (1),

knowing that force, fraud, or coercion described in subsection (c)(2) will be used to cause the person to engage in a commercial sex act, or that the person has not attained the age of 18 years and will be caused to engage in a commercial sex act, shall be punished as provided in subsection (b)."

Much of the Act is framed around assistance for trafficking abroad or for those not born in the United States including access to temporary citizenship through "T" visas. Within this definition, assistance and eligibility for benefits and services for victims *within* the United States is only granted to those who meet the criteria for "severe form of trafficking" which is defined as:

(A) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.

The law and its following reauthorizations (in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2013) primarily focus on foreign-born individuals being trafficked into the United States and abroad. Beginning in 2005, some provisions were added to include additional resources for domestic sex trafficking, recognizing that this is not solely a problem of people being trafficked across national borders but one that greatly affects U.S. citizens as well. The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005, for example, includes a provision to authorize specific programs for U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents of

domestic human trafficking. Similar assistance is mandated in the Trafficking Victims

Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, specifically for United States citizens and lawful

permanent residents but only if they also meet the definition of *severe forms of*

trafficking.

Excluded by definition

By drawing parameters around who is included in this definition of severe trafficking

victim, the TVPA also serves to draw distinct margins designed to exclude certain groups

as well. This is problematic because when a group is excluded from this definition of

victim entirely, it is also excluded from the resources and funds that are designated for

helping victims. Consideration for trafficking victim status comes with it funds for public

awareness campaigns (2000), creation of a federal task force (2000), the right to sue

others involved (2003), programming and shelters (2005), and other services for

survivors (2008).

Therefore, who is not considered a victim of trafficking is just as important as who is

considered a victim. Along with the allocation of resources, other benefits such as

government supported research initiatives and societal recognition of hardship comes

with the federally recognized status of victim. Specifically, the inclusion of *force, fraud,*

or coercion disqualifies anyone of TVPA victim status if that person is in the commercial

sex trade without being "forced" to do so. This is the line that we have drawn as a society

between sex trafficking and prostitution. One is considered a horrific act over which the

person affected needs special protections and government intervention in order to be

extricated from the situation whereas the other is steeped with rhetoric of not only illegality but agency, choice, and other negative morally-suggestive stigma (Pheterson 1993).

This distinction in the definition is not accidental. In fact, much debate emerged in the defining of sex trafficking when the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act was established (Bromfield and Capous-Desyllas 2012). Multiple interest groups, competing feminist philosophies and varying agendas created complexity and discord over who specifically would be covered under this legislation. This debate reflects current disagreements about whether selling sex should be considered an empowered position of sex work (the liberal feminist position) or whether selling sex in any form is dehumanizing and should be considered exploitation (the radical feminist position) (Weitzer 2009). Other stakeholders involved were more focused on providing services for exploited people and did not weigh in heavily on this debate (Bromfield and Capous-Desyllas 2012).

In the end, the definition of sex trafficking is distinctly separated from being compounded with what is considered to be "unlawful commercial sex acts." This omission can be assumed to reflect the attitudes and beliefs associating prostitution with choice and agency in direct contrast with the legal definition of force, fraud, and coercion. This contrast distinguishes trafficking as a new category, separating individuals into two groups with one holding the label of victim, warranting assistance and advocacy resources while the other being considered "unlawful" and a result of one's own choices,

therefore unworthy of such intervention or victim status. The inclusion of specific provisions within Reauthorizations of the TVPA that reference "unlawful commercial sex acts" demonstrates that this law and its reauthorizations were not designed to focus only on what we consider trafficking. Instead, a reinforcement of the norms that associate prostitution with agency and choice are embedded within not only the definition of severe sex trafficking but the direct reference to "unlawful commercial sex acts" as well. These norms reflect the misguided idea that if someone wanted to exit the commercial sex trade, she/he has that ability contrary to those who are trafficked and alternatively need additional assistance and relief. The only area of the VTVPA and following Reauthorizations that allows for funds to be designated to resources for those engaging in unlawful commercial sex acts exists in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 allowing funds to track the number of unlawful commercial sex acts including purchasers of such acts. No services or assistance, however, are included for this population within the VTVPA including the division specifically deemed the Violence Against Women Act nor do any services or assistance funds exist for exiting the sex trade in any following Reauthorizations of the TVPA. Thus, the importance of needing to prove force, fraud, and coercion becomes critical for any adults seeking to exit the commercial sex trade.

The exclusion of those who sell sex unlawfully as legally-defined victims does not reflect the existing research and knowledge about this highly vulnerable group. Those involved in the commercial sex trade are at great risk of violence and victimization including physical, sexual and emotional abuse by pimps, buyers, and even police (Lea et al. 2016;

Cohan et al.,2006; Farley and Barkan, 1998; Finn, Muftić, and Marsh 2015). Even for those who unquestionably fall under the trafficking victim definition have faced arrest and detention due to the ambiguity and lack of training around trafficking for law enforcement officers (Finn, Muftić, and Marsh 2015; Farrell and Cronin 2015). In addition to violent victimization while in the sex trade, a history of child physical and sexual abuse is prevalent among this population (Silbert and Pines 1981; Farley and Barkan 1998; Clarke et al. 2012). This population also experiences poor mental health (Farley and Barkan 1998; Butters and Erickson 2003) and has a higher likelihood of substance abuse (Butters and Erikson 2003; Bungay 2013). To say that this population as a whole does not meet the criteria of victim which is what their exclusion from any part of the VTVPA accomplishes only serves to further marginalize and stigmatize this already vulnerable group.

Institutional Barriers

Throughout the life course, we interact with a number of institutions that compel us to take on multiple roles, influence our behavior, and determine the resources that are and will be available to us (Macmillan and Copher 2005; Mortimer, Oesterle, and Krüger 2004). Institutions are pivotal in shaping individual experiences throughout childhood, the transition to adulthood, and adulthood. This project examines how institutions influence life trajectories for those who sell sex, specifically the family, education, economy/work, and the criminal justice system along the life course. In addition to evidence in existing literature, breakdowns with these specific institutions were also mentioned in pilot interviews that I conducted with social service agencies. For example,

trouble at home (family) can lead to truancy and not having a high school diploma

(education) and having a criminal record (criminal justice system) which influenced

one's ability to find a stable job (work/economy) and support children (back to family).

Understanding the institutional hurdles that individuals who sell sex experience is central

to framing this research.

Family

The main functions of the family in society include to provide for, socialize, and raise

children; and to offer support, tending to the emotional and social needs of its members

(Ballantine and Roberts 2011). Where families do not meet these functions, children are

more likely to have poor peer relations, increased aggressiveness, and experience various

mental illnesses (Hutchison 2011). In many cases, minors who sell sex have known

histories of maltreatment within their families that include physical and sexual abuse and

family dysfunction (Bell and Todd 1998; Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak 2010; Walls

and Bell 2011). The overwhelming connection between childhood abuse and minors

selling sex is undeniable (Clarke et al. 2012; Kramer and Berg 2003; Schissel and Fedec

1999; Silbert and Pines 1983). For adults who sell sex, 49% experienced physical abuse

by a family member as a child and 47% experienced sexual abuse by at least one family

member (Kramer and Berg 2003). These early childhood abuse experiences put children

on a trajectory of vulnerability to sell sex both as minors and as adults. Minors who sell

sex are also more likely to have runaway from negative family situations such as abuse,

domestic violence, and substance use in the home (Clarke et al. 2012; or be living in

foster care or on their own (Bell and Todd 1998; Gerassi 2015). On the contrary, positive

maternal relationships are a significant predictor of at-risk youth *not* engaging in survival

sex (Stein et al., 2010). The family is a highly influential institution and breakdowns in its central functions have been reported as common experiences for minors who sell sex.

The transition to adulthood and shift from various protective functions from state agencies against family breakdowns like abuse and dysfunction are removed once one becomes an adult. Where there is suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, social service agencies are required to investigate. Involvement in foster care or child protective services is common for minors who sell sex (Kortla, 2010). Whether involvement in the foster system or state intervention of the family unit is effective in removing minors from a trajectory of selling sex is questionable and has not been studied, however, the very fact that measures exist to try to protect children from maltreatment and intervene where the institution of family has failed or put the minor at risk demonstrates an attempt at a safety net that is not available to adults.

When looking at adults, many of the same factors that influenced minors selling sex also influence adults who sell sex, such as a history of child abuse and general family dysfunction (Gerassi 2015, Clarke et al., 2012). Many of the adults who sell sex have the history of the family breakdowns that minors face, but with added barriers that come with adulthood. Family members sometimes blame adults who sell sex for choosing to remain in the trade, hearing similar language as victims of domestic violence face, such as "if it's so bad, just leave" (Stark and Hodgson, 2004), other times adults who sell sex will keep their status of selling sex from family members for fear of judgment and stigma and do not seek support from family members (Weitzer, 2009). In adulthood, intimate partner

violence becomes a factor when women who sell sex consider their pimp their partner or boyfriend and makes exiting that much more complicated (Gerassi 2015; Raphael et al., 2010). Supporting one's own family is also a consideration for adults who sell sex and needing to provide for children is a reason women remain in the sex trade (Gerassi 2015).

Education

Education socializes children to be contributing members of society and trains individuals for a variety of positions in the workforce and society (Ballantine and Roberts, 2011). Where schools fail to meet their purpose in the education system, we see individuals more likely to be absent, drop out, and join gangs and other deviant peer groups (Kornblum and Julian, 2012) and those without a college education have different trajectories than those who do and are likely to enter into earlier marriage, parenting, and employment (Hutchison, 2011). Minors and adults selling sex often have limited engagement with school and dropping out is common (Clarke et al., 2012; Kramer and Berg 2003). Irregular school attendance and a lower likelihood of going to college (Bell and Todd 1998; Clarke et al. 2012) can greatly influence a person's trajectory and institutional opportunities. The negative implications of not attending school regularly and dropping out before obtaining a high school diploma are predicted to have an impact on the economic options and positive social development the education system is meant to facilitate. The family is an important influence on not only school achievement but drop out behavior as well (Rumberger et al., 1990). The higher level of education one achieves, the less likely that individual is to sell sex as a minor or adult (Kramer and Berg 2003). The more education at-risk youth and adults have, the higher the likelihood that

those individuals will delay or not begin selling sex (Clarke et al., 2010; Kramer and Berg 2003). The school system also serves the function of being a source of mandatory reporting for suspected child abuse and maltreatment (Crenshaw, Crenshaw, and Lichtenberg, 1995) so that added level of surveillance can serve to be an important resource and contribute to a safety net for minors.

Economy/Work

The economy and drive to work is a major consideration for individuals who sell sex. Income inequality has been increasing in the United States and Boston was recently cited as having the highest level of economic inequality in the nation (Berube and Holmes, 2016). Social upward mobility is particularly difficult and the class stratification of our economy makes upward movement of socioeconomic class a rare occurrence (van Leeuwen and Maas, 2010). Intergenerational upward mobility within a family has also not improved in the US for decades as individuals entering the labor force have the same chance of improving their income distribution status compared to their parents' level as individuals had in the 1970s (Chetty et al., 2014). Selling sex is directly linked to poverty as a means to get by (Monroe, 2005) and has been cited by those in middle classes as a means of economic survival for those who struggle to find substantial financially secure work (Bernstein, 2007). The financial incentive is a primary motive of selling sex (Bernstein, 2007; Monroe, 2005) and reflects a larger, economic, and structural issue of the ability to find financially sustaining work for low (and even some middle) class populations. The bleak picture of stagnant social mobility suggests that this will remain a problem not only over the life course but across generations to come.

Children are not meant to financially support themselves in this society. However, low socioeconomic status and poverty of minors when coupled with lack of family support are common experiences for minors who turn to survival sex (Kramer and Berg 2003). Individuals in high-poverty areas where prostitution is more visible, are more likely to sell sex at an earlier age than those in more affluent neighborhoods (Kramer and Berg 2003). Homeless and runaway youth in particular are more likely to partake in selling sex as a means to get by (Walls and Bell, 2001). Selling sex to get by is most common when family dysfunction and abuse are coupled with the economic disadvantage encountered by runaway youth (Walls and Bell, 2001). Protective laws in place to ensure the "wellbeing of the child" to protect minors from homelessness and starvation are not in place for adults.

For minors still living at home or in foster care, it is the responsibility of their caregivers to provide housing and support them financially. In the State of Massachusetts, adequate shelter, food, and clothing is required to be provided to anyone under 18 unless inability to do so is "due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition" (Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, 2015). This legal expectation ends when a minor turns 18. Though runaway and homeless youth exist, the state does consider shelter to be a right for anyone under 18 and having a caregiver provide housing and financial support is not a legal requirement for adults. This shift in available resources is suspected to contribute to the institutional hurdles adults face and calls for scholarly investigation.

Minors have a financial incentive to sell sex when the institution of family does not fulfill

its function of financial support, a role that should provide a social safety net for minors.

For adults, the established understanding and financial support that families and foster

care are mandated to provide disappears, leaving an even greater economic drive for

adults to sell sex. This connection ranges from survival to a push for financial

independence (Weitzer, 2009). Connected with interactions with the institution of the

family, selling sex as an adult has also been tied to the necessity of supporting a family

(Gerassi 2015). The economic benefit of selling sex and engaging in riskier sex (without

a condom, for example) for a higher price means bargaining health and safety in order to

make money (Adriaenssens and Hendrickx, 2012; Deering et al., 2013). Women who are

pimp-controlled are forced to give most if not all revenue from selling sex to the pimp

and in addition to fearing violence and repercussions for leaving, are financially

dependent on the exploiter/pimp (Raphael, Reichert, and Powers, 2010).

Criminal Justice

Criminal justice intervention is not inherently dysfunctional. Where the criminal justice

system intervenes to stop and prevent crime, it is fulfilling its purpose in society. Youth

involvement in the criminal justice system contribute to poor adjustment into adulthood

(Hutchison, 2011) and having a criminal record creates barriers to success in other areas

such as applying for a job, obtaining housing, and furthering education. There exists

discord in the literature and society as to whether adolescents who sell sex should be

considered victims or delinquents (Hasselbarth, 2014; Marcus et al., 2012; Menaker and

Miller, 2013; Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak, 2010) but recent literature primarily

frames minors selling sex as victims instead of perpetrators. Many factors contribute to the type of interactions minors who sell sex have with the criminal justice system and whether they are treated as victims. One factor in arresting officers associating minors selling sex with victim or delinquent status is influenced by whether an exploiter was present at the scene, not simply because they are a minor (Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak, 2010). Police officers also become involved if a minor has run away which can also result in an arrest (Bell and Todd 1998). Minors involved in the criminal justice system are also struggling with the education hurdles, stigma, and may also be confounded by mental illness that makes the transition to adulthood particularly difficult and begins a trajectory towards continued involvement in the criminal justice system as adults (Hartwell, Fisher, and Davis, 2010).

The distinction the criminal justice system makes between a minor and adult is arguably one of the most important institutional comparisons to make. There is no shortage of literature on the criminalization vs. decriminalization of adults selling sex (Bates and Berg, 2014; Goodyear and Cusick, 2007; McCraken, 2010; Weitzer, 2009). Important to this argument is treatment by the criminal justice system and whether adults who sell sex are treated as victims or criminals by the government. Prostitution is considered a crime and therefore when an adult is found to be selling sex, an arrest is likely as that person is considered a criminal. Some adults who sell sex have reported being victimized by police and report interactions where officers would coerce them into sex, verbally or physically assault the women, or continually harass them (Williamson et al., 2007). Some adults who sell sex feel discouraged to report violence and other crimes to the police as many

report non-responsiveness from the police and being treated as invisible (Williamson et al., 2007). In addition to arrests and individual experiences with police officers, once a criminal record is formed, the ability to get a job, school, housing, etc. is even more difficult and greatly impacts their relationships with other social institutions. Alternatively, Williamson and colleagues (2007) revealed that sometimes officers would make an arrest of loitering as a form of support to provide women a night in jail to rest and eat. This calls into question the level of support the criminal justice system and society more broadly is providing if the only way a police officer can "help" is by actually arresting an adult selling sex to offer food and rest. There exists an intergenerational factor with the criminal justice system with a higher likelihood of incarceration for those whose parents were also incarcerated (Ng, Sarri, and Stoffregen, 2013). Family can be an important source of social capital for offenders and can have a major impact on the level of involvement one has in the criminal justice system with distinct connections to family socioeconomic status (Reisig, Holtfreter, and Morash, 2002).

All four social institutions discussed treat minors who sell sex differently than they treat adults who sell sex despite the singular life course trajectories that those barriers predict. Furthermore, given what is known about vulnerable populations and their transition to adulthood, a call for focused research that includes the transition to adulthood for minors who sell sex as a vulnerable population is needed. The separation of minors and adults who sell sex into two separate populations of study and the multiple value-based terms that are used to describe those groups contributes to associating one group with

victimhood and the other group with agency. The multiple institutional barriers and interactions that lead to selling sex are of great importance to individuals both as minors and adults and the transition into adulthood for this population is one way to reveal those obstacles. The life course perspective can bring attention away from the preconceived notions attached to victimhood or agency of one group over another and reveal the similar life trajectories and institutional barriers that exist for this population as a whole.

Figure 1. Barriers Across the Life Course for People Who Sell or Exchange Sex
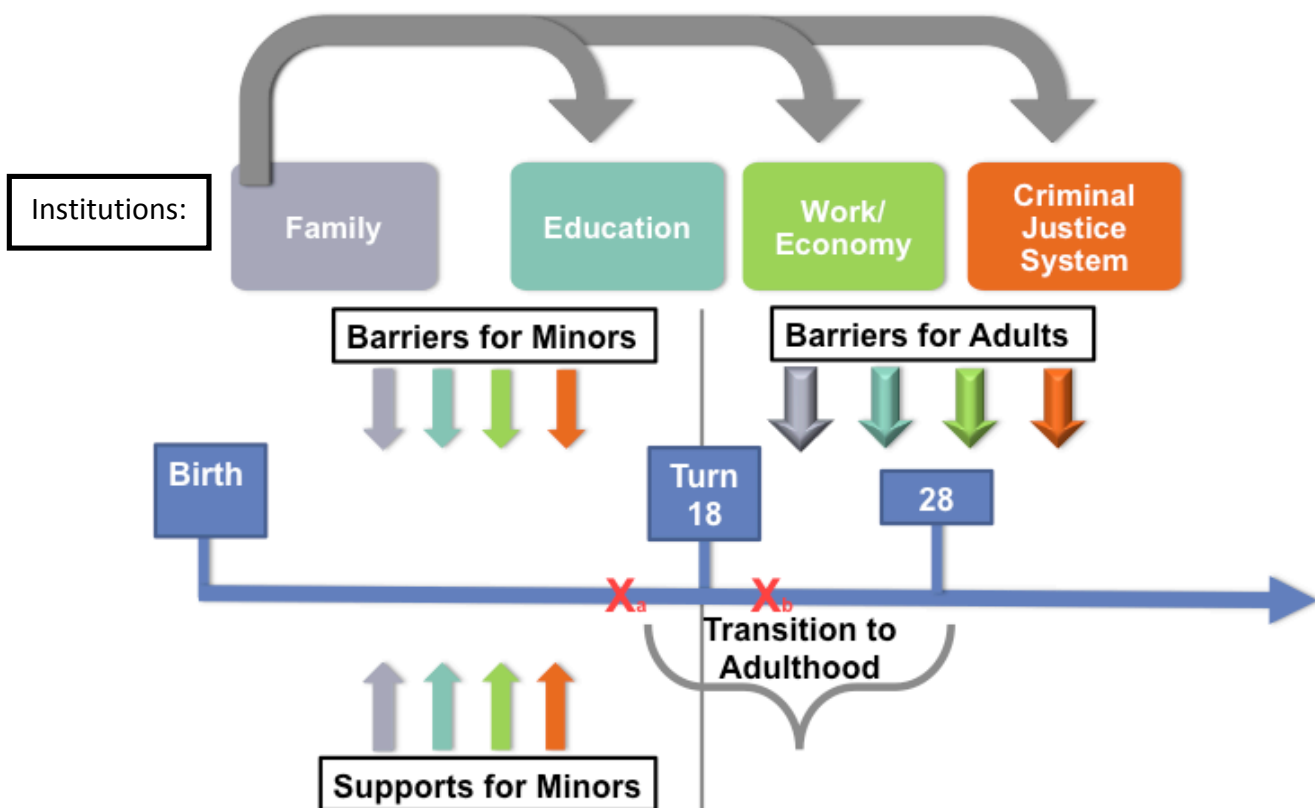
This diagram in Figure 1 provides a visual of the proposed life course application to those who have sold sex. Structural barriers exist for cis-gendered women prior to turning 18, yet some institutional supports also exist. Upon turning 18, those barriers increase and supports are removed. Whether a person began selling sex as a minor (Xa) or as an adult

(Xb), the same factors exist for someone throughout their life course. Minors who sell sex and adults who sell sex are not two different populations but the same population experiencing different stages along the life course. Focusing on the transition to adulthood will provide insight to the ways individuals are treated and the hurdles they face with each institution and how those barriers shift as adults.

Race, Class, Gender, Sexual Orientation: An Intersectional Approach

Race and Ethnicity

When investigating the structural barriers that exist for those who sell sex, the role of race and ethnicity in shaping those experiences provides a clearer picture of the ways in which various marginalized groups experience sexual exploitation. Patricia Hill Collins discusses the racialized aspect of prostitution, noting that for Black women, stereotypes about sexual promiscuity and the pervasiveness of this image in American culture affects women of color who sell sex differently than white women who sell sex (Collins, 2000). Collins also points out that the commodification of Black women's bodies can only be understood while incorporating an intersectional lens; the history of slavery and particularly the ways in which white men have appropriated Black women's bodies are experienced by adopting associations with Black female bodies as being "animalistic" vs. the typical "objectification" that white exploited women might face (Collins, 2000, 156).

Understanding these nuances in the different life course events that women of different racial and ethnic groups experience can help in understanding the structural influences that contribute to one's life course trajectory and the likelihood of selling sex in one's

lifetime. Additionally, the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality will mean unique interactions with institutions as people experience varying levels of oppression based on the interlocking systems of oppression that exist within the societal structures that shape their experience (Collins, 2000). For instance, Dewey, Hankel and Brown (2017) found that Black women who sold sex as adults were more likely than any other racial/ethnic group to also have sold sex as a minor and that Black women were more likely to have been forced/trafficked into the sex industry where white women were more likely to have a negative correlation with being forced/trafficked according to self-reports. Black women were most likely to also report child sex abuse than other racial groups and although Hispanic or Latina women were less likely to report any type of child abuse, they were more likely to experience all forms of abuse/violence as adults (including sexual, physical, and emotional abuse).

Race and ethnic identity also influenced the type of sex work that individuals engage in with White Non-Hispanic cis-women being more likely to be associated with escort services, referral-based (call girls), hotels, and adult cabaret clubs but Black cis-women are more often found as "streetwalkers," Asian cis-women are more likely to be found in massage parlors, Asian hostess clubs, or brothels and Hispanic or Latina cis-women are more often found in "hostess dance halls," bars or cantinas (Lever, Kanouse, and Berry 2005).

Class

Class, as discussed earlier regarding the role of work/economy as an institutional factor influencing individuals over the life course is a critical consideration when discussing the intersections of other marginalized identities. Those affected by poverty have an increased likelihood of participating in the commercial sex trade (Monroe, 2005) and homeless youth as a means to get by are more likely to engage in "survival sex" and are at particular risk of getting recruited into the commercial sex trade during the critical transition to adulthood (Hagan and McCarthy, 2005).

Incorporating class into the analysis of different experiences within the commercial sex trade allows for a more detailed investigation as to why some groups are recruited into "the life." For example, considering the differences between why middle-class cis-women are entering the commercial sex trade (Bernstein, 2007) or middle-class youth might be running away (Hagan and McCarthy, 2005), we can start to look at factors like the relatively high pay of the sex industry when compared to other legal service sector jobs (Bernstein, 2007). Paying attention to the different life course events of various socioeconomic groups sheds light to the structural factors that contribute to one's entry into the commercial sex trade.

Gender and Sexuality

Most research on prostitution, sex work, and sex trafficking is positioned around the experiences of cis-gendered women and girls. Though the gendered nature of the commodification of bodies and the view of sex being a service that can be bought and

sold is one that feminist theorists have explored as being particularly harmful to the ways in which society views the female body (Collins, 2000; Gerassi 2015) and has been a central part of the conversation about whether sex work is a source of exploitation or empowerment where sex workers maintain control over the labor exchange (Chapkis, 2000) (see section below for more discussion on this topic) revolves primarily around the acceptance that girls and women face the greatest risk for entry into the commercial sex trade either by force or choice.

There exists emerging literature, however, about the experiences of men and boys who are involved in the commercial sex industry and the ways in which their experiences are both similar and different than their female counterparts (Richards and Reid, 2015; Minichiello and Callander, 2013; Logan, 2010). Research on cis-male sex workers reveals, for instance, that race and ads for sex work that highlight stereotypical racial behavior is priced differently which supports an intersectional approach to understanding sex work (Logan, 2010). An important note about the similarity between cis men and women is that those buying sex from both groups is primarily men with both heterosexual-identified and gay-identified men seeking services from cis-male sex workers (Logan, 2010).

Transgender individuals who are involved in the sex industry also face intersectional forms of discrimination that includes transphobia which can translate into higher rates of violence and is also correlated with race (Nemoto, Bödeker, and Iwamoto, 2011). However, having a greater understanding of transgender experiences within the sex

industry and their specific life course trajectories when compared to their cis-gendered counterparts reveals that trans-identified are less likely to report substance use problems (Bailey-Kloch, Shdaimah, and Osteen, 2015) but debate about mental health issues exists with some research revealing high rates of depression and suicide ideation (Nemoto, Bödeker, and Iwamoto, 2011) while others reveal that trans-identified individuals are less likely to report mental health problems (Bailey-Kloch, Shdaimah, and Osteen, 2015), citing individual and structural discrimination as major contributors to a trajectory towards selling sex (Bailey-Kloch, Shdaimah, and Osteen, 2015).

The Exploitation Debate

Is sex work/prostitution inherently exploitative? Feminists and other scholars have attempted to answer this question and I would be remiss to not acknowledge this debate given the tone of my work as revealing a potentially elongated stage of victimhood than has been previously attached to this population. A person who sells sex or is sold for sex as a minor has a high chance of being in the commercial sex trade as an adult whether she or he falls under the Trafficking Victim Protections Act or falls under the definition of prostitution (Kotrla, 2010; Dewey, Hankel and Brown, 2017). As discussed, one's economic, educational, and familial situation makes exiting that situation extremely difficult, especially if that situation is one that is not given victim status. The label of victim may not be ideal and may in and of itself be problematic for those who do not identify as a victim, but with victim status also comes visibility and recognition that larger structural factors are at play that may not simply be a result of personal choice and agency. The same logic is applied to survivors of domestic violence and rape, both of

which are offenses that have transitioned in society from conjuring a victim-blaming attitude to one of compassion, empathy, and resources (Stark and Hodgson, 2004).

Labels and the meaning we attach to those labels matter. When a person shifts from being considered a victim in society to a criminal simply by having a birthday, we need to reevaluate those labels and consider additional policy that does not exclude this marginalized group but provides access to resources, a reevaluation of selling sex as a crime (while still holding controllers and buyers legally accountable) and the revictimization that occurs for individuals through the criminal justice system that create additional hurdles with a criminal record and additional stigma.

There exists mobilization and activism around sex worker rights emerging not only here in the United States but around the world (Chateauvert, 2013 and Bass, 2015). These efforts are also often coupled with arguments for legalization and decriminalization (Chapkis, 2000; Chateauvert, 2013; and Bass, 2015) to address the stigma and institutional barriers that sex workers, and specifically female sex workers, face. This position rejects the notion of sex workers as victims, providing a more empowered approach. Unfortunately, we as a society tend to provide resources, assistance, and visibility to those groups that we name as victims. Transitions to positions of empowerment and greater social change are possible once basic access to the institutions and resources are established. Total legalization of buying and selling sex does not guarantee safety from violence and stigma (Farley, 2004) and some countries like Sweden, Norway, and France have taken the position of only criminalizing buyers and

pimps while decriminalizing the act of an individual selling sex (an approach deemed the "Nordic Model") (The Guardian, 2013). International organizations like the Coalition Against Trafficking Women take a strong stance on destigmatizing and decriminalizing those who are bought and sold while taking a strong stance *against* the full legalization of prostitution (Coalition Against Trafficking Women, 2003). Despite the differing views of many over decriminalization and legalization, the central common thread that exists but is rarely illuminated is the role of institutional failures in contributing to entrance into the sex trade, whether it be trafficking or prostitution and the prohibitive barriers that block options and the availability of exiting as an option. This project is an attempt to first reframe the question, to move away from declarations of choice which the exploitation debate is also subject to but also to refocus the attention to the institutional influences that exist for individuals over the life course. So whether one sits in the camp that selling sex is exploitative by definition or whether one believes that selling sex can be empowering and is not always exploitative, the overall problem of institutional obstacles and societal stigma remains the critical issue.

Conclusion

What began as a definitional dilemma within the literature transformed into a greater complex picture of not only what the life course *may* look like for those who have sold sex but also the ways in which social scientists have researched and weighed in on sex trafficking and sex work in American society. It is a topic that is steeped in stereotyping and problematic labels, debates about criminality, and disagreement about empowerment vs. exploitation models. The ways that race, class, gender, and sexuality intersect

contribute to various forms of institutional obstacles and experiences within the sex industry make it difficult to construct any sweeping generalizations about the experience of selling sex and the ways that life events have influenced those paths. Gaining a better understanding of the different trajectories and life events for those who have sold sex through investigating both qualitatively and quantitatively the transition to adulthood through a life course perspective will provide a different lens that can incorporate the multitude of events that those who have sold sex experience over the life course. Specifically, focusing on the transition to adulthood can turn the lens to institutional factors that influence those trajectories instead of engaging in the empowerment vs. exploitation and choice vs. force dialogues that cloud our understanding of the intertwining and ongoing life events of this marginalized population.

CHAPTER 3

WHEN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Introduction

In order to more fully understand the vulnerabilities that put adolescents at risk for a

rocky transition to adulthood and the systemic influences for individuals who sell sex,

what we know about the transition to adulthood for other "vulnerable populations" needs

to be explored. Some of the groups who have been considered "vulnerable" and whose

transition to adulthood has been studied are youth in foster care, individuals involved in

the juvenile justice system, and homeless/runaway adolescents. Even though there has

been overlap mentioned among these populations and commercially sexually exploited

youth (Hagan and McCarthy, 2005), research on the transition to adulthood for

commercially exploited youth is largely missing from the literature and reveals a major

gap in academic research. Research on the transition to adulthood for vulnerable

populations would certainly benefit from knowledge about the challenges commercially

sexually exploited youth as a group (who also may be involved in foster care, have

juvenile justice involvement, and have a high propensity for running away and

homelessness) face in transitioning to adulthood. Likewise, literature on commercial sex

trafficking and sex work would largely benefit from a life course perspective that

examines the transition to adulthood as a pivotal moment as for many, it means moving

from the category of sex trafficking victim to sex worker in the eyes of society and will be explored in a different chapter.

In order to understand what the experiences for sexually exploited youth and young adults might be and the areas where the transition to adulthood for individuals who sell sex or have been sold for sex proves especially problematic, the existing literature on vulnerable populations transitioning to adulthood is reviewed here. Of particular interest are the barriers that youth face and how the circumstances that surround their vulnerability set them up for adverse experiences into adulthood. Focusing specifically on the process of transitioning to adulthood serves to highlight where supports fall away, where systems become less forgiving, and where the societal expectations of responsibility and self-reliance become a considerable obstacle moving forward.

The transition to adulthood as an area of life course research

The Life Course Perspective is used as a lens through which to understand how people pass through various stages over their lives. Elder's (1974) seminal work evaluated the common trends of individuals and families in the Great Depression era to track their pathways through life. The life course view connects individual lives and trajectories to historical influences, cultural norms, and shared cohort experiences that influence experiences at specific points in life and across generations (Elder, 1999; Hutchison, 2011). This perspective is often used to better understand how early behavior and life events can influence later outcomes in areas of crime (Sampson and Laub, 1992) and victimization (Chen, 2009).

Childhood and adolescence are periods of the life course in which individuals experience a protected status in society. The life course approach identifies various protections afforded to people during childhood such as guardianship, state protection from abuse, and specialized divisions of the criminal justice system (i.e. juvenile detention). Childhood is associated with vulnerability and keeping children and adolescents safe is a social effort that is not afforded to adulthood (Hutchison, 2011). Even though adulthood is not typically seen as a stage that warrants protection, various risk factors such as poverty, substance use, risk of physical violence, mental health issues, sexual assault and rape, stigma, and even arrest that existed throughout childhood/adolescence remain through adulthood and affect one's overall life course trajectory.

Historically, turning 18 has been a significant milestone in our society— one is able to vote, sign contracts, join the military, and interact with institutions differently than when he or she was a minor. Turning 18 is a part of the transition to adulthood and that process differs for various groups of people. The transition to adulthood incites role shifts within the family, graduation from high school, expectation to go to college or start working, engaging in adult life events like marriage and having children, and accountability under the law (Arnett, 2000; Berzin and De Marco, 2010; Mortimer, Oesterle, and Krüger, 2004). Traditionally, the five main markers that one associates with the onset of adulthood are leaving home, finishing school, getting a job, getting married, and having children (Settersten, 2011).

The transition from childhood to adulthood is a markedly important transition in our lifetime. It marks a changing of roles and statuses that are associated with childhood and adolescence to the roles and statuses associated with being an adult (Hutchison, 2011). Within Life Course research, this transition is often marked by bureaucratic and institutional transitions rather than developmental or cultural norms (Davis, 2003). The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a process that may be either accelerated or delayed depending on a number of factors (Arnett, 2000; Berzin and De Marco, 2010; Mortimer, Oesterle, and Krüger, 2004) including class (Berzin and De Marco, 2010), family stability (Fuligni and Pedersen, 2002; Osgood et al., 2005), race and ethnic background (Fuligni and Pedersen, 2002), as well as a number of other influences such as mental health status and substance use which will be explored in this chapter.

Over the past couple of decades, research about the transition to adulthood has led way to the idea of "emerging" adulthood (Arnett, 1998) where at this point in our society, individuals are delaying some of the life events that accompany adulthood like marriage and having children and are instead living with their parents into their early twenties. This experience has been coupled with entering a new and exploratory phase of going to college and putting off some of the typical responsibilities that are often associated with being an adult. Alternatively, distinct experiences of vulnerable populations during this transition to adulthood have been described as an "accelerated" transition to adulthood (Collins, 2001; Lee, 2014; Osgood, Foster, and Courtney, 2010; Osgood et al., 2005) and call for a need to incorporate other factors such as class, race and gender to the

discussion. What sets vulnerable populations aside from the current emerging adulthood trend is explored next.

Vulnerable populations and the accelerated transition to adulthood

Notably, the unique experiences of vulnerable populations during this transition to adulthood have been described as an "accelerated" transition where adolescents take on caretaker roles within the family, interact with the criminal justice system, or deal with other responsibilities that are typically experienced in adulthood (Collins, 2001; Lee, 2014; Osgood, Foster, and Courtney, 2010; Osgood et al., 2005). Factors that disproportionately affect various vulnerable populations include a lack of family and social support (Osgood et al., 2005; Jones, 2014), an expectation of resilience (Jones, 2012; Wright et al., 2014), a discontinuation of government services (Courtney and Heuring, 2005); Dworsky, Napolitano, and Courtney, 2013), and the mediating factors of race, class, and gender (Osgood et al., 2005; Kirk and Sampson, 2013; Singer and Berzin, 2015; Trulson et al., 2005) which make the likelihood of selling or exchanging sex more or less likely depending on one's level of societal marginalization.

While others their age may experience prolonged support through family, social capital, and educational opportunities, youth and young adults involved in the foster care system, juvenile justice system, or who have experienced homelessness can face an abrupt end to services upon turning 18 or soon after regardless of their readiness or the resources in place for the new role (Dworsky, Napolitano, and Courtney, 2013; Osgood et al., 2005). Particularly with the vulnerable populations being discussed, disrupted relationships with

family members as well as a lack of other formal and informal supports play a key role in making the transition to adulthood a time of uncertainty and isolation (Jones, 2013; Jones, 2014; Keller, Cusick, and Courtney, 2007; Wright et al., 2014).

One of the contributing factors of Life Course Perspective in understanding structural influences on individual behavior is the recognition of cohort effects and the significance of historical place and time for investigating variance in behavioral and situational outcomes. For instance, when discussing the role of economic conditions on different outcomes connected to the transition to adulthood, existing trends with the economy, recession, and social norms provide context to understanding some of the specific ways work and the economy may influence the transition to adulthood for various populations. A shift towards the service-industry, technological changes in labor, and the failure of the minimum wage to keep up with a living wage influence the amount and type of available jobs available to young adults (Danziger and Ratner 2010). A look into the time-specific economic aspects of the transition to adulthood provides context to understanding those changes such as young people changing employers more than their parents' generation as well as an extended time period of completing a college education. An increase of housing prices as well as increased debt contribute to trends of economic instability and an increase of young adults returning to live with their parents (Danziger and Ratner 2010; Danziger and Rouse 2007; Hill and Holzer 2007). Men are more likely to move back in with their parents than women and higher-income families were more likely to have their adult children move back when compared to lower-income families. Even more common than moving back with parents, young adults are shifting in their

likelihood to move in with others who are not their spouse which is a more profound shift of recent generations than earlier decades (Danziger and Rouse 2007). These shifts, particularly with class and gender trends create questions of how lower-income individuals and women (and specifically, lower-income women) are faring economically as they transition into adulthood during this current point in history. If these factors are part of the experience for all individuals transitioning to adulthood, how are vulnerable populations faring? Hagan and McCarthy (2005) suggest that many homeless youth have serious substance use problems with 80% smoking marijuana, 57% using hallucinogens, and 43% using cocaine multiple times after becoming homeless and alcohol also being a common coping mechanism. Additionally, for homeless youth that successfully avoid the criminal justice system involvement, entering conventional work and legal employment served as a significant protective factor so community-level programs that help support economic opportunities for this population as they make the transition into adulthood may be able to mediate the negative influences of increased substance use during this time period.

Gender differences within the context of historical eras are crucial in better understanding the context of available economic opportunities for young adults. Since the 1970s and second-wave feminism, women's roles have shifted and their participation within the workforce has shifted the economic landscape within the United States (specifically white women's roles as women of color have always been working albeit extremely low-wage positions) (Stranger-Ross, Collins and Stern 2005). Particularly for women in today's economy who have experienced family instability, the transition to adulthood has

been marked with lower rates of college completion, earlier childbearing, and entrance into the labor force at an early age suggesting an increased pressure to support oneself independently (Fomby and Bosick 2013).

The study of *resilience* is one of common interest in the research about the transition to adulthood for vulnerable populations (Hauser, 1999; Luthar et al., 2000; Osgood et al., 2005; Jones 2012) and is defined as the ability to make "positive adaptations on one's life circumstances despite exposure to severe adversity, and a multitude of risks" (Luthar et al., 2000; Jones, 2012). The factors that contribute to one's resiliency (such as having social support and advanced living skills) vs. the obstacles that make resiliency more difficult (such as poverty, living with family dysfunction, and a history or behavioral problems) contribute to the discussion of what makes a successful vs. non-successful transition into adulthood (Jones, 2012). The application of resiliency, however, is best utilized within the context of structural and societal influences instead of a marker of individual ability and effort. This can be tricky when terms like "resilience" illicit images of personal achievement and wherewithal.

The intervention of government agencies is particularly relevant for youth in the juvenile justice system and the foster care system. Homeless and runaway youth are not necessarily a separate group, immune to the criminal justice system and child welfare system, however, and the influence of these two institutions on vulnerable populations play an important role in not only this critical transition into adulthood but the trajectory of their entire life course as well. Courtney and Heuring (2005) demonstrate the

responsibility of the government in successfully transitioning adolescents into adulthood when discussing the role of our society's child welfare system: "Yet these are, in a profound way, society's children. Government takes them away from the care of their parents under the presumption that government can and should do better"(27). Similar to this argument about the child welfare system, the juvenile justice system also takes over in cases of adolescent criminality, removing youth from the homes of parents and guardians and placing them into the care and supervision of the criminal justice system. When adolescents turn 18 and age out of these systems, should it not be the role of that same system to ensure the best and most optimal transition into adulthood, especially considering their risk for adverse conditions and experiences? This question is an ongoing debate about the role that government and society should play and the responsibility it has to not only the youth under its care and supervision but the adults who have graduated from and been influenced by those very institutions (Courtney and Heuring, 2005). These are also the very youth that become at risk for becoming homeless at this pivotal stage (Dworsky, Napolitano, and Courtney, 2013) and are set up for pathways end up filling our prisons, emergency rooms, homeless shelters well into adulthood.

When looking at what makes vulnerable populations particularly vulnerable during this transition, the role that race, class, and gender play cannot be overstated. Racial and ethnic minorities are overrepresented in every vulnerable group discussed here (as well as others) and discrimination adds a continued disadvantage to the hardship of transitioning to adulthood that non-Hispanic whites do not face (Osgood et al., 2005). Within the

criminal justice system, individuals with structural disadvantages including race and class lack the social capital and face additional discrimination in their likelihood of arrest, thus affecting their life course trajectory and outcomes later on in adulthood (Kirk and Sampson, 2013). The implications these hard life transitions have for black men in particular paint a bleak picture for future job attainment and education outcomes. When imprisonment becomes a normative event in the life course of a particular subgroup of the population (Kirk and Sampson, 2013), it begs the question if intervention at earlier points in the life course to counteract the structural inequality might be beneficial to not only the lives of many but society as a whole as well. Likewise, the role of poverty in making the transition to adulthood even more difficult and the propensity for youth to be even more at risk for negative outcomes in adulthood when they are at an economic disadvantage also significantly influences one's life course trajectory (Wright et al., 2014). Involvement in the criminal justice system as a juvenile has serious and disastrous influences when it comes to pathways to education and employment and can be traced to the educational disadvantage experienced by specific minority groups (Kirk and Sampson, 2013).

Juvenile Justice

When looking at youth involved in the juvenile justice system as a population that experiences specific vulnerabilities, life course theorists are interested in looking at the various events and influences that occur over that person's lifetime – from childhood to adolescence and into adulthood where future outcomes such as employment, education, family, and future criminal justice involvement are considered (Hartwell et al., 2010; Kirk and Sampson, 2013; Sampson and Laub, 1990; Wright et al., 2014). What we know

about this population of juvenile offenders is not only that there are life events and structural factors that contribute to their likelihood of arrest as an adolescent (Evans, Simons, and Simons, 2016) but also that the very act of being arrested and entering into the criminal justice system before an adult has very serious and predictive consequences for their life course trajectory into adulthood and include such outcomes as future delinquency, a drop off in education, and under or unemployment (Ausbrooks, Gwin, and Brown, 2011; Kirk and Sampson, 2013; Wright et al., 2014). Because of such outcomes, the importance of looking into alternatives for juveniles instead of incarceration, especially for individuals who have experienced trauma, remains an area for future exploration (Hartwell et al., 2010).

Life course scholars are interested in investigating the influences of juvenile offending – that is, over the course of one's life what puts youth at risk for engaging in criminal behavior and what can we learn from those trends? Specific factors stand out in the research such as deviant or delinquent peers, racial discrimination, family dysfunction and transitions, poor school performance and resources, and also living in a community with increased crime (Chung, Little, and Steinberg, 2005; Evans, Simons, and Simons, 2016; Hartwell et al., 2010).

Also important to note is the mental health status of incarcerated youth as one review study revealed that the presence of mental health problems in up to 92% of youth offenders (Casswell, French, and Rogers, 2012). Individuals with higher levels of emotional disturbance or psychotic disorders are also more likely to be arrested than their

peers (Constantine et al., 2013). Not only are young people who experience mental health problems more likely to enter the juvenile justice system but evidence suggests that mental health problems persisted and in some cases even worsened after exiting the criminal justice system (Harrington et al., 2005). Along with the struggles of mental health needs, the co-occurrence of substance abuse (and increased substance use upon release to the community) demonstrates a need for a continuity of services for adolescents and young adults (Casswell, French, and Rogers, 2012; Harrington et al., 2005; Hartwell, Fisher, and Davis, 2010). Individuals with psychiatric disabilities who are transitioning to adulthood during their criminal justice involvement are at a higher risk to future criminal justice involvement and should be considered as a population in need of ample community supports (Hartwell, Fisher, and Davis, 2010).

The problems at home, school, and community before ever being arrested coupled with a lack of institutional support (rather than just taking on the role of sanctioning) shouldn't be ignored. There exist so many factors that put juvenile offenders at risk of becoming a vulnerable population even before entering the juvenile justice system such as an unstable family, poverty, communities with crime, institutional racism, a lack of support in schools, delinquent peers, mental health and substance use (Chung, Little, and Steinberg, 2005), however the influence of entering the juvenile justice system and how it does little to help sustain a positive and interrupting alteration in the trajectory of the life course is reviewed next.

Having a criminal record, even as a juvenile, blocks opportunities of housing and employment in the transition to adulthood (Ausbrooks, Gwin, and Brown, 2011; Chung, Little, and Steinberg, 2005), as well as completing a high school education (Kirk and Sampson, 2013; Hartwell et al., 2010) which are major markers of supporting oneself and upholding the societal expectations of being a responsible adult. Not only do these institutional blockages impact that critical transition, but they also increase the likelihood of reoffending (Kirk and Sampson, 2013). In addition to having a criminal record, life course researchers have found that additional neighborhood factors including deviant peers increase the likelihood of reoffending (Wright et al., 2014). Though youth may be somewhat aware that external and environmental factors are present and might influence their likelihood of reoffending, personal goals and perception of self-efficacy can become the focus, (Beal, 2014) thus making reoffenses interpretable as a personal failure rather than a systemic issue.

Our responses matter. Taking into consideration how we approach youth and seeing the transition to adulthood as a time of opportunity to go on a different pathway rather than one of continued struggle takes restructuring and an onset of resources to support youth during this transition. As it stands, their pathway is one of low education attainment, poor family outcomes, employment struggles, discrimination, mental health issues, substance abuse, and continued involvement in the criminal justice system. This carved pathway for the millions of juveniles arrested each year needs to be seriously reviewed and evaluated to foster better outcomes for these young people and society as a whole (Chung, Little, and Steinberg, 2005).

Foster kids and other maltreated children

For youth involved in foster care, their role as a vulnerable population is structured around the institution of the family instead of the criminal justice system (though overlap between these two systems certainly occurs). Troubled family histories, experiencing abuse and neglect alone sets up a pathway for potential struggle and adversity that others who do not face such challenges are less likely to experience. Added on top of that, the experience of being taken away from one's family and having the government in the form of child welfare agencies step in and say "hey, we're going to do a better job, we're going to take care of you" can have both positive and negative outcomes. Taking responsibility, however, only until youth reach the legal age of 18, ignores the crucial role families play during and after the transition to adulthood. Returning to the "emerging adulthood" literature and the trend of people in their 20s returning home and being supported by their parents until they continue on their own path is something that peers in foster care do not always have the option to take, especially considering that the average age that individuals in the general population strike out on their own is 28 compared to an abrupt transition at 18 that many foster care youth face (Jones, 2014).

Youth involved in the foster care system experience a more accelerated path to adulthood in many ways, needing to exercise independence and self-reliance long before many of their peers not involved in the foster care system are forced to face the same responsibilities (Singer and Berzin, 2015). Evidence that the foster care system is not currently set up to fully support youth during the transition to adulthood is overwhelming. In one comprehensive

study, Courtney and Dworsky (2006) discuss the fate of most of their sample of young adults

formally involved in foster care:

> [A]lthough some of these young adults are in stable situations and either moving forward with their education or employed in promising jobs, more of them are having significant difficulties during the early stages of the transition to adulthood. Too many are neither employed nor in school, have children that they are not able to parent, suffer from persistent mental illness or substance use disorders, find themselves without basic necessities, become homeless, or end up involved with the criminal justice system (211).

Indeed, the needs for individuals exiting the foster care system are great. Some states,

including Massachusetts, allow youth to remain in foster care after they turn eighteen but this

is not a common practice across the country (Courtney and Heuring, 2005). In addition,

contrary to popular belief, individuals who actually age out of the foster care system have not

in fact grown up in the system – most had entered foster care after their fifteenth birthday –

so for the purpose of evaluating the influence of the foster care system on youth and the

transition to adulthood, it is important to include not only individuals who age out of the

system but individuals who were ever removed from their home or involved in the foster care

system as the vulnerability of this group as a whole are not limited only to individuals who

turn eighteen while in foster care (Courtney and Heuring, 2005).

Youth involved in foster care experience low levels of educational attainment, attending

fewer years of school and also less likely to graduate high school than non-foster youth

which also bleeds into the likelihood of obtaining a college degree (Barnow et al., 2015;

Courtney and Heuring, 2005). These outcomes stem from struggles children face while in

the foster care system where children are more likely to repeat a grade, change schools

during the school year, or enroll in special education programs compared to other children (Barnow et al., 2015).

Unsurprising is the propensity for mental health issues among current and former foster youth given troubled family histories, experience of neglect and abuse, and the unpredictability changing nature of care and support they face compared to the general population (Courtney and Dworsky, 2006; Courtney and Heuring, 2005). There is significant overlap between involvement in foster care and future involvement in the criminal justice system (Courtney and Dworsky, 2006; Courtney and Heuring, 2005; Lee, Courtney, and Hook, 2012; Ryan, Perron, and Huang, 2016). Additionally, children who are maltreated and may not officially be in the foster care system are also high risk for future arrest and even more so than individuals in foster care (Ryan, Perron, and Huang, 2016). Staying in foster care can actually serve as a protective function with one study revealing that youth who remained in foster care offended and were arrested less often than individuals who age out at eighteen (Lee, Courtney, and Hook, 2012) suggesting that there is a complex relationship between the foster care system and the abuse and trouble that youth face throughout their childhood and adolescence, even further highlighting the importance of the transition to adulthood for future adult outcomes and societal roles.

For foster care youth, what remains an encouraging influence is the role of social support, especially during the transition to adulthood. With all of the disheartening outcomes that have been discussed for this vulnerable population, youth involved in foster care experience better outcomes - such as improved educational experiences, determent from the criminal justices system, and improved mental health statuses - if they have a supportive social

network through the transition to adulthood (Jones, 2014). Though this is a helpful influence for anyone transitioning to adulthood, the presence of positive role models or support whether they come from family or elsewhere is especially important for foster care youth who have often experienced disruptions in their family and social networks and are at risk for negative outcomes and troubled pathways into adulthood. These positive social influences can be reconnected family members, foster parents, social workers, or other mentors (Jones, 2013).

Homeless Youth

The final population discussed here that faces specific vulnerabilities overlapping with individuals who sell sex -and, interestingly, are one of the few groups acknowledged in the transition to adulthood literature as being at risk for bring recruited into the commercial sex trade (Hagan and McCarthy, 2005) - are youth experiencing homelessness. Homeless youth are susceptible to involvement in the criminal justice system, are often running away from situations of abuse and victimization, and face obvious barriers to housing, work, and education (Hagan and McCarthy, 2005).

Foster care children are at particular risk for becoming homeless (Dworsky, Napolitano, and Courtney, 2013) and this risk is especially high during the transition to adulthood (Curry and Abrams, 2015). Surrounding this difficult transition are values around being self-sufficient and not a part of the "system" while maintaining the need for strong social and systemic supports as individuals attempt to support themselves in adulthood for the first time with a litany of difficult obstacles from their past influencing those chances (Curry and Abrams, 2015).

Homeless youth are at risk for involvement in the commercial sex trade and engaging in "survival sex" where they trade sex for shelter, food, or other resources and studies have found that around a third of homeless youth have traded sex for these resources and had a higher likelihood of facing violent victimization (Hagan and McCarthy, 2005; Heerde and Hemphill, 2017). African American youth, gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth are at particular risk for engaging in "survival sex" when homeless with substance use and poor mental health increasing the likelihood of engaging in survival sex and being recruited into the commercial sex trade (Walls and Bell, 2011).

Youth who are homeless use alcohol and drugs with some studies revealing almost two-thirds (64%) of runaway youth engage in substance use (Thompson, Safyer, and Pollio, 2001). The likelihood that one will use substances increases immensely when youth on the street have experienced trauma (Thompson et al., 2015). The pathway to substance use for homeless youth is multi-pronged. Engaging in illegal behavior often associated with substance use for means of survival such as survival sex, prostitution, pimping, theft, and dealing drugs are means of getting by while living on the street (Ferguson et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 2015). In addition, the use of substances while living on the street is perceived as normalized and part of the culture of street life (Thompson et al., 2015).

Accompanying an increased likelihood of substance abuse, the mental health status of homeless youth facing the transition to adulthood is an added constraint and challenge for adolescents on the street (Bender et al., 2010; Yoder, Whitbeck, Hoyt, 2010). Most youth who experience homelessness face previous traumas (57%) and are more likely to have

PTSD (24%) that, when coupled with substance use, makes the transition to adulthood particularly difficult (Bender et al., 2010). About half of the adolescents living on the street have thought about suicide with more than 1 in 4 reporting making multiple attempts to commit suicide over their young lifetime. With homeless youth having higher rates of premature death than others their age, providing support to this population becomes particularly dire (Yoder, Whitbeck, Hoyt, 2010).

With over 80% of homeless youth reporting childhood physical or sexual abuse histories, it is no wonder that most report still being affected by that abuse while living on the street (Keeshin and Campbell, 2011) and calls for a comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing the effects of such histories, traumas, and the subsequent substance use and mental health disorders that follow. For adolescents, homelessness during the transition to adulthood can have long-term influences on criminal behavior and future life trajectories. Experiencing homelessness early in life (by age 26) increases the likelihood that one will commit violent crime in adulthood and 30% more likely to commit a property crime. Such findings are exponentiated when abuse and neglect come in to play as victims of child maltreatment are up to 15 times more likely to commit property crime (Cronley et al., 2015).

The life experiences that have put youth on a path to homelessness do not bode well for the transition to adulthood and future life trajectories. In order to create a comprehensive and effective intervention, the multitude of factors that contribute to homelessness in adolescence as well as having an eye towards what the looming shift of responsibilities and expectations

bring with transitioning to adulthood makes this population particularly vulnerable with an added susceptibility to violence and victimization.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

The transition to adulthood among the vulnerable populations discussed above encompasses many overlapping factors and challenges. Two important aspects to discuss with shaping the framing and overall understanding of the experience of vulnerable populations transitioning to adulthood are the role that substance use and mental health status play during this pivotal time period. The ways in which substance abuse and mental illness intersect with broader institutional barriers can help in providing a better understanding of the particular interactions individuals have with those institutions. All of the groups discussed above have high rates of substance use and mental health issues upon their transition to adulthood and some of those connections are discussed in more detail below (Osgood, Foster, and Courtney 2010).

For youth who lack traditional typical parental support through the transition to adulthood such as those transitioning out of foster care, taking on responsibilities such as obtaining housing. A lack of support for youth who age out of foster care has been correlated with increased issues with mental health (double that of other foster youth who age out with support such as staying with relatives) and those who have housing at the age of leaving foster care are significantly correlated with better mental health than those without housing (Fowler, Toro and Miles 2011). A need exists for youth who are transitioning out of the

child welfare system to have additional social support networks as those that don't have this support report high rates of substance abuse and mental health diagnoses yet a resistance to receiving that help and wanting to be independent is part of the profile of those who are transitioning to adulthood (Davis 2003; Keller, Cusick and Courtney 2007)

Emerging adults involved in the juvenile justice system have a high prevalence of substance use and mental illness post-release and are also at a pivotal time point when compared to adults where recidivism is higher for individuals transitioning into adulthood (Hartwell, Fisher, and Davis 2010). Among this population of juvenile-justice involved youth, connections of impulse-control and binge drinking increased upon entry into early adulthood (Davis et al. 2017) as well as cycling out of one system and into the mental health system as new adults (Osgood et al. 2005).

Age 18 and the overall transition to adulthood can mark significant changes in mental health status within the biosocial development of young adults and those with serious emotional disturbance are less prepared than peers who do not have cognitive or emotional delays (Davis 2003) and adolescents who have mental disorders are at an increased risk of mental health problems during the period of "emerging adulthood" (Davis and Vander Stoep 1997; Gralinski-Bakker et al. 2005). Additionally, even though for non-vulnerable populations increased substance use is associated with being male and having increased parental control (Plummer Lee, Beckert and Marsee 2018), the inclusion of childhood abuse within the life course creates an indirect link between transitioning to adulthood and substance abuse (Savage and Crowley 2018).

Conclusion

In conclusion, even though three separate groups were explored in this chapter, many of the participants in the research overlap with other vulnerable groups (individuals who are involved in the juvenile justice system may have also been involved in foster care or experienced homelessness – or both). Additionally, we know that overlap exists for adolescents who have either sold sex (and are therefore sex trafficked) or are at risk for selling sex or being sold for sex. There is a major gap in the literature that looks at the transition to adulthood for this population to determine where the added factor of selling sex or being sold for sex influences individual life trajectories and where systems might be able to intervene and interrupt the cycles and influences these populations face. This study aims at getting a clearer look at some of those issues. The methods used in both the pilot study and the survey are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The goal of this research study was to examine the institutional obstacles faced by

individuals who sell sex and what role of turning 18 had for individuals who had sold sex at

some point over their life course. The main research questions of this study include:

1. What institutional obstacles within the family, education system, work/economy, and

   criminal justice system do individuals who sell sex face throughout the life course?

2. How did interactions with these institutions change once this group turned 18?

3. What resources/supports were helpful at different points in the life course and what

   impact did those resources have?

The study used initial pilot interview data of service agencies for trafficking victims in

Boston to shape the above research questions and a nationwide survey was then deployed to

gain a greater understanding of various life events and interactions with institutions that

individuals who have sold sex experience over their life course.

Pilot Study

I conducted 13 interviews with service agencies – both governmental and non-governmental

organizations – for the Study of the Commercial Sex Trade in the Greater Boston Area under

the guidance of Principal Investigators Dr. Megan Klein Hattori and Jackie Lageson. This

exploratory study was designed to assess the sex trade in the Boston area as well as services

provided to individuals involved in the commercial sex trade. Working with community partners, we conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with service providers about the population, services available, and barriers to services for individuals involved in the commercial sex trade in the Boston area. The team analyzed the qualitative interview data, coding a number of themes including barriers to services, descriptions of the population being served, and struggles within the services field.

As the lead interviewer, I noticed a theme emerging with the interviews over the importance of the legal definition of trafficking and the role it played in the very existence of the services provided. This assumption was confirmed when analyzing the qualitative pilot data and will be discussed further in Chapter 4. Because the United States definition of trafficking includes anyone who sells sex and is under the age of 18, the age of individuals seeking services was a central focus for many of the organizations, some of whom relied on federal or state funding. The sole agency that provided exit services for adults relied on private funding and often struggled with connecting victims to services. It was difficult to "prove" that someone was a trafficking victim if they were over the age of 18 even if force or coercion from a pimp was present. The following quote from one of those interviews summarizes the sentiment of many of those agencies:

"What ends up happening, we end up with these homeless eighteen year olds, right? Who with this, under eighteen you're a victim, eighteen you're now an adult, you're a friggen volunteer. This is the same child - you understand what I'm saying?"

Beyond the issue of funding based upon the age provision of anti-trafficking laws, this quote highlights the underlying issue of victim status among individuals who have sold sex. The stigma of being a "sex worker" or "prostitute" becomes attached to an individual when they

turn 18 where before they were considered a "sex trafficking victim" or "commercially sexually exploited child." Once this theme began to emerge in the 10 interviews conducted with service providers, I sought 3 additional interviews (for a total of 13) with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families to talk specifically about this suggested critical time period and to get more information about what they were seeing around the transition to adulthood and the risk for selling sex.

Pilot Sampling

This project consisted of 13 semi-structured interviews with members of various social service agencies in the Boston area. The initial estimate of potential agencies and sampling goal was 20 service providers. The initial list of potential service agencies was provided by the office of a city councilmember. From there, suggestions from other agencies regarding what organizations worked with individuals involved in the commercial sex trade contributed to the final list of participants. Publically available email addresses were used to contact the agencies and ask if a representative from their organization would participate in interviews. Any agency that works with trafficking survivors was eligible even if that was not their main focus (for example, organizations that addressed domestic violence or substance abuse were also contacted). Recruitment also occurred at various community meetings about sex trafficking where these organizations participated in a public forum.

After I conducted the first 10 interviews with service agencies as part of Dr. Klein Hattori and Jackie Lageson's project, the theme of transitioning to adulthood, particularly for youth involved in the foster care system, emerged. At that point, an additional 3 interviews were sought and conducted from members of the Department of Children and Families who

worked with youth who had been commercially sexually exploited and the interviews focused on their experiences working with commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) and their transition to age 18.

Pilot Data Analysis

The interview data from service providers was coded and analyzed using the NVivo program and themes around abuse and neglect, education, criminal justice, work/economy, and family were included as well as others. Additional detail about the codes created and analyzed can be found in the chapter about the pilot data analysis in Chapter 4 as well as the findings of the pilot study. The interviews with service providers informed the goals and objectives of this dissertation research as well as the survey questions for phase two of the research.

Survey Design

Event History Calendar

As described in Chapters 1 and 2, the transition to adulthood is an area of study within the Life Course Perspective. Within Life Course research, the use of longitudinal or cross-sectional data is often the most preferable method in order to track individuals across various points of their lives (Giele and Elder, 1998). Much of Life Course research relies on the quality and accuracy of reports – often self-reports – to have the best representation of social phenomena over a person's life which includes various stages, role transitions, and specific events (Freedman et al., 1988; Belli, Stafford, and Alwin, 2009). Where longitudinal data collection is not possible or even appropriate, researchers must rely on retrospective recollection of their participants. Recalling information about one's past requires a temporal cognitive positioning that can be a difficult request for anyone to accomplish. For instance, you may remember that you went on a trip as a child or that you met an important person as

an adult but may not be able to place exactly *when* that event occurred. This is a barrier Life Course researchers face when analyzing the influence of certain events, as order of events is a central part of the research method.

For this reason, the use of Life History Calendars (LHC), also known as Life Event Calendar/Timelines, have become a preferred method within studies that require participants to recall past event information (Belli, Stafford and Alwin, 2009; Cotugno, 2009; Glasner and van der Vaart, 2009). The Life Event Calendar is used to provide visual cues to participants to increase the participants ability to situate events within the same time period as other life events. See Figure 2 from Freedman et al. study below:

Figure 2. Sample Life Events Survey Calendar from Freedman and Colleagues

(Freedman et al. 1988:47)

Traditionally, as with the example above, Event History Calendars (EHCs) are completed by the interviewer using paper and pencil interview (PAPI) method rather than a computer-based interview (Belli, Stafford, and Alwin, 2009). Even with computer-assisted interviews becoming more common when using an EHC, the interviewer is typically present during the process to help with properly entering the data as it can be a fairly confusing process as Figure 2 demonstrates. Even a computer-based calendar can be confusing for a participant to

navigate and typically requires the assistance of a trained interviewer (see Figure 3 for an example).

Figure 3: Computer-Based Event History Calendar from Kite and Soh
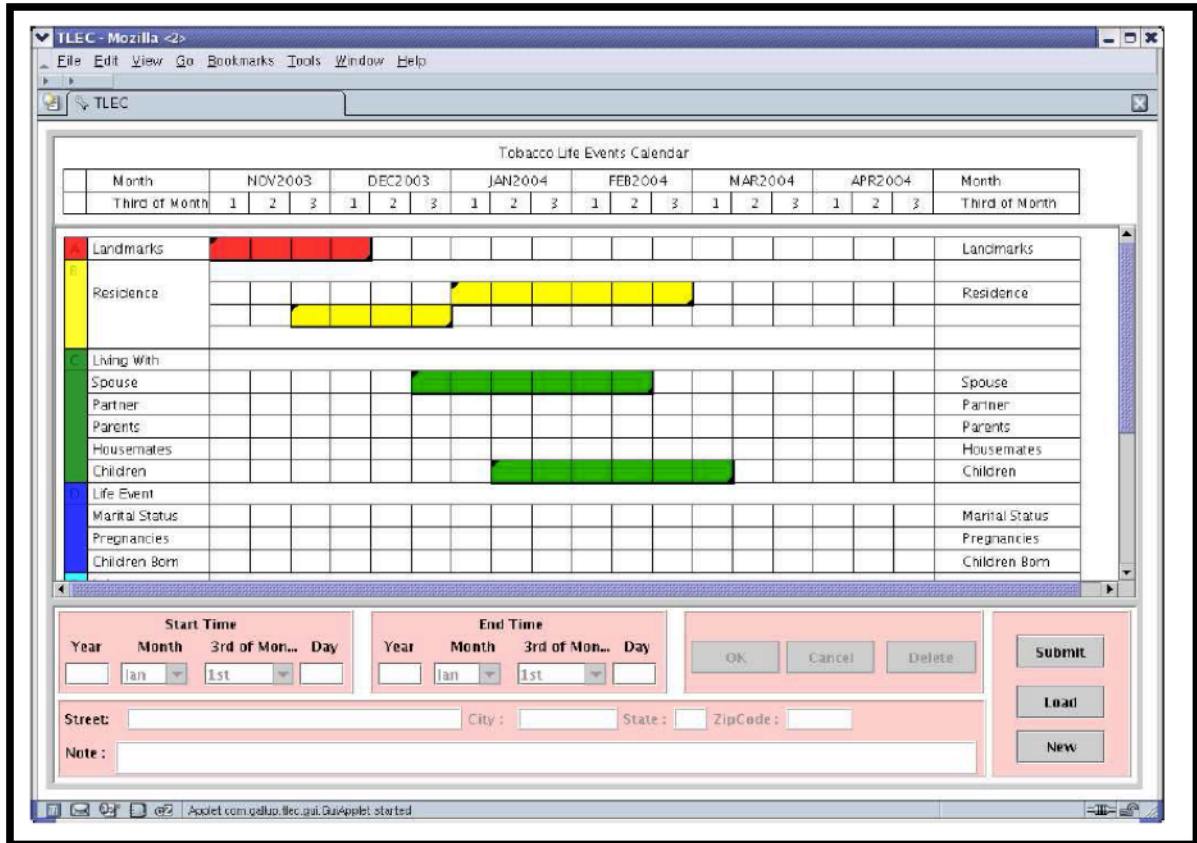
(Kite and Soh, 2004:4)

 Having the interviewer present while asking about life history events has its drawbacks, however, particularly when participants are asked about sensitive life event data. Self-administered EHCs were preferred among a sample of adolescents for a study on sexual risk behaviors and participants who used a self-administered EHC reported being more likely to disclose behavior that they might have been otherwise deterred from sharing if asked with the interviewer present (Belli, Stafford, and Alwin, 2009). The self-administered EHC has been largely administered using paper-and-pencil with only a limited number of researchers

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attempting to apply this method in an online-survey format (Glasner, van der Vaart, and Dijksktra, 2015; Morselli et al. 2016).

After reviewing common online survey platforms including Survey Monkey and Qualtrics, Google Forms, and REDCap, it became clear that despite the usefulness and reliability an Event History Calendar provides, it has not yet reached mainstream publically available survey sites. I reached out directly to individuals in the field who have worked with EHCs and inquired about the availability of using an EHC in an online platform. Even though multiple researchers had used an online tool like the one I sought, no one possessed a reusable survey or even still had access to the computer programming codes used when developing their online surveys. Fortunately, a personal contact with experience in computer programming and development was willing to write the computer code for me to develop my own Event History Calendar within an online survey. Additionally, the University of Massachusetts-Boston IT Department provided a secure domain for me to deploy my survey. Development of the survey, however, took a year to complete and continuous testing to be easily accessible in a self-administered format before it was ready to launch in April 2018. Sample screenshots of the adapted Event History Timeline from my survey is below:

Figure 4a. Screenshot Image of Work Housing Events from Siegfriedt Survey
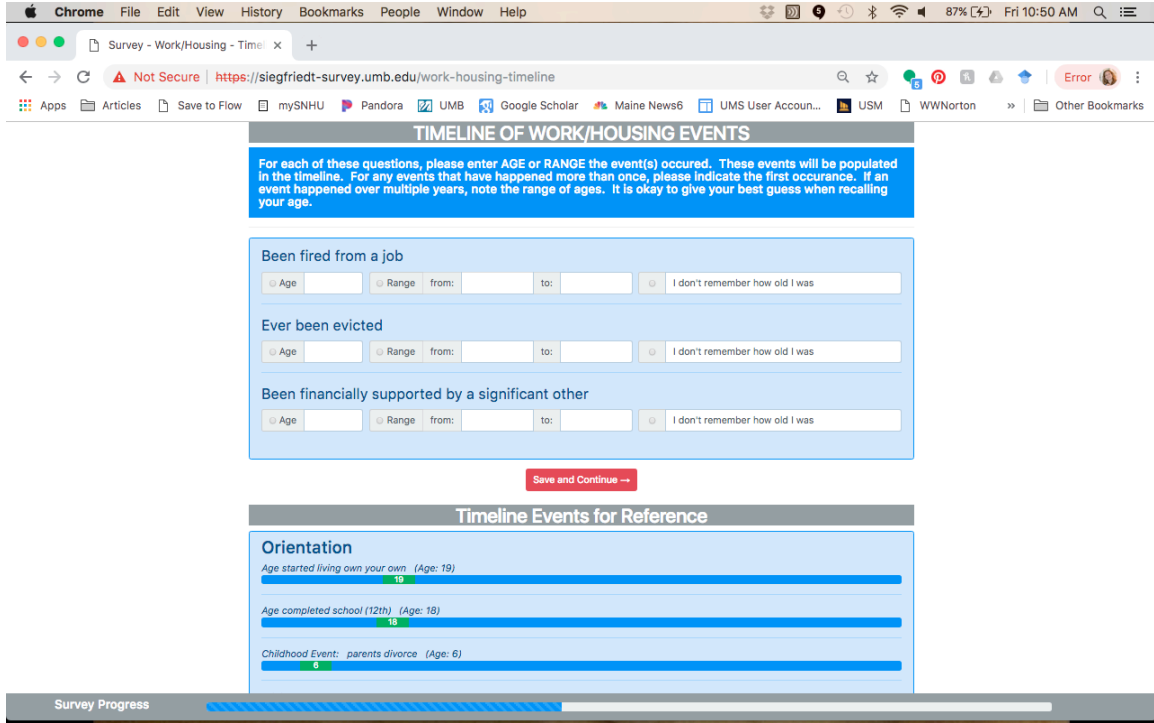
And scrolling down further on the page includes previous entries into the timeline:

Figure 4b. Screenshot Image of Event History Calendar from Siegfriedt Survey (screen continued)
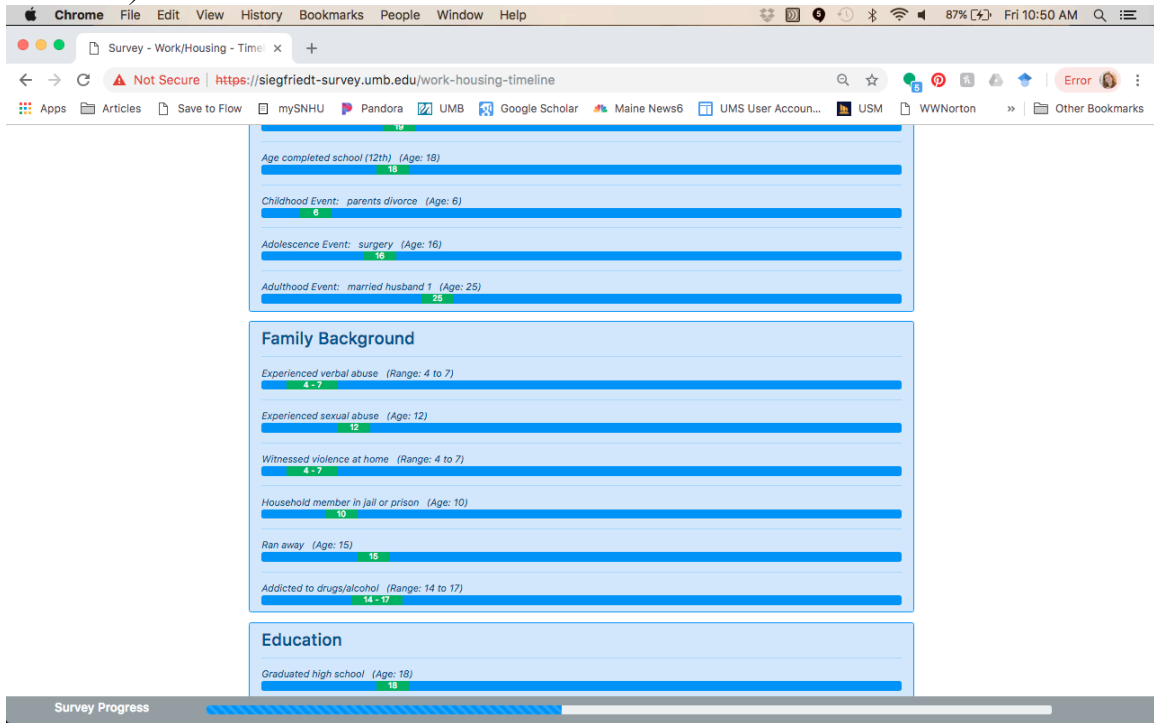
Survivor-Informed Questions

The questions developed for the survey are survivor-informed. This was central to the creation of the survey in order to use language that most accurately reflects the experiences of exploited individuals and individuals who have experienced trauma. It was also in discussions with contacts who are also sex trafficking survivors that I worded questions based upon the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) questionnaire that had been a meaningful measure for the survivors I spoke with who are also involved in the advocacy world.

The survey consists of ten sections which include demographic information, orientation questions for the calendar, and life events based on interactions with various institutions (family, criminal justice system, education, work/housing), as well as services provided over the years. See Appendix D for the list of final survey questions.

The survey consisted of both quantitative data collection as well as some areas for qualitative data collection where participants could write freely about their experiences if they chose. The survey was estimated to take between 30-45 minutes. The general setup of most of the survey consists of a list of events on one page where participants were asked to check an event if it had happened to them. On the following page for a select number of events, they were asked the age/range of when those specific events happened while being able to view their answers to previous timeline questions below. See Figures 5a and 5b below. After participants were asked basic demographic information, they were asked to fill-in a memorable event in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood as "orientation" questions and these would serve as markers for participants to refer back to in order to increase the

likelihood of accurate recall. The use of orientation questions is common use for EHC data collection and are considered "respondent- generated landmarks" (Belli, Stafford, and Alwin, 2009). In Figure 5a below, the checklist can be seen for the Criminal Justice section and, an event history calendar appears on the next page (Figure 5b) with the "arrested" category populated which would appear on the following page if the "Ever been arrested" option was checked in the checklist with the timelines of other categories for reference to assist participants in estimating the time of the event (in this case, arrest).

Figure 5a. Criminal Justice Checklist in Event History Calendar in Siegfriedt Survey

Figure 5b. Criminal Justice Timeline Population Field in Siegfriedt Survey

Participants were given the option at the end of the survey to participate in a follow-up interview if they chose however nobody opted into this option so this method was dropped from the study design.

Sampling

After the pilot interviews were complete, the second phase of the research consisted of a nationwide online survey for individuals who had sold sex at some point in their lives. The target sample size was 100 participants. All surveys were completed in April 2018. The eligibility criteria for participants was anyone who had sold sex (whether they identified as a sex trafficking victim, sex worker, engaged in survival sex, etc.) and that they were at least 18 years of age.

Federal task forces investigated 1,218 accounts of suspected adult sex trafficking cases and 1,016 accounts of suspected child sex trafficking cases in the United States between 2008 and 2010 (Banks and Kyckellhahn, 2011). Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center has reported 14,588 cases of sex trafficking hotline calls in the US (Polaris, 2015). While many associate the term "sex trafficking" with foreign-born individuals, US-born men and women are trafficked every day. Many of these US-born cases fall within the definition of "prostitution," especially when the lines of force, fraud, or coercion seem obvious or at least potentially present. Though we don't know the number of US-born individuals who are sex-trafficked, we do know that around 44,000 individuals are charged with prostitution per year (Gerassi 2015).

Because the lines of coercion and force are difficult to determine and because, anecdotally from discussions with various survivors and organizations, self-identifying as either a sex-trafficking victim, sex worker, or anything in between (i.e. sold sex as a runaway as a means of survival), it was important methodologically to include a number of scenarios that individuals might identify with to determine eligibility for the survey. For example, even asking if someone has "sold or exchanged sex at some point in their life" may seem like a general enough description but for someone who felt they had little or no control over that situation, they might identify with language of force, rejecting that they willingly sold sex. Likewise, if force is included in the description but a person felt, even as a runaway with a history of abuse who was recruited by a pimp, that their actions were in no way shaped by others, they are likely to reject any suggestion of force. For this reason, the following eligibility options were provided to potential participants:

a. Survivor of commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking

b. Controlled by another person to sell sex as a payment for drugs or other need

c. Exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs

d. Someone has paid another person to have sex with you in exchange for food, shelter, or other needs

e. Had sex for money because a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or family member asked or forced you

f. Being a sex worker or have you ever made money selling sex

A snowball sampling method was used for the surveys. More information about the recruitment methods are included in the Recruitment section below.

Recruitment

Procedure

Through existing contacts with survivors and survivor networks, the online survey was distributed to existing networks of individuals who identify as survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, previously having been sex workers, or who identify as neither but have exchanged sex for money or drugs. Permission to use the various listservs, online communities, and agencies was obtained from the appropriate entities prior to sending recruitment materials to potential subjects.

A snowball sampling method was employed after the initial gatekeepers and survivor networks had been contacted. The initial pool of interview participants was recruited using the following methods:

1. Through existing contacts with service agencies who work with individuals who identify as survivors of the sex trade

2. Through existing survivor and sex worker listservs and online communities

3. Through personal contacts from the pilot study

A recruitment statement (see Appendix A) was sent with a link to the survey to potential participants by those organizations and contacts. Given the potential risk participants had as a vulnerable population, even though they did not fit the IRB criteria for a vulnerable population, extreme caution was used in not revealing the identity of potential participants as well as actual participants. In essence, no "cold-calling" was utilized in order to increase the rights and privacy of the participants. Potential participants were referred by organizations and their outreach to potential participants as well as snowballing from other participants was the main form of recruitment. No identifying information was collected with the exception of the researcher seeing an email address when participants emailed the study address to receive the Amazon gift card. The email address was not collected in any study document and emails were promptly deleted after the gift card information was sent.

Individuals were sampled and participated from all over the country. This choice was made to include a diverse number of experiences and to not limit the experiences of some which may be influenced by specific state laws, local advocacy movements, and various economic scenarios to better understand the many different life events that might occur for this population.

Response Rates

Of the targeted 100 individuals, a total of 100 people accessed the survey and consented to the survey with 97 participants completing at least part of the survey and 94 participants completing the entire survey.

Protocol and Data Collection

Once an individual clicked the link for the survey, they were brought to a welcome page explaining the study and eligibility criteria. The individuals then were asked to confirm their eligibility status checking that yes, they were at least 18 years old and that yes, they identified as survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, as ever been a sex worker, or who identify as neither but have exchanged sex for money or drugs using the terminology listed under Sampling. If participants answer yes to both of these questions, they were brought to the consent page. If they selected no to either criteria, they were sent to a page that thanked them for their interest but they were not eligible at this time.

Consent

In order to maintain absolute confidentiality for participants given that they are answering questions about illegal or risky behavior, a waiver of documentation of informed consent was sought from and approved by the IRB. Before completing the survey, a screen that details the study and all of the information included in a consent form was shown to participants and participants were asked via a yes/no question if they consent to the research. It was my belief that recording identifying information about participants posed an unnecessary risk to participants so at no point in the research process did collect names or identifying information of participants. Participants were asked email their study ID at the end of the

survey to receive the $20 Amazon gift card. This process was designed so that participants also were not entering their email address into the website survey in order to ensure additional confidentiality. Participants were also be given a link to the survey to send to anyone else who might be eligible to participate in this study.

Total participation time varied from participant to participant. It was anticipated that the average participation time was between 30 and 45 minutes. Participants in the surveys received a $20 gift card as an incentive for their participation. The amount of $20 is comparable to incentive amounts for similar studies utilizing surveys involving human trafficking survivors. Participants were told they could receive the card if they consent to the interview and will keep the card regardless if they withdraw consent. Due to the design of the study, if a participant did not email the study email with their study ID, they did not receive a gift card.

Survey

After determining eligibility and obtaining consent, participants completed an online survey where they are asked a series of questions about events in their life course. The survey was divided into themes (for example, family background, education, work, etc.) and each theme had two or three sections - the first where participants are provided with lists/examples of life events and the second where they are asked temporal questions to place events into a timeline. Some themes also included a third page to ask follow-up questions that provided crucial information but may not have been situated with the timeline questions. All questions were written with the input of a survivor of sex trafficking to ensure that the language and intentions of the survey reflected the experiences of potential participants as well as includes

questions supported by academic research on the experiences of survivors and general

transition to adulthood literature. See Appendix D for the survey questions. Participants were

able to skip any questions they did not want to answer. All recruitment, consent, and survey

material was written at an eighth grade reading level or lower. In every possible instance

common language and vernacular replaced jargon and technical language.

The current method of using a timeline to note life events that can also be used to help

participants recall *timing* of life events, as described above, has not been found on traditional

online survey platforms like Survey Monkey, Qualtrics, or REDcap. Instead, I worked with a

developer who volunteered his time to create my own website survey that has this necessary

feature was able to host the survey on the UMass Boston secure server.

Study Sample Characteristics

Some demographic data for participants is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristic	N	%
Sex/Gender		
Female	81	85.3
Male	10	10.5
Transgender	4	4.2
Race/Ethnicity		
White Non-Hispanic	59	63.4
Hispanic or Latino	12	12.9
Black/African American	9	9.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	9	9.7
American Indian	2	2.2
Other (including Multiracial)	2	2.2
Born in the US		
Yes	93	97.9%
Age	Mean = 29.85 SD=4.97	

Almost all of the participants were born in the United States (98%) which supported not only the literature about sex trafficking in the United States but also the reports from the pilot interviews. Participants currently reside in 35 different states with California being the most common respondent state of residence. The majority of participants identified as female (85%) which is also consistent with interviews conducted with service providers. The literature on men and transgender individuals who sell sex is still limited though it has been suggested that the numbers of individuals involved in the commercial sex trade are even more underreported and unknown than what we know about the experiences and rates girls and women involved in the trade (McCarthy, 2014). The majority of the sample reported being Non-Hispanic White (63%) with the next largest racial/ethnic group being Hispanic or Latino (13%) (specifically identifying as Mexican/Mexican American representing 11% of the total sample). The mean age for participants was just under 30 years old and ranged from 23 to 50 with a median age of 29. Because this survey was online, access to computers and the internet should be included when considering the population that was included in this study. Additionally, most of the agencies that were contacted through the pilot study would fall within the realm of anti-trafficking rather than sex worker advocacy though when sending out the information about the study, the eligibility criteria for who could take the survey was made clear. At the time individuals completed the survey, 37% had a college degree (with an additional 9% completing a graduate degree) and 27% had completed at least some college. This finding was surprising and will be discussed more in Chapter 5 though it does beg the question of who was completing this survey and what does this group of college-educated individuals bring to the discussion of selling or exchanging sex. Put within

the context of historical and societal changes, the pressure to receive a college education to make a livable wage warrants additional investigation.

Participants were asked about how they identify within the commercial sex trade/trafficking and were allowed to select more than one option. More detailed demographic information as well as additional descriptive data is included in Chapter 5.

Position of Researcher

The position of the researcher is never unbiased. Thus, it is important with sociological inquiry to reveal to the audience and the field potential areas of bias and perspective. This project is a product of a pivotal time in Boston where there was an interest in addressing sex trafficking that was happening locally. The implementation of Safe Harbor Laws that aimed at keeping children safe from traffickers and providing funds to do so as well as a city, state, and national interest in raising awareness and addressing sex trafficking were all present at the onset of this research. Local and national campaigns were taking place in Boston and there was not only a governmental response but also a local advocacy and non-profit organizational interest in addressing sex trafficking. Much of this focus came about after a Task Force initiated by the MA Attorney General and report published to determine the status of sex trafficking in the state of Massachusetts.

It is worth noting that within the world of the commercial sex trade, there is conflict and discord between anti-trafficking campaigns and organizations (including the agencies included in the pilot interviews) and sex worker rights advocacy and grassroots organizations. This divergence is centered once again on choice – sex worker rights

organizations position themselves in opposition to the victim-rhetoric of being associated with sex trafficking and likewise, many anti-trafficking organizations position themselves as being completely different than those advocating for the rights of "prostitutes" or "sex workers."

As a researcher who entered this world without a familiarity to the topic and being initiated by the anti-trafficking organizations through my pilot interviews, I have been keenly aware of potential bias when asking people about their experiences within the commercial sex trade. I believe that there is a misconception about coercion as a binary concept. If coercion is seen instead as a spectrum of various levels of force and manipulation, one might be able to see the role of financial control over another person as being coercive even if that doesn't meet our stereotypical idea of someone being kidnapped and forced into sex slavery. That said, if someone does maintain control of their choices and are not being coerced, it is also my belief that their report of their own experience is also valid. Where I found the trouble with the binary perspective of sex work vs. sex trafficking is the fuzzy space in the middle where some level of coercion is present but might not be acknowledged by society or even the individual in the trade. Thus, focusing all of the conversation on determining individual choice instead of institutional factors that contribute to a life path that includes selling sex begs for a reframing of this controversial issue.

As a person who has never sold or exchanged sex, I am very much an outsider to this world and take great care in properly representing the experiences of the participants in both the pilot interviews and subsequent survey. That said, I am aware of my outsider status and see

my own role as opening a conversation to a new perspective of the commercial sex trade that does not put as much weight on the role of choice or coercion but instead the institutional interactions and life events that happen throughout the life course for this population. The transition to adulthood is a prime place to begin to see the role that outside structures and stigma have on this particular group.

Data Analysis

There were multiple forms of data analysis utilized in this study to evaluate the qualitative data from pilot interviews as well as the quantitative and qualitative data provided in the surveys (some survey questions were open-ended and provided an opportunity for participants to expand upon answers or answer direct questions.)

Qualitative Survey Data

The qualitative data collected in the survey was substantially less content to analyze than the service provider pilot interview data as transcripts for the pilot data often went over twenty pages in length for interviews lasting anywhere between an hour to two hours. Very few individuals answered the open-ended questions in the survey at length and therefore the brief answers (detailed primarily in Chapters 7 and 8) provided were easily coded in Excel and SPSS. Codes were developed and analysis conducted on an inductive, open coding process. The questions analyzed in the survey were exploratory where I wanted to capture specific experiences such as what individuals remember about turning 18 or their circumstances around entering the commercial sex trade. Open coding was helpful in this way to discover emerging themes and identify where any themes may overlap.

Quantitative Survey Data

The quantitative survey data was analyzed using SPSS software. Two datasets were created to fulfill the analysis needs of this data, one master dataset which followed the traditional format and an Event History Analysis dataset set up specifically to track events at different time points and allow for a thorough analysis of the significance of the transition to adulthood using various independent variables or predictors. The independent variable used most often in this study was age of entry to the commercial sex trade and the reasoning for that decision is outlined in Chapter 8. The statistical tests used in this study include descriptive presentations, correlations, t-tests, chi-square, and event history analysis using a logistic regression using the Generalized Estimating Equations function in SPSS. Significance was determined at 95% confidence intervals with corresponding p values of $p<.05$, $.01$, and $.001$ noted where applicable. Normal distributions and other pre-tests were conducted where appropriate prior to conducting any final analysis.

Study Limitations

This study holds limitations. The primary limitation is its reliance on self-report data. There was no way in the current design with maintaining anonymity that I could verify the accuracy of the answers provided. This is a barrier for social science research though it would not be appropriate or even possible to verify all of the life events reported in this survey. The use of a Life Event Timeline was used to improve the accuracy of recalling timing for certain events but this tool is not completely foolproof.

In order to maintain anonymity of the participants, I specifically could not verify their eligibility in that they had in fact sold or exchanged sex in their lifetime. I had to rely on self-

reporting and that people would honestly only take this survey if they were ever involved in the commercial sex trade. Some studies have shown, particularly around at-risk behavior, that completing an online survey without the researcher looking on or directly asking questions actually increases the likelihood that people will be more open about their reporting (Belli, Stafford, and Alwin, 2009) but it is not possible to determine that for certain with the existing study.

Similarly with the inability to test the reliability of individual respondent answers, the respondents represent a skewed sample which is not unknown to with online surveys, particularly with the fact that this study relied on snowball sampling. As a result, the individuals who took the survey report some skewed data (for example, the unexpectedly high number of individuals who completed a college degree). California respondents were over-represented and given the anonymity of the survey, I am not able to follow up with the respondents to determine how and where they heard about the survey and how it made the pathway it did to the respondents other than the discussion of original recruitment strategies (outlined earlier in this chapter). Thus, the results of this study that counter previous findings in the field of sex trafficking and sex work should not challenge existing knowledge but simply call for additional understanding of various subpopulations within the field.

Most studies on sex trafficking and sex work are qualitative (McCarthy, 2014) and this study provided a valuable quantitative component to add to the literature. However, with all quantitative data collection, obtaining detail or context of a person's answers or clarifying where needed is not possible. Though the intention of conducting a follow-up interview

would address that factor, it was not possible for this study and would be an area for future research.

Finally, when using the Life Course perspective and focusing on the transition to adulthood, a longitudinal study design would be the most beneficial as participants would be able to answer questions throughout the transition to adulthood and a more detailed analysis would be possible through that approach with multiple data points collected over time. As that approach was not possible in this research design, the use of the Life Events Calendar accounted for additional reliability than a traditional online survey. Future research on this topic may benefit from a longitudinal approach to track specific barriers and experiences that come with the onset of adulthood that may be difficult to recall retrospectively.

CHAPTER 5

PILOT STUDY INTERVIEWS

Pilot Study Description

As local responses to the commercial sex trade started to gain political traction in Boston in 2015-2016, members of Boston City Council reached out to UMass Boston Sociology Department to research the services provided to individuals in the commercial sex trade in the city with a specific focus on the services that are provided for individuals trying to exit the commercial sex trade. In addition to attending multiple community meetings with service providers, local government officials, and members of law enforcement, I conducted interviews with administrators from community organizations (both governmental and non-governmental agencies) who provide services to individuals involved in the commercial sex trade as part of that research.

The main aim of the pilot study was to answer the following questions through interviews with governmental and non-governmental agencies that provide services to individuals involved in the commercial sex trade in Boston:

1. What are the characteristics of the commercial sex trade in Boston?

2. What social services are available to men and women involved in the sex trade in Boston?

3. How can services for men and women involved in the sex trade in Boston be better coordinated?

Transition to Adulthood as Emerging Theme

It became clear early on in the project that the terms "sex worker" and "sex trafficking victim" were difficult to define (as described in chapter 1) even among service providers and the laws in place would often dictate *who* was allowed to receive services based on the federal definition of trafficking. Even though adults could fall under the definition of sex trafficking if they met the criteria of force, fraud, or coercion into the commercial sex trade, multiple organizations only served those under eighteen because there was no need to prove force, fraud, or coercion. This very important distinction became more and more apparent throughout the interviews as service providers described the role of adulthood as being a barrier (and sometimes a deal-breaker) in the ability to provide services. The only agency that provided specific exit services for individuals at the time of this study was privately funded and could not rely on government funds to help sex trafficking victims as other agencies could. As a survivor of trafficking, the founder of this organization was unhappy with the misconceptions of sex work and sex trafficking as described here:

> We separate, there are the children who are like the victims, but then when they turn eighteen, we don't want to – oh no, then it becomes a separate issue. Then it becomes, there's victims and then there are the ones who are complicit in their own craziness.

The lack of services that exist for individuals once they turn eighteen, even if they were previously connected to services, was a concern for a number of different agencies and the

clear gap in what was available for outreach was not based on the discussion of force, fraud,

or coercion, but age. One service provider explained:

> And it's interesting to me to see that I couldn't find a shelter – if I had somebody
> from Roxbury and they were eighteen, and I'm trying to find them a shelter – no one
> would call me back. That's what I was seeing. And I've said this to the medical
> community when they were like trying to talk about human trafficking. And this
> comes from policies out of HHS and OBC this sort of victim of trafficking and this
> sort of thing of envisioning someone who again, who is innocent.

One agency that serves this population relies on age as a factor of intake as someone must be

under 18 in order to receive anti-trafficking services for this organization. However, once a

client turns 18, they do not close the case:

> We don't close cases here. We don't say, even though our referrals, we only take girls
> under eighteen, but when they turn eighteen, services don't end.

However, this same interviewee expressed distinct dissatisfaction with the system based on

the way age plays such a central role in how this vulnerable population is treated:

> But they don't want to do that so what ends up happening, we end up with these
> homeless eighteen year olds, right? Who with this, under eighteen you're a victim,
> eighteen you're now an adult, you're a friggen volunteer. This is the same child - you
> understand what I'm saying?

Perhaps even more revealing of the services being provided for minors vs. adults is that an

individual who is under 18 does not necessarily have to have sold or exchanged sex, they

simply need to be considered *at risk* for selling sex to receive services. In an interview with

two staff members of one agency that works only with clients from the Department of

Children and Families describes:

> R1: So DCF refers girls who they feel are either at risk of being sexually exploited or
> maybe have been exploited. Um, then what we do is we provide a life coach…And
> help them kind of maneuver that whole system. And the hopes of that if they're at
> risk that they now know what's out there, how to protect themselves, and then learn
> life skills to kind of help them through their journey.
> R2: So…the young women who are known victims it's really about aiding in their
> recovery.

Another interview participant explains the role of the response to at-risk youth in another agency:

> Even for children who are considered very high risk so maybe they're not disclosing but they were found in compromising circumstances, we're meeting right away. And it's either by phone or in person. And for other cases where there's risk factors present but we're not sure what's happening, there might be a case conference right away or it might kind of be over time let's stay connected, and had a chance to see what's going on. I'm always connected to providers right away.

What is particularly noteworthy about these distinctions between at risk and confirmed cases where minors are selling sex is that age remains a crucial factor in determining whether services are available for an individual selling sex in order to exit the sex trade as outlined previously in this text. However, even beyond that crucial age marker for individuals who have sold or exchanged sex, resources are allocated to youth and adolescents who have *not* sold or exchanged sex but who are considered at *risk* for selling or exchanging sex that are not available to individuals 18 years and older who *have* sold or exchanged sex. Even in a city that has devoted multiple resources to intervene on multiple local and state levels to combat sex trafficking like the city of Boston, to help prevent individuals from selling or exchanging sex and provide mentorship, legal, and familial support including coordinated response teams to intervene are almost entirely lost once someone turns 18. The idea that a person has the means to support oneself, even with the myriad of risk factors recognized by these organizations, upon their 18th birthday raises the question of how equipped those individuals truly are to keep themselves out of the commercial sex trade when they turn 18.

The Department of Children and Families

Connections Between Service Providers and DCF

The transition to adulthood for individuals who have sold sex or are at risk for selling sex

was a common theme in the interviews. After conducting ten initial interviews with service

providers, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) was mentioned by almost all of

the agencies (9) as being an agency of central importance for youth who have sold sex or

were at risk for selling sex. For example:

> You're dealing with a kid who's been in the system, say since twelve, maybe younger.
> Foster home, group home, some have been molested, not fit, you know this whole
> series of things, not to mention, the reason they got removed from their home in the
> first place. So then you have this child who has been in the system and they turn
> eighteen.

Another agency working to respond to cases of runaway and at risk youth who might be

selling sex reports not only working with DCF but also the involvement of DCF in

recognizing when youth might be particularly at risk for selling sex:

> The majority of the cases that we see have a history of DCF…It's about sixty-five
> percent or more have a history of being involved in DCF. This year we're starting to
> track previous referrals to DCF because some of those kids had open cases with DCF
> due to protection concerns or they needed services and some of those kids were just
> referred – maybe there was a sexual abuse allegation and DCF wasn't the entity to
> respond so maybe they screened it out but we're trying to gather information on that
> too.

In addition to the particular vulnerability that adolescents who are in foster care have because

of their troubled and often violent family history, these youth are specifically targeted by

pimps as described in that same interview:

> And so T stations are really, really bad. Really bad. And you know groups and group
> homes, when we go down to the bottom of the hill. [Pimps] know we're up there. The
> teen parenting program, they always talked about that. How when they go down to the
> bottom of the hill...

In this quote, the administrator of an organization aimed at helping youth who have sold sex,

explains the ways in which pimps/traffickers find and recruit youth (specifically girls) to

enter into the commercial sex trade. The interviewee goes on to say:

> R: So those are the issues that make our girls most vulnerable for when the slick guy comes up and makes promises, right? Because that's who a pimp's looking for. That girl who already doesn't you know, feels like her body is only good for sex and to be, right? That approach- he can use that approach is, now you control who, what, and where. He took advantage of you baby, but you can make money, you know what I'm saying? But the reality is that you can't control who, what, and where.
>
> I: How do they find the girls?
> R: They know where all the group homes are.

In another interview, the interviewee described DCF as a central referring agency for

initiating intervention strategies:

> If DCF is referring, hopefully somebody has been trained at DCF and they know what exploitation looks like and what's going to happen, so they're sending it to me and there's kind of this third safety net so if the DA's also trained, so say the report doesn't explicitly talk about exploitation but they talk about some of the red flags, if there's someone who is screening the report, who may not be as well trained, then the DA's office would say wait a second, I think this is also trafficking or something with exploitation so they would refer.

Another role that DCF has in the lives of youth is being a central referral agency, where

social workers are being asked to look for red flags for the sexual exploitation of their cases.

As gatekeepers to additional services, one interviewee talked about the need for additional

training within DCF particularly around the awareness that boys can also be recruited into the

commercial sex trade.

> Sometimes a DCF worker will approach a boy and say "are you prostituting" well of course they're not going to say yes so when they say no, okay, no case here. So that's what I'm dealing with. Or there are certain workers that don't want to work with this topic that don't want to work with male prostitution at all so will not refer or will not work on those cases. Well take cases that are sent that way. And then there are others that only see this as a gay issue. When it's not a sexual orientation issue so they don't red flag other boys that may be at risk who are not gay. And one meeting I had at a

DCF office when I was explaining the project, their only response to me was 'well we don't have any trans kids right now.'

Considering the potentially central role and knowledge that staff from the Department of Children and Families has for the transition to adulthood for at-risk youth, we decided to include additional interviews (3) with staff members from DCF who have specifically worked with clients transitioning into adulthood and have had experience with youth who have sold sex. Since the focus of the original interviews was not on the transition to adulthood, the interview questions with DCF staff members expanded upon the original interviews by including additional specific questions about youth turning eighteen and the transition to adulthood specifically for adolescents involved in DCF who had sold or were at risk for selling sex.

Interviews with Department of Children and Families

The interviews with the Department of Children and Families staff who represented administrators as well as direct care social workers revealed a more in-depth view of the particular struggles this population faces as well as the obstacles DCF has in preparing clients for that transition and even in providing services after that transition where relevant. It was only recently when Massachusetts included sex trafficking of minors as a new form of abuse to be included in mandatory reporting laws. The inclusion of sex trafficking in DCF's policies and procedures wasn't finalized until 2016. Essentially, if a mandatory reporter was aware that a child was being sold for sex, they were not required by DCF policy to report that behavior until 2016 in the state of Massachusetts which was described by one interviewee as actually being ahead of other states:

We just had our new protective intake policy which was just rolled out to the field on February 29th of this year, sixteen, speaks to two new allegations of abuse. These are brand new, never before been under the abuse allegation for mandated reporters. And they are – we use the term human trafficking as an umbrella. The law is – the language in the law is very confusing if you're reading it. So we try to simplify that for staff and for people filing 51-A reports for child abuse and neglect. So we made an umbrella term of human trafficking with two subsets – sexually exploited child and labor. So you can file on one or both of those if you're a mandated reporter. So for the most part we use CSEC – commercially sexually exploited child – in our vernacular, in our every day language with each other.

This information was particularly interesting when conceptualizing sex trafficking and sex work. Historically, if a teenager is sexually active with an adult, sexual abuse can be reported to the Department of Children and Families. However, if that same teenager was receiving money for sex (or a pimp was receiving money for that teenager having sex) it was not considered abuse. This DCF policy only changed as of 2016. The recognition of this loophole and need to create an organized response demonstrates our stand-off attitude towards commercial sex work. Even though this response may seem delayed in its recent application, this interviewee reported that Massachusetts is actually ahead of its time in implementing such policies

[T]he trafficking law of '12 or '14 I believe – requires every state to have policies – how are you gonna track these kids. So, we're miles ahead of other states who are now saying, "how do you take these in as abuse allegations?" It's like, well we were there a year ago, but you know, asking – it takes time, obviously, with any new initiative.

In addition to recognizing that youth selling sex was a form of abuse that should be addressed by the Department of Children and Families, DCF has helped to coordinate a multidisciplinary team response across the state through a federal grant and has been working with agencies and local areas to train social workers and local organizations about the red

flags and warning signs for adolescents selling sex (or commercially sexually exploited

children – CSEC as they are most commonly described within DCF and other agencies).

> We received this grant. We are in our third year now. We received it just over two
> years ago now. It's a five year grant and it's design – I'm looking at this map here
> [points to map of Massachusetts] – it's designed to move across the – it's not only to
> train DCF staff on CSEC, on identification and response, but also to bring together
> multidisciplinary teams within their child advocacy center. So this is a map of
> Massachusetts and all the child advocacy centers. And so obviously Suffolk County is
> already up and running… So it's basically providing for Mass DCF. MDTs
> [multidisciplinary teams] wherever you are in this state, as soon as we get a 51-A on
> human trafficking, we can call them up and say, we have this and then a coordinator
> or someone who's designated to be the coordinator – will take a look at the
> information, pull the right people together, either conference call or in person and
> then figure out a coordinated way to respond to our kids.

In speaking with a representative of DCF who had such integrated knowledge of the higher-

level and systemic response of DCF, it was also important to include some perspectives of

on-the ground supervisory and case worker experiences for working with this population as

well as specifically looking at the transition to adulthood for those who have sold or

exchanged sex. As one DCF worker highlighted, the agency recognizes the importance of the

transition to adulthood and have transition planning worked into their programming with

young adults:

> We have to do transition planning. But if they want to walk away from us it's not a
> time for them not to – we're supposed to still be doing transition planning even if they
> don't want anything that we're selling. But we still need to do it. And then if they are
> able to leave at eighteen and if they realize that was a bad idea at nineteen or twenty
> they can come back and apply for services.

However, in that same interview, there was a disconnect in legal services and policy and

what the type of support the Department of Children and Families could actually provide

young adults who were selling sex depending on age. Even for the clients that opted into

services after turning 18, there were differences in responses that DCF could provide:

So there's …a disconnect in what our policy is saying and what the laws are saying. And the biggest gap there is the services. So the services that are available and that require a response for a seventeen year old is not the same for that eighteen year old. There is no multiple disciplinary team for eighteen year olds. There's no non-prosecution, non-arrest for the eighteen year olds, right? Yet in the child welfare system, they're still children, still treated like that because we're still charged with having the same response.

This response demonstrates that even for the youth who decide to sign back into services and receive institutional support that others do not, there is a limit that exists for what sort of services and responses are allowed because of their new status as adults. In another interview with a staff from DCF, the attitude about turning 18 for young adults also helped add more context:

[W]ith our kids, there's this buildup like when I'm turning 18, suddenly I'm going to have all of this independence and I'm gonna be able to make all of these decisions for myself and there's this false perception that everything is gonna be different. And the reality is that it is just harder because we can't force you to do what we want you do and therefore we might have to say goodbye. So I think that's one of the big realizations that kids really struggle with and if that, that accountability really shifts to being on them, and if you're not gonna be safe or work with us then kind of get backed into the corner of losing out.

The freedom and independence that is often associated with the age of 18 is a reality that many young adults face, particularly if involved in the foster care system; participants described how that ideology can be translated into the decision to opt out of extended service support from the Department of Children and Families. For youth involved in the foster care system upon turning 18, the decision to continue receiving state-funded services through DCF until age 22 was a complex mix of seeking independence and newfound responsibility. For those former foster children who decided not to sign into services at 18 but later resolved that support would be helpful or needed may have the option to sign back into services. The availability of the option to sign back into DCF care resulted in mixed reports from DCF versus some of the other providers who work with DCF. As one DCF worker stated:

Yeah, you know, they don't necessarily view the department as a support [laughs]. I'm sure that we're fairly and unfairly scapegoated around the trauma that they've experienced in our attempt to keep them safe have contributed to the trauma in their life – separating them from their family and so forth. So I think initially a lot of youth say "I want nothing to do with you at eighteen" but not really understand what that means when you're eighteen you don't have anybody supporting you financially or through life. And so yeah, the pushback is I don't want to have anything to do with you and then we might- they can come back. If they've been involved with us and they've been in placement with us at eighteen they can come back and we can offer them services, placement services, if they were in placement at the age of eighteen. It opens them up to receiving more services than if they weren't in placement at the age of eighteen.

Compliance was noted within the interviews with DCF workers as an important component of continuing care after age 18. Another worker described those specific requirements adults receiving DCF services must meet:

[W]e have obviously rules and regulations around if you sign yourself in at eighteen what has to happen during that time for us to continue working with you and a lot of it was for many workers it boils down to are you compliant with the program that you're in – either a work program or a school or continuing to work - actually work – maintaining your living situation, that kind of thing.

However, one of the service agencies that works closely with DCF suggested that the availability of the option even to sign back in relied on the discretion of specific case workers:

That's the biggest problem for me and that's so heartbreaking for me and we have nowhere to put them. Nobody has anywhere to put them. So I find that, for me, is one of the biggest things because now since we've been in existence for so long we watch our girls turn eighteen, sign themselves out. I've got this, it's gonna be alright. And then sometimes depending upon their worker, some of them are fortunate enough that they have great workers that will you know understand take them back. And then some of them are like she was a pain in the ass, no.

And in another interview, even though DCF can be a potential support, their strict regulations of compliance for individuals who are 18+ received criticism for their lack of institutional support:

I mean DCF is, unfortunately, not DCF, but being in DCF care has perpetuated the problems in some cases with these young women's future success so there's no preparation. We could have an eighteen year old today who we've only been working with for six months or a year who's just beginning to deal with the trauma associated with her exploitation and she doesn't go to school for a week. Which is kinda- you know- we know the patterns, it's gonna happen, and DCF says you're not complying with your voluntary case closed. They lose their placement, they lose their life coach, they lose, you know, all of their support systems and all we have for services is the [one agency that serves adults].

One truth that continually rang throughout these interviews was that the transition to 18 was a major life event that included layers and complexity at many levels. In order to more fully understand this transition as well as the institutional forces that contributed to the complexity of the transition into adulthood, a focus on the portion of the interviews that revealed family, education, work/economic, and criminal justice barriers and supports is explored.

Institutional Forces

Family

Interviews with the 13 service providers including DCF reveal the importance of the institution of family, particularly in childhood, for those who have sold sex. Responses from service providers supported what the research has shown about the high prevalence of abuse and dysfunction (Bell and Todd 1998; Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak, 2010; Walls and Bell, 2011). Some of the responses around the types of abuse that individuals experience are included below:

> Yeah, and it rings true, eighty percent I believe is the statistic, they say between I think it's like seventy and ninety percent have been sexually abused as a child. But our girls definitely about eighty percent have child sexual abuse, trauma.

Exposure to violence in the home and the role of parents was a common theme presented by service provider participants:

So I would say, yes, history of sexual abuse. Mothers who have been victims – so we have a lot of moms who were substance abusers. We have moms who have been victims of domestic violence and not a single incident. And not a single relationship of domestic violence but repeated violent relationship so these girls have witnessed this. And we know well these are all precursors. This is what puts young women at high risk to be exploited.

The integral role of the family and a history of abuse is something that exploiters specifically seek out and use to recruit adolescents into the commercial sex trade. For example:

And also I think sexual abusers targeting the kids that might not speak up or might not come forward for asking for help. I think this issue is still, there's a lot of shame associated with it and the perpetrators will give those messages to kids. So especially if they know the child's been abused, they might be saying, "gee, like you've been giving sex away for free, why don't you make something off of it now?" So they're kind of like, flipping that message and manipulating kids but then once they've been exploited, they might say like "I'm going to tell your older sibling or I'm going to tell your family or how can you go back, everyone's going to know what you did." So there's that shame of coming forward.

In this instance, the failure of the family institution is part of the tactic used to convince adolescents to sell sex. By seeking out young individuals who have been abused, exploiters are using the failure of the family system where dysfunction and abuse is present to influence individuals to enter into the commercial sex trade. And then once youth have started selling sex, the family is also used as a shaming mechanism to convince young individuals to remain in the commercial sex trade. Here it is suggested by service providers working with this population that the family is not simply an indirectly connected aspect of entry into the commercial sex trade but a central recruiting tool used by pimps and traffickers to initiate entry into and continuation within the commercial sex trade.

Particularly with an increased prevalence of abuse and neglect in the family leading up to the transition to adulthood, exploration on the key role of the family as an institution will be helpful in understanding a trajectory towards selling sex along one's life path. For this reason

and out of the pilot interviews, special focus on the role of abuse and neglect among

individuals who have sold sex was included in the development of the online survey via the

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) measure and is discussed in Chapter 6.

Education

In seeking information about the role of the education system for individuals who have sold

sex, participants in the interviews highlighted some of the factors that previous research also

supports regarding dropping out (Clarke et al., 2012; Kramer and Berg 2003) and concerns of

graduating (Bell and Todd 1998; Clarke et al. 2012). Likewise, school can also serve as a

support but few individuals are still in school after turning 18. Providers spoke about the

educational needs of their clients on an individual level…

> Educational stuff was still kind of a struggle for her. Still missing a lot of school,
> cutting classes, that kind of stuff. But was able to really connect with the school, they
> came up with a plan, they're doing pretty well to try to address – when she's staying
> in school she's doing okay.

…and on a systemic level when asked about the general needs of the population:

> Oh, their needs are education. A lot of them, they've been out of school for a long
> time. Definitely need assessments around their educational needs. Some of them need
> to have IEPs, you know, like and a lot of them, not even due to their fault, you know,
> I always say, you know if I didn't send my kid to school, they'd file a fifty-one A. But
> then the kids end up in the system and sometimes because they're moved - I see kids
> where DCF put them in - they might have been in school- say they were home, they
> were at school, somebody might have - a lot going on but they went to school. Now
> you're in the group home and they don't get in school a month, month and a half,
> waiting for placement.

Reintegrating back into school once one has sold or exchanged sex or "been in the life" was

cited as being a barrier by one DCF worker. A lack of a continuity of care and support

around returning to school could prove to be a barrier for those getting out of the sex trade if

still in school:

You finally get some of these kids out of it and into placements. They can't go back to school and just pretend that they're a freshman in high school anymore or a sophomore or senior, you know what I mean? Their life experience has changed their presentation to the world. So there's a lot of work that really needs to be done with the school system like you know, as simple as how they dress, how they go, how they speak. They find their entire world or the educational world they're mature and they just can't relate to that. So I think there's a struggle around some of that stuff.

A lack of engagement in school was cited as cause for concern, even raising red flags for initiating team responses for youth. This information suggests that the education system can serve to be a protective mechanism for individuals who have sold sex in order to intervene or even for those at risk of selling sex. However, similar to the family, there were cases where knowledge about the effectiveness of the education system was something that exploiters were aware of and in turn made conscious efforts to fabricate wellbeing and a lack of involvement in the commercial sex trade by making commercially sexually exploited youth remain and participate in school and extra-curricular activities.

[S]chool definitely falls off the radar…truancy starts, aggressive behavior perhaps starts in school. But there are also girls who go to school, were members of a sports team maybe even, they're home for five o'clock dinner and they're being exploited. And the pimp is wise enough to keep things all together so there's no suspicion anywhere and I think those are probably more the exceptions than the rule but can look the other way and not think that you're child's vulnerable around that.

Finally, some service providers saw the education system as a prime spot for prevention and actively connect to this institution to raise awareness and try to avert youth from entering the commercial sex trade from numerous angles:

I think that's really important. I think to do a lot of these things, prevention needs – there needs to be better education programs in middle school and in high school that one, warn girls about how one can get caught up but two to teach boys and girls the importance of respect for another human being and other things like that so that they'll think twice. I mean, I understand now a lot of gangs you know, drugs now, they have gotten into the sex industry so these are just young guys.

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For youth, the education system was described by participants in the pilot study as not only a source of support but also a place where lack of participation (dropping out, moving, etc.) created barriers that made continuation in the commercial sex trade a plausible reality. Again, the complex and integrated way institutions influence one another and the individual lives of those who have sold or exchanged sex is marked. If family instability is present and an adolescent experiences multiple placements and moves around a lot, their educational success and attainment is more at risk. As described in these interviews, one's experience is closely linked to the interlocking nature of the influence those institutions have. Similarly to the connection between the family and education, work and education have a similar symbiotic relationship in the lives of those who have sold sex.

Work and the Economy

As stated in Chapter 1, the financial motivation to sell sex is an important consideration about any decision to enter the commercial sex trade (Bernstein, 2007; Monroe, 2005). Specifically, paying attention to the larger, structural factors that disadvantage certain groups like those susceptible to lower income or poverty such as women, transgender individuals, and people of color needs to be a part of the conversation about institutional influences of entry into the commercial sex trade. In the interviews with service providers, the role of work became especially significant upon turning 18 for many of their clients.

> We need transitional services and housing for eighteen and twenty-five year olds. And we do not have any. There's no, no home, no place for these young women. These women to live and they can't – they don't- again, they may not have education, job skills… Right, so being able to find mainstream employment is so difficult. Or they might be able to find a job but to be able to be successful and maintain that position so they don't have the resources to live independently per se.

Where there is a lack of institutional supports leaves individuals more susceptible to a pathway into the commercial sex trade. Part of the following quote was provided earlier when discussing the role of DCF and turning 18 but the follow-up question and answer to the scenario provides additional detail here about the consequences of a lack of institutional support:

> And then sometimes depending upon their [DCF] worker, some of them are fortunate enough that they have great workers that will you know understand take them back. And then some of them are like she was a pain in the ass, no.
> I: And so then what happens?
> R: Homelessness. Who's gonna take care of them now? The pimp.

Service providers were able to see some of the systemic issues that contributed to the circumstances of the population they were serving. One agency representative commented specifically not only on the multiple intersections of the institutions involved but the intergenerational role of poverty and the policies that perpetuate disadvantage:

> So we kind of demonize and we sort of make this picture of the good and the bad we believe the victims are not – and all this without looking at this is really an intergenerational issue here of poverty, of lack of- not being able to participate in life. Because we have created policies that have marginalized people. That we have an economy that you have to have a skill, an education, and to grow up and be nurtured.

Criminal Justice System

The final social institution that was deemed as significant in the eyes of the service providers was the criminal justice system. There was a distinct interconnectedness between the influence of the criminal justice system on the lives of clients being served by these agencies and the ability to get a job, again showing the ways in which institutions influence one another on their impact on individual lives. Additionally, involvement in the criminal justice

system around the transition to adulthood has been shown to lead to a trajectory of future

criminal justice involvement (Hartwell, Fisher, and Davis, 2010).

Many of the interview participants focused on what is known in Massachusetts as a CORI

(Criminal Offender Record Information) which essentially equated to having a "criminal

record" and the transition to 18 was a crucial time period to the likelihood of having a CORI

for clients as described by many of the interview participants.

> So you're looking for a job and you have kids, you have a CORI, you have sex for a
> fee on your CORI. There was a woman I met, who couldn't – and cooperated in a
> federal case. I remember when she was struggling, she had a little boy, she couldn't
> get daycare for. And then she went to the Goodwill to get a job thinking okay, they're
> CORI-friendly. This is a woman who wouldn't probably step into the goodwill when
> she was working because, you know what I'm saying? So now it's – okay, I'm
> willing to go work at the Goodwill. Couldn't get a job, they wouldn't hire her because
> of her CORI.

Particularly with the involvement of a pimp or trafficker, the complexity of being moved

across state lines and which law enforcement was getting involved was described in one

interview as being a major barrier. In order for individuals to clear their records or fight

charges, the obstacles appear looming:

> And even possibly work. You just can't get these two things can be blocked. Simply
> on the basis of the CORI. Okay? A lot of the charges will be around things you know,
> they may not be necessarily huge but a lot of them are out of state because they're
> being moved across state lines, correct? Cause a lot of the girls you're seeing that are
> coming here, we're getting a lot from New Hampshire and Maine…And so they're
> being moved across state lines so you'll have someone who has a warrant in New
> Jersey, a warrant in Ohio, random, right? And all over the place so in order to get all
> of these sealed and closed, who has that kind of money to get down there to address it
> and you've got the different jurisdictions and the different people oh, we're state
> police and you're city cops and we don't like each other so there's just so many more
> obstructions to getting what they need

For those who have sold sex and are under 18, even if they are facing charges despite being considered a victim of trafficking, many have additional supports beyond simply being considered a minor by the criminal justice system. By having organizations primarily geared towards helping children, in Boston, they were teaming up with representatives within the criminal justice system (attorneys, law enforcement, advocates, the DA, and others) to help support specifically youth with their legal needs:

> We work really closely, also, I should say also, I shouldn't leave this out, again with the juvenile courts and probation because so many of the kids have status offense or delinquency charges. They're a huge partner. And also kind of uniquely we work with defense attorneys for youth. And so a lot of people are like, "what"? Why would a defense attorney come to this information sharing meeting and sit down and talk with you – and we're representing the needs of their client, or the wants of their client. But we find that those attorneys are really great – what's the word – they can be a huge help for kids. Because not only do they know what's going on with the child but they're confidential. So if a child has concerns and needs to ask for support, they can talk to the attorney in confidence. And the attorney can also sit on the team and even if they can't share information with the team, they can bring back suggestions and referrals and support ideas to the child. So they are a vital part of our teams.

Supports like this that could contribute to the prevention of a trajectory of not only selling sex but also continued involvement in the criminal justice system are no longer available once a person turns 18. However, as one interviewee said, the idea of who we think is a sex trafficking victim and who is not infiltrates various levels of the criminal justice system. Of male victims of trafficking, one interviewee said:

> I was at [a law school] and they did a panel recently so two DAs were there and some, two other people that I know. And so at the end, you know, I just have to say, you never mentioned males at all and I need for you to be much more inclusive in your presentation because basically, you're a DA, a federal DA, people are going to take your word for what you say, and you're talking about massage parlors in Chinatown and I had just seen that pimp with the boy at – that week – and I said well boys are getting pimped right over there. So if you're going to be saying [that], I need for you to be inclusive.

Informing the Survey

In keeping with a mixed-methods design, the initial interviews with service providers not only provided rich data about some of the experiences of individuals who have sold sex but also provided a framing for further research aims and were used to inform the survey questions.

The aims of the study that emerged from this initial data include:

AIM 1: *Analyze the life course and the differences and commonalities in paths by various socio-demographic factors, focusing on the challenges that individuals who sell sex or have been sold for sex face throughout childhood and as adults within the institutions of the family, education, work/economy, and criminal justice systems (with specific focus on any intersections of the family with other institutions).*

AIM 2: *Describe the transition to turning 18 and any shifts in institutional barriers or available supports during the transition to adulthood.*

AIM 3: *Explore barriers to exiting the sex trade and how those obstacles change over the life course with specific focus on the transition to adulthood.*

The analysis of survey data to accomplish these aims will be visited in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the pilot interviews with service providers including those with the Department of Children and Families were incredibly revealing as to some of the complexities regarding service provision, barriers to services, and overall experiences of those who have sold sex in and around the city of Boston. The issue of labels and the line between sex trafficking and sex work was predicated primarily on age and the transition to 18 in the United States as described in previous chapters, has been an understudied phenomenon.

Through these interviews, a clearer view of the institutional role that the family, education system, work and the economy, and criminal justice system played in shaping the trajectories of individuals into the commercial sex trade emerged. Though it was helpful to get a higher-level viewpoint from agency representatives who worked with this population to start to get an idea of the trends and commonalities of experiences, a more direct understanding of those experiences through the voices of individuals who have sold sex are needed. And it was through these initial interviews that the framing of the survey which held both quantitative and qualitative aspects was possible. The following chapters provide analyses of that survey data. The next chapter will provide an overview of some of the descriptive data about survey participants before delving into more in-depth analyses of the data.

CHAPTER 6
SURVEY POPULATION

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of some of the descriptive information about the respondents who participated in the online survey. All participants were at least 18 years of age and self-reported selling sex at some point in their life. Included in this chapter is general demographic information about survey participants (N=97), how participants identified selling or exchanging sex, and an overview of some of the more common life events reported at the various life course stages including childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

Demographics

Gender and Race

The survey sample predominantly identified as women (85%) though a small percentage of men and transgender individuals also participated. The representation of this sample supports the ideology of the gendered aspect of selling sex though as is also suggested in previous research, men and transgender individuals also have pathways to selling sex that are often overlooked and underrepresented in research about sex trafficking and sex work (Richards and Reid, 2015; Minichiello and Callander, 2013; Logan, 2010; Nemoto, Bödeker, and Iwamoto, 2011).

The sample was also predominantly white (63%). Of the remaining racial/ethnic groups, those individuals who identified as Hispanic/Latinx represented the next largest group (13%),

all but one participant in this subgroup reporting being Mexican or Mexican American. Black or African American respondents made up about 10% of the total population which was the same representation for Asian/Pacific Islander respondents. Those that identified in non-white groups made up over one third of respondents. Additional information about the race makeup of survey participants can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Gender and race of individuals who have sold or exchanged sex

Demographics	%
Sex/Gender	
Female	85.3
Male	10.5
Transgender	4.2
Race	
Non-Hispanic White	63.4
Hispanic/Lantinx	12.9
Black/African American	9.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	9.7
Native American	2.2
Multiracial/Other	2.2

Bringing in the intersectional work of famed sociologist, Patricia Hill Collins, this study examines intersections of race and gender and the influence that those intersections can have on one's experiences over the life course. For example, white women made up just over half of the sample (55%) with the other 45% of respondents representing some form of a minority group within the world of sex work and sex trafficking. Since research is primarily dominated by the experiences of and representation of white women, this research is able to explore how those intersections contribute to various institutional experiences and life events that may contribute to a trajectory of selling or exchanging sex within the life course. However, the single highest represented group within the sample was white women.

Table 3. Sample characteristics: Intersections of Gender and Race

	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian/Pac. Isl.	Native American	Multiracial/ Other
Female	51 (55%)	10 (11%)	8 (9%)	7 (8%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
Male	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	0	2 (2%)	0	0
Transgender	3 (3%)	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0

Other Demographic Information

Of the sample, most (97.9%) were born in the United States. Participants currently reside in thirty-five states with California representing the most frequent state of residence of the sample (19.6%). The average age of participants completing the survey was 29.85 (SD=4.97). Most of the participants had completed at least some college if not also obtaining a college degree and 8.7% had gone on to obtain a graduate degree.

Due to the information gathered from the pilot study about the critical role of the foster care system, I was anticipating that the individuals who had sold or exchanged sex would have a high frequency of a history within the foster care system though of the sample, only 3.2% reported having a history of foster care involvement. Other social factors include most reporting never being married (only 10.5% reporting being married at one point) and the vast majority of respondents did not have children (94.6%). Additional demographic information about the study population can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Sample characteristics: Demographic Information

Age	Mean/SD
Age at time of survey	Mean = 29.85 SD=4.97
Age started living on own	Mean=19.17 SD=2.15
Age started selling sex	Mean=18.15 SD=3.08

Education	%
Less than high school	10.9
High school	16.3
Some college	27.2
College degree	37.0
Graduate degree	8.7
Has GED	7.5

Family/Social	
Involved in Foster Care	3.2
Been Married	10.8
Been Divorced	7.5
Have children	5.4
Experienced violence by a partner	37.6
Experienced emotional abuse by a partner	33.3

Criminal Justice	
Arrested	9.7
Incarcerated	2.2

Selling or Exchanging Sex

Definitions and Identity

The average age respondents reported first selling or exchanging sex was 18.15 (see Table 4). The average age that individuals last sold or exchanged sex was 24.14 (SD=2.67) for an average duration of 6 years. More detail about the entry into the commercial sex trade will be explored more in Chapter 8. The entire sample had reported selling or exchanging sex at one point in their life as this was a criteria for participation in the survey. How they identified that experience, however, revealed more complexity about involvement in the commercial sex trade.

Figure 6. Self-identified involvement in the commercial sex trade
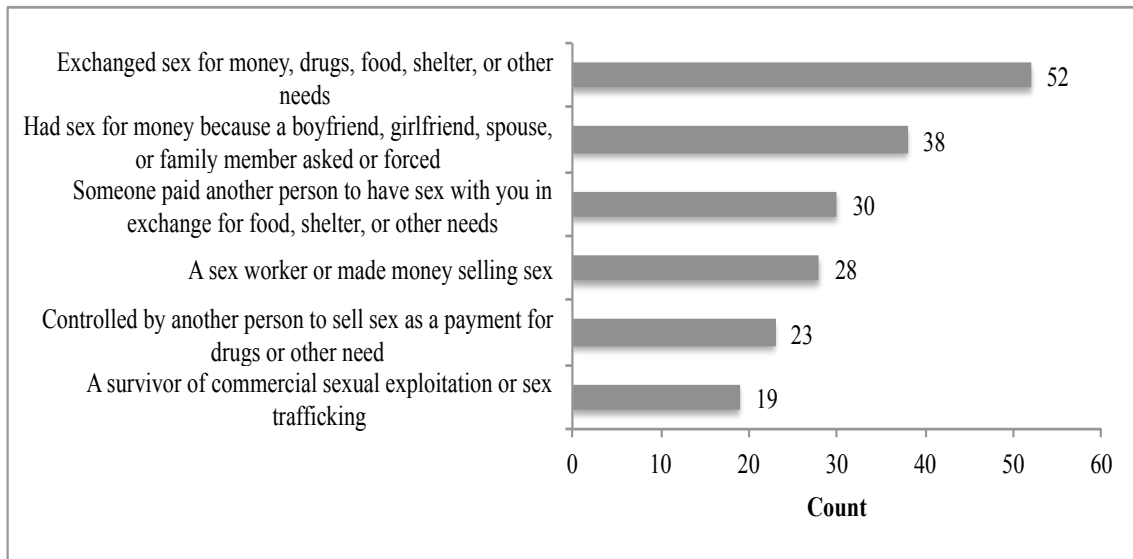
Survey participants were able to select more than one identifying factor to explain their experience. Important to note is that the most popular selection was "Exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs" which did not fit squarely within the label of "sex worker" or "sex trafficking victim." In fact, most participants (55%) did not select the categories of a survivor of sex trafficking or sex worker suggesting that these labels are not complete in explaining the experiences of individuals who sell sex despite those labels being the dominant narrative that shape understanding of the commercial sex trade by the law, media, and society as a whole with consequences that span from social stigma to criminality depending on how an individual is labeled.

Notably, of those who report selling or exchanging sex prior to 18 (and would technically be considered a sex trafficking victim under federal law), only 25% used sex trafficking language/exploitation to explain their experience. Likewise, 25% of those who sold or exchanged sex prior to 18 also reported identifying as a sex worker demonstrating that age

was not as much of a factor in how one has defined their experience in the commercial sex trade. The most common description self-reported by those who first sold or exchanged sex prior to 18 was "I have exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs" (42%) which was the most "neutral" category provided.

Duration of Selling/Exchanging Sex

How long one is involved in the commercial sex trade was described anecdotally by some in the original pilot study as a complex concept. Exit from the commercial sex trade wasn't seen by law enforcement and service providers as an absolute condition. In other words, when someone stops selling sex or is able to leave trafficking, they are not necessarily out of the woods in terms of never selling or exchanging sex again. I believe this speaks to an awareness of the structural factors that come into play that influence one's trajectory into the commercial sex trade which may not mean steady involvement but instead, some may engage in commercial sex work/get drawn into trafficking sporadically based on other life events at the time (Cobbina and Oselin, 2011).

This reality makes calculating the duration of involvement within the commercial sex trade difficult to truly measure. Therefore, the participants were simply asked at what age was their first time selling sex and the age of the last time they sold or exchanged sex. For most (93%) of the participants, it had been at least a year since the last time they sold or exchanged sex. For the purposes of calculating duration in the sex trade, only those who had reported at least a year since selling sex and the time they were completing the survey were counted. The average duration in the commercial sex trade among those who had experienced at least a year outside the commercial sex trade was 6.026 years (SD=2.989). The average age that an

individual last sold or exchanged sex was 24 years old (SD=2.746). As can be seen in Figure

7, most individuals in the study sold sex between 4 to 6 years (36%) and 7 to 9 years (34%).

Figure 7. Duration in Years Individuals have Sold or Exchanged Sex.

Looking at the typical experience of individuals who have sold or exchanged sex, turning 18

and early adulthood is a crucial time for entry into the commercial sex trade (discussed more

in Chapter 8) which begs the question if more supports were available during this time,

whether the duration of time in their lives selling sex would span the years that it does or if

determent from the commercial sex trade altogether is a possibility as some studies suggest

(Kramer and Berg, 2003). The next section explores what some of the events are that occur at

different stages of the life course (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood) and where entry

into the commercial sex trade fits into that pathway.

Violence

Respondents were asked about violence experienced in various aspects of their life. Included

in those inquires were questions about violence faced by pimps or traffickers and buyers (or

Johns) as there is a wealth of research that has documented the connection between

involvement in the commercial sex trade and exposure to violence (Cohan et al., 2006; Farley

and Barkan, 1998, Weitzer 2009). Violence by a pimp or trafficker was reported by 20% of respondents and violence by a client/buyer was reported by 43% of respondents. In addition to violence associated with involvement in the commercial sex trade, 38% reported experiencing violence from a partner at some point in their life course and 33% reported experience emotional abuse from a partner. Additionally, 30% stated that they had been stalked at least one point in their lives. These experiences are not necessarily exclusive to life outside of the commercial sex trade as 51% of participants described being in a romantic relationship with someone who had sold them for sex. These results paint a complicated picture of the violence that some may experience while involved in the commercial sex trade and even outside of it and how love and relationships can be a complicated factor (and sometimes a method of control as was suggested in the pilot interviews) for pimps and traffickers.

Life Events Throughout the Life Course

Using a Life Course Perspective means capturing various life events among this select population of individuals who have sold sex at one point in their lives. To exhibit some of the events over the life course, some of the results have been presented here in a life course timeline (see Figure 8). The timeline below depicts the application of the life course perspective to demonstrate the bigger picture of some of the experiences that individuals who have sold or exchanged sex have had.

Figure 8. Institutional Factors over the Life Course
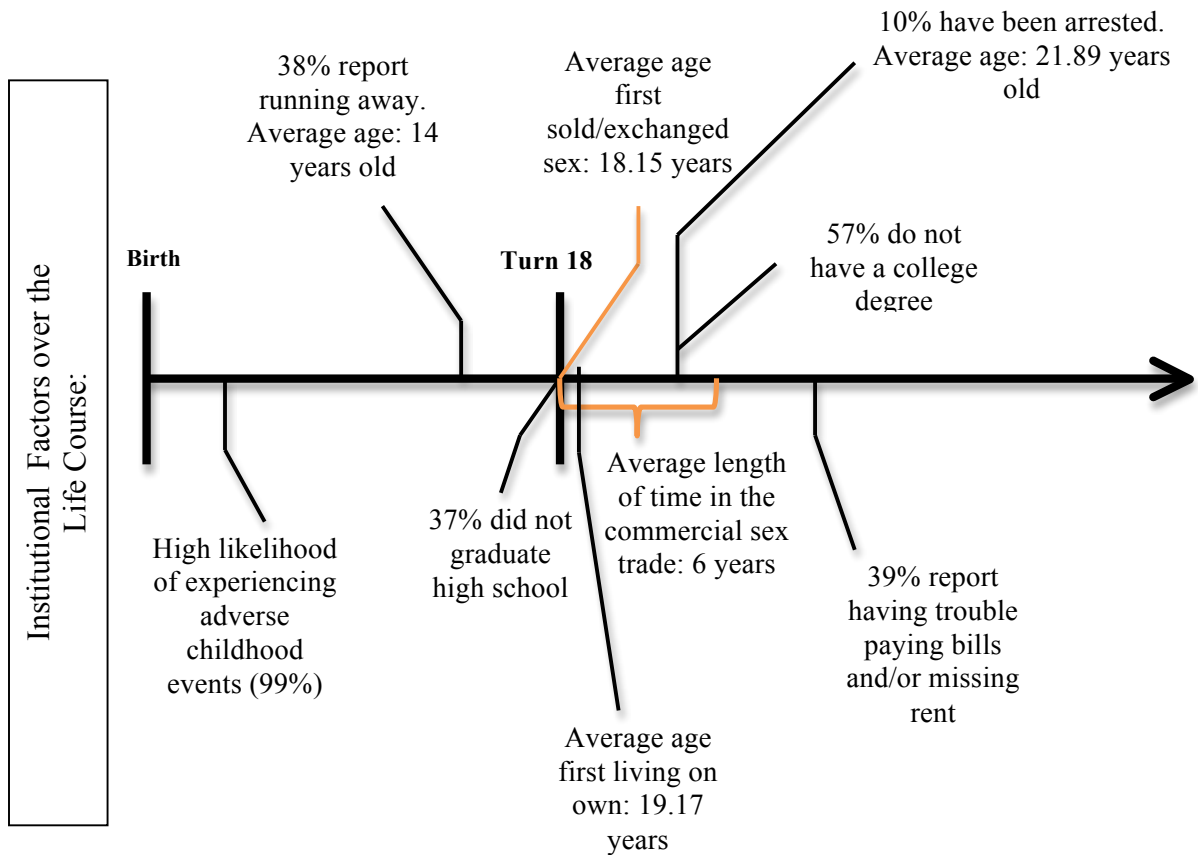
In Figure 8, a visual can start to be conceptualized of some of the life events that occur for those who have sold or exchanged sex. I believe that this is the first step in reframing the discussion from one of sex trafficking vs. sex work based on age groups and instead on looking at what pulls individuals into the commercial sex trade across groups. All but one individual in the population surveyed reported having an adverse childhood event with 95% reporting adverse childhood events in at least 4 categories on the ACE measure (which is discussed further in Chapter 6).

Additionally, more than one-third (38%) of respondents reported running away at some point in childhood with the average age of running away being 14 years old. Likewise, around 37%

did not graduate high school though 43% did go on to obtain a college degree in adulthood. As discussed above, the average age individuals first sold or exchanged sex was 18 years old and remained in the commercial sex trade for around 6 years with the average age of last selling sex being 24 years old. Early adulthood was also significant for respondents as when individuals start living on their own (average age 19 years old). Discussion of the legality of adulthood was expressed in qualitative responses in the survey about the transition to adulthood (which is explored in more depth in Chapter 7) though in reality only 10% of respondents report ever being arrested (and only 2% report incarceration). Finally, almost 40% of participants report having trouble paying bills or missing a rent payment. Collectively, Figure 8 provides a brief snapshot of the ways in which various life events and institutional influences come into play for individuals who have sold sex.

Childhood and Adolescence

The institutions most influential in childhood and adolescence are the family and education. Questions were asked in the survey that included the wording an framing from the well-known Adverse Childhood Events measure (more detail on this measure is outlined in Chapter 6) though this study went beyond simply asking if certain events occurred as the original measure includes but also followed up using an event history calendar to ask when various adverse (and non-adverse) childhood events had occurred. Education and other structural systems of influence were also measured in this way. Below is a descriptive chart outlining some of the more common events and whether those life events were occurring in childhood (defined as ages 0-10) or adolescence (defined as ages 11-17).

Table 5. Adverse Family and Education Life Events in Childhood and Adolescence

Life event	% Childhood	% Adolescence
Family		
Household member was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide	7%	12%
Experienced Physical Abuse	14%	31%
Experienced Sexual Abuse	4%	30%
Experienced Verbal Abuse	10%	41%
Homeless	5%	19%
Involved in Foster Care	0%	3%
Household member in jail or prison	4%	2%
Witnessed violence at home	13%	33%
Ran away	0%	26%
Education		
Abused by teacher/someone else at school	0%	13%
Skipped school regularly	1%	13%
Left school for a period of time	0%	19%

In Table 5, adolescence holds a higher percentage of adverse events for individuals who have sold or exchanged sex in every category except whether a household member was in jail or prison (which decreased from 4% in childhood to 2% in adolescence). Physical, sexual, and verbal abuse all increased in likelihood during adolescence from childhood as well as witnessing violence in the home. Over a quarter of the participants reported running away and that occurred exclusively in adolescence. Relatedly, homelessness experienced prior to 18 jumped from 5% of the population to 19% of the population from childhood to adolescence. It should be noted that these events were asked about retrospectively and memory about events in adolescence may be clearer than the ages of 0-10 in childhood though in the implementation of the survey, special measures were taken to ask about notable events in childhood (as well as adolescence and adulthood) that would help orient participants to best estimate the time period and age those events were occurring (see Methods in Chapter 4 for more details).

Finally, the adverse events that participants experienced at school such as abuse by a teacher or someone at school, skipping school regularly, and leaving school for an extended period of time all occurred in adolescence. In applying a Life Course perspective, further investigation of the timing of these types of events can help in planning specific intervention and preventative measures for particular risk factors.

Adulthood

In adulthood, additional institutional factors begin to come into play with expectations around paying bills, living on one's own and the criminal justice system. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the comparison rates of the percentage of participants who experienced adverse events between adolescence and adulthood.

Table 6. Adverse Life Events in Adolescence and Adulthood

Life event	% Adolescence	% Adulthood
Work/Housing		
Had trouble finding job	2%	34%
Been fired	1%	24%
Quit job	0%	33%
Homeless	19%	10%
Received public assistance	1%	4%
Family		
Experienced Physical Abuse	31%	9%
Experienced Sexual Abuse	30%	15%
Experienced Verbal Abuse	41%	11%
Witnessed Violence at Home	33%	10%
Violence by partner	1%	29%
Had romantic relationship with someone who sold you for sex	4%	20%
Lived with significant other for financial reasons	0%	17%
Criminal Justice		
Arrested	2%	7%
Incarcerated	0%	2%
Violence by non-family		
Experienced violence by a client	2%	30%
Experienced violence by a pimp	2%	15%
Stalked	1%	11%
Coping		
Used substances to cope	7%	33%
Addicted to drugs/alcohol	9%	15%
Struggled with depression/anxiety/PTSD/mental health	4%	35%

In Table 6 there are some interesting shifts happening between adolescence and adulthood in the prevalence of various life events. As can be expected, work and housing expectations appear to be shifting. Adverse events in the workplace such as having trouble finding a job or losing a job either because of being fired or quitting, significantly more people in adulthood are experiencing those events as with adulthood also comes the need to work. Very few individuals in the sample received public assistance in adolescence or adulthood with only

1% reporting receiving assistance in adolescence and 4% reporting receiving public assistance in adulthood. Interestingly, the likelihood of homelessness decreased in adulthood with more participants (19%) reporting experiencing homelessness in adolescence than adulthood (10%).

An important shift in the role of the family can also be seen with experiences in adolescence and adulthood. All instances of abuse (physical, sexual, and verbal) decrease in prevalence in adulthood compared to adolescence though intimate partner violence and relationship-based experiences (like becoming romantically involved with someone who has sold you for sex) increase in adulthood. As will be explored in Chapter 7, Transitioning to Adulthood, the escape from abuse within the family unit can be an important marker of turning 18 though the institution of the family takes on a different role in adulthood, especially early adulthood, with partnerships. For instance, even though many individuals report running away and even homelessness in adolescence, no participants reported living with a significant other for financial reasons. In adulthood, that number jumped to 17% of the population who reported living with a significant other due to financial reasons. Continuing to live with an individual who is violent, for instance, because of a financial need is a known protective strategy for women experiencing intimate partner violence and is a powerful and combined structural influence of work/economy and family institutions on individual life decisions (Hamby, 2014).

In addition to an increased experience of violence by intimate partners in adulthood compared to adolescence, violence is also increasing by pimps and clients in the commercial

sex trade. This fact exists despite adolescence being a time where around 30% of individuals of the sample first sold or exchanged sex yet few experienced violence by a pimp (2%) or client (2%) during their adolescent years. Adults also experienced an increase in stalking. Finally, there was a marked increase in the experience of mental health issues and reporting the use of substances to cope or even experiencing addiction. The results presented here support previous research that highlights the multiple factors faced where managing addictions, exposure to violence, and insecure housing influence each other to make additional institutional barriers and serve to carve deeper pathways towards a trajectory of selling sex and difficulty to exit (Hankel, Dewey, and Martinez, 2016).

Though the prevalence of adverse life events is presented here in a more descriptive format, the level to which the timing of these life events is associated with or has a cumulative influence on when someone enters the commercial sex trade is explored in more detail in Chapter 9: Entry into the Commercial Sex Trade.

Social Supports and Services

Social Supports

The role of positive interpersonal relationships and support has been reported as a key factor in building resiliency and protection among those who have sold or exchanged sex or are at risk for entering the commercial sex trade (O'Brien, 2018). Half of respondents (50%) reported struggling with trusting people. In addition to this question, I included a question in the survey that was crafted with direct input by a survivor of trafficking that read "Have you

had a positive support in your life that you trusted unconditionally?" Only 31% of respondents selected "yes" to this question.

Support can be provided in a multitude of ways and the criteria of unconditional trust may not be a part of that. Table 7 represents the individuals that respondents reported they turn to for support when they were growing up (participants were able to select more than one option so the percentages presented are not mutually exclusive).

Table 7. Sources of Support Growing Up

Turn to for Support	%
Mother	28
Father	0
Friends	64
Sibling	22
Teacher	28
Social Worker	36

Friends represented the most likely response for this question and what is particularly noteworthy is that family members were selected either as often or not as often as non-family members suggesting the role of family as not serving the supportive role in childhood and adolescence. In adulthood, only 56% of respondents reported having a healthy romantic relationship.

Services

One of the aims of this study was to investigate the barriers to exiting the commercial sex trade and one of the ways that was measured was in looking at the services that individuals who have sold sex had access to. Respondents were asked to report which services they ever sought services for while being exploited/involved in the sex trade or sought as a result of

their exploitation or involvement in the sex trade. Questions were also asked about whether participants ever experienced trouble getting specific services or faced discrimination for services that were sought and whether discrimination was a factor in receiving services. Figure 9 includes the percentage of individuals who received services while involved in the commercial sex trade/exploitation or as a result of involvement next to the percentage of those who experienced trouble or discrimination while seeking services.

Figure 9. Respondents Who Received Services vs. Experienced Trouble Receiving Services
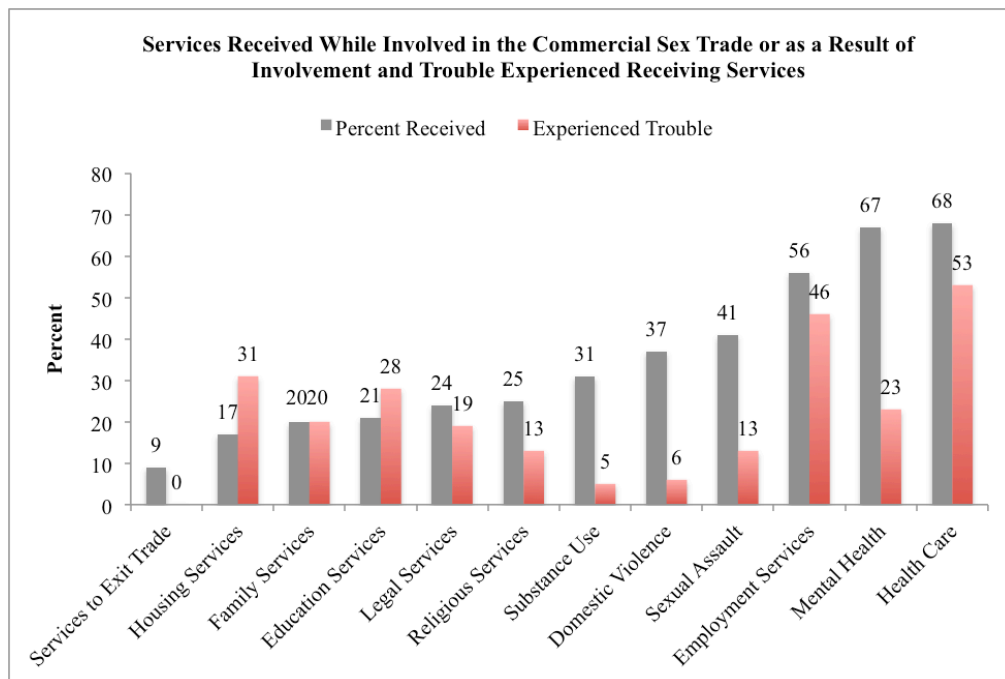
Health services were the most common services received (68%) and health care services received consists of both emergency room (43%) and health care clinic (60%) care. Health services was also the area where participants reported experiencing the most trouble or discrimination (53%). Individuals were almost as likely to receive mental health services (67%) but faced significantly fewer issues or discrimination accessing those services. The

three types of services where respondents faced as much if not more trouble accessing than they reported receiving services were housing services, family services, and education services. This finding is telling as housing, family, and education are major institutional factors predicted to influence entry into and sustained involvement in the commercial sex trade. Employment services (56%) were more often sought than legal services (24%) but as can be seen in Figure 9, substantial barriers to accessing those services were also reported suggesting that all four institutional interventions have a long way to go for making assistance and institutional supports more accessible.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief snapshot of not only who completed the online survey but also included some of the experiences reported by individuals who have sold or exchanged sex. It should be noted that even though adverse life events were highlighted in this chapter to begin to investigate some of the predictive risk factors of those who sell or exchange sex, positive and supportive factors were included in the survey (for instance, getting on the honor roll in school, having positive interactions with law enforcement, etc.) though in many cases very few if any respondents reported experiencing those positive institutional factors or supports with few exceptions which will be explored in later chapters. In conclusion, the sample of individuals surveyed as part of this project represent a variety of experiences and I will aim to examine various analyses in the following chapters including the next chapter which will go into depth about Adverse Childhood Events of this population.

CHAPTER 7

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

The ACE Measure

In order to measure the role of negative family events throughout childhood and adolescence

among a population of individuals who have sold sex, questions within the survey were

included that aligned with the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) scale (see Appendix E

for a sample of this measure). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration (SAMHSA) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recognize ACEs as

"stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect" (SAMHSA, 2018) that are

connected to a variety of negative health and behavioral issues throughout the life course.

The ACE questionnaire consists of ten questions including inquires about abuse, neglect,

violence in the household, substance use and mental illness in the household as well as

whether parents were separated or divorced or went to prison. Participants in the ACE survey

receive a score of 0-10 with a higher score correlating to a higher frequency of negative

childhood experiences.

In one of the largest studies about the correlation of childhood neglect and abuse with general

health and well-being later on in life, the CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood

Experiences Study followed over 17,000 individuals between 1995 and 1997 and were able

to link higher ACE scores with risk for a number of outcomes including but not limited to depression, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, risky sexual behavior, poor academic achievement, and a number of poor health outcomes as well like liver disease, heart disease, and fetal death (CDC, 2016). Though limited, research has shown that adverse childhood experiences are more prevalent among adolescents who have been sexually trafficked vs. not trafficked (Narramore et al., 2017) and this current research will serve to add to that literature.

Linking ACE Scores to Outcomes in the Life Course

In one study that utilized the CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, adverse childhood events were linked to women reporting sexual risk behavior later on in life including increased risk of having sex by the age of 15, perceiving self to be at risk of AIDS, and reporting having 30 or more sexual partners (Hillis et al., 2001). Looking at childhood adverse experiences as a precursor to other events in adulthood such as low income, the level of social support, and adult adversity has distinct and influential impact on mental health (Jones et al., 2018).

Not only are higher scores associated with an increased risk of adversity in adulthood, but that risk is gradated; the higher the ACE score, the higher the risk for a number of various adversities (Merrick et al., 2017, Mersky, Topitzes, and Reynolds, 2013). Some of the outcomes for individuals with higher ACE scores include a higher morbidity rate, increased likelihood of risky behavior, and disability in adulthood (Campbell et al., 2016).

The presence of multiple ACEs are linked to additional poor health and mental health outcomes including poor overall health, low life satisfaction, frequent anxiety and depressive symptoms, and use of substances for those in early adulthood (Mersky, Topitzes, and Reynolds, 2013) which suggests the transition to adulthood for those who have experienced adverse events and trauma can be met with additional obstacles like mental health issues, substance use, and poor overall health.

The CDC website even features this point, highlighting the importance of ACE scores on a variety of negative health outcomes later in life and can be seen in Figure 10.

Figure 10. ACES Predicting Life Course Events on the CDC Website
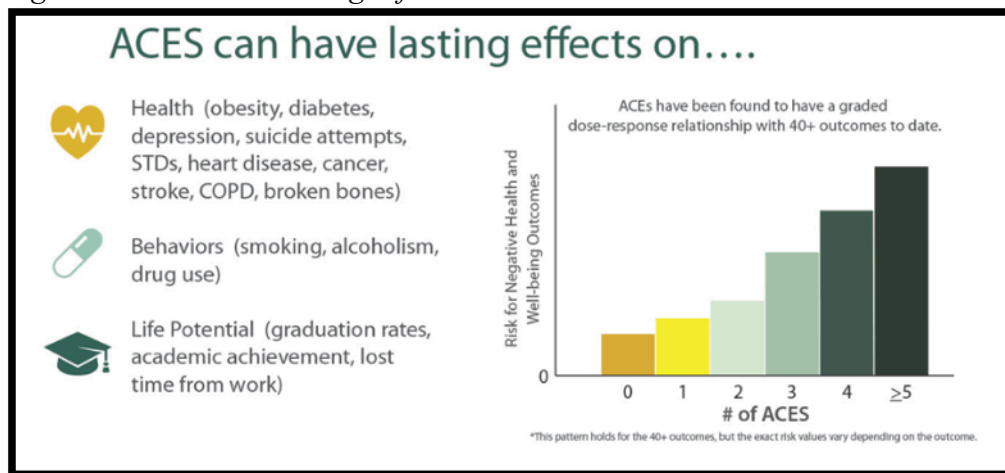
Populated on CDC, 2016 website. Retrieved July 20th, 2018: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/ACE_graphics.html

The reason a focus on adverse childhood experiences within the family is so central to this research can be linked to what the CDC is presenting in Figure 10. The connection of negative experiences and barriers in childhood have been linked to other institutions such as education and the workplace, and also influence other behaviors that become co-occurring like substance use, mental illness, that further interfere with a successful life course including a transition to adulthood (CDC, 2016). The presence of adverse childhood experiences has

been linked to mental illness and substance use specifically in early adulthood (Mersky, Topitzes, and Reynolds, 2013).

ACE Scores among the General Population vs. Study Population

The institution of the family plays a pivotal role in predicting future life events. For this reason, it was hypothesized that the existence of adverse childhood experiences would be present for individuals who have sold sex and rates of adverse childhood events would be higher compared to the general population. What was not anticipated, however, was the overwhelmingly high rate of adverse childhood events experienced by this population. Experiencing some adverse events in one's lifetime for the general population is not uncommon. About two-thirds (64%) of the general population have experienced at least one of the adverse events listed on the ACE measure in their first 18 years of life. However for this study population, almost everyone (99%) experienced at least *three or more* adverse events listed on the ACE measure (compared to only 22% of the general population). See Table 8 for more details.

Table 8. ACE scores of general population comparison with study population

ACE Score	General Population[1]	Study Population
0	36%	1.1%
1	26%	0%
2	16%	0%
3	9.5%	4.3%
4 or more	12.5%	94.6%

[1]Data from CDC, 2016.

A score of 5 was the most common among participants (5 was both the mode and median score) with a mean score of 5.76. A histogram of the distribution of scores can be seen in

Figure 11. The mean score is comparable to other research (5.74) that connects ACE scores and commercially sexual exploitation of youth (Naramore et al., 2017).

Figure 11. Bar Chart Frequency of ACE Scores in Study Population
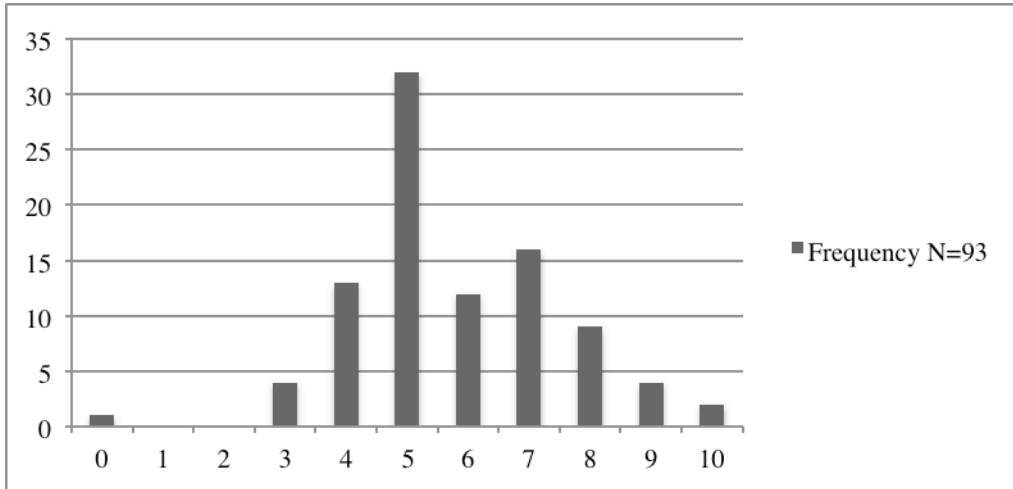
Previous studies have compared outcomes of participants between those who have a high ACE score (4+) between those who have a lower ACE score (3 and below), however given the distribution and the high level ACE occurrence of this sample, such a comparison was not possible with this study.

Prevalence of Specific ACEs

Overview of Individual ACEs

The ACE measure has been used to connect adverse experiences in childhood to a variety of health and behavioral outcomes. In addition to connecting the overall ACE score of individuals to their risk of negative outcomes later in life, research has indicated that the occurrence of specific adverse experiences have predictive power on specific outcomes such as the existence of specific types of abuse, the imprisonment of a household member, or witnessing domestic abuse (Campbell et al., 2016). Unsurprisingly, child abuse in particular

has been connected to a variety of negative health outcomes in adulthood even when controlling for factors such as income and education (Font and Maguire-Jack, 2016). Other studies have connected the prevalence of specific ACEs like parental separation or divorce to individuals who were sex trafficked (Naramore et al. 2017).

The following chart outlines each ACE item with the percentage of individuals who reported experiencing that event in the current study (Table 9). For specific wording of each ACE question, see Appendix E.

Table 9. Percentage of Individual Items on ACE Measure

ACE Items	%
ACE 1: Emotional Abuse	94.8
ACE 2: Physical Abuse	53.6
ACE 3: Sexual Abuse	62.9
ACE 4: Lack of Love/Support	94.8
ACE 5: Neglect	59.8
ACE 6: Parents Separated/Divorced	38.1
ACE 7: Mother Abused	62.9
ACE 8: Substance Abuse in Home	36.1
ACE 9: Mental Illness in Home	40.2
ACE 10: Someone Imprisoned	9.0

Child Abuse and Neglect

The most common form of abuse reported by participants was emotional abuse (see Table 9) with 95% of respondents stating that they experienced being sworn at, insulted, put down, humiliated, or put in fear of being physically hurt by a parent or other adult in the household. This finding supports other research that has not only linked emotional abuse to adolescent involvement in selling sex but also that emotional abuse was specifically correlated with a younger age of entry into the sex trade (Roe-Sepowitz 2012).

Given the nature of this research, the prevalence of sexual abuse (63% of the study population) is of particular interest for later risky sexual behavior. The occurrence of sexual abuse in childhood is and the trauma experienced by children exposed to sexual abuse has lingering lifetime effects including a number of health and behavioral outcomes including entry into the commercial sex trade (Browning, 2002, Clarke et al., 2012; Kramer and Berg 2003). In adolescence and early adulthood, a history of sex abuse may heighten interest in sexual activity, increasing vulnerability and likelihood of risky sexual behavior including entrance into the sex trade (Kaestle, 2012) and make individuals particularly vulnerable to being pulled into the commercial sex trade as sex trafficking victims or recruited by pimps.

The occurrence of physical abuse (54%) and neglect (60%) were the lowest reported occurrences of abuse and neglect but notably more than half of respondents reported experiencing these forms of child maltreatment. Even more revealing is the rate of co-occurring abuse and neglect among this population. Every respondent (100%) who reported experiencing physical abuse or neglect also reported at least one other form of abuse. Of the entire sample, 87.6% reported multiple forms of abuse or neglect.

Lack of Love and Support

Almost all of the respondents reported yes to ACE Question 4, a lack of love or support in the household, with 95% selecting that they often felt that either no one in their family loved them or thought they were important or special OR that they often felt as if their family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or supported each other. To break this information down further, particularly with interest to the pivotal role of the family in providing foundational social support in childhood, I divided the questions within the survey

to understand in more detail the adverse experiences individuals were facing in childhood.

Table 10. Individual ACE Questions about Family Love and Support Prevalence

Love and Support Questions	*%*
Often felt that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?	84.5%
Often felt that your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?	67.0%
Selected both options above	56.7%
Selected either options above	94.8%

Table 10 represents descriptive analysis of only one question of the measure (ACE 4) but

within this question lies what I argue is also representative of the most basic functions of

family in this society and therefore merits specialized attention. As discussed in Chapter 1,

and revealed in the results above, instances of child abuse are prevalent in the childhoods of

individuals who have sold sex (Clarke et al., 2012; Kramer and Berg 2003; Schissel and

Fedec, 1999; Silbert and Pines, 1983) but less of a focus exists on other areas of family

dysfunction that represent some of the most basic functions of family in our society: to

provide love and support. This sample is not representative of everyone who has sold or

exchanged sex but of this sample, 95% report either love or support missing in their

childhood. This sample represents individuals who have identified as sex trafficking victims,

as sex workers, and any identity in between. Looking at the multiple breakdowns within the

family structure and their effects over the life course that lead to selling sex for one reason or

another, warrants further evaluation and research.

Other Family Dysfunction

The remaining ACE categories reflect additional family dysfunction and the results of this

research challenge what another study revealed that linked ACE scores with youth trading sex. Naramore and colleagues (2017) was one of the only studies found that directly linked ACE scores with juveniles selling sex and the most frequent adverse experience in childhood found for that population was parental separation or divorce (92%) followed closely by the presence of household violence (90%). This study reveals that parental separation of divorce occurred only at a rate of 38% and household violence at a rate of 63%. Worth noting, however, is that Narramore and colleagues' sample was made up entirely of juvenile offenders.

Additional Factors influencing ACEs

Resiliency is a topic often associated with ACE scores (Kaestle, 2012) including additional factors that increase the likelihood of poor adult outcomes with the existence of adverse experiences in childhood. Socioeconomic status in adulthood, for example, has been a mediating factor between ACEs and adult outcomes (Font and Maguire-Jack, 2016).

Race also plays a complex role as a mediating factor between ACEs and health risk behaviors (Slack, Font, and Jones, 2017). Where one study suggests that class has a greater role in determining health risk behaviors (Slack, Font, and Jones, 2017) however when evaluating the interplay of race and class regarding ACE scores, race can be significantly associated with class membership, particularly among youth involved in the juvenile justice system (Wolff et al., 2018). Race is a recognized factor among homeless youth who trade sex (also known as "survival sex") with Tyler's (2009) study revealing that White homeless youth were 84% less likely to have traded sex while on the street than non-white homeless

youth. Whether race plays a role in ACE scores among individuals who have sold sex is included in this research. An independent-samples T-Test was conducted to compare mean ACE scores between white and non-white participants. There was a significant difference in mean scores for white (M=6.14, SD=1.66) and non-white (M=5.00, SD=1.59) participants; t(87)=3.13, p=0.002 For this sample, those who identified as white had a significantly higher mean ACE score.

Using ACE Scores Sociologically

The realization that individuals who have sold sex have also experienced adverse events in childhood is not a novel or surprising finding and this research supports what other previous studies have found regarding the family histories of those who have sold sex. Adverse experiences in childhood and using the ACE tool specifically has been a source of validity in a number of behavioral and health outcome studies yet has not been used frequently among this population with the exception of a study of juvenile offenders (Naramore et al., 2017). Adverse childhood experiences have reverberating effects throughout the life course as can be shown with the research about ACE scores detailed above. If viewed sociologically, the ACE tool represents one way to measure whether the institution of the family is fulfilling a primary function of keeping children safe. The life course perspective allows a greater understanding in evaluating the experiences of those who have sold sex, especially if we know that adverse childhood experiences like abuse, neglect, and substance use in the home are a part of that narrative and an early influence in the life course.

The existing narrative about sex work versus sex trafficking is concentrated on *choice,* whether an individual was able to make a choice to sell sex or was forced into the sex trade. A new sociological approach, however, one that incorporates a life course perspective, can view the role of institutional factors that contribute to involvement in the sex trade which include adverse family events. Family is just one of the institutions explored in this research but it is the foundation. The fact that almost every participant experienced adverse events in childhood within the family unit is where their stories start and the following chapters will build upon those experiences as this research reveals additional factors throughout the life course that suggest a cumulative nature of risk factors along similar trajectories.

Relevance of ACE and the Transition to Adulthood

In addition to the awareness of higher ACE scores being connected to negative outcomes in adulthood and how that understanding can help reframe discussions on selling and exchanging sex within the narratives of both sex trafficking and sex work, adverse childhood events can also be helpful in understanding the transition to adulthood. Though the connection to adulthood has been well-documented, the multiple pathways through which adverse childhood experiences influence adulthood events is not as known (Jones et al., 2018). For vulnerable populations, the level to which adverse childhood events influences a potentially rocky transition to adulthood will be explored in more depth in the next section, Chapter 7, Transitioning to Adulthood, but the fact that these negative childhood experiences are connected to issues around substance use or mental health in early adulthood (Mersky, Topitzes, and Reynolds, 2013) opens the door for where preventative strategies might be most helpful along those pathways. In other words, what are the factors that make an individual most vulnerable to selling sex and how do a person's propensity for experiencing

abuse, neglect, and other childhood experiences set them up for a particularly vulnerable

transition to adulthood that contributes to outcomes such as selling sex, poor mental health,

or increased substance use during that transition? These factors and others associated with

the transition to adulthood will be explored next.

CHAPTER 8

TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD

Introduction

Going into this research project, the aim was to gain a better understanding of what the

transition to adulthood looks like for individuals who have sold sex at some point in their life

course and specifically, whether the transition to 18 and legal adulthood was a time period

when this group was more vulnerable to selling sex. To recap, applying a life course

perspective to understanding the life experiences of this population allows for a

disengagement from standard rhetoric about choice and a refocus on the institutional

influences that occur at different points in the life course and whether those influences take

on a cumulative effect as one enters into and continues through adulthood.

Age and Participation in the Commercial Sex Trade

Anyone 18 years of age or older was invited to participate in the survey if they had sold or

exchanged sex at some point in their life. Participants completing the survey ranged in age

from 23-50 with a mean age of 29.84, median of 29 and a mode of 27. Though not intended

in the design of the study, the fact that around two-thirds of participants (67.4%) were aged

30 and below may have served as a helpful mechanism in recalling specific events around the

transition to adulthood and early adulthood years. One of the first questions I set out to

answer with the quantitative survey data was the average age of entry into the commercial

sex trade. In other words, when are individuals most likely to start selling sex and what role does the transition to adulthood have on this timing?

Going into the research I hypothesized that the transition to adulthood and turning 18 would make it difficult for individuals who were selling sex already to exit or for those who had not yet sold sex, pose additional institutional barriers that may increase the likelihood of entry into the sex trade at that time. Indeed, 18 is a crucial time for individuals in the study as the mean age individuals first sold or exchanged sex was at 18.15 years old (SD=3.08). The mean age participants typically last sold or exchanged sex at age 24.14 (SD=2.67) for an average duration of 6 years (SD=2.98) in the commercial sex trade.

For most of the analyses used, the dependent variable used is age one first sold or exchanged sex with the anticipation that early adulthood puts one at higher risk of selling sex. However, for those who sold sex prior to 18 and were thus considered to be sex trafficked by current policy definitions, most continued selling sex into early adulthood.

Even for those who started selling sex before 18 (40%, n=39), 94% were still selling sex at 18 and that percentage increased to 97% at age 19. Of the entire sample, 50% of the were selling sex when they turned 18 and by age 19, 74% of the sample was selling sex, demonstrating that the transition to adulthood was crucial for the majority of the sample as three fourths of respondents were selling sex during that time.

Identification and Selling Sex in Early Adulthood

As discussed in earlier chapters, the legal definitions of sex trafficking vs. prostitution use age as a defining factor in the identification of whether selling or exchanging sex is considered sex trafficking or sex work (and thus whether someone is labeled a victim of a crime vs. a perpetrator of a crime). Societally speaking, the label of sex trafficking victim can hold great weight but after discussing the labels of sex trafficking victim vs. sex worker vs. prostitute anecdotally with service providers in the pilot study, many voiced an aversion of those labels among those who have sold sex. For this reason, even identifying participants for enrollment criteria was a challenge. For example, someone who was sold for sex by a family member may not identify even with a neutral description such as "ever sold or exchanged sex for money." Likewise, someone may solely identify as a sex worker and will not identify with any sort of status that suggests victimhood despite similar life experiences and behavior with those who do identify as a sex trafficking victim. The descriptions of involvement included in the survey resulted from those conversations and feedback from service providers, particularly service provider staff who also identified as survivors.

In order to determine whether the self-described labels significantly correlated with ages associated with adulthood, a Pearson chi-square was used to determine whether the onset of adulthood (18 and then 19) vs. selling sex prior to 18 correlated significantly with certain labels. Note that individuals were able to choose more than one identifying description. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Early Adulthood and Self-Identifying Involvement in Commercial Sex Trade

	Was selling sex before 18	Was selling sex at 18	Was selling sex at 19
1. Survivor of commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking	11%	10%	17%
2. Have been controlled by another person to sell sex as a payment for drugs or other need	6%	11%	16%
3. Have exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs	18%	26%	39%
4. Someone paid another person to have sex with you in exchange for food, shelter, or other needs	7%	11%	18%
5. Had sex for money because a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or family member asked or forced	18%	19%	29%
6. A sex worker or made money selling sex	11%	13%	23%

In Table 11, there was little significance found between the transition to adulthood and various labels with some exceptions. The presence of another person's involvement (either with "controlled" language as in option 2 or that someone else was paid for the sexual exchange as in option 4) was more likely to be used by those who sold or exchanged sex before age 18. The most seemingly neutral option "have exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs" was more likely to be used by those who had sold or exchanged sex either before 18 or were selling sex at 19. Also notable is that the identity of a sex trafficking victim or sex worker did not was not influenced by the age at which one was selling sex suggesting that those labels do not resonate with individuals despite the significance of age in the legislation and impact that legislation has on access to services and criminality of selling sex.

Institutional Changes with Adulthood

Living on your Own

Participants were asked in the survey what age they started living on their own. The concept of "living on your own" is tied to multiple institutions including a potential decreased role of the family as a support and an increased expectation of working and providing housing. As aligned with the literature on vulnerable populations and accelerated adulthood, many respondents report supporting themselves before 18 (16.3%) though the average age of living on one's own for this study sample was 19.17 years old. In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the age individuals started living on their own and the age individuals started selling sex. There were two outlier cases within the sample where individuals were sold by family members at ages 3 and 5 so for the purposes of this analysis, those cases were excluded as living on one's own would not be possible at those ages. A Pearson's r was computed to assess the relationship between the two continuous variables of age that one starts living on own and age that one first sold or exchanged sex. The results revealed that there was a positive correlation between the two variables, r=0.394, n=81, p=0.000.

Though the connection between living on one's own and needing to sell sex to support oneself may appear to be an expected finding and correlation, the results help to provide a clearer picture of some of the societal and structural aspects that contribute to the "choice" to sell sex.

Education

The most frequent life event that participants reported occurring at age 18 was graduation from high school. This result is not surprising as 18 is the typical age most graduate with a high school diploma. However, most of the study population reported attending at least some college (73%) with 46% of the study population reported obtaining a college degree including 9% finishing a graduate degree.

Since the education system can be considered a support and positive structural influence on the lives of individuals and since the majority of the population, even if finishing high school at 18, went on to at least some college at some point, the question emerges whether the age at which one finishes school is significantly related to the age at which someone starts selling sex. A Pearson r test was run to determine if there was a significant relationship between these ages and this relationship was not significant.

Secondly, it is important to note that the relationship between secondary education and post-secondary education is markedly different. The decision to go to college and subsequently pay for tuition and other fees makes the college experience qualitatively different from receiving a presumably free public school primary and secondary education. The added factors of financial stressors as well as adult independence should be a consideration in terms of an important distinction between a high school and college experience and thus the influence of education as an institution cannot be lumped into one variable and may not be able to be captured by age.

An ANOVA was computed with level of education categories as well as a series of independent-samples t-tests with dummy variables for the categories of less than high school, high school, and any college to determine if the relationship between the age that someone first sold or exchanged sex (again excluding the two cases where this age was 3 or 5) was connected to the level of schooling an individual received. None of these tests produced statistically significant relationships. The lack of statistical significance in this case is curious and warrants additional investigation as to the ways in which education as an institution may have potential to be a protective factor for entering the commercial sex trade but does not currently fulfill that role. In fact, the mean age of entry did not change significantly among those who had attended at least some college suggesting that college attendance is not a protective factor for entry into or early exit from the commercial sex trade.

Substance Use and Mental Health

Individuals who have sold or exchanged sex have a disproportionate likelihood of substance use as well as reporting issues with mental health (Butters and Erikson, 2003 and Bungay, 2013). Vulnerability to mental health issues is only exacerbated by the transition to adulthood where many individuals face institutions that are not structured around the needs of young adults and individuals during this transition period may face a drop off in services they were receiving in adolescence during a time that they face significant emotional needs during a major life transition (Davis 2003). Specifically young adults who have higher ACE scores have been shown to have an increase in depressive symptoms and anxiety in early adulthood as well as increased substance use (Mersky, Topitzes, and Reynolds 2013). It was hypothesized that not only would mental health and substance use be areas of concern for

this population but that those issues would be exacerbated during the transition to adulthood in this study.

Fifty-one percent of respondents reported struggling with depression, anxiety, PTSD, or other mental health issues. Additionally, 42% report using substances to cope and 44% have been hospitalized at one point for alcohol or drug use. In order to determine whether individuals were more at risk for using substances at the time of entry to the commercial sex trade and whether the transition to adulthood was also a significant factor, and event history analysis was run using hazard ratios in SPSS under the Generalized Estimating Equations function. The results are populated in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Substance Use and the Transition to Adulthood Hazard Rate for Age of Entry

Predictors	**exp(B)**
Ages 18-19	4.001***
Uses Substances to Cope	1.394*
(Intercept)	0.170***

*p<.05, p<.01,***p<.001

In the model presented in Table 12, the hazard rate for individuals who are ages 18 and 19 to enter into the commercial sex trade is three times as likely than others in the study and the use of substances increases the hazard rate of entering the commercial sex trade by 39% relative to the rate for those who did not report using substances to cope. Mental health issues were reportedly high though because they spanned for much longer over the life course, a similar model was not possible to measure the influence of timing as was substance use in this example.

Turning 18: Qualitative Reflections from the Survey

Participants were asked specifically what the experience of turning 18 was like for them personally in an open-text answer format of the survey twice, once at the beginning at the survey and again at the end of the survey. The decision to include this question twice was made given the importance of the question of individuals reflecting on what turning 18 was like. Because the survey was fairly long, the question was included in the beginning in an attempt to address survey fatigue and a concern the question would be skipped if kept at the end. The question was then repeated at the end as at that point participants had been asked about a number of life events that may inform their descriptions of turning 18. Answers were coded into the following categories: freedom from abuse/control or otherwise independent, difficult/more responsibility, both independence and responsibility, nothing really changed, and other. For full transparency of reporting the results, the frequencies are included for answers provided both at the beginning and end of the survey as some provided information that was coded differently from their original answer.

Table 13. Coded descriptions of turning 18

Can you explain what it was like turning 18 and becoming a legal adult?	Description 1 N=44	Description 2 N=68
Freedom from abuse/control or otherwise independent	24 (54.5%)	26 (38.2%)
Difficult/more responsibility	5 (11.4%)	21 (30.9%)
Both freedom/independence and increased responsibility	11 (25.0%)	8 (11.8%)
Nothing really changed	3 (6.8%)	1 (1.5%)
Other	1 (2.3%)	12 (17.6%)

Despite being concerned that fewer participants would answer a fill-in question at the end of the survey after completing survey sections focused on various life events in the areas of the family, education, work/housing, criminal justice system, exploitation, social support, and

services, more participants provided answers in the section at the end (68) than in the

beginning of the survey (44). Example answers are provided below for the codes above.

More freedom and independence

Some of the answers revolved around the ability to make decisions and independence, a

concept tied to the construction of adulthood. [Insert connection to independence and

adulthood from Hutchison?] Some examples include:

"[H]aving the ability to make my own decisions and to have the freedom to do so"

"Gaining that sense of independence"

"I can do whatever I want"

Many responses noted some of the factors like smoking and legal changes that come with

adulthood. Others described being able to shed parental or guardian control and not needing

permission.

"You can legally smoke and get married without parental consent."

"You can legally do a whole bunch of stuff you were never previously able to do as a minor."

"I was allowed to do more things and people didn't look at me as a teenager anymore."

As can be seen with the final example above, the image of being a teenager/adolescent was

part of the identity of being an adult and turning 18. For others, an increase of responsibility

is what marked the transition to 18.

Difficult/More responsibility

Some respondents provided vague answers describing difficulty associated with turning 18,

noting a distinct shift in expectations.

> "Culture shock... never thought it would be hard"

> "Slap with responsibilities at once"

> "I felt very afraid in some ways- I was supposed to be an adult now, and I was barely making it emotionally. I felt younger than my peers in some ways, and older in other ways. I didn't feel like I fit in and had no idea how to be 'an adult'"

Others provided more detail about the specific expectations that came with becoming an

adult and the responsibilities that went along with that transition.

> "You have to find a job by yourself. No one gives you financial support. If you don't earn enough money, you will be hungry or even die."

> "If we make a mistake because of impulse, we may be punished by law. Our parents can not help us overcome the difficulties."

The theme of legality and role of the law as a punishing factor was a common factor that

participants considered. This finding was particularly enlightening considering only (10%)

reported actually ever being arrested. However, the fear of legal intervention was clearly an

aspect that individuals associated with turning 18. Additional examples include:

> "As a legal adult, you are now responsible for your actions. If you violate any law, you will be charged as an adult."

> "As an adult, if you are not careful, you will spend a lot of time in prison."

> "Whatever you do, consider whether or not it is legal"

Both more independence and responsibility

Since an increase of both independence and responsibility were themes noted by participants it is unsurprising that some individuals described specific examples of both in their responses:

> "It felt good to become an adult but I wasn't prepared for life"
>
> "It felt like freedom into adulthood but I was not equipped with the tools I needed to navigate that part of life. Therefore I ended up a sex trafficking victim at age 19"

In this last example, the participant connected the expectations of becoming an adult with their entry into the commercial sex trade, self-describing as a sex trafficking victim. It is also noteworthy that the age of 19 for this participant was when the effects of the onset of adulthood cumulated at 19 instead of 18. Even though 18 may be the official marker of legal adulthood, an expanded look at the years where the transition to adulthood is taking place should be taken into consideration. Especially considering age 19 was the most common age individuals in the study reported entry into the commercial sex trade.

One participant described in detail what turning 18 meant for her…

> "Wonderful and terrible. My trafficker was my biological father, without his consent there was nothing I could do for myself. I couldn't get a job, get healthcare, see a doctor, apply for a license, apply for financial aid for college. Because I was a minor I had to have parental consent for everything, which meant I could not do any of the things listed above. Turning 18 meant I was no longer legally bound to him, but it also meant I was completely and utterly alone in this world with no resources. I did not qualify for domestic violence shelters, because he was my parent not a partner. I did not have children so despite being homeless I could not get medical, even after calling dozens of numbers. I could not find the counseling I needed or the clothes for a job interview. Food was hit and miss and I had been so isolated and abused by my trafficker that I had no idea how to function in this world. Freedom of 18 gave me a way out of trafficking but dumped me right into homelessness despite job searching, calling numbers in the phone book and doing my very best to advocate for myself. Freedom, but from the trap of trafficking to the trap of homelessness and loneliness."

In a similar description, another participant explained the connection between a history of abuse and the role of the family in the significance of becoming an adult:

> "I moved out at 17 to escape an abusive adoptive family- turning 18 just meant no one was able to check in anymore- ex. teachers, classmates."

Though this quote is brief, her experience captures what was suggested in the initial pilot interviews as well as what this study was intended to investigate which is the role of institutions in shaping a trajectory towards selling sex. This participant reported elsewhere in the survey that she began selling sex at age 18. Even though she did not associate selling sex specifically in her description of turning 18, what she did describe was the role of a dysfunctional family life as well as a drop-off in an institution that was providing a protective function: the education system.

Nothing really changed

For some, reflecting on turning 18 did not conjure any notable changes, particularly if abuse or exploitation continued into adulthood.

> "Nothing changed. I was being trafficked before and after I turned 18 years old. Due to the level of trauma that was taking place at the time, I do not remember my 18th birthday."

> "Changed nothing. I was still a slave."

For others, the idea of turning 18 conjured more about the societal markers than a reflection of individual experiences. Similar to the experience of feeling more freedom, the following quote demonstrates some of the markers that participants described as the universal experience of turning 18.

"Nothing changes except you can vote, buy cigarettes, lottery tickets and porn."

Overall, the answers to the open-text field of the survey about turning 18 provided helpful anecdotal information to supplement the quantitative data about the experience of turning 18 and the transition to adulthood for individuals who have sold sex.

Conclusion

The transition to adulthood was a time of shifting roles and expectations where additional responsibilities were often coupled with a history of family dysfunction and abuse. Propensity towards substance use and mental health issues for individuals in the study create a scenario where young adulthood means an increased risk for selling sex. The qualitative data from this chapter provides mixed feelings about turning 18 and I believe also highlights the benefit of having qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data is often seen as helping to fill in some of the gaps that are difficult to capture with quantitative data as can be seen with some of the examples outlined in that section of this chapter. However, the quantitative data in this area specifically was particularly helpful for when you ask someone to describe what turning 18 was like, it may be particularly challenging to capture the role of institutions and the overlapping factors that contribute to one's experience the way quantitative data can encompass through event history data collection. Many may not associate turning 18 and transitioning to adulthood with entry into the commercial sex trade but quantitative analysis can be used to explore whether that correlation exists. The connection between the transition to adulthood and the hazard rate of the likelihood one will sell or exchange sex during this time is explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9
ENTRY INTO THE COMMERCIAL SEX TRADE

Introduction

This chapter explores both the quantitative and qualitative results of entry into the

commercial sex trade. Quantitatively, age at entry is considered the dependent variable and

an event history analysis is utilized to get a better understanding of some of the factors that

contribute to the age of entry into the sex trade and a specific focus is applied to the role of

the transition to adulthood on the hazard rate of the age of entry. Qualitatively since

individuals taking the survey have had varying experiences in the commercial sex trade

(some experienced involvement as exploitation, others a means for getting by, and some

reported entering out of curiosity), this chapter also explores some of the anecdotal

information provided by participants on why they first sold or exchanged sex and also if they

left "the life" and returned, what factors brought them back.

Age of Entry

Age of entry into the commercial sex trade or the onset of exploitation has been a topic of

great interest and one where there is little clarity within the research. Depending upon

whether adults or juveniles are being studied can influence the average age reported (Roe-

Sepowitz 2012) and that average age can range from 13 (Silbert and Pines 1981) to 19 years

old (Dalla 2000) while others use 15 as a significant time period for marking entry into the

commercial sex trade (Kramer and Berg 2003). The average age of entry, however, does not

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mean that individuals are not *at risk* for entering the sex trade earlier and some studies have

revealed that individuals have entered as early as 11 years old (Dalla 2000).

Table 14: Percentage of Ages of Entry to the Commercial Sex Trade

Age	%
3	1
5	1
15	1
16	23
17	12
18	13
19	24
20	10
21	2
22	6
23	7

Table 14 details at what age respondents reported entering into the sex trade. Though the

average age was 18.15, age 19 was the most common age for a person to start selling or

exchanging sex. To get a better understanding of the probability that selling sex will occur at

age 18 or 19, discrete-time event history modeling can provide a framing for determining the

influence of various ages for entry into the commercial sex trade.

Some studies report that the beginning range of adolescents being at risk of selling sex begins

around age 11 (Dalla 2000), other studies report that age of entry for adolescents is an

average of 13 or 14 years old (Silbert and Pines 1981, Nadon et al. 1998). For this analysis,

age 13 was used as the beginning of the risk set for this sample to conduct an event history

analysis using a hazard rate ratio. Selecting this range excluded two cases from the dataset,

one respondent who reported being sold at age 3 and another at age 5. An event history

analysis was conducted using a binary logistic regression via the Generalized Estimating

Equations function in SPSS to evaluate the age of entry into the commercial sex trade and

measure the influence of the transition to adulthood and to explore the hazard rate of various ages to determine the probability of entering the commercial sex trade at various ages in adolescence and the transition to adulthood compared to other ages (over age 20 being the reference category).

Table 15: Age of Entry into the Commercial Sex Trade and Corresponding Hazard Ratios

Predictors	exp(B)
Ages 13-15	0.014***
Age 16	1.064
Age 17	0.595
Age 18	0.931
Age 19	2.846*
Age 20	2.052

N=533
*p<.05, p<.01,***p<.001*

Table 15 includes specific ages with their hazard rate ratio with the dependent variable defined as age entering the commercial sex trade. The reference group used was adults aged 21-23. Here, the first significant age for timing of entry into the commercial sex trade was 13-15 as individuals had a hazard rate that was 98% lower than adults aged 21-23. Additionally, in this model, age 19 was also a significant age point with individuals having a hazard rate 2.9 times higher than adults aged 21-23. Additional discussion of this model and these results is included in more depth below as this model reflects Model 1 in Table 17.

Table 16 includes predictors on the age of entry to selling sex. This model was run prior to including the specific age groups in order to determine the level of significance on the hazard rate of entering the commercial sex trade.

Table 16. Predictor Hazard Ratios for Age of Entry to the Commercial Sex Trade

Predictors	exp(B)
Race=White	0.980
Sex=Female	0.880
White*Female	0.881
Experienced sexual abuse	0.851
Ran away	1.100
Less than HS Degree	1.282**
Skip school regularly	1.006
Ever homeless	0.959
Trouble finding a job	0.821*
(Intercept)	0.266***

*$p<.05$, $p<.01$, ***$p<.001$*

The two predictors that resulted in significant hazard ratios to determine age of entry into the commercial sex trade in this model, prior to the inclusion of specific ages into the model, was not having a high school degree and trouble finding a job. Those individuals without a high school diploma had a hazard rate that is 28% higher than the rest of the sample. In other words, these individuals were more likely to begin selling sex at an earlier age than the rest of the sample. Individuals who reported having trouble finding a job was also a significant factor at predicting the age of entry into the commercial sex trade. Individuals who reported trouble finding a job had a hazard rate that was 18% lower relative to those who did not have trouble finding a job meaning that they were more likely to begin selling sex at a later age than those who did not report having trouble finding a job.

Table 17. Hazard Rate Models and the Hypothesized Predictors of Age of Entry

N=533	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Predictors	**exp(B)**	**exp(B)**	**exp(B)**	**exp(B)**	**exp(B)**	**exp(B)**
Ages 13-15	0.014***	0.007***	0.006***	0.004***	0.003***	0.003***
Age 16	1.064	0.570	0.506	0.377*	0.294**	0.289**
Age 17	0.595	0.338*	0.305**	0.222**	0.173***	0.171***
Age 18	0.931	0.590	0.547	0.432	0.348*	0.344*
Age 19	2.846*	1.935	1.718	1.417	1.157	1.153
Age 20	2.052	1.200	1.153	0.822	0.764	0.771
Sex=Female		0.616	0.969	0.568	0.523	0.531
Race=White		0.362**	1.285	0.503*	0.489*	0.474*
White*Female			0.304			
Experienced sexual abuse				0.393***	0.347***	0.358***
Ran away				1.030	1.044	1.079
Less than HS Degree					3.580***	3.552***
Skipped School Regularly					1.026	1.061
Ever homeless						0.926
Trouble finding a job						1.003
(Intercept)	0.303***	1.654	1.012	3.596*	4.828**	4.934**

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 17 incorporates six cumulative models to look at the potential hazard rate for individuals with various predictors included. Ages 13-20 were looked at as individual variables and this sample (with ages 13-15 being grouped into one variable as age 15 was the first age of entry to the commercial sex trade for this sample), as stated earlier, included events between the ages of 13 and older, as this was the age individuals entered the risk set and the age at which a participant started selling sex was the last age that was included in the set as they were no longer at risk for entry into the sex trade after the age they first started selling or exchanging sex. The comparison group in this case, as the first age individuals started selling sex was 15, is all of those still in the risk set after age 20. This choice was

made to see how much adolescent ages and early adulthood ages put people at risk for selling

sex with the incorporation of various predictor variables.

There are a few notable takeaways from Table 17. Since every respondent reported selling or

exchanging sex, the dependent variable used for these analyses is not *if* one enters the

commercial sex trade but *when* one enters the commercial sex trade based on the factors

included and these results should not be used to compare with those who have not entered the

commercial sex trade. For ages 13-15, the hazard ratio is extremely low indicating that the

rate of entry into the sex trade for this age range was 98% lower than the rate for adults aged

21-23 (the reference category). Variables were introduced to explain the changing hazard rate

over time for various ages. Age 16 had a low hazard ratio in Models 4 through 6. Once

institutional variables were included (beginning with the family), the hazard ratio for age 16

became significantly lower than the reference group of 21-23. In Model 4, the hazard rate for

entry into the sex trade was 64% lower for those aged 16 relative to those aged 21-23 and for

Models 5 and 6, the hazard rate of entry into the sex trade was 72% lower than the reference

group. As predicted, age 18 was an age where individuals were at significant risk for entering

into the commercial sex trade but that age was only significant once factors of education and

work/economy were included and indicates a lower hazard rate relative to ages 21-23. Age

19 was significant in Model 1 and the inclusion of other factors did not help explain the

significance of this age. More noteworthy is that this age had a higher hazard rate than other

ages in the model. -20 were not significant ages of entry as well compared to older ages

though observation of the exponentiated rates reveals that even though 19 was not significant

in these models, the exponentiated rate increased to a positive value indicating a shift in

direction for this age range. Further analysis of these ages are explored in Figure 12 below when analyzing predicted probabilities of these age groups.

Race was a significant factor in that Whites were more likely to enter the commercial sex later. An interaction effect of gender and race was included in Model 3 though since this variable removed the effect of race, the interaction was removed from future models. By doing so, the influence of race was able to be included in additional models where it continued to show a delayed entrance to the commercial sex trade for whites at a rate 50-53% lower. Experiencing sex abuse and the absence of a high school degree had significant influences on the models. Experiencing sex abuse did not increase the hazard rate as expected though it should be noted that with this sample, nearly every individual had experienced abuse so consideration should be made for the specific population being studied in this sample. Depending on the model, a history of sex abuse accounted for a 60-65% lower hazard rate for entering the commercial sex trade, suggesting that of this sample, individuals with sex abuse entered the commercial sex trade later. For those who did not have a high school diploma, the hazard rate was more than 2.5 times the rate of those who did have a high school diploma indicating that those without a high school diploma were more likely to enter the commercial sex trade sooner.

Overall, the main takeaways from these analyses indicate that white individuals enter the commercial sex trade later on average and likewise, having a history of sex abuse delays entry as well. Not having a high school degree accelerates one's entry into the commercial sex trade and factors of homelessness or trouble finding a job were not significant factors in these models for predicted timing of entry into the commercial sex trade. Additionally,

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gender in this model was not a significant predictor for time of entry. The next figure displays the predicted probabilities for affected ages on hazard ratios.

Figure 12: Predicted Probabilities of Affected Ages on Hazard Ratios
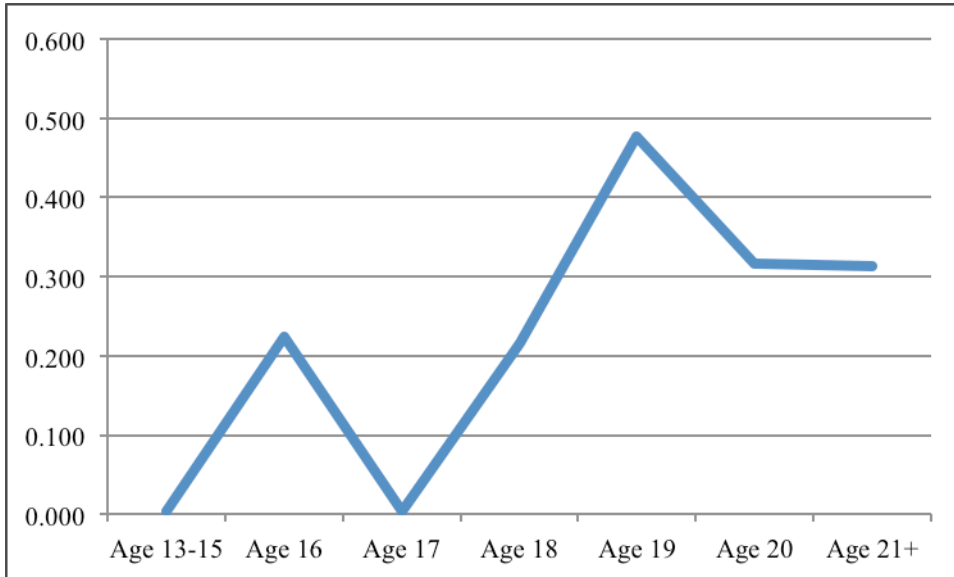
In Figure 12, the predicted probabilities of affected ages is displayed to predict various hazard ratios where all other variables were set to man values for each age. In doing so, the influence of age was being measured setting all model independent variables at the mean for that age group. As can be seen in the line graph, there is a spike at age 16 but at age 17 there was not much likelihood of entering the commercial sex trade among a population of individuals who have sold or exchanged sex. Eighteen is when the hazard rate is predicted to rise again, peaking at age 19 and then beginning to fall again at age 20. This graph of predicted probabilities of hazard rates demonstrates the increased probability that someone will enter the commercial sex trade in early adulthood (within a population of individuals who have sold or exchanged sex). These results support the hypothesis that early adulthood is a crucial time among individuals who have sold or exchanged sex though additional

qualitative data can provide a look into some of the reasons individuals report entering the commercial sex trade.

Reasons for selling sex

In addition to the quantitative portions of the survey, participants were asked in an open-ended form "What were the circumstances around the first instance of selling or exchanging sex?" Of the 97 total respondents, 46 (47.4%) provided answers to the question. Those answers were coded into different categories with the most popular answer (52.2%) connected to either money or services needed. Some reported being pressured or even forced into selling sex by family members, a loved one (significant other/friend) or a pimp/trafficker (19.6%). Others reported being curious or wanting to explore the option (15.2%) and only one respondent listed drugs as a reason. Some of the responses are listed below to provide a snapshot of the range of reasons individuals gave in their own words.

Some of the financial reasons provided include:

> "To support my family"

> "Paying hospital bills"

> "My father was sick, and I had no money to buy medicine, so I got money through sex trade."

> "I don't have enough food, no house to sleep, and no suitable job for me. I can only choose this."

Other examples include the participants being pressured or forced:

> "Romeo pimp turned violent- force and coercion used"

> "My boyfriend forced me to complete a sexual transaction for drugs"

"I was trafficked by family members at a young age. Started with sexual abuse, pornography, and then being sold for sex. Was taken to brothels, hotels, and had people brought to me."

"My life was set up for me to be a sex slave at birth having been born a female to a pedophile father. I was part of a systematic ritual abuse mind control programming funded by the CIA and perpetrated by U.S. military officers, who also pretended to be satanic ritual abusers, in Kuwait. I went through severe torture to dissociate my mind (D.I.D.) to have certain parts of me as perfect sex slaves, as well as spies, with no memory during my \normal\" every day life. MK Ultra and other covert CIA mind control programs moved overseas away from exposure and consequences. They were spreading sex trafficking worldwide. My father and brothers also sex trafficked me for personal gain."

"attended a party thrown by people i had just recently met, and was kidnapped at gunpoint and forced…"

Finally, some participants reported being curious or having exploratory reasons for entering the commercial sex trade:

"Out of curiousity"

"i just want to make love have a fun"

"I was curious at first"

Participants were also asked if they had left the commercial sex trade at any point, what contributed to a return to the trade. Of the 36 (37.1%) who answered, 44.4% reported money as the primary reason and 33.3% reported being pressured, forced, or even threatened by violence by another person as the reason to return to "the life."

Returning to Commercial Sex Trade

Based on the pilot interviews, the process of selling sex and length of time within the sex trade was not one that I anticipated to be straightforward. Some may attempt to leave the sex trade multiple times, returning for any number of reasons. Through the survey I attempted to

try to capture some of those experiences of returning to the sex trade to get a better idea of some of the personal reasons and institutional influences individuals face in a decision to return to selling sex if they stopped. Of those who provided reasons for returning to the commercial sex trade if they left and returned, the most popular reason (48.8%) was a financial need. A full break-down of the coded reasons for returning are listed in Table 18. Some of the specific examples of descriptions of the financial reasons are provided below:

> "I wanted to leave this life, but I couldn't start a new job. I didn't have the ability to communicate, I had no skills, and it was hard to get the right job, so I finally came back."
>
> "To pay debt or bills"
>
> "Cannot afford to buy everyday goods"
>
> "To pay college and house bills"
>
> "To support me and my family members"

In these albeit brief answers, structural influences can be seen as having significant impact on the lives of these respondents. Beyond the need to earn money and being part of an economy that makes purchasing even "everyday goods" difficult, though other intersections with institutions and their compounding influence on the lives of individuals is also apparent. For instance, the need to support a family is not divorced from the economic drive to sell sex. Also, the expense of a college education was mentioned as a reason to return to commercial sex work.

Others reported that their reasons for returning to the commercial sex trade revolved around direct force by a pimp or organization (12%) and even violence (5%):

"The pimp, he grabbed me back"

"I was recruited by a pimp after leaving the first time. I did not know I was going to be re-exploited and trafficked again."

"The Mafia members of the company brought me back"

"I tried to 'break up\ leave my pimp many times. but he always guilted, manipulated or physically beat me to stay/come back"

For some, the pressure to return to the commercial sex trade came from family members (5%) or a relationship (17%):

"My boyfriend forced me to come back because he had no money"

"I came back for my boyfriend and I was afraid he wouldn't take care of him"

"My sister asked me to come back because I had nowhere else to go."

"My closest friend, she thought I had no better way to make money."

These anecdotes provide a helpful look into some of the varied reasons someone starts selling sex again once they have stopped. Some of the reasons for returning to the trade were positively correlated with how individuals categorized their involvement in the commercial sex trade. For instance, after running a Pearson chi square on the self-identified categories of selling/exchanging sex and the coded reasons for returning to the commercial sex trade and one significant correlation was reason returned and the selection of a "survivor of commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking" (p=.005, Pearson value= 16.633. One of the more notable connections was that all but one person who reported returning to the commercial sex trade for reasons pertaining to money also did not report being a victim of sex trafficking.

Table 18. Reasons for Returning to the Commercial Sex Trade if Left

Coded Reasons for Returning to Sex Trade	%
Family member forced	4.9
Because of a relationship/love	17.1
Money needed	48.8
Forced/pressure by non-family member	12.2
Violence	4.9
Other	12.2

Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative results from the online survey provide a comprehensive look as to the complex reality that individuals face when entering into the commercial sex trade. As discussed in earlier chapters, those experiences are not necessarily steeped in whether one identifies as a sex trafficking victim or sex worker, whether they consider themselves coerced or forced or whether they are exploring and curious. These factors do of course play a role but they do not tell the whole story. The significance of age 16 was a surprising addition as well as the takeaway of age 19 being the highest risk age variable to enter into the commercial sex trade. As predicted, age 18 was a significant factor as well, especially considering that 17 did not seem to be a significant age to enter into the commercial sex trade, and the inclusion of various negative events in the family, education, and work/economy are helpful to determine which factors may contribute to the age of entry during the transition to adulthood for individuals who have sold or exchanged sex. By highlighting the different ways the family, education, work and the criminal justice system play a role in entry into the commercial sex trade, a better understanding can be had of the various pathways that exist that make deeper grooves for some to fall into along their life path and more difficult to exit.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Many people have an image in their minds of who is a sex trafficking victim versus who is a

sex worker (or they apply other labels such as prostitute) that hang very squarely around the

idea of "choice." Sex trafficking is associated with being held against your will, kidnapping,

the removal of all choice in selling/exchanging sex in the commercial sex trade. Sex work

and prostitution are associated with agency, even if victimized or at risk of violence, agency

is touted as the defining factor here, having all of the choice. For some people in the

commercial sex trade, these associations match reality as can be seen in the qualitative data

in Chapter 9 – there are folks for whom sex work is a conscious choice, who have multiple

options for employment and find sex work to be empowering and fulfilling. On the other side

of the spectrum are those who are involved in the commercial sex trade completely against

their will and who do not have a choice in entering the commercial sex trade. This

dissertation and research is not disputing those realities at all, but my initial introduction to

the project revolved around a question about the individuals who fall somewhere in the

middle of those extremes where a person may not clearly meet those definitions yet those are

the labels that are applied. And this is where the definitions of sex trafficking and sex work

break down and where the question of choice is not a sufficient framing.

A Call for a Reframing

By focusing on the institutions of the family, education, work/economy, and the criminal justice system, the spotlight is moved from trying to determine how much of a choice someone has made and instead on the institutional factors that help carve pathways into the commercial sex trade for those folks that fall somewhere in the middle or even completely on one end or the other of the sex trafficking/sex work spectrum. By using an intersectional and sociological lens, it is transparent to see that this framing does not serve marginalized groups. If, as a society, we think that someone has chosen their circumstances, it becomes easier to blame the individual and key, ignore the structural influences of those choices. And for those who truly have a choice to sell sex, the role of privilege needs to be a part of that discussion.

Transition to Adulthood and a Focus on 18

Our laws follow this choice ideology. Under federal law, in order for someone to be considered a victim of sex trafficking versus criminally engaging in selling sex, that individual must prove force, fraud, or coercion. In other words, prove that your involvement in the commercial sex trade involved zero choice. There is an exception. Unless, that person is under 18, where any involvement in the commercial sex trade is considered means for sex trafficking victim status. And that status comes with some, albeit limited, resources and supports.

Using 18 or 19 as a marker for adulthood is not the main point here, we use this marker for a number of different transitions like military service, signing a contract, and we are treated differently within the criminal justice system. Theoretically (not always in practice),

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someone is tried differently as a juvenile than as an adult, and 18 is the marker that is used. But hypothetically, if you are picked up for stealing a bag of M&Ms ™ at 17 instead of 18, your sentencing may be different because of age but the definition of the crime itself doesn't change. You don't go from being a victim of a crime to a perpetrator of a crime by having a birthday. That is the case with sex trafficking and sex work. This distinction highlights the ways in which labels matter for those who sell sex that tells a story beyond the existing rhetoric of choice. If we can see that by having a birthday, someone's label changes from sex trafficking victim to sex worker, maybe we should start to question those labels. The call for questioning those labels becomes even more pivotal when that transition to adulthood and a shift in those labels means greater likelihood of entry into the commercial sex trade or continued involvement in the sex trade when histories of adverse experiences in childhood, mental health issues, skipping school, and the expectation of living on ones own accompany the increased probability of selling or exchanging sex.

The historical and societal context through which young people are transitioning to adulthood is also significant. Taking the lived realities of vulnerable populations into consideration also means that consideration for a society where service jobs are providing less-than a livable wage, where globalization and technology are replacing many of the low-skilled jobs that were available for earlier generations, as well as trends in increased housing prices, debt, and the presence of economic dependence and living with either family or non-spouses define the lived reality of many young adults transitioning to adulthood (Danziger and Rouse 2007). For the population surveyed in this study, the surprising finding of college education within this specific sample merits additional investigation. Additionally, the economic hardships cited

by many (39% report trouble paying the bills or missing rent payment) need to be put into the context of hardships of the existing economy for anyone transitioning to adulthood. Given the high propensity of anyone in this sample to experience childhood adverse experiences (99%) suggests the need to seek more information of what makes this group particularly vulnerable to entry into the commercial sex trade and whether cross-sections of past trauma and the role of gender (85% were women) are significant influences within the context of economic hardship. In other words, with the application of an accelerated transition to adulthood framing, further investigation is warranted regarding factors of gender and past trauma when young adults are having an increasingly difficult time making a living wage during this transition, especially when availability of supports like moving back with family are not viable as they are with peers who have not come from dysfunctional or abusive homes.

The bigger picture: Intersectionality and the Life Course

An intersectional approach means recognizing the ways in which institutional forces help to support some and oppress others. In the case of selling sex, for instance, when looking at the ways in which the economy interacts with opportunity for people to find employment, those who face more barriers to employment because of intersections of race, class, gender, and age are disproportionately drawn to other forms of making money. When some groups are more likely to experience childhood trauma in the family and are more likely to interact with the foster care system, the pathway into the commercial sex trade is different than those who do not. My interest lies in the institutional factors that contribute towards a pathway of selling sex (whether that's defined as sex trafficking or sex work – I have no trust in the

application of those labels), we cannot understand those institutional contributions without looking at how some groups may experience more supports than others. Intersectional analyses also helps in figuring out the barriers to exiting and who is seen as worthy of services. Those perceptions influence the fact that percentages of individuals experiencing trouble receiving services was almost as high or higher in some instances than those who actually received those services (see Figure 9 on page 112). The institutional framework that carves out pathways for people into the commercial sex trade have deeper grooves for some that make it more difficult to change course.

Recommendations From the Researcher

Inclusion of sex trafficking victims, sex workers, and anyone in between

Being involved in this research has made me keenly aware of debates occurring around sex trafficking and sex work. One example of such policy debate is the anti-trafficking legislation like the recent Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and Stop Engaging Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA) that appears to be a step forward in addressing sex trafficking and holding websites accountable for their role in promoting the commercial sex trade. This legislation is not popular among sex worker advocates as it has been cited as impeding the safety and livelihood of individuals engaging in sex work (Cole 2018). I bring this specific example up because its importance lies in how we label selling and exchanging sex. Since this legislation was seen as primarily anti-trafficking and was not at all connected to sex work and sex workers, those experiences were not taken into consideration when crafting the legislation. Likewise, I have attended a number of anti-trafficking events where the topic of decriminalization of sex work comes up and the primary response is "sex work is not sex

trafficking, they are totally separate." Yet, legislation aimed at addressing trafficking directly

affects the lives of people who identify as sex workers (or who don't identify as either as the

majority of individuals in my data report) and decriminalizing sex work would directly

influence the lives of people who are trafficked. If we instead looked at institutional factors

and brought all parties to the table before instituting new policies and legislation around sex

trafficking and sex work, we may be able to find solutions that work for all parties who sell

or exchange sex.

Focus on marginalized groups

The second suggestion is to consider the ways in which race, class, gender, and other

marginalized statuses intersect to form unique experiences and pathways into the commercial

sex trade. Having a deeper understanding of the ways intersections of marginalized statuses

influence personal and institutional experiences can be seen in examples like the

sexualization of black bodies and the controlling image of African American women as

sexually promiscuous (Collins 2000) means that women of color will experience selling sex

differently than white women and that violence is not only based in sexism but racism as

well. Trans women (especially trans women of color) are at particular risk of not only

needing to sell sex to support themselves economically because of job discrimination

(Bailey-Kloch, Shdaimah, and Osteen, 2015), but experience transphobia and are targets of

violence more than cis-women (Nemoto, Bödeker, and Iwamoto, 2011). This call for more

intersectional understanding leads into suggestions for future research.

Recommendations from Service Providers

During the pilot interviews, one question that was asked was how to address some of the

many institutional issues brought up in those interviews including how to effectively address

stigma and the cycle of selling sex. I share some of those suggestions with you now, from

folks who are on the front lines working with individuals affected by the many issues that I

have outlined in this dissertation.

Some of the service providers suggested that those who are held responsible should not be

the individuals who are most vulnerable but individuals (men) who are buying sex.

> I mean it's about time and there needs to be consequences. It's always about - oh we
> don't want to further embarrass the men. They have families. Well the women and
> children have families too!

> I think when you shift it away and put it on the men, it takes away. I think people now
> are realizing that women are deserving of getting out of this and having programs and
> giving people options and opportunities. Do you know what I mean? Not just for
> them but their kids.

The theme of showing individuals (particularly girls and women) who have sold or

exchanged sex that they are "worthy" and to change their thinking about how society has

labeled them.

> You know, so I think that it just needs to start at a really grassroots level, catching the
> kids when it's early. Teaching them that they are worth something. That they are
> valued. That they mean something. You know?

> I think it's changing the identity, so they've been told repeatedly by their pimps and
> often times by their family, "you're a whore, you're always going to be a whore."
> And that has really been beaten into them in multiple ways, not just physically beaten
> into them. So it's really breaking that identity and helping them see that there is
> something else.

One respondent suggested focusing on men and potential buyers and pimps but in a way that

offers support rather than perpetuating the cycle of violence in gangs and the criminal justice

system.

> I see this in our DYS committed juvs because ninety percent of our committed juvs
> are males. There are only about fifteen girls who are committed in this region.
> They're all boys. And I think about them because I see this in relation to gangs. That
> they are groomed by their families from being born they're put in gang colors. And
> it's reinforced their entire life, that this is who they are, what they have to be is their
> identity. And this is the parallel. So intervening at an early age with these young men
> and ensuring that they have the support systems they need and the services and sort of
> the corrective learning and the corrective messaging.

And finally, education was brought up, primarily in educating society and the role of trauma

was introduced to fully understand and connect the role of trauma to the life histories of

individuals who have sold or exchanged sex.

> Yeah, I think it's a multi-pronged response. I think it's targeting sex, even like stigma
> and stereotypes. The targeting the demand. Kind of educating the community on how
> detrimental this can be because I do think there's this cultural attitude about boys will
> be boys or that this is the oldest profession or that it's a victimless crime and we
> know that that is just not true and we know that the average age of entry for even
> adults who have been commercially sexually exploited is twelve to fifteen so really
> educating on the life circumstances and the abuse that both minors and adults who
> have been exploited have endured and that it's a trauma. So really just – because I
> don't think people are being malicious in most cases, I think a lot of the buyers are
> situational I think, abusers, so really getting education out there about how harmful
> and detrimental exploitation is and how real it is and how prevalent it is

Education around trauma was also mentioned in this final quote with the suggestion that

social support and having at least one person to provide mentorship or care was essential

Well I think DCF or others – service providers in their circle who are educated and understand what they can without being in the life, about what their experiences have been like and there is a – I'll repeat myself – there's a trauma-informed lens that understands the stages of change that supports the client at their own pace which is very challenging in a bureaucracy because we have time limits on stuff – and that they have, we talked about this earlier – they have a mentor, a solid person in their life.

Future Research

This research did not find particularly groundbreaking findings on race, class, and gender influences on the entry into the commercial sex trade. The majority of participants identified as white women and their experiences, though captured in this study, do not reflect all pathways into the commercial sex trade or even the additional ways the transition to adulthood influences that path.

The pilot interviews revealed that the foster care system is one institution that merits focus and investigation as to the vulnerabilities children involved in that system have to selling and exchanging sex particularly with a drop off in services at 18. The survey data did not yield a significant amount of individuals who have been involved in the foster care system so this area of research would be particularly helpful in filling in some of those gaps that were introduced in the service provider interviews in Boston. Specifically, looking at what factors are predictors versus protectors for entry into the commercial sex trade among foster children through the transition to adulthood would be an area of interest for future research.

Methodologically it was interesting to engage in an event history calendar to capture retrospective data about life events. The utilization of this tool and accessibility of such a tool in an online format would be helpful to future researchers looking to engage in event history

data collection. Survey development research would greatly benefit from the availability of such a tool so that researchers do not need to create a tool from scratch as I did for this project. I plan to look into ways to make the code and structure of the survey publically accessible following this research and develop it further so that it may be tested and used for future projects of my own and others as well.

Concluding Thoughts

I am incredibly appreciative of the participants who took their time to share their thoughts and experiences through the interviews and survey in this project. Through their lenses, a better understanding has been gained of the critical vulnerability that exists during the transition to adulthood, how labels can be both stigmatizing and personally irrelevant, and that trauma that happens in childhood influences our life course trajectories. I do hope I have done their stories justice and represent their experiences in a way that increases understanding but also pushes meaningful policy forward. There is much work left to do.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello,

We invite anyone over the age of 18 to participate in a UMass Boston research project to offer your experience and expertise to study major life events and explore the transition to adulthood for individuals who identify as:

Survivors of commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking

Have been controlled by another person to sell sex as a payment for drugs or other need

Exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs

Had sex for money because a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or family member asked or forced them

Has identified as a sex worker/made money selling sex.

This study is survivor-informed.

Your participation in this survey is estimated to take around 30 minutes. If you decide to participate, we will ask you about a number of life events that occur for both survivors and non-survivors. Some questions will be about exploitation and the sex trade but this is not the main focus of the study, instead, we are interested in learning more about your experiences within the larger context of your life.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time or you may choose not to answer any specific questions.

Your participation in this survey will help provide a necessary perspective in informing policy, best practices for service providers, and future research. As a thank you for your time in providing your expertise and experience, all participants will be provided with a $20 gift card.

Participation is confidential.
However, you will be asked to provide an email address which will only be used to email you the gift card information and follow up with an interview (only if that is something you have indicated wanting more information about).

This study has been approved by the

UMass Boston Institutional Review Board

For more information please email us at (study email address) or email the Principal Investigator of this study: Julianne Siegfriedt (Julianne.Siegfriedt@umb.edu), a PhD Candidate in the Sociology Department at UMass Boston.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY CONSENT FORM

UMASS BOSTON INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

University of Massachusetts Boston
Department of Sociology
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA. 02125-3393

Consent Form for the Study of Life Events: Survey

Thank you for your interest in this survey and study. We are asking you to take part in a research project to offer your experience and expertise to study major life events and explore the transition to adulthood for individuals who identify as survivors of commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking, exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs, have been controlled by another person to sell sex as a payment for drugs or other need, had sex for money because a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or family member asked or forced them, or has identified as a sex worker/made money selling sex. This study involves a survey about different life events. At the end of this survey, you may be asked to participate in an additional follow-up interview but are not at all required to do so.

The head researcher for this study is PhD Candidate, Julianne Siegfriedt, MA in the Department of Sociology at UMass Boston. Please read this letter and feel free to ask questions. You may contact Julianne directly with any questions at 617-750-7425 or email at <u>Julianne.Siegfriedt@umb.edu</u>. You may also contact the faculty advisor, Stephanie Hartwell, PhD at <u>Stephanie.Hartwell@umb.edu</u> or at 617-287-6529.

Description of the Project
The purpose of this research is to answer three questions about survivors:
  1. What obstacles with family, school, work, social, and criminal justice system exist?
  2. How did interactions with these institutions change after turning 18?
  3. What resources/supports were helpful and what supports would have been helpful?

Your participation in this survey is estimated to take around 30 minutes. If you decide to participate, we will ask you about a number of life events that occur for both survivors and non-survivors throughout different time periods in life. Each section will be about a certain subject area (like family or school for example) and after noting specific events, we will ask you to think about the time period (to the best of your ability) that the events took place. Some questions will be about exploitation and the sex trade but this is not the main focus of the study, instead, we are interested in learning more about your experiences within the larger context of your life. This survey will ask briefly about some illegal activities like selling sex, drug use, etc. so it is important that you know that what you answer will be kept **confidential** and will not be made available, published, or presented in any way that anyone could identify you. In fact, other than your email address, we will not be collecting any identifying information about you and your email address will only be used to email you the gift card information and follow up with an interview if that is something you indicate wanting more information about.

To thank you for participating in this research we will give you a $20 gift card. You get this gift card even if you decide to stop taking the survey, ask us to delete the data, or don't want to answer any question.

After the survey we will ask you if you know of anyone else that might be eligible for the survey and give you information about sending the link to other potential survivors. You helping us find other people to take the survey would help us describe the full range of people's experiences.

Risks or Discomforts
The main risks are that you may feel negative or disturbing feelings during the survey or after and that information about you will be inadvertently released. You may speak with the lead researcher, Julianne Siegfriedt, to discuss any distress or other issues related to your participation in this survey. You can also contact the 24-hour National Human Trafficking Resource Center for immediate help at 1 (888) 373-7888 (or text HELP or INFO to 233733).

Confidentiality
Your part in this research is **confidential**. This means that what you say will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to know it was you. We will not record your name or any other information that would allow someone to know it was you. Your survey will be attached to a code and that code will be used to connect to your follow-up interview if one is completed. At no point will we ask you to sign anything.

Voluntary Participation
It is up to you to decide if you want to participate in this research. If you do, you may stop talking with us at any time without any consequences. You can

also refuse to answer any questions. If you wish to stop participating in the survey, you may stop the survey at any time. Whatever you decide will in no way penalize you and you will still receive a gift card.

Rights
You have the right to ask questions about this research before you agree to participate and at any time during the survey. You can reach Julianne Siegfriedt at 617-750-7425 or at Julianne.Siegfriedt@umb.edu If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached at the following address: IRB, Quinn Administration Building-2-080, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393. You can also contact the Board by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5374 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

Would you like to participate in the research? You saying yes will be considered as consent.

YES   **NO**

Please keep a copy of this form for your records if you need to contact me. It is also okay to not keep this form for confidentiality. Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX Ca

PILOT INTERVIEW GUIDE: SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service providers in-depth interview guide

Background information:
- Current position/title?
-Goals of organization?
-Describe current role and role of your agency/department (in general and with respect to human trafficking).
-How long provided services to individuals in sex trade?
-Capacity provided services?
- When (days and times) are services available?

General sex trade questions:
-Describe the sex trade in Boston?
    a. Where are people selling sex? (street, hotels, online ads)? Probe for addresses or use map for where the sex is happening
-Describe the individuals you provide services to?
-Needs clients have? Where would funding be helpful?

-Situations typically contributed to clients entering sex trade? Age start?
-Circumstances that lead clients to seek services/help?
-Knowledge of previous trauma history (child sexual abuse, poverty).
-Client ever involved with Child Protective Services/DCF or Juvenile Justice.
    a. If so, did victim age out of the system.
-Any typical health needs sex trade victims have?
-How do sex trade victims typically address health needs?

-People served monthly? Annually? Seasonal nature to work?
-Common characteristics of the individuals you serve?
-Changes in sex trade economy in recent years?
-Sex trade facilitators (pimps) connected to one another? How?
-Sex trade victims connected to one another? How?
-    a. How extensive are their networks? (local, inter-state, and/or international?)

General Needs:
-Any needs you/your organization have in overcoming challenges?

-Massachusetts law help facilitate serving those involved in the sex trade? Make more difficult?
-Challenges to serving those involved in the sex trade?
-Differences in serving US citizen vs. foreign national victims and/or suspects?
-Instances where women decline certain services or types of assistance?
-Anyone you would like to provide services to who you do not currently?
-Any other organizations that you partner with? Who?
-Any types of organizations that you'd like to partner with but don't?

Three most recent case questions:
I'd like to talk about the *three most recent individuals* to whom you have provided services.
-First come into contact with person X?
-History receiving services from the government/NGOs?
- X's life history?
- How X began selling sex?
- How selling sex has influenced X's life?

-Your opinion, how do we break the cycle of:
       a. People buying sex
       b. People selling sex
       c. Pimps facilitating sales
-Stigma of selling sex?
       a. Suggestions?

-Any other information about the sex trade industry in Boston?
-Other organizations we should talk with for a good picture of sex trade in Boston? Other people within this agency?

APPENDIX Cb

PILOT INTERVIEW GUIDE: DCF VERSION

In-depth interview guide for DCF Workers about clients who identify as survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, previously having been sex workers, or who identify as neither but have exchanged sex for money or drugs

Background information:
- Current position/title? In your opinion, what is the overall goal of DCF?
-Describe clients you serve overall
-What are your caseloads like?

Before we get started, there are a lot of different terms that people use to describe prostitution, the sex trade, sex trafficking… and so on. What language do you use to describe the experience of your clients? (NOTE THIS AND USE IT THROUGHOUT INTERVIEW)*

Experience of sex _____ (insert preferred language: trade/traffic/exchange)
-What led to DCF involvement? Different than clients who are not at all involved in prostitution?
-What percentage of your clients would you say have had to sell or exchange sex either as minors or adults?
-What do you think is the biggest differing factor for those clients who have had to sell/exchange sex vs. those who haven't?
-What types of things might make you concerned that a client might have ties to prostitution?
-Generally speaking, under what circumstances have you seen your clients needing to sell sex?
-From your experience, can you describe in general some of the similarities you see of your clients who sell sex? (age, race, gender, family background, etc.)
-From your perspective, how does the sex trade/trafficking/exchange work before one turns 18? After turning 18? How much control do your clients have over who they have sex with? Over money? What role do pimps play?
-How are they being brought in to the sex trade/trafficking/exchange? (Process)
-Have you known clients that have tried to leave the sex industry/stop selling sex? Were they successful?
-Thinking about the most recent client you've had who sold/exchanged sex, can you tell me about them?
         1. What was their family background like?

2. What age did the individual become a DCF client? How long was person a client?
3. What issues did the client face?
4. Did the client ever try to stop/leave?
     a. What prompted trying to leave?
     b. Receive support in leaving (friend, social worker)?
     c. Did they return? If yes, why?

Family History:
- So now for clients in general who sell sex, do you notice any similarities with their family situation growing up? (include events like divorce, single parent, remarriage, incarceration, etc. as well as type of abuse/neglect)
- - Who were the members of their family growing up?

-Tell me about typical foster care and DCF experience for clients involved in prostitution – different placements, staying with family, etc. **(ask on average- if there is no typical answer, ask about most recent case)**

(Probe for: Age, any family reunification, temporary or permanent, placed with family or non-family members, any adoption or aging out?)

-To your knowledge, were many clients who sell sex abused (sexually, physically) or neglected in foster care by either a provider or someone else?

-Were there types of abuse that were typical (from family or providers)? Who was the typical abuser?

-Typically, did anyone in their families use drugs or alcohol while they were growing up? Addicted?

-How about the clients involved in prostitution themselves? Typically?

-Typically, was anyone in their families involved in the sex trade (survivor, pimp, purchaser of sex)? Do they talk about it openly?

-When do they start having kids typically (or what's the age range)?

Social Capital:

Education

-Tell me a little about what school was like for your clients who have sold sex.

    -(Probe) Typically, did they go to school regularly or were there instances where they would skip school?

    -If skip school, ask when, why, what was going on then?

    -Do they typically finish high school?

Housing/Social Connections

-For those who sell sex, while in DCF and before turning 18, where are they living (family, foster care, etc.)? What happens when they turn 18 and are they still under DCF care? Finally, what about those clients who age out at 18?

    a. For clients who age out (either at 18 or later) how do they find a place to live?

Financial

    -For those 18 and over, what is their financial situation like, typically?

    -(Other than selling sex) do clients have other sources of income as teens? As adults?

    -What barriers, if any, do they face in finding work?

Turning 18 and Transition to Adulthood
-How long do you typically stay in touch with clients after they turn 18?
-What is DCF doing to prepare clients for turning 18? In general? Those involved in prostitution?
-Can you explain what happens with DCF services when a client who sells sex turns 18? Is this different than your typical clients?
-What happens when clients turn 18? (signing back into services vs. services terminating)
-Tell me a little bit about the time around a client's 18th birthday. Does anything change around this time typically for clients who have sold sex? (prompt: How about with their family, supporting themselves, school, CJ system)
-Were there any supports or help that clients had before 18 that went away when they turned 18? Were there any supports/help that became available once they turned 18?
-Are there any other signs of adulthood? If a client signs into continued services after 18, when do those services end?

Interactions with law enforcement:
-Before they turned 18, do they typically have any interactions with police or the criminal court system?
     a. If yes – what were those like? And after turning 18?
(Probe)- Around what percentage of your clients who have sold sex run away before turning 18?
          b. On average, how often do they run away?
          c. What tends to cause them to run away?
-Are your clients ever arrested for prostitution? Other crimes? How many times on average? Before 18 and after?
-On average, what age is someone first arrested?
-Do your clients who sell sex typically have a criminal record?
    a. How has that impacted any other aspects of their life?
-Have clients ever reported being solicited by a police officer? If yes, how common is this? Does it happen before turning 18? After?

Services and Supports:
-Describe any services they regularly receive other than DCF (substance abuse, therapy, healthcare, social worker) – include before 18 and after.
-**Of your clients with children:** do they have regular childcare? What do they do for childcare?
-As adults, what % have someone in their life they can depend on? Who usually fills this role?
-What services do you feel they currently need? (Rank if multiple)
-In your opinion, what would be the ideal living situation for clients after they turn 18?

-We've discussed a number of difficult things that clients face, thinking about those, are there any interventions along the way that would have made things easier for them? (Probe for structural- education, CJ system, family, economic)

Is there anything else we should know about your clients who have sold/exchanged sex?

Make sure to say "clients in prostitution" and not just clients (every time)

Ask typical always, so the extraordinary isn't the default. If you start getting extraordinary answers, ask if it's typical?

Don't just interview social workers who work with this population, ask to interview social workers who might refer to that person.

APPENDIX D

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. We value your opinions and expertise. In each section you will be asked a series of questions about events that may have happened in your life. Following each list you will be asked to place these events in a timeline. We are asking that you answer the questions to the best of your knowledge and estimation.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFO
☐ Age (drop-down menu)
☐ Gender (drop-down menu)
☐ State of Residence (drop-down menu)
☐ Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply)
☐ Were you born in the US? (yes/no)
    ☐ If not where? (write-in)
    ☐ How long have you lived in the United States?
    ☐ Were you brought to the US by a trafficker?
☐ Do you identify as any of the following (Please check all that apply):
    ☐ Survivor of commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking
    ☐ Controlled by another person to sell sex as a payment for drugs or other need
    ☐ Exchanged sex for money, drugs, food, shelter, or other needs
    ☐ Someone has paid another person to have sex with you in exchange for food, shelter, or other needs
    ☐ Had sex for money because a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, or family member asked or forced you
    ☐ Being a sex worker or have you ever made money selling sex

FAMILY BACKGROUND
Who, if anyone, did you turn to for support growing up? (drop-down menu/check all that apply)
_____

While you were growing up, before turning 18…(check all that apply)
☐ A parent, guardian, or caregiver got married
☐ A parent got divorced
☐ A parent was addicted to substances (alcohol or drugs)
☐ A parent had mental health issues (depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar, etc.)
☐ A parent abused you (physically, sexually, or emotionally)
☐ A parent neglected you
☐ A parent experienced violence in the home
☐ A parent was arrested
☐ Someone else came to live with you (boyfriend or girlfriend of parent, aunt, uncle, etc.)
☐ You experienced homelessness

- ☐ You experienced abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional) by a non-parent
- ☐ You ran away
- ☐ Your family experienced poverty
- ☐ You worried about not having enough to eat
- ☐ You didn't have enough to eat
- ☐ You used substances (before turning 18)
- ☐ Did you feel like your life was threatened
- ☐ Other violence in household not mentioned above
- ☐ Other major family events not mentioned above? _____ _____

- ☐ Were you ever involved in foster care? (yes/no)
  - ☐ If yes:
    - ☐ How many places did you live while in foster care? (drop-down with ranges)
    - ☐ Did you experience any positive placements?
      - ☐ yes/no
        - ☐ If yes, how many?
        - ☐ If yes, what were the positive experiences? (drop-down with experiences)
    - ☐ Did you experience any negative placements?
      - ☐ yes/no
        - ☐ If yes, how many?
        - ☐ If yes, what were the negative experiences? (drop-down with experiences)
    - ☐ What age did you leave foster care?
    - ☐ If you "aged out" of foster care, did you sign yourself back in to receive additional benefits when you turned 18?
      - ☐ Why or why not?
    - ☐ What was your reason for leaving? (drop-down menu)
    - ☐ What role, if any, did turning 18 or leaving foster care have for you (open-ended)

——For all "yes" answers and "checks" will be asked to place in timeline——

EDUCATION
- ☐ Highest year of education (drop-down menu)
- ☐ Did you enjoy going to school?
  - ☐ yes/no

Did you…(check all that apply)
- ☐ Attend Pre-K
- ☐ Get an award at school
- ☐ See school as a source of success and fulfillment
- ☐ See school as a source of failure and disappointment
- ☐ Have a teacher you liked and connected to
- ☐ Have a teacher that made things difficult for you
- ☐ Apply to college
- ☐ Get into a college, but did not attend
- ☐ Felt like you were treated unfairly in school
- ☐ School felt like a struggle, always falling behind
- ☐ Skip school regularly at any period of time

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☐ Leave school for a period of time
     ☐ If so, how many times?
☐ Experienced abuse by a teacher (or someone else at school)
☐ Other major education events not mentioned above? _____

——For all "yes" answers and "checks" will be asked to place in timeline——

WORK/ECONOMY/HOUSING
Have you…
(define job as a legal profession to separate experiences of selling sex with other economic challenges)
☐ Applied for a part-time or full-time job?
     ☐ If so, PT, FT, both?
     ☐ If so, when did you apply for your first job?
     ☐ If before 18, when did you apply for your first PT or FT job as an adult?
☐ Had trouble finding a job
☐ Been employed part-time or full-time
     ☐ Part-time
     ☐ Full-time
☐ Been fired from a job
☐ Quit a job
☐ Lived on your own
☐ Had trouble making bills
☐ Had trouble finding housing
☐ Made above minimum wage
☐ Bought a house
☐ Struggled to pay rent (late or missed)
☐ Ever been evicted
☐ Lived with a significant other for financial reasons
☐ Lived with a family member for financial reasons
☐ Been financially supported by a significant other
     ☐ Was this person ever a trafficker? (yes/no)
☐ Other major work events not mentioned above? _____

——For all "yes" answers and "checks" will be asked to place in timeline——

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
Have you…(check all that apply)
☐ Dated
☐ Been married
☐ Been pregnant
☐ Had a child
☐ Had a healthy romantic relationship
☐ Lost an important friendship
☐ Struggled with trusting people
☐ Struggled with finding healthy relationships
☐ Struggled having relationships with your family as an adult
☐ Tried to reconnect with anyone as an adult when that was a strained relationship in the past
     ☐ If checked, would you categorize that attempt as a positive/negative experience?
☐ Had someone help you out when you needed it
☐ Gotten involved with any community organizations

☐ Other major events with social relationships not mentioned above? _____

——For all "yes" answers and "checks" will be asked to place in timeline——

EXPLOITATION (temporary title)
☐ Did you ever exchange or sell sex before 18?
☐ Did you ever exchange sex or sell after turning 18?
☐ At what age did you first exchange or sell sex/sexual favors? (drop-down menu)
☐ What were the circumstances around this exchange (open ended writing)
Have you…(check all that apply)
☐ Been asked by a family member to exchange sexual favors for money, drugs, or other compensation
☐ Had a romantic relationship with someone who sold you for sex?
☐ Experienced violence by a pimp
☐ Experienced violence by a client
☐ Ever been stalked
☐ Ever feel like your life was threatened
☐ Ever tried to leave the sex trade
    ☐ If yes, how many times? (drop-down menu)
    ☐ Did you return to/were brought back into selling/exchanging sex (yes/no)
    ☐ Can you describe who or what brought you back? (open-ended question)
☐ Used substances (drugs, alcohol) to cope
☐ Been addicted
    ☐ To what? (open ended answer)
☐ Ever been hospitalized for drug or alcohol use
☐ Struggled with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health issues
_____

☐ What do you do to take care of yourself (drop-down: exercise, go for a walk, religious activities, etc.)
☐ How do you react when you are in a stressful situation? (drop-down: take a break, eat more, exercise, drink, smoke, lie, steal, run away, cut)
☐ Other events not mentioned above? _____

——For all "yes" answers and "checks" will be asked to place in timeline——

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
Have you…(check all that apply)
☐ Ever been arrested
    ☐ If yes, how many times? (drop-down menu)
    ☐ If yes, what were the charges? (drop-down menu)
☐ Ever been detained but not charged
☐ Ever been convicted/found guilty
☐ Ever reported a crime to the police
☐ Ever had a negative interaction with a police officer
☐ Ever had a positive interaction with a police officer
☐ Ever been solicited/asked to do anything sexual by a police officer
☐ Had a criminal record
    ☐ If yes, experienced issues in other areas because of that record (housing, getting a job, etc.)
☐ Other events with the criminal justice system not mentioned above? _____

——For all "yes" answers and "checks" will be asked to place in timeline——

SERVICES
☐ Have you ever had a social service agency reach out to you to help? (drop-down menu)
While being exploited or as a result of your exploitation, have you ever <u>sought</u> services for:
☐ Substance use
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Mental health
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Health care clinic
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Emergency room
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ An agency to exit the commercial sex trade?
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
        ☐ If yes, what did they help you with? (drop down - housing/shelter, legal, mentoring, etc.)
☐ Domestic violence services
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Sexual assault services
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Legal services
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Employment services
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Family services (child care, custody, etc.)
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Housing services
    ☐ Did you receive those services?
☐ Other services not mentioned above? _____

Have you ever experienced trouble getting services you need for (or faced discrimination in these areas)...
☐ Health care
☐ Employment
☐ Housing
☐ School
☐ Police
☐ Legal aid
☐ Courts
☐ Family
☐ Domestic Violence
☐ Substance Use
☐ Mental Health
☐ Sexual Assault
☐ Agency to help exit sex trade

☐ If you would like to explain any of these experiences, please include explanation here (open-ended)

——For all "yes" answers and "checks" will be asked to place in timeline——

FINAL QUESTIONS
- ☐ Can you explain what it was like turning 18 and becoming a legal adult? (open-ended answer)
- ☐ What do you want society to know about selling/exchanging sex that you feel non-survivors don't understand? (open-ended)
- ☐ Is there anything else you would like the research staff to know about any of your answers? (open-ended)

APPENDIX E:

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE) QUESTIONNAIRE

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often …

 Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?

 or

 Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

 Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often …

 Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?

 or

Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

 Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever…

 Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

 or

 Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?

 Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

4. Did you often feel that …

 No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?

 or

 Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each

other?

 Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

5. Did you often feel that …

 You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?

 or

 Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you

needed it?

 Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

 Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

7. Was your mother or stepmother:

Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?

 or

Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?

 or

Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

 Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street

drugs?

Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt

suicide?

Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____ This is your ACE Score

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