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City of Roses: Sexual Exploitation in Portland, Oregon

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City of Roses: Sexual Exploitation in Portland, Oregon

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES

AND THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

By

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ABSTRACT

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Justice funded a report on child trafficking that revealed that Portland, Oregon is one of the national hubs for child sex trafficking. The goals of this thesis are to investigate the web of characteristics of larger Portland metropolitan area that have contributed to the high prevalence of sexual exploitation of women and children. This research is aimed to close the gap in our understanding of the extent and nature of Portland's local sex trafficking trade. An exploration of Portland's location and culture, especially its placement on the I-5 corridor, libertine sex culture, and the prevalence of legal and illegal sex businesses, allows us to start to understand the contributing factors of sexual exploitation in the Portland community. This thesis also investigates methods of recruitment and the sorts of persons who fall victim to sex trafficking and the economic structures that underlay this problem. Finally, possible solutions will be suggested to ameliorate sexual exploitation in the "City of Roses."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	
Introduction.....	13
Chapter One: Characteristics of Portland.....	21
I-5 Corridor.....	22
Portland International Airport.....	25
Chapter Two: Sex Culture of Portland.....	29
Zoning Laws, Licensing, and Fees.....	31
Strip Clubs.....	36
Chapter Three: Victims.....	39
Methods of Recruitment.....	39
Sex Workers.....	42
Minors.....	43
Homeless Population.....	45
Immigrants.....	47
Chapter Four: Economic Framework of Sex Trafficking.....	50
Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery.....	51
Seattle: A Case Study.....	55
Chapter Five: Solutions.....	60
Prevention Campaigns.....	60
Social Services.....	61
Stigmatization of Prostitution in the U.S.	64
Decriminalization of Prostitution in Sweden.....	65
Conclusion	68
Bibliography.....	72

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City of Roses: Sexual Exploitation in Portland, Oregon

"Truths and Roses have thorns about them." ~ Henry David Thoreau

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1851 Portland had only eight hundred residents. Eventually it grew and flourished to become Oregon's largest city, as it was one of the centers of the industrial boom in the Pacific Northwest, specifically connected to the harvesting and processing of timber. In order to keep up with the rate of Portland's expansion and accelerated growth, trees were cut down rapidly. Their stumps were left in place. This is the origin of one of Portland's nicknames: "Stumptown." Today nearly a quarter of a million people reside in the "City of Roses" and up to two million people live in the greater metropolitan area surrounding the city.

Portland sits geographically in a spectacular setting. Travel an hour outside of the metropolitan area and Mount Hood offers year-round skiing while the Oregon coast presents 350 miles of largely undeveloped, publicly accessible coastline. It is thriving city with a liberal reputation that embraces progressive values. Portland has earned a spot on many "best cities" lists in several major magazines including *Travel + Leisure*,¹ *Forbes*,² and *TIME* magazine.³ For this reason in part, Portland has become a desired place to live, as it features all the cultural advantages of a major city. Streets throughout the city have recently become home to a variety of food carts. It is possible to eat at a Portland food

¹ Jacqueline Gifford, "The Top 15 Cities in the United States" last modified July 12, 2017. <http://www.travelandleisure.com/worlds-best/cities-in-us#portland-oregon>

² Kurt Badenhausen, "Portland, Ore., Leads the Best Places for Business and Careers 2017" last modified October 30, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2017/10/24/portland-ore-rates-as-the-best-place-for-business-and-careers-2017/#8f3c7a5143ee>

³ "The 6 Best Big Cities," *Time*, last modified September 17, 2016, <http://time.com/money/collection-post/4490477/the-best-big-cities/>.

cart every night for two years before one would be forced to eat at the same place twice.⁴ One can find craft breweries or local coffee roasters on just about every block. The Portland metropolitan area proudly holds the title of the largest craft beer capital of the world due to its density of breweries.⁵ The city recently was the subject of its own hit comedy television show: *Portlandia*. This comedy introduced Portland's quirkiness to the nation.⁶ This trendy city is home to many emerging artists, eccentric shops, beautiful parks, bridges, bikes and more bikes. Portland is the leading city in bicycle commuting in the U.S.⁷ Other cultural icons include the Bagdad Theater, the world-famous Voodoo Doughnuts, and Powell's Books on Burnside.

Not only is the city a prime cultural destination, Portland has attracted multi-million-dollar companies as a world-class destination to set up shop with its emerging creative energy, phenomenal outdoor arena, and dynamic workforce. Portland and the surrounding suburbs have become breeding grounds for leading industries such as technology, manufacturing, healthcare, athletic and outdoor apparel. The area's popularity has attracted companies to headquarter in or near Portland's city center. Nike, Intel, Boeing, Columbia Sportswear, Adidas, and others have headquarters or have major divisions in the greater Portland area. Within the next year, Airbnb,⁸ Amazon,⁹ and

⁴ Spencer McKee, "52 Facts About Portland You Probably Didn't Know - Movoto" last modified February 24, 2018. <https://www.movoto.com/guide/portland-or/portland-facts/>

⁵ John Foyston, "World's best beer city is Portland, Oregon; 23 reasons why" last modified November 19, 2014. <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/portland-best-beer-city/index.html>

⁶ Greg Braxton, "Last chance to put a bird on it: 'Portlandia' closes up its painfully hip artisanal shop this season" last modified January 18, 2018. <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/la-et-st-portlandia-final-season-20180118-story.html>

⁷ Jennings Brown, "Most bike-friendly cities in the U.S" last modified July 12, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/america-most-bike-friendly-cities/index.html>

⁸ Mike Rogoway, "Airbnb confirms plans for Portland hub, plans to hire 160 this year" last modified March 14, 2014. http://www.oregonlive.com/siliconforest/index.ssf/2014/03/airbnb_confirms_plans_for_port.html

⁹ John Bell, "Amazon to nearly double Portland footprint with big lease in Broadway Tower" last modified January 16, 2018. <http://www.kgw.com/article/money/business/amazon-to-nearly-double-portland-footprint-with-big-lease-in-broadway-tower/283-508561879>

Google¹⁰ plan to expand further into the area. The tech corridor, anchored by Intel, is located in the western suburbs of Portland. This has led to the moniker of the “Silicon Forest” for its high-tech employment.¹¹ It is no wonder Portland was ranked third of the 200 best U.S. metropolitan areas for business and careers in *Forbes* magazine.¹²

Portland's popularity and success however has exacerbated many problems, some of which have a long and dark history. Portland's commercial and industrial growth has forced rapid expansion and construction which in turn has increased the cost of living greatly. Consequently, the Portland metro area was recently declared to be in a state of emergency for housing by the Portland City Council.¹³ As a result, crime and the homeless population are climbing at an alarming rate.¹⁴ Over the past two years, the homeless population in Multnomah County has increased by nearly 10 percent.¹⁵ It has been estimated that about three-fourths of Portland's homeless are addicted to drugs or alcohol, and roughly half struggle with mental illness.¹⁶ Homelessness in Portland is caused in part by rising rents, lack of low-income affordable housing, few employment opportunities for unskilled workers, low availability of affordable health, mental health and addiction care, and is exacerbated by the mild climate. Today, Portland has one of the highest percentage of homeless youth in the nation.

¹⁰ Mike Rogoway, “Google opens new, \$600 million Oregon data center” last modified August 28, 2017. http://www.oregonlive.com/silicon-forest/index.ssf/2015/04/google_opens_new_oregon_data_c.html

¹¹ Joseph Cortright, “Growing the Silicon Forest” (thesis, Portland State University, 2000), 7-12.

¹² Badenhausen, "Portland, Ore., Leads the Best Places for Business and Careers 2017."

¹³ Jessica Floum, "Portland 'housing emergency' and renter protections up for extension at Portland City Council" last modified October 04, 2017.

http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/10/portland_housing_emergency_and.html

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Michael J Totten, "Portland's Homeless Challenge" last modified March 08, 2016. <https://www.city-journal.org/html/portland%E2%80%99s-homeless-challenge-14185.html>

Along with the housing crisis and rise of homelessness, the Portland community, like many large cities in the United States, combats violence. It is not uncommon to hear of altercations, shootings, stabbings, and other violent crimes when tuning in to the local news. Some of this violence is caused by high racial tensions in local neighborhoods.¹⁷ Gentrification of local neighborhoods due to rapidly increasing property values in the city has led to landlords evicting tenants so they can remodel and raise rents.¹⁸ Recent audits found leasing agents and landlords discriminating against people of color by citing higher deposits, rent rates, and additional fees.¹⁹ Racism in Portland persists today, but it is often hidden in rent hikes, eviction notices, and even violence.

In the aftermath of the Great Depression, Portland became increasingly racist. At the time, Portland was one of the most openly racist cities outside of the south. Oregon openly enacted racial laws that legally excluded African American and minority populations from employment, residence in certain areas of the city, exclusion from restaurants and theaters, and some laws even prohibited interracial marriages.²⁰ At the height of WWII, the Oregon Shipbuilding Company was established in Portland for the construction of ships used during the war. Minority laborers from across the nation flooded into the area to lend their efforts which created a severe housing shortage. In order to accommodate the workers of the shipyards, a temporary housing project was constructed in less than a year. In 1942, Vanport was established.

¹⁷ Alana Semuels, "The Racist History of Portland, the Whitest City in America," last modified July 22, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/07/racist-history-portland/492035/>

¹⁸ Melanie Sevckenko, "Soaring rents in Portland lead to more evictions and homelessness" last modified February 11, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/feb/11/portland-oregon-housing-rent-homelessness>

¹⁹ Floum, "Portland 'housing emergency' and renter protections up for extension at Portland City Council."

²⁰ Kirk Johnson, "Portland Killings Dredge Up Legacy of Racist Laws in Oregon" last modified June 04, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/04/us/portland-killings-racist-laws-oregon.html>

Vanport was never meant to become an established community. It was built as a temporary solution to house temporary workers. The cheap and rushed construction of Vanport was made up of “cracker-box houses” that lacked solid foundations.²¹ At its height, the 40,000 residents of Vanport made it Oregon's second largest city.²² African Americans and minorities made up a large part of the migratory population, therefore Portland's racial profile began to change.²³ On May 30th of 1948, the makeshift railroad dike holding back the Columbia River broke, flooding the Vanport community. Within ten minutes the second largest city in Oregon was demolished. The flood took the lives of fifteen people and displaced the majority of African American and minority populations of Oregon.²⁴ The line of racial discrimination hardened as it was impossible for families of color to find housing in only the areas they were legally allowed to reside in.²⁵ The legacy of Vanport sheds an uncomfortable light on Portland's racist history and discriminatory housing policies.

Issues of affordability, entrenched racism, gentrification, and homelessness may seem at odds with the reputation of this city known for its progressivism. Before Portland was known as a progressive city, it was known as a western port town. Home to mainly men during its settlement period, laws were lax and lawlessness reigned. Libertine attitudes towards drinking, gambling, and petty crimes were the order of the day. Even by the start of the 20th century, Portland had a reputation as a city with an extensive criminal

²¹ Laura Lo Forti, "Digging History: Oregon's First African Americans" last modified January 20, 2016. <https://www.vanportmosaic.org/blog/2016/1/20/digging-history-oregons-first-african-americans>

²² Natasha Geiling, "How Oregon's Second Largest City Vanished in a Day" last modified February 18, 2015. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/vanport-oregon-how-countrys-largest-housing-project-vanished-day-180954040/>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

history.²⁶ This libertine attitude is seen today in another horrible plight faced by this city: sex trafficking. Portland's has long been entangled with the scandal of sex trafficking and prostitution. In fact, Oregon's laws both reflect and contribute to Portland's libertine attitude towards sexual freedom. Consequently, Portland's legal and illegal sex industry continues to thrive because of it. The dark side of Portland can be witnessed simply by taking a drive along streets such as NE Sandy Boulevard and 82nd Avenue where prostitution runs rampant in plain sight.²⁷ Many under-age girls, many of whom are from minority or immigrant populations, can be observed lingering near hourly motels that have acquired a reputation for drug use and prostitution.²⁸ This thesis seeks to examine the prominence of sex trafficking in the Portland metropolitan area. Central to this study is the examination of Portland's libertine attitude toward sex-oriented businesses, its geographical location in the Pacific Northwest, and the high percentage of sex workers and homeless youth *per capita* in the metropolitan area which contributes directly to these problems. The intention of this study is to come to a deeper understanding of how Portland's culture and location plays a large role in the sex trafficking of female adults and children for commercial gain. This study will also examine various responses of the community, law enforcement, lawmakers, and social service providers to try to provide workable solutions to a seemingly intractable problem.

In February of 2009, a FBI-coordinated sting successfully rescued underage girls of sex trafficking in Portland.²⁹ Local and federal law enforcement set up "meets" in

²⁶ Semuels, "The Racist History of Portland, the Whitest City in America."

²⁷ Anna Griffin, "Sex for sale rules 82nd Avenue again" last modified September 14, 2008. http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2008/09/sex_for_sale_rules_82nd_avenue.html

²⁸ "A Guide to Crime Prevention in overnight Lodging," Brochures RSS, May 01, 2008 <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/31556>

²⁹ Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Experts in child prostitution "hub" Portland say: Look behind stats for real picture" last modified June 10, 2015. <http://www.invw.org/2011/01/14/portland-story-on-sex-trafficking/>

various, undisclosed locations with girls suspected of being trafficked for commercial sex. As the officers arrived on the scene, seven underage girls were rescued and moved to safe locations while adult prostitutes, pimps, and johns were arrested.³⁰ In Oregon, traffickers convicted of "compelling prostitution" typically face prison time, and buyers are charged with prostitution usually face probation.³¹ Operations such as this one have revealed the extent of these problems in Portland. In some studies, Portland is listed as the number one city in the nation for underage prostitution.³² While rescuing and helping victims rebuild their lives is laudable, preventing exploitation from the start should be the ultimate goal. Inaction and permissive attitudes breed the exploitation of women and children in the commercial sex industry. Sexual freedom does not need to come at the price of a young girl's childhood. It is a horribly sad fact that a destination city known for its vibrancy, beauty, quality of life, high levels of education, and progressive values, is one of the primary centers for sex trafficking in the United States.

This study will examine many factors that contribute to Portland being rated as one of the most notorious cities for underage sex trafficking and prostitution. The first chapter will investigate what makes Portland a destination city for sex trafficking, such as its location on the West Coast, the I-5 corridor, and the Portland International Airport. The second chapter will examine Portland's sex culture, including an examination of the prevalence of legal and illegal sex businesses. The third chapter examines the sorts of persons who fall victim to sex trafficking. The fourth chapter investigates the economics

³⁰ Michal Elseth, "Portland's dark world of child sex trafficking" last modified July 28, 2010.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jul/28/portlands-dark-world-of-child-sex-trafficking/>

³¹ "2015 Analysis and Recommendations Oregon," Shared Hope International, accessed March 21, 2018, http://sharedhope.org/PICframe5/analysis/PIC_AR_2015_OR.pdf

³² Christopher Carey and Lena Teplitsky. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area*. Portland State University, University Studies Program, Office of Academic Affairs, 2013.

of sex trafficking. Finally, chapter five provides possible solutions for ameliorating sexual exploitation in the “City of Roses.”

CHARACTERISTICS OF PORTLAND

"He that sows thorns should never go barefoot." ~ Benjamin Franklin

For nearly a century Portland was dubbed "The Forbidden City of the West." It was considered one of the most dangerous port cities in the world.³³ Between 1850 and 1941, Old Town/Chinatown Portland was made up of an intricate system of underground tunnels that linked together basements of hotels and taverns with the docks of the Willamette River.³⁴ These underground passageways were known as the Shanghai Tunnels, used to avoid traffic from the streets above and guard the ships' cargo from the ubiquitous rain. The Shanghai Tunnels, although ostensibly built for the legitimate practices of the cargo ships, were also used to carry out illicit deeds.³⁵ At the time, Chinatown was considered the center of gang-related activity, and it is believed that gambling, drug-running, kidnapping, and prostitution took place in the depths of the tunnels.³⁶ Women were told to avoid Old Town Portland so they would not be kidnapped and sent to a foreign country as prostitutes.³⁷ Portland, known as the toughest port along the west coast, has an extensive history of black market criminal activity and prostitution. Unfortunately, these activities continue today throughout the metropolitan area.

Portland is often cited as the city with the highest rate of juvenile sex trafficking in the country.³⁸ The high rate of sexual exploitation is due in part to the physical

³³ K.C. Dermody, "8 Things You Didn't Know You Could Do in Portland" accessed February 25, 2018. <http://bestofthenorthwest.com/northwest-travel-ideas/unique-things-to-do-portland/>

³⁴ James B., "Portland's Shanghai Tunnels" last modified June 20, 2013. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/portland-s-shanghai-tunnels>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Finn J.D. John, "Opium culture a long-forgotten part of the urban underworld" last modified February 2, 2014. <http://offbeatoregon.com/1402a.opium-culture-portland-urban-underworld.html>

³⁷ B., "Portland's Shanghai Tunnels."

³⁸ "Portland," Youth Ending Slavery (YES), accessed February 25, 2018, <https://www.youthendingslavery.org/portland.html>.

characteristics of Portland. This city provides easy accessibility for traffickers to transport victims. Victims are transferred along the I-5 corridor and flown in and out of the Portland International Airport.³⁹ Portland often serves as a pit stop for traffickers traveling along the I-5 route that links Canada to Mexico.⁴⁰ International access through the Portland International Airport makes the Portland metropolitan area susceptible to sexual exploitation.⁴¹ For these reasons Portland has become a city known for sex tourism.⁴²

Interstate 5 Corridor

Interstate 5 is a major corridor that links the entire western U.S. with Mexico and Canada. It is known as the “West Coast Track.”⁴³ The route allows passage through major cities and state capitals of California, Oregon, and Washington. The heavily travelled route is used by individual travelers who are transitioning to and from nearby cities and is used heavily by companies that transport their commercial goods along the coast. However, this corridor also is used to transport women and girls exploited by the sex industry.⁴⁴ Seattle law enforcement has reported that there is a Washington state circuit between Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma and a regional circuit connecting Washington, Oregon, California cities, and even, Las Vegas, Nevada.⁴⁵ Criminal justice authorities and even captured offenders report that traffickers use informal travel circuits

³⁹ "Portland," Youth Ending Slavery (YES).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Carey and Teplitsky, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area*.

⁴³ Dylan Wells, "On the Track: Sexual Exploitation along the I-5 Corridor" last modified January 9, 2017. <http://uchicagogate.com/articles/2017/1/9/on-the-track-sexual-exploitation-along-the-i-5-corridor>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Meredith Dank, Bilal Khan, P. Mitchell Downey, Cybele Kotonias, Debbie Mayer, Colleen Owens, Laura Pacifici, and Lilly Yu. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2014.

and networks to facilitate the movement of victims to different cities.⁴⁶ Local law enforcement acknowledged that travel circuits may evolve over time in response to enhanced law enforcement activity in specific cities.⁴⁷ The track from Vancouver, British Columbia to the U.S.- Mexico border of Tijuana allows traffickers to travel across state lines from city to city with their victims. Traffickers travel to avoid police crackdowns or attend major events that promise substantial crowds.⁴⁸ Traffickers also report travelling to recruit new victims or market victims as “fresh faces” in the local underground commercial sex economy.⁴⁹ In some circumstances, traffickers do not even exit the highway, instead their business is conducted out of rest areas.⁵⁰ In 2012, vice detectives from Seattle and Portland estimated that there are approximately 300 to 500 child prostitutes trafficked along the I-5 corridor on a monthly basis.⁵¹ It is imagined that this number has likely increased as these victims are taken along the “West Coast Track” and sold for commercial sex, they make their trafficker hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.⁵²

In many ways, Washington is a model state. It has adopted strict anti-human trafficking laws and funded advocacy and preventive measures. Washington was the first state to pass a law criminalizing trafficking. Under the law, it is a serious felony to recruit, harbor, transport, or obtain any person for labor or services using force, fraud, or

⁴⁶ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Wells, "On the Track: Sexual Exploitation along the I-5 Corridor."

⁵¹ <https://depts.washington.edu/womenctr/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Microsoft-SPD-one-pager.pdf>

⁵² Wells, "On the Track: Sexual Exploitation along the I-5 Corridor."

coercion.⁵³ *Seattle Against Slavery*, an organization working to prevent human trafficking, initiated a campaign aimed to help victims identify themselves, acknowledge their rights, and access services through informative posters. Through fundraising efforts, informative posters have been permanently installed in twenty-three highway rest stops across Washington State.⁵⁴ Rest areas offer a strategic location to present information to help sex-trafficking victims. “This is really targeted on people who need help,” said Robert Beiser, Interim Executive Director of *Seattle Against Slavery*. He continues, “People who are in a situation they don’t want to be in, who are forced to work or forced into prostitution and want to find a way out, and this will help them connect with the services they need.”⁵⁵ The goal is to provide a trafficking hotline phone number and encourage victims to call. The poster is translated into English, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese to target ethnic groups that are at the highest risk for being trafficked along the west coast. “Foreign nationals are a more vulnerable population,” Beiser said, “because they don’t necessarily know their rights. They don’t have connections to government organizations, and they might not have comfort with connecting to government organizations who would offer them protection.”⁵⁶ Similarly, the *No One Should Be Forced* campaign effort in Washington State began during the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics to combat the increase in trafficking that occurs during large sporting events. This initiative yielded impressive results. The National Human

⁵³ Cynthia Shepherd Torg. "Human trafficking enforcement in the United States." *Tul. J. Int'l & Comp. L.* 14 (2005): 503.

⁵⁴ "No One Should Be Forced Campaign," SAS, accessed February 25, 2018. <http://www.seattleagainstsavery.org/no-one-should-be-forced/>.

⁵⁵ Sean Duncan, "Poster campaign targets human trafficking along I-5" last modified May 22, 2012. <http://www.seattleglobalist.com/2012/05/22/rest-stop-poster-campaign-targets-human-trafficking/3888>

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Trafficking Hotline reported that calls from Washington state dramatically increased at the time.⁵⁷ Oregon should look at these results and adopt similar policies.

California, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington State could all bolster investigation efforts by coordinating law enforcement strategies, communicating about cases, and sharing investigative findings. Federal-level coordination remains critical to combat regional and national circuits and networks.⁵⁸ Studies indicate that traffickers modify their travel circuits based on law enforcement attention. To dismantle travel circuits effectively, coordinated work across the West Coast will be required.⁵⁹ By sharing knowledge of local travel circuits and networks, statewide taskforces could disrupt the movement of commercial sexual exploitation.

Portland International Airport

Helping communities identify locations where victims are most vulnerable to recruitment and trafficking is necessary to preventing commercial sex trafficking. Locations for such solicitation surround us, from the rest stops along the I-5 interstate to the Portland International Airport. Air transportation is frequently used by traffickers to transport victims from one place to another. According to Interpol, “victims are trafficked internationally into the United States by plane, boat or unidentified means.”⁶⁰ Interpol reported evidence in the early 2000s gleaned from survivors: “Some survivors traveled first to South Africa, acquired false identification documents, and then entered into the United States through international airports.”⁶¹ The Portland International Airport is the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Nichols, *Sex trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*.

⁶¹ Ibid.

largest airport in the state of Oregon, acting as a joint military and civil airport. This airport conducts the majority of the state's cargo and passenger travel. It provides domestic connections and direct flights to most major cities across the United States and hosts a large number of international flights. To date, no reliable data exist to provide Oregon state policymakers with a verifiable and detailed comprehension of the commercial sex trade network that exists within the Portland International Airport. This researcher was unable to obtain valid data that would provide a deeper understanding of how the network of sex trafficking that occurs in the Portland International Airport contributes to Portland's local commercial sex trade. Without this detailed knowledge, interventions and indictments become very difficult.

However, by increasing awareness, preventive measures, security, and training, individuals can be equipped to recognize and report cases of sex trafficking. Education drives awareness and awareness drives prevention of sex trafficking on a global scale. Airline companies, the Transportation Safety Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and international airports like PDX have increased their efforts to combat commercial sex trafficking. The Portland International Airport is in the ideal position to advance efforts by making their customers and staff aware. PDX could have a hand in preventing the 40,000 to 50,000 people who are trafficked across the U.S. borders. The U.S. State Department's latest figures have shown between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked internationally each year.⁶² Education and training are key to recognizing potential perpetrators and victims.

⁶² Eva Grey, "Preventing human trafficking at airports" last modified November 08, 2017. <http://www.airport-technology.com/features/featurepreventing-human-trafficking-at-airports-5814318/>

One agency is trying to educate airline employees. The *Airline Ambassadors International* conducts and develops preventive measures and awareness training for those involved with the airline and travel industry.⁶³ Trainers for *Airline Ambassadors International* present ways to identify trafficking situations correctly, and hand out wallet cards and posters to highlight potentially dangerous situations.⁶⁴ Flight crews are trained to recognize behavioral indicators of sex trafficking, such as physical or emotional abuse, branding or symbolic tattoos, and signs of anxiety or fear among their passengers.⁶⁵ Victims often avoid eye contact, cannot speak for themselves, are not appropriately dressed, etc.⁶⁶ They learn to ask questions of potential victims to elicit whether or not they are able to provide their destination or flight information. In most cases, traffickers purposely withhold the location to which they are traveling, the job the victim will have, or even their identification. The victim's identification is withheld to render them helpless in an unfamiliar area of the country. Thus, they feel trapped and without recourse which prevents them from escaping. Airline employees are trained to contact law enforcement professionals to intervene and assess the situation.

Some airports have even found clever ways to relay help to victims without alerting their traffickers. Advertisements around airports have displayed the trafficking hotline number with dashes placed non-traditionally to make it easier for victims to reach out.⁶⁷ Placards and advertisements with the National Human Trafficking Hotline number, 888-3737-888, have been strategically placed in bathroom stalls and near baggage claim

⁶³ Frank Laczko and Marco A. Gramegna, "Developing better indicators of human trafficking," *The Brown Journal of world affairs* 10, no. 1 (2003): 179-194.

⁶⁴ Laczko and Gramegna, "Developing better indicators of human trafficking," 179-194.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 179-194.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 179-194.

⁶⁷ Scott McCartney, "A New Push Against Human Trafficking on Flights" last modified December 13, 2017. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-new-push-against-human-trafficking-on-flights-1513178860>

in major airports such as the McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas.⁶⁸ Due to the high volume of travelers in and out of Las Vegas, there is currently an initiative underway to engrave the National Human Trafficking Hotline number on the underside of soap bars in hotels.⁶⁹ By displaying the hotline number in discrete locations, this increases the chance for victims to reach out without flagging suspicions of their trafficker. Airports are used as a mode of transportation for trafficking women and children for commercial sexual exploitation.⁷⁰ By taking preventive measures at the Portland International Airport, potential perpetrators could be deterred from trafficking women and children for commercial gain.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ McCartney, "A New Push Against Human Trafficking on Flights."

⁷⁰ Ibid.

PORTLAND'S SEX CULTURE

"There's no dearth of kindness in this world of ours; Only in our blindness we gather thorns for flowers." ~ Grantland Rice

According to the International Human Rights Clinic at the Willamette University Law School, Portland has the largest legal sex industry *per capita* in the country.⁷¹ In 2011, *TIME* magazine published an article titled "Oversexed Oregon: Top 10 Most Promiscuous U.S. Cities." This study announced that Portland is one of the most "lustful" cities in the nation.⁷² The popular dating site *OkCupid* gathered data and calculated the number of people seeking "casual sex" and published that Portland has the highest percentage among cities.⁷³ In August of 2015, the infamous infidelity site *Ashley Madison* was hacked exposing 173,666 users who had accounts listing Oregon as their home state.⁷⁴ Further analysis of the data revealed that the highest concentration of subscribers had addresses in downtown Portland.⁷⁵ This should come as no surprise to residents of Portland, as its sex-centric culture offers an array of adult entertainment around the city. *Seattle Times* reporter Jim Brunner stated that Oregon is a place "where a liberal free-speech clause in the state constitution and several rulings by the state Supreme Court have rendered strip clubs and other sexually oriented businesses nearly

⁷¹ Tristan Burnett et al., "Modern Slavery in Our Midst: A Human Rights Report on Ending Human Trafficking in Oregon," *International Human Rights Clinic at Willamette University College of Law*, June 2010.

⁷² Megan J. Gibson, "Oversexed Oregon: Top 10 Most Promiscuous U.S. Cities" last modified August 19, 2011. <http://newsfeed.time.com/2011/08/19/oversexed-oregon-top-10-most-promiscuous-u-s-cities/>

⁷³ Joseph Lamour, "OkCupid Reveals the Horniest State In America" last modified January 13, 2016. <http://www.mtv.com/news/2728147/okcupid-statistics-2015-2016/>

⁷⁴ Douglas Perry, "Portland may be U.S.'s kinkiest city, but it's far from tops for Ashley Madison users" last modified August 29, 2015.

http://www.oregonlive.com/living/index.ssf/2015/08/portland_is_kinkiest_city_but.html

⁷⁵ Ibid.

untouchable.”⁷⁶ Take a drive through the city and one finds a plethora of adult video stores, coffee stands with bikini baristas, erotic theaters, escort services, gentleman’s clubs, private “lingerie modeling” establishments, nude establishments, sex shops, swingers clubs, and even BDSM dungeons. The array of sexually explicit businesses contributes to the acceptance of Portland’s sex culture. In comparison to major cities, Brunner concludes that Portland is in a league of its own: “While Seattle has four strip clubs, and Dallas, another trafficking hotspot, has three, Portland has more than 50 all-nude strip clubs within the city limits. One directory lists forty erotic dance clubs, forty-seven all-nude strip clubs, thirty-five adult businesses, and twenty-one lingerie ‘modeling shops.’”⁷⁷ Adults can even attend live sex shows due to Oregon’s Supreme Court ruling that extended free-speech protections to these establishments.⁷⁸ Even the greater outdoors of Portland hosts a multitude of clothing optional resorts, nude swimming events, naked bike rides, nude beaches, and plenty of nude bathhouses, and similar clothing optional natural hot springs. It is not an illogical assumption that Portland’s thriving legal sex industry and libertine sex culture contributes to attitudes towards illegal sexual activities. Additionally, the city’s large legal sex industry provides camouflage for illegal activities, including sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and children. Due to tolerant attitudes and the influences of the legal sex industry, the Portland metropolitan area has a growing reputation as a hub for sex trafficking.

⁷⁶ Jim Brunner, "When it comes to strip clubs, Portland has nothing to hide" last modified November 01, 2006. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/when-it-comes-to-strip-clubs-portland-has-nothing-to-hide/>

⁷⁷ Brunner, "When it comes to strip clubs, Portland has nothing to hide."

⁷⁸ Zachary Crockett, "Why Does Portland Have So Many Strip Clubs?" last modified June 17, 2015. <https://priceconomics.com/why-does-portland-have-so-many-strip-clubs/>

Zoning Laws, Licensing, and Fees

Lax zoning laws, liberal issuance of licenses, and minimal fees influence the ongoing growth of the legal sex industry in Portland. In 1996 *The League of Oregon Cities*, a government entity that works to “help local government better serve its citizens of Oregon,” released the *Regulation of Adult Businesses*.⁷⁹ The regulations were updated in 2010 in order to combat concerns and questions regarding the regulation of sexually explicit adult business. They state that a city such as Portland may exercise its power to regulate sexually explicit adult businesses, but any such limitations are constrained by Oregon’s Constitution. Certainly, this is referring to a particular clause in the Constitution ratified in 1859. Article 1: Section 8 states the following:

No law shall be passed restraining the free expression of opinion, or restricting the right to speak, write, or print freely on any subject whatever; but every person shall be responsible for the abuse of this right.

The ambiguity of Article 1: Section 8 has required further interpretation by Oregon’s Supreme Court. Plaintiffs appearing before this court have won cases that have secured the protection of nudity at strip clubs as a form of freedom of speech and expression. After 160 years of being signed into law, the Oregon Constitution, as currently interpreted through case law, has resulted in Portland hosting the highest number of strip clubs *per capita* in the U.S. Since the release in 1996 of the *Regulation of Adult Businesses*,⁸⁰ Oregon’s free speech protections have been reinforced and expanded:

⁷⁹ The League of Oregon Cities, *The Regulation of Adult Businesses*, last modified December 2010. <https://www.orcities.org/Portals/17/A-Z/LOCAAdultBusinesses.pdf>

⁸⁰ Ibid.

In this state, any person can write, print, read, say, show or sell anything to a consenting adult even though that expression may be generally or universally considered ‘obscene’...Appearing nude or exposing one’s genitals in public, can constitute symbolic conduct and be a form of expression under Article 1: Section 8.⁸¹

From this statement, it is very clear that the League of Oregon Cities defends a very liberal definition of freedom of speech and expression in all forms. However, the downside of such interpretations is that Portland condones and sanctions legal establishments that can serve to legitimize various several practices which may lead to illegal activities. At the very least, criminal groups use these businesses as cover for many illegal activities.

In many major cities throughout the United States, zoning laws require nude establishments to remain 1,000 feet from “sensitive use areas” such as bus stops, licensed daycares, healthcare facilities, places of worship, and schools. Such laws restrict the opening of sexually explicit adult businesses. In turn this forces many prospective strip club owners to buyout a club that has already been licensed and zoned for sexually explicit entertainment. In contrast, Portland’s zoning laws are slanted in favor the legal sex industry. This has resulted in a large increase of strip clubs and sexually explicit entertainment venues. These lax regulations are reflected in a statement issued by the of League of Oregon Cities’ *Regulation of Adult Businesses*: “Adult businesses may be zoned and regulated, however, but only the same as other commercial enterprises.”⁸²

⁸¹ The League of Oregon Cities, *The Regulation of Adult Businesses*.

⁸² Ibid.

Therefore a business cannot be denied access to a location in Oregon solely due to the nature of its sexual content. The statement continues: “If the court finds that the adult business is legally within a zone designated for businesses, and yet the city seeks to deny the continuation of or establishment of the adult business, the zoning ordinance probably will be struck down as content-based.”⁸³ If a sex-oriented adult business attempts to locate near a residential area with surrounding businesses that are already established, it cannot be denied solely on account of its sexually explicit nature: “Prohibiting the establishment of an adult business within a residential zone will be upheld so long as no other businesses are allowed in the residential zone.”⁸⁴ Additionally, the sexually explicit establishment cannot be denied access on the basis of hypothetical, harmful effects of the adult business, such as attendant drug use or the lowering of property values.⁸⁵ Zoning laws may not be based on adult content alone: “Even if the city is able to show a court that its decision to prohibit the adult business is based on research that demonstrates the harmful effects of adult businesses, let alone hypothetical harms, the court may still strike the ordinance down as content-based.”⁸⁶ League of Oregon Cities’ regulations are in place to ensure zoning laws do not discriminate between sexually oriented adult businesses and other businesses.

Not only are zoning laws regulated, but governing licenses and fees are carefully screened to prevent municipalities from explicitly regulating adult-oriented businesses differently from other businesses. As with zoning laws, licensing regulations and fees may not discriminate between adult businesses and other businesses. A city cannot refuse

⁸³ The League of Oregon Cities, *The Regulation of Adult Businesses*.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

to license an adult business on the grounds that it is an adult business because this would be a judgment based solely on the content of the free expression of the business. The League of Oregon Cities also acknowledges any attempt at revoking licensing privileges due to sexual content alone will be prohibited: “For example, a city cannot refuse to license an adult business on the grounds that it is an adult business because this would be a distraction based on the content of the expression of the business.”⁸⁷ Furthermore, fees imposed by a city for permits may not be inflated to deter adult establishments: “The fee charge must be demonstrably related to the actual costs to administering the license and not an attempt to suppress or discourage the perpetuation of the business. In sum, licensing regulations must not be enforced discriminatorily, arbitrarily, burdensome, and used to ban adult businesses, for no other reason than the fact that they are adult businesses.”⁸⁸ Therefore, measures cannot be taken by local municipalities to discourage the licensing process for adult businesses. The regulations of the League of Oregon Cities explicitly protect adult establishments. These regulations explain in part why Portland has some of the highest numbers of legal strip clubs in the United States, as the following graphs demonstrate.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ The League of Oregon Cities, *The Regulation of Adult Businesses*.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

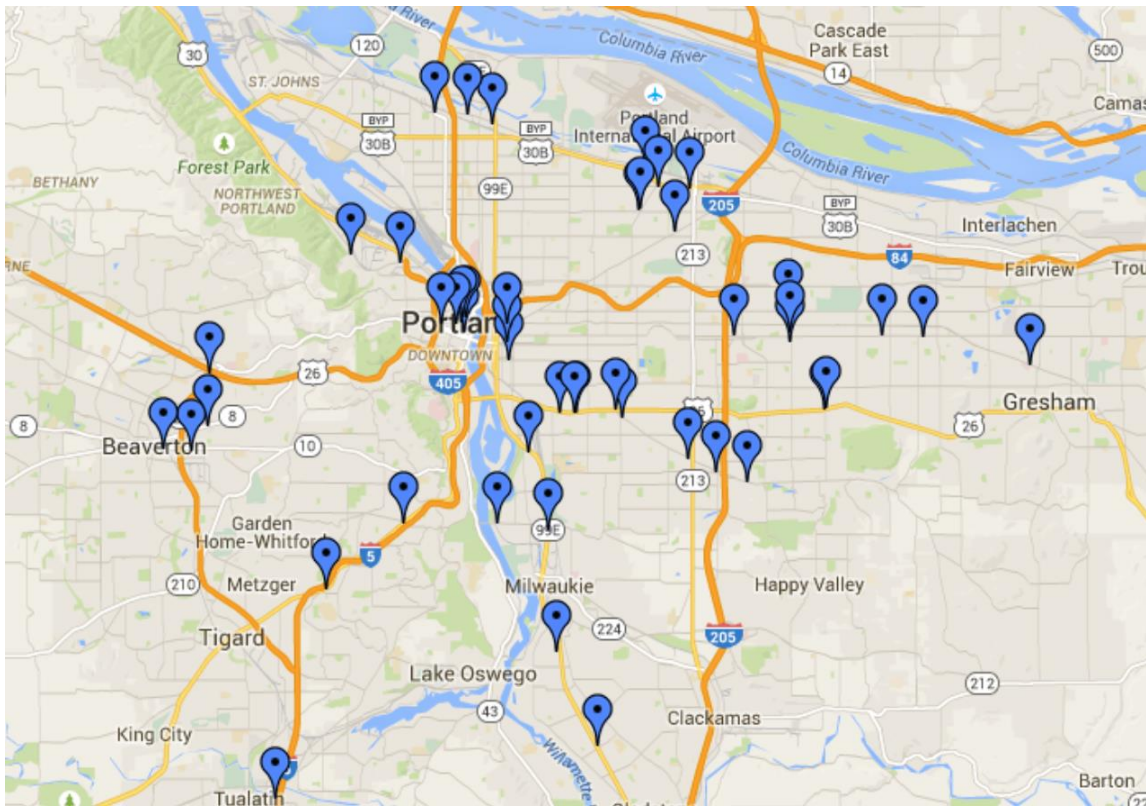
U.S. Cities with the Most Strip Clubs *Per Capita* ⁹⁰

Rank	City, State	Population	# of Strip Clubs	Per 100,000 Capita
1	Portland, OR	609,456	54	8.860
2	Tampa, FL	352,957	28	7.932
3	Fayetteville, NC	204,408	15	7.338
4	Miami, FL	417,650	20	7.183
5	Atlanta, GA	447,841	30	6.699
6	New Orleans, LA	378,715	23	6.073
7	Las Vegas, NV	603,488	34	5.634
8	Cleveland, OH	390,113	20	5.127
9	Detroit, MI	688,701	32	4.646
10	Newark, NJ	278,427	12	4.310

Rank	State	Population	# of Strip Clubs	Per 100,000 Capita
1	Oregon	3,899,353	85	2.180
2	West Virginia	1,855,413	40	2.156
3	Nevada	2,758,931	43	1.559
4	South Dakota	833,354	12	1.440
5	Wyoming	576,412	8	1.388
6	New Jersey	8,864,590	117	1.320
7	Hawaii	1,392,313	17	1.221
8	Wisconsin	5,726,398	67	1.170
9	Ohio	11,544,225	134	1.161
10	Oklahoma	3,814,820	41	1.075

⁹⁰ "Why Does Portland Have So Many Strip Clubs?" Priceonomics. Last modified March 24, 2018. <https://priceonomics.com/why-does-portland-have-so-many-strip-clubs/>.

Distribution of Strip Clubs in Portland Metro Area⁹¹



Strip Clubs

As shown in the map above, the Portland metropolitan area has more than 54 strip clubs. Alexander Barrett has quipped: “In many areas, it is easier to get to a strip club than it is to get to a supermarket.”⁹² The local strip club scene hosts a variety of preferences: acrobatic, burlesque, punk, heavy metal, rock n’ roll, theatrical, and a few even cater to veganism. While not all strip clubs perpetuate sex trafficking, many of these

⁹¹ Google My Maps. Accessed March 24, 2018.
https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?hl=en_US&mid=1uD1RSqGe-pW_Q1RKELbdxqZWx0&ll=45.51544414557734,-122.66361550000005&z=11.

⁹² Alexander Barrett. *This Is Portland: The City You've Heard You Should Like*. Chicago, IL: IPG, 2013.

venues act as fronts for prostitution.⁹³ Law enforcement and government agencies suspect networks of organized crime within strip clubs.⁹⁴ Many strip clubs become gateways to criminal activities such as solicitation for prostitution, illegal drug transactions, sexual assault, and abuse.⁹⁵ Many women begin as workers in legal, sexually explicit establishments and find themselves in sexually exploitative situations. Studies have shown that traffickers often have reported that they recruit victims at clubs or bars.⁹⁶ One trafficker explained his process for meeting women at strip clubs:

“Sometimes I just go to clubs. If I go to a strip club or normal club, I just sit back and prey on girls that prey on me. Some girls go to clubs to catch somebody who has money [to] buy them drinks, [act] flashy. If I go to a strip club, I throw some money on a certain girl. I just kick it with her, ask if she wants to get some food and get something to eat. I have it on my mind how I’m going to approach it, what I do.”⁹⁷

Strip clubs provide an environment for traffickers to prey on individuals whose inhibitions might be lowered through alcohol or drug consumption. Victims with vulnerable mental and physical states allow traffickers the opportunity to groom and recruit them. Therefore, sex trafficking often becomes more concentrated around sex industry-based businesses. The Portland metropolitan area has the unfortunate distinction

⁹³ Andy Campbell, “Where Strip Clubs Thrive In Portland, So Does Child Sex Trafficking,” *Huffington Post*, June 26, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/25/child-sex-trafficking-strip-clubs-portland_n_7650778.html.

⁹⁴ Campbell, “Where Strip Clubs Thrive in Portland, So Does Child Sex Trafficking.”

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

of having the most strip clubs *per capita* in the U.S. It can be logically deduced that the prevalence of legal establishments based on a libertine culture and lax laws leads to the high number of young girls and women who are sex trafficked for commercial gain in Portland.

VICTIMS OF PORTLAND'S COMMERCIAL SEX ECONOMY

*“she was a rose
in the hands of those
who had no intention
of keeping her” ~ rupi kaur*

Film and television often depicts victims being kidnapped and forced into sexual exploitation. Situations like these are rare in comparison to victims who are lured or recruited through other means. Different forms of coercion and fraud are used by traffickers to recruit, manage, and retain control over their victims. These forms include feigning romantic interest, emphasizing mutual dependency between trafficker and victim, discouraging women from “having sex for free,” and promises of material comforts.⁹⁸ Risk factors for women who are more easily trapped into sexual exploitation include poverty, homelessness, substance addiction, domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, and assault. These factors leave victims susceptible to exploitation for commercial sex in the Portland Metro area.

Methods of Recruitment

Recruitment methods are relatively advanced. Traffickers reported adjusting their recruitment methods in response to their observations regarding the personal needs, experience, and vulnerabilities of the individuals they intend to recruit. Using coercive tactics and fraud, traffickers successfully recruited and exploited individuals from myriad

⁹⁸ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities.*

backgrounds and all socio-economic strata.⁹⁹ Many victims are lured into sex trafficking with the promise of a job opportunity, such as a career in professional dancing or modeling. Some find themselves trafficked by family members. Others become romantically involved and find their significant other manipulating them into a trafficking situation. “In more typical cases of sex trafficking in the United States, sex trafficked girls are psychologically attached to their traffickers through intimate relationships.”¹⁰⁰ In many situations of prostitution cycled into sex trafficking, the emotional bond developed between victim and trafficker is a result of the trafficker’s initial professions of love and affection. In such cases, traffickers asked their victim to prove their love and commitment by engaging in sex work.¹⁰¹ Trafficked girls maintain trauma bonds with their traffickers, and it is primarily this psychological bond that keeps girls attached to their pimps.¹⁰² Once trust is gained, the cycle of sex trafficking begins as they are coerced into performing sexual acts for money with deception, treats, and violence. Sex trafficking victims face various circumstances that lead them into exploitative situations.

Traffickers are master manipulators. They work to breakdown the psyche of their victims to develop a sense of dominance. Traffickers often instigated competition between victims by maintaining romantic and sexual relationships with many of them and then showing affection for the most profitable victim.¹⁰³ Recognition from the trafficker thus serves as a motivation for victims to engage in sex work and turn over proceeds.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹⁰⁰ Nichols, *Sex trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*.

¹⁰¹ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹⁰² Nichols, *Sex trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*.

¹⁰³ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

As seen in victims of domestic violence, victims may feel a sense of loyalty or love toward their trafficker.¹⁰⁵ Other times they feel as though they are indebted due to financial or relational ties.¹⁰⁶ An emotional or economic bond is often an obstacle for leaving exploitative situations. Those who have substance addiction, mental health, or medical issues are oftentimes denied their medication or medical assistance.¹⁰⁷ Traffickers induce substance abuse by becoming a steady supply of drugs and alcohol for those who struggle with addiction.¹⁰⁸ Dependency also creates an obstacle for leaving exploitative situations.

Economic leverage is used by confiscating a majority of the victim's earnings or restricting access to financial resources. Due to income restrictions, victims are forced to rely on their trafficker for basic living necessities such as clothing or food. Many traffickers enforce a quota to be met by the victim each day. Consequences of violence and denial of shelter, food, or medicine may be inflicted if the victim does not meet quota. Traffickers use methods of isolation by denying or monitoring the use of cellphones, email accounts, and social media to cut social ties or prevent the victim from reaching out for help.¹⁰⁹ Traffickers will use any means necessary to turn profit; confinement, economic abuse, familial relations, intimidation, romantic relations, induced substance abuse, manipulation, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and verbal abuse. Many times, especially if the woman is from a foreign country, the trafficker seizes her passport, visa or other documentation. The use of manipulation enables traffickers to

¹⁰⁵ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

develop and preserve their control over business operations and profits.¹¹⁰ In all of these ways, the use of manipulation enables traffickers to develop and preserve their control over business operations and profits.¹¹¹

Prostitution/Sex Workers

Prostitution and sex trafficking are for all intents and purposes the same. Eighty percent of women in prostitution are under another person's control.¹¹² “Adults engaged in a commercial sex are often labeled as willing sex workers out of the perception that adults ‘choose’ to sell sex.” While some people still assume that prostitutes are willingly selling their bodies for sex, the vast majority are forced into prostitution against their will.¹¹³ It is critical to understand that a person’s initial consent to participate in prostitution is not legally determinative;¹¹⁴ if they are thereafter held in service through psychological manipulation or physical force, they are victims of trafficking. Prostitutes are not sex workers, they are victims. The commodification of a person for commercial sex is a grave human rights violation and is legally considered to be sex trafficking. Many people have trouble viewing women as victims instead of prostitutes; therefore, adult female victims often face criminal sanctions and harsh treatment instead of receiving support and social services.

¹¹⁰ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Celia Williamson and Terry Cluse-Tolar. "Pimp-controlled prostitution: Still an integral part of street life." *Violence against women* 8, no. 9 (2002): 1074-1092.

¹¹³ Nichols, *Sex trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*.

¹¹⁴ Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2015), 37, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015/>.

Minors

The Portland metro area of Oregon, in part due to the very high numbers of homeless youth, is a central location for sex trafficking and the commercial sex industry involving minors. Portland has been dubbed the national hub for child sex trafficking because there is a demand in our community.¹¹⁵ People are purchasing sex from underage children. In situations when a minor is involved in the commercial sex industry, it is often due to a need for survival and lack of choice. It is a misconception that if a minor “chooses” to be involved in the commercial sex trade, then they are not a victim of sex trafficking. Under the United States Trafficked Victims Protection Act (TVPA), an individual who is under the age of 18 cannot legally consent to commercial sex acts; therefore, any minor involved in any form of commercial sex is considered a victim.¹¹⁶ Anyone who purchases sex involving a minor is considered a perpetrator engaging in statutory rape. “By definition, a commercial sex act includes things other than prostitution, including stripping, pornography, escort, and other sexual services that may not involve sexual intercourse.”¹¹⁷ Under the TVPA, minors involved in commercial sex are considered victims of a sex trafficking crime.

Researcher Christopher Carey, a professor at Portland State University, authored the latest report on child trafficking in the Portland metro area requested by the U.S. Department of Justice. Christopher Carey and graduate student Lena Teplitsky sought to quantify the epidemic despite the challenge of identifying victims. This study was groundbreaking because it was the first study to collect raw data of child sex trafficking

¹¹⁵ Carey and Teplitsky. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area*.

¹¹⁶ Jared R. Rayborn, “Regulated Prostitution as a Component in the Fight Against Human Trafficking in Oregon,” *Willamette Law Review* 115, Fall 2013: 11.

¹¹⁷ Nichols, *Sex trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*.

in Portland with data provided by the Department of Human Service's (DHS) child welfare department and the Portland-based Sexual Assault Research Center (SARC). The researchers documented every case of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) that had come into contact with DHS and SARC over a four-year period. The legal definition specific to prostitution and human trafficking as they relate to child sexual abuse and exploitation is as follows: anyone under the age of 18 who is involved in commercial sex is a child victim. The purpose of the research behind the study was to quantify and analyze trends among CSEC victims in the Portland Metro Area. The data collected included both census count and demographic details.

This study collected data from 2009 to 2013. To give an idea of what Carey and Teplitsky discovered, it is surprising to note that 469 children under the age of 18 were sexually exploited for commercial gain between December 2012 and June 2013.¹¹⁸ It is estimated by SARC that there are ten times as many in reality as the following statement confirms: "But those numbers, compiled by a team of researchers at Portland State University, still grossly underestimate the true numbers of exploited children, said Amanda Marshall, the U.S. attorney for Oregon who commissioned the study."¹¹⁹ The average age of identified victims and served by DHS & SARC in the Portland Metro Area was 15 ½. The youngest victim was eight years old.¹²⁰ It is important to note that 15 ½ is not the first age of sexual exploitation, exploitation begins prior to the first contact with social services and first referral to a support agency.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Carey and Teplitsky. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area*.

¹¹⁹ Bryan Denson, "Problem of Child Sex Trafficking in Portland Backed up by New Numbers, Authorities Say" last modified August 06, 2013.

http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2013/08/portlands_role_as_hub_of_child.html

¹²⁰ Carey and Teplitsky. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area*.

¹²¹ Ibid.

The CSEC study found that nearly 17% of the victims have children of their own.¹²² On a generational level, almost 20% of the victims have a familial history of sexual exploitation.¹²³ A person related to the child was often sexually exploited as well. Eleven percent of victims have been exploited by a family member.¹²⁴ Forty-nine percent of the 159 CSEC cases that were currently being served by DHS and SARC have a gang connection: "Gang connection indicates that youth have either been exploited by gang members, are affiliated or members of a gang themselves, or that gang influence plays a large part in their lives."¹²⁵ Half of these victimized children are connected to a gang, as sex trafficking has proven to be more profitable than drug or gun running.¹²⁶

The objective of the research surrounding Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area was to quantify and describe CSEC cases in order to present lawmakers, social service providers, and other stakeholders with data that will help them establish the scope of the problem in this geographic region, determine trends common among victim profiles, pinpoint characteristics of alleged perpetrators, and provide information regarding treatment and recovery options.

Homeless Population

According to Multnomah County Sheriff Deputy Sgt. Keith Bickford, head of the Oregon Human Trafficking Task Force, on average one of three homeless youths will be contacted by a trafficker within 48 hours of hitting the streets.¹²⁷ Lack of stable housing

¹²² Carey and Teplitsky. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area*.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Human Trafficking Industry Thrives in Portland Metro Area" last modified January 10, 2010.

http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2010/01/human_trafficking_industry_thr.html

leads to chronic homelessness leaving many women and young girls susceptible to recruitment into sex trafficking on the streets of Portland. The homeless population often experiences increased vulnerabilities, both physical and psychological. Traffickers have an easier time manipulating and exploiting those without a stable home life. They act as a financial benefactor who can provide shelter in exchange for their participation in commercialized sex. Amidst being evicted or leaving their previous home, victims may feel as though they have no other option than to exchange sexual favors for shelter. These transactions lead to exploitative relationships. Victims who struggle with substance abuse are also approached by traffickers during transitional periods after rehabilitation. Many of these victims are susceptible to drug addiction and/or homelessness and therefore have trouble securing a safe place to find refuge.

One of the most difficult aspects of combating sex trafficking is lack of safe shelters. Studies show that “social service providers, police, and prosecutors report the number of sex trafficked people in need of services, particularly safe shelter, exceeds the number of available services.”¹²⁸ With lack of appropriate spaces for sex trafficked victims, many of them end up in facilities that cannot provide proper support for the trauma they have endured. Some are able to turn to correctional facilities, residential treatment centers, and child protective services, but oftentimes victims of sex trafficking are in need of extensive emotional, mental, and physical counseling along with assistance with finances, healthcare, housing, education, occupation, and family services to prevent them from falling back into the exploitation of commercial sex. The lack of safe shelters

¹²⁸ Nichols, *Sex trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*.

in the Portland Metro area is due in part to lack of awareness, proper funding, and inadequate public policies.

Immigrants

Many immigrant women and children fall vulnerable to sexual exploitation within the United States. Hepburn and Simon in their book titled *Human Trafficking Around the World: Hidden in Plain Sight* state: “A majority of trafficking survivors in the United States who are originally from other nations first migrate to the United States legally with work visas, often with false promises of legitimate employment, and are exploited after their arrival.”¹²⁹ By targeting immigrant women and children, they are able to use the false promise of job opportunity and a better life. Sex trafficked people originating from outside of the United States “more frequently come from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, and other neighboring middle-income and low-income nations as well as Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe.”¹³⁰ Traffickers create dependency by identifying a victim’s vulnerabilities. In order to impose control, traffickers make promises of attaining financial stability and legal immigration status. Victims are offered elaborate promises which include covering their victim’s debt, medical bills, financial hardships, and housing expenses in exchange for commercial sex. Due to their immigration status, they often are more susceptible to traffickers who use debt bondage, document confiscation, isolation, language barriers, violence, and psychological and physical abuse as methods of coercion.

¹²⁹ Stephanie Hepburn and Rita J. Simon. *Human trafficking around the world: Hidden in plain sight*. Columbia University Press, 2013.

¹³⁰ Nichols, *Sex trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*.

Traffickers prey on women and children who are unfamiliar with their surroundings, legal rights, and local support networks.¹³¹ Those who are usually aware are fearful of reaching out for help due to their fear of deportation or even, the general notion that immigrants may hold, that law enforcement officials might not care or worse, might be involved in the trade.¹³² To increase isolation, traffickers restrict communication to their loved ones or anyone outside their commercial sex trafficking network.¹³³ Many victims are fearful of threats against their own life or the lives of their family members in their originating country.¹³⁴ Without the proper legal status to remain in the country, many have a hard time trusting government agencies and law enforcement.¹³⁵ Traffickers also threaten to contact immigration authorities if victims do not comply.¹³⁶ Many victims face trauma, indebtedness, and shame, having been lured with a false job opportunity that turns out to be a life in the sex trafficking industry.¹³⁷ Portland civil rights attorney, Katelyn Oldham, says, “Many women really do believe they will be hired as a nanny or domestic help and that will be better than a void of a place like Chechnya or other Eastern European countries where there are no jobs and people are starving to death.” She continues: “Others come here knowing exactly what they are going to do. People shouldn’t have to make those choices.”¹³⁸ Unfortunately, some women come to

¹³¹ Neha A. Deshpande and Nawal M. Nour. "Sex trafficking of women and girls." *Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynecology* 6, no. 1 (2013): e22.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Melody Finnemore, “Human Tender: Oregon Attorneys, Law Enforcement Forge Collaborative Strategy to Combat Growing Trade in Human Trafficking,” *Oregon State Bar*, News release, 2009, Oregon State Bar Bulletin, 2.

Portland knowing their fate, but it is a matter of simple survival that leads them into exploitative situations.

ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK OF PORTLAND'S COMMERCIAL SEX ECONOMY

"For the beauty of the rose we also water the thorns." ~ African Proverb

In September of 2012, President Barack Obama stated the trafficking of persons, "ought to concern every person, because it is a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at our social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation, because it endangers public health and fuels violence and organized crime. I'm talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name – modern slavery."¹³⁹ President Obama's statement aligns with the perspective of many who consider sexual exploitation of women and children as a form of modern day slavery. Sexual exploitation has become a pervasive cultural scourge, and the market for it feeds into a lucrative industry that rakes in staggering sums of money. "It is estimated that human trafficking generates many billions of dollars of profit per year, second only to drug trafficking as the most profitable form of transnational crime."¹⁴⁰ Trafficking is the second leading black market criminal enterprise trailing only behind the illegal drug trade.¹⁴¹ "These trafficked sex victims form the backbone of one of the world's most profitable illicit enterprises and generate huge profits for their exploiters, for unlike narcotics, which must be grown, harvested, refined, and packaged, sex slaves require no

¹³⁹ Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President to the Clinton Global Initiative" last modified September 25, 2012. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative>

¹⁴⁰ "What Is Human Trafficking?" Department of Homeland Security, last modified November 21, 2016, <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/what-human-trafficking>.

¹⁴¹ Tony Maddox, "Modern-day slavery: A problem that can't be ignored" last modified March 04, 2011. <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/04/modern-day-slavery-a-problem-that-cant-be-ignored/>

such ‘processing,’ and can be repeatedly ‘consumed.’”¹⁴² Profits of commercial sex turn domestic violence, humiliation, rape, and sexual violence into a business enterprise: an enterprise complete with domestic, international, and marketing sectors utilizing physical locations in which women and children are used by owners and managers for commercial sex. Due to the business-like nature of the underground commercial sex economy, traffickers engage in conventional business practices such as advertising, renting business locations, the transportation of workers, communication, internal business structure organization, and a recordkeeping of all financial transactions.¹⁴³ Due to the low risk for traffickers in comparison with other criminal activities and the “reusable” nature of using trafficked women again and again, sex trafficking is becoming one of the fastest growing illicit enterprises.¹⁴⁴ Unlike other illegal “goods,” women and children are capable of being bought and sold repeatedly without the cost of a large capital investment. Commercial sexual exploitation in the Portland Metro Area is thriving due to the immense profitability of victims and relatively low risk for sex traffickers. Like modern day business associates, they operate commercial sex enterprises using formal business plans and financial practices.

Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery

Siddharth Kara is a leading expert in the examination of the economic forces that allow sex trafficking to thrive. His book, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern*

¹⁴² Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017).

¹⁴³ Kevin Bales and Steven Lize. "Trafficking in persons in the United States." *Croft Institute for International Studies, University of Mississippi* (2005).
Jody Raphael and Brenda Myers-Powell, 2010, *From Victims to Victimizers: Interviews with 25 Ex-pimps in Chicago*, Chicago: DePaul University College of Law.

¹⁴⁴ H Diep (2005). We pay—The economic manipulation of international and domestic laws to sustain sex trafficking. *International Law Review.*, 2, 309–331.

Slavery, proposes strategies for anti-trafficking efforts. Kara uses his educational background in economics, finance, and law to analyze sex trafficking operations as a business enterprise. Kara gives a blueprint of pathways of recruitment and how traffickers operate the commercial sex economy. He states, “Like most businesses, sex trafficking has four components: a product (the victim), a wholesaler (the trafficker), a retailer (the exploiter), and a consumer.”¹⁴⁵ Sex trafficking operates similarly to a small business structure with the objective of maximizing profits and minimizing costs. The National Institute of Justice conducted a study and asked if traffickers had a business plan. Respondents spoke to general hopes and aspirations. Most commonly, the strategy was to simply make money. As one respondent put it:

I don’t believe I really had a business model in that sense, but I always had a plan. What I did was make a plan and execute it as cleanly as possible. My main goal was always to make one million dollars. I always had that sort of goal to aim for. It’d be one million dollars, then 100 million dollars, then a billion ... I never got there, obviously, but I got to a million, in about the first six months.¹⁴⁶

Other respondents in this case study shared the intention to “go legitimate” and invest money into creating a legal business structure to support their work.¹⁴⁷ Similar to legitimate businesses, sex trafficking operations often have a fixed business location, operating expenses, support staff, product, and product distribution. Case studies have shown that traffickers cultivate networks and business-related relationships, repeat practices to maintain and grow their market reach, and follow pricing plans to determine

¹⁴⁵ Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*.

¹⁴⁶ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

profits.¹⁴⁸ Traffickers also routinely invest money back into business operations.¹⁴⁹ Primary upfront costs for traffickers are acquiring the product (i.e. victims) and the locale where business is conducted (i.e. apartments, hotel rooms, strip clubs, and other discreet locations).¹⁵⁰ Traffickers routinely covered costs associated with housing, transportation, victim appearance, advertisements, and hotels and motels.¹⁵¹ Other business-related legal expenses include bail, costs, and other expenses associated with arrests and prosecution on charges related to pimping.¹⁵² Due to the illegality of business, people are often paid off and guards are employed by traffickers for protection. Traffickers have other operating expenses such as bedding, drugs, alcohol, food, condoms, clothing, etc.¹⁵³ Case studies have shown costs that varied significantly across respondents. Some traffickers reported very low expenditures on operational costs, while others invested a high percentage of their earnings back into the business.¹⁵⁴ The table below provides a breakdown of the percentage of respondents who reported expenditures on specific costs.

¹⁴⁸ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

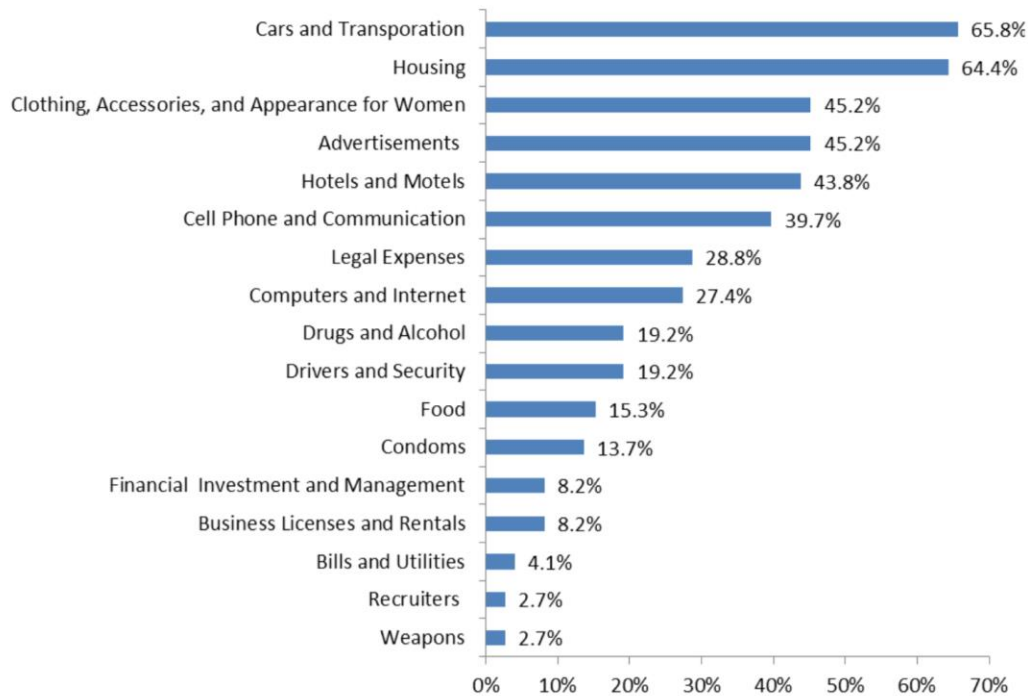
¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*.

¹⁵⁴ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

Commercial Sex Economy Business-Related Expense ¹⁵⁵



It seems the only risk factor for a trafficker is the illicit nature of the business.

Commercial sex is alluring to traffickers with its relatively low risk and high profit margin. Sex trafficking continues to exist and thrive because there is a demand, unfortunately a high demand. Traffickers know that if they can provide a product, they can turn a profit. Therefore, acquiring victims, operating expenses, and economic risk is minimal in comparison to profit margin.

To decrease exploitation of a sex trafficked victims, an upward shock to the costs of operating sexually exploitive businesses must be created such as federal stings, high fines, elongated prison sentencing. This upward shock relates to the industry's risk economics, and the shock must be applied at a profit-compromising level.¹⁵⁶ The business

¹⁵⁵ Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

characteristics and models used can aid law enforcement in potentially bringing down underground commercial sex trades. Bales and Lize refer to traffickers' financial and commercial transaction records as the "Achilles' heel" of prostitution and trafficking offenders.¹⁵⁷ By increasing the cost of running a sex trafficking operation, a reduction in the aggregate demand of traffickers and consumers follows. The business of sex trafficking acts as a basic economic model complete with supply and demand. Demand creates supply; therefore, reducing and ending demand should be paramount focus to ameliorating sex trafficking.

Seattle: A Case Study

There is a lack of reliable information of the commercial sex industry to help policymakers and law enforcement understand how sex trade networks operate in the Portland metro area. In addition, there are no reliable data regarding Portland's local sex trade activity conducted over the internet. The closest study in relation to Portland was funded by the National Institute of Justice and released in 2010. The underground commercial sex economy in Seattle was one of eight major U.S. cities to be studied by the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center. Seattle and Portland are two major cities along the "West Coast Track." The study of the commercial sex economy of a major metropolis area such as Seattle allows policymakers and law enforcement to have a better understanding of the extent and nature of the commercialized sex trafficking industry in Portland *mutatis mutandis*.

¹⁵⁷ Kevin Bales and Steven Lize. "Trafficking in persons in the United States." *Croft Institute for International Studies, University of Mississippi* (2005).

Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Seattle, WA¹⁵⁸

Venue	Offender profile	Employee profile	Evidence of prostitution	Evidence of trafficking	Pricing	Open/ Closed customer base	Customer profile	Link to gangs, drugs, weapons, or organized crime
Street and Internet	In the past, pimps were involved through family and community ties and worked independently Recently, heavily gang-involved and collaborative males	Street individuals are typically drug-addicted with pimps. Increase in women who work voluntarily online.	X	X	Street: \$30–40/hand job, \$50–60/oral sex, \$75–100/"full service" Internet: \$125–\$150/30 min., \$175–200/hr.	Open	Men of all races/ ethnicities	Circuit in Washington between Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma. Interstate to Portland, San Francisco, and Las Vegas. Avoid Los Angeles
Erotic massage parlors and spas	Asians, particularly from China, Vietnam, and Korea Typically female operators	Asians, same nationality as operators, in 40s and 50s	X		House fee \$40–60 Tips: \$40–60/ oral sex, \$100/ "full service" Negotiable.	Open	Men of all races/ ethnicities	Women rotate between several massage parlors owned by the operator. Women start out in Los Angeles or bay area and then referred to Seattle, and can move out of Seattle. Illegal women are smuggled through Mexico or Canada
Home/ residential brothels	Vietnamese nationals	Vietnamese women, some illegal, some with refugee or asylum status	X		No house fee. \$200/hr., house takes \$60–80 \$140/30 min., \$160/45 min.	Open	Men of all races/ ethnicities Wealthy men common	Women have strong ties to Vietnamese populations in Orange County, Santa Ana, and Anaheim

The conclusion of the study estimated that in 2007 the underground sex economy worth was between \$39.9 and \$290 million.¹⁵⁹ While almost all types of commercial sex venues—massage parlors, brothels, escort services, and street and internet-based prostitution—existed in each city, regional, and demographic differences influenced their markets.¹⁶⁰ As shown on the table above, the underground commercial sex economy in Seattle is diverse and includes street and online prostitution, massage parlors, brothels, and escort services. Individuals involved in street and online prostitution are typically drug-addicted or pimp-controlled.¹⁶¹ Seattle law enforcement reported that traffickers remain in close proximity to the women and girls they control.¹⁶² Traffickers are often found in a car down the block, waiting in the hotel parking lot, or stationed in a club, bar,

¹⁵⁸ Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*.

¹⁵⁹ Kevin Bales and Steven Lize. "Trafficking in persons in the United States." *Croft Institute for International Studies, University of Mississippi* (2005).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

or casino. This is confirmed by a Seattle Police Department Law Enforcement Official as he discusses how they look for pimps, prostitutes, and johns:

Between Seattle and Tacoma, it's almost every part of Highway 99, Aurora, it changes names, but it is the same highway for miles and miles. It actually goes north of Seattle up to Everett. Everett, Seattle, Tacoma, [and] SeaTac are high prostitution areas, so we identify that. It's obvious, we see the girls walking out there, even to untrained eyes. ... once you point out the indicators and the flags your observer becomes pretty well-learned in differentiating between a working-gal and a non-working gal. We are also on the lookout for the pimps. And once you've identified the girl or the guy, you usually see the second half of that operation close by—that's not quite half the time, you'll have the working gal and then maybe the pimp within the block walking and you'll see him watching her, sometimes shouting out instructions on the phone to each other, and you can see that he is making a phone call, her phone rings, she disconnects, he disconnects. Other times you'll see just the girl working, where the pimp isn't on site, but he is on the telephone with her from a bar, a restaurant, a casino, or the hotel room.¹⁶³

Traffickers turn to exploiting women and children because the commercial sex economy presents opportunities with lower risk but a high return. The study interviewed 73 traffickers with convictions of compelling prostitution and of human trafficking charges. The data revealed that the price for commercial sex acts was most commonly determined by amount of time, single date, and/or sex act. The typical pricing structure on the street is \$30 to \$40 for manual stimulation, \$50 to \$60 for oral sex, and from \$75 to \$100 for

¹⁶³ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

“full service.”¹⁶⁴ Traffickers in Seattle typically have two to three girls working for them and often enforce a daily quota.¹⁶⁵ This daily quota ranges from \$500 to \$800 and will often be increased to \$1,000 or \$1,500 as a form of punishment if a victim is caught not following the rules set by the trafficker.¹⁶⁶ Law enforcement officials note that if victims do not make daily quota, they will most likely be physically abused, or in some cases, tortured.¹⁶⁷ The case study showed that traffickers made between \$5,000 and \$32,833 per week from commercial sex transactions.¹⁶⁸ By using data collected on Seattle's commercial sex economy, Portland law enforcement officers, government officials, and the local community can gain a better understanding of how Portland's commercial sex economy operates. Due to Portland's high numbers of legal and illegal sex establishments, it is rational to assume that the problem in Portland is worse *per capita*.

¹⁶⁴ Dank, et al. *Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities*.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

SOLUTIONS

“A thorn defends the rose, harming only those who would steal the blossom.” ~ Chinese Proverb

Prevention Campaigns

Sex trafficking in the Portland metropolitan area is a complex issue that requires a statewide collaborative response to combat exploitation. Oregon cities and counties should address the problem with prevention campaigns within local communities, law enforcement agencies, government agencies, school communities, and social service agencies. Public and private schools as well as community colleges, trade schools, and universities should implement awareness campaigns to educate students about the role of force, fraud, coercion, and exploitation in sex trafficking. Law enforcement, government, and social service agencies can unify their efforts by sharing case studies and true stories to encourage student outreach and reporting to law enforcement officials. As a component of these campaigns, it is critical to depict the coercive psychological techniques used by traffickers to target and control victims. This will encourage students to help victims and identify signs of fraud and coercion. Awareness campaigns will not only educate students, it will increase the awareness of school officials to help them identify at-risk or involved youth. In cities with active taskforces, cross-training of local school officials and teachers and raising awareness within the schools will encourage the active involvement of school authorities in detecting possible cases of sex trafficking. Local prevention campaigns are already developing around the country. Fairfax County, Virginia, launched its “Just Ask” Prevention Project in January 2014. It is aimed at

promoting public awareness about domestic, minor sex trafficking.¹⁶⁹ It is the responsibility of the Portland metropolitan community to set younger generations up for success through awareness and education.

Social Services

In addition to awareness campaigns in school settings, law enforcement and social service providers should be trained on how to assist victims who have been psychologically manipulated and coerced by traffickers to engage in sex work. Social services can play critical roles in helping to identify victims of sex trafficking and providing both assistance and advocacy for affected women and girls. Victims of sex trafficking are likely exposed to adverse conditions that can negatively affect their physical, mental, and emotional health. There are many risks to engaging in the commercial sex market, including: client unpredictability, violence, rape, sexually transmitted diseases and other health hazards, risks involved with drug use and dependency and even death.¹⁷⁰ Social services play an essential role in providing interventions to improve physical and psychological health among victims and advocating on behalf of victims to help improve their social circumstances.¹⁷¹

Sex trafficking victims are particularly susceptible to sexually transmitted infections such as gonorrhea, syphilis, urinary tract infections, and pubic lice.¹⁷² In some cases, human immunodeficiency viruses and AIDS infections are known to be

¹⁶⁹ "'Just Ask' Shining Light on Teen Sex Trafficking Problem in Fairfax Co." WTOP. last modified June 05, 2017. <https://wtop.com/fairfax-county/2017/06/march-raises-human-trafficking-awareness-in-va/slide/1/>.

¹⁷⁰ Neha A. Deshpande and Nawal M. Nour. "Sex trafficking of women and girls." *Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynecology* 6, no. 1 (2013): e22.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

prevalent.¹⁷³ As a result of commercial sex work, many victims experience pelvic pain, vaginal/anal tearing, rectal trauma, and/or urinary difficulties.¹⁷⁴ Sex trafficking victims are often physically abused by their clientele or trafficker. Therefore, social services can provide victims of commercial sex work with screenings for physical injuries such as broken bones, bruises, burns, scars, and broken teeth and other dental problems.¹⁷⁵ Social services can also provide screenings for unwanted pregnancy resulting from rape and prostitution, sterility, miscarriage, menstrual problems, mutilations, and forced or coerced abortions.¹⁷⁶ Infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, malaria, and pneumonia may be more prevalent among sex trafficking victims as a result of unsanitary and dangerous housing conditions, the use of needles, and inadequate access to health care.¹⁷⁷

Victims of sex trafficking may face moderate to severe psychological trauma from daily mental, emotional, and psychological abuse and torture.¹⁷⁸ Post-traumatic stress disorder, acute anxiety, and depression are all common psychological issues among victims of commercial sex.¹⁷⁹ Social services can provide screening for feelings of helplessness, shame, humiliation, distrust, self-hatred, disbelief, denial, suicidal thoughts, disorientation, confusion, and phobias among suspected victims.¹⁸⁰ Case studies have shown that it is not uncommon to encounter sex trafficking victims in their early 30s who have become psychologically and emotionally disabled as a result of working in

¹⁷³ Neha A. Deshpande and Nawal M. Nour. "Sex trafficking of women and girls." *Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynecology* 6, no. 1 (2013): e22.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

prostitution.¹⁸¹ In one study, social services providers reported that sex-trafficked women were less stable, more isolated, had higher levels of fear, more severe trauma, and greater mental health needs than other victims of crime.¹⁸² Sex trafficking victims may develop substance abuse problems or addictions from being coerced through drug use by their traffickers or by using substances to cope or escape their desperate situations.

Trafficked women engaging in sex work tend to have fewer resources, limited options, and increased vulnerability to violence and abuse than women who are not trafficked.¹⁸³ Anecdotal evidence suggests that victims have a greater prevalence of illiteracy, homelessness, poverty, and societal isolation.¹⁸⁴ Programs and services designed to help victims of commercial sex achieve alternate and legal career options also served as an important catalyst for exiting sex work. In one case study, a victim described her program: “Working here, I’m able to be me. I’ve been doing trainings, testing, counseling, so I’m doing it [involved in sex work] less and less. I’ve been here at [Program] for 1.5 years. It’s the best thing that’s happened to me to be here in [Program] because I’m facilitating my own groups here at [Program] now.”¹⁸⁵ Victims of commercial sex have illustrated in multiple studies the significant benefits of these prostitution exit programs and services. Therefore, funding social services is critical to providing emotional, physical, and mental support as well as job assistance to victims of sexual exploitation in the Portland community.

¹⁸¹ Neha A. Deshpande and Nawal M. Nour. "Sex trafficking of women and girls." *Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynecology* 6, no. 1 (2013): e22.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

Stigmatization of Prostitution in the U.S.

The United States recognizes that trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a grave human rights violation. However, state laws and U.S. policies are designed to maximize arrests and prosecution for prostitution. Victims are identified as prostitutes rather than victims of sexual exploitation.¹⁸⁶ The stigmatization of those involved in sex work creates avenues of discrimination, oppression, and violence. Sex trafficking is the only crime in the United States where the victim is more likely to be arrested and prosecuted than the perpetrator.¹⁸⁷ In order to reduce demand for commercial sex, law enforcement needs to enforce existing legislation. It is illegal to participate in commercial sex, yet if law enforcement does not enforce state law and U.S. policy to the fullest extent, the Portland community will continue to see an increase in demand. Therefore, law enforcement and government agencies are in need of a paradigm shift in terms of investigating and prosecuting perpetrators rather than victims. Reframing the thought process is challenging, however, because perpetrators can be those whom one would least expect. They can be well-respected members of the community, those with high-status jobs who earn an income that enables them to participate in illicit sexual activity. Perpetrators can be members of a local church, a school community, or a professional. Perpetrators can also be volunteers at youth organizations with families and children of their own. By removing the negative stigma surrounding victims of sexual

¹⁸⁶ Jordan Greenbaum, James E. Crawford-Jakubiak, and Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect. "Child sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation: health care needs of victims." *Pediatrics* 135, no. 3 (2015): 566-574.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

exploitation and prosecuting perpetrators to the fullest extent, the Portland community has a better chance reducing the demand.

Decriminalized Prostitution: Sweden as an Exemplar

Sweden has been the most successful country in the world for reducing the demand of commercial sex.¹⁸⁸ In 1995, the Swedish government engaged in a national campaign to decriminalize the sale of sex yet make purchasing of sex illegal. The campaign required the arrest and prosecution of all those involved in the purchase of sex. In the country's proposal to prohibit the purchase of sexual services, the Swedish government states:

By prohibiting the purchase of sexual services, prostitution and its damaging effects can be counteracted more effectively than hitherto... The government considers, however, that it is not reasonable to punish the person who sells a sexual service. In the majority of cases at least, this person is a weaker partner who is exploited by those who want only to satisfy their sexual drives.¹⁸⁹

Supporters of the Swedish approach argue that, unlike liberalization, it does not encourage sexual exploitation. The Swedish government decriminalized the sale of sex because they recognize sex workers as victims of gender and socio-economic oppression rather than prostitutes. From a Swedish legal stance, a woman selling sex has been forced to do so by circumstances or coercion. To push for gender equality, Sweden increased

¹⁸⁸ Katee, Stahl. "Addressing Demand for Sex Trafficking in Sweden and the United Kingdom: An Interpretive Policy Analysis of Demand Reduction Policies, in Consideration of the Principles of Deterrence Theory." (2015).

¹⁸⁹ Ekberg, Gunilla. "The Swedish law that prohibits the purchase of sexual services: Best practices for prevention of prostitution and trafficking in human beings." *Violence against women* 10, no. 10 (2004): 1187-1218.

their efforts of awareness and education of sex trafficking.¹⁹⁰ Once the Swedish government began prosecuting perpetrators, sex trafficking decreased by 40% over a five year period.¹⁹¹ The government of Norway, Iceland, and Canada have adopted similar campaigns to criminalize those buying commercial sex.¹⁹² Reducing the demand of commercial sex in Portland will need to begin with recognizing the crime, prevalence, perpetrators, victims, and the reasons why commercialized sex is growing explosively. “If the rate and economic costs of conviction are high, the cost of being caught can be detrimental. If not, the cost is negligible.”¹⁹³ Raising penalties and enacting stringent laws against those who sexually exploited women and children both will increase the cost of operation and decrease the demand. By decriminalizing prostitution and making the purchase of commercial sex illegal, Oregon would acknowledge sex workers as victims of gender and socio-economic oppression rather than as prostitutes who share the blame.

¹⁹⁰ HumanTrafficking.org. “Prostitution Ban Huge Success in Sweden.” Last modified January 30, 2008. <http://www.humantrafficking.org/updates/838>.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*.

CONCLUSION

“It was in my flaws, I found a much deeper truth and it is from them, I bloom: a black rose.”

~ Segovia Amil

The prevalence of sex trafficking is a highly complex and multi-faceted issue that has been influenced by the cultural, social, and economic factors of the Portland metropolitan area. This thesis examined the prevalence of legal and illegal sex businesses and revealed that the libertine attitudes towards Portland’s sex culture contributes to the sexual exploitation of women and children in this area. This study also explored how Portland’s placement on West Coast and the I-5 corridor accommodates and influences the local sex trafficking industry. This work also noted a gap in existing research and data surrounding the Portland International Airport and the Portland area in general. Without current data and research efforts, policymakers are unable to see a holistic picture of the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of women and children and its consequences within Oregon’s borders. In order for anti-sex trafficking policies to be developed, factual information surrounding the sexual exploitation of women and children within the Portland metropolitan area is vital. Studying the characteristics of victims, traffickers, and the magnitude of the problem as a whole has created many research challenges and methodical limitations. Human trafficking by nature is difficult to measure because traffickers, victims, and the clients of trafficked victims belong to a so-called “hidden population.”¹⁹⁴ To promote accurate data, scholars should conduct rigorous, standardized,

¹⁹⁴ Maggy Lee, ed. *Human Trafficking* (Portland: Willan Publishing, 2007), 26.

ongoing data collection regarding the characteristics of traffickers, their victims, and the effects that policies and programs have on preventing traffickers and protecting the victims.¹⁹⁵ Research that sheds a light not only on victims, but also on traffickers can provide informative results that create a better understanding of the local sex trafficking industry. Providing accessible data, information, and research may educate the public and aid in funding for more extensive resources for victims and help to combat sex trafficking in the Portland community.

The local commercial sex trade in the “City of Roses” plays a role in a larger nationwide criminal industry complete with supply and demand that establishes a market for sex trafficking. Oregon could influence the market and reduce the number of trafficking victims by adopting policies that applied the simple supply-demand theory of economics. Oregon’s policy and laws have failed to keep up with the pace of the growth of the local sex trafficking industry. This thesis has provided recommendations and possible solutions for Oregon policymakers, yet the overall goal is to increase awareness among the Portland community. By examining the sorts of persons who fall victim to sex trafficking, the general population can begin to change the landscape of the sex trafficking industry by addressing the issue. The victims of sex trafficking are often overlooked and labeled as criminals or prostitutes. The Portland community can better help victims of sexual exploitation by examining and understanding what factors lead them into trafficking. Studies reveal that each victim’s experiences in sex trafficking is unique, yet overarching themes exist. Many women and children have been forced into

¹⁹⁵ Caitlyn S. Goodman, "Human Trafficking: Modern-day Slavery in Need of a Modern-day Solution." PhD diss., 2015.

sex trafficking through threats, violence, manipulation, and false promises of legal work or a better life. Due to the lack of societal knowledge, trained authorities, funding, and social services for victims, the local sex trafficking trade in the “City of Roses.” Portland remains one of the most notorious cities for underage sex trafficking and prostitution.

Despite its reputation as a progressive, quirky destination city for tourists and as the home to many international corporations, Portland has a dark underside which is rarely seen in the glossy photos in travel magazines or the staged images found in shows highlighting this “weird” city. Unfortunately for many, including the homeless and the trafficked, the “City of Roses” has its thorns.

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