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Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
DePaul University College of Law

Domestic sex trafficking of Chicago women and girls

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Executive summary

The purpose of this research project was to obtain more information about the process by which young girls are recruited into the sex trade industry in the Chicago metropolitan area including strategies used, and levels of coercion, control, and violence that hold them in prostitution. The researchers hypothesized that dishonest recruitment tactics and outright coercion are employed; the same tactics in international human trafficking are to meet the demand for prostituted young women in Chicago. Researchers also set out to determine where girls were active in the sex trade, whether they are transported to prostitution venues, how far they are transported, and whether they are taken across state lines.

Between July and December 2007, the Schiller DuCanto & Fleck Family Law Center at DePaul College of Law, in collaboration with the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, interviewed 100 young women, up to the age of 25, currently involved in the sex trade industry in Chicago and controlled by an individual serving the function of a pimp. Two survivors of prostitution interviewed young women on the streets, and at *Unhooked*, a court-mandated, anti-prostitution program operated by Footprints, a division of Christian Community Health Centers. *Unhooked* provides an eight-hour curriculum twice a month to women and girls as an alternative to prosecution and/or incarceration.

The sample of young women interviewed was neither random nor representative of the sex trade recruits in the Chicago metropolitan area. Due to the clandestine and illegal nature of prostitution, it is difficult to know how a representative sample would actually look. However, the sample is large enough to illustrate the challenges faced by these young women and help formulate ways to respond to them.

Age of entry

Among those interviewed, the average age of entry into regular involvement in the sex trade was 16.4 years. Thirty-three percent of the sample entered the sex trade between the ages of 12 and 15, and 56 percent entered at ages 16 or younger.

Recruitment into the sex trade

Of those interviewed, 70 percent said they were recruited into the sex trade. The other 30 percent started on their own, but ended up with pimps at the time of the interview.

Of those who reported being recruited, 11 percent were introduced by family members, including sisters, brothers, and foster parents; 19 percent said a friend or girlfriend recruited them; and boyfriends recruited 29 percent.

Those recruited by family members began regular involvement in the sex trade at an average age of two years younger than others in the sample.

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Circumstances during recruitment

Almost half of those interviewed who entered the sex trade on their own said they did so in order to support a drug habit. The survey did not ask specific questions about drug use, so this motivation may be more common than what was stated.

Many participants were victims of childhood sexual assault, abandoned by their mothers, or homeless. Four participants were in foster care or group homes.

Early prostitution involvement

When they were recruited, participants were involved in a variety of sex trade venues, and many in multiple sites. While 60 percent of the participants worked regularly on the streets, many also worked indoors at hotels, parties, escort services, or their own homes.

Twenty-eight percent of participants became escorts when recruited, and almost all (93 percent) had a pimp. One quarter of them experienced some violence at the hands of their pimp.

When recruited, the number of customers that participants reported having each day ranged from 2 to 20, but 13 percent of them indicated that they had to have sex with an average of 10 customers or more per day. As their time went on in the sex trade, participants were expected to serve increasing numbers of customers, and 51 percent reported being forced to have sex with an average of more than 10 individuals per day.

Fifty-eight percent of participants indicated they were physically transported from where they lived to another location for the sex trade. Twenty-six percent said they were transported to other states.

Violence and coercion during recruitment

Some of the participants experienced violence during recruitment. About a quarter of the sample reported experiencing slapping and 20 percent reported forced sex.

Thirty-five percent of participants said they were coerced into the sex trade. Coercion was defined as providing or denying certain benefits, threats, or verbal abuse. Almost one-third were told that they owed the recruiters because of the provision of food, clothing, or gifts, 29 percent were threatened with harm, and 23 percent said the person recruiting them threatened to end a romantic relationship with their pimp.

Nearly 60 percent of those interviewed said that promises made by pimps during recruitment into the sex trade were broken.

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Current involvement in the sex trade

Pimps

Of those interviewed, 64 percent said they were in a romantic relationship with their pimp. An additional 19 percent had a pimp with whom they were not intimate.

Number of customers

The average number of customers per day increased over time. When starting in the sex trade only 13 percent were forced to engage in sex with an average of more than 10 customers a day, while currently more than half (51 percent) were. Forty-five percent indicated they had to have sex with an average of 10 customers or less per day.

Those trading sex with greater numbers of customers each day faced increased amounts of violence from their pimps.

Transportation

Pimps transported two-thirds of study participants to various locations to trade sex.

Participants were transported to areas throughout the city, the Chicago suburbs, and across state lines. There was an increase in the number of women currently trading sex in more than one geographical area from the time they were recruited.

Pimp violence and coercion

Large percentages of the sample reported currently experiencing violence from their pimps. Seventy-one percent experienced slapping, while 48 percent reported punching, and 47 percent reported forced sex. More than 20 percent stated that fists or feet were used against them, as well as other objects, such as wire hangers, broom sticks, baseball bats, telephone cords, hammers, screwdrivers, and brass knuckles.

The amount of violence endured by the participants increased over time. After recruitment, the women were more than three times as likely to be pinched or kicked, and twice as likely to be punched, kidnapped, or to have clothing ripped.

There was a correlation between increased number of customers and increased levels of violence from the period of recruitment. Current involvement in the sex trade included higher numbers of customers and higher levels of violence from pimps.

Fifty-five percent of participants stated they were currently subject to coercion by their pimps, including threats, monetary withholding, and verbal abuse. Pimps stole money from 62 percent of participants and threatened 61 percent with ending their romantic relationship. Nearly 60 percent were told that they were indebted to their pimps for food, clothing, and gifts. More than one-third of participants said their pimps threatened to kick them out of the house.

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Nearly 30 percent reported being given drugs by their pimps in efforts to get them addicted. Giving or withholding drugs were highly correlated with higher levels of violence.

Two-thirds of the sample said they were forced to live in a certain place and 53 percent of participants were not allowed to keep any of the money they earned.

Forty-three percent of participants said they could not leave without physical harm and an additional 20 percent were not sure if they could leave without harm. Forty percent said they were watched when they were not working, and 20 percent were not sure if they were being watched or not. Thirty-seven percent said they were not allowed to visit friends or family.

Prostitution myths

Data collected from this sample contradicted several common prostitution beliefs. The participants participated in many sex trade venues simultaneously, blurring an often-made demarcation about high-end prostitution activities, such as escort services, and the image of them being free from pimp control and violence. In addition, as the young women progressed through the lifestyle of prostitution, they had to have sex with more customers, travel to more locations, and were subject to more violence and coercion from their pimps. This downward spiral weakens the viability of statements made about prostitution being a victimless crime.

Exiting the sex trade

Nearly 65 percent of participants said that at one point or another they had wanted to leave the sex trade. When asked why they did not leave, some cited drug addiction, while many more reported fearing violence from their pimps. Others explained that they had no way to leave—no home, no money, and no one to care for them. They could not visualize how to make an exit from the sex trade industry. Some reported that they were looking for someone else to take care of them.

Recommendations

The researchers developed the following recommendations based on this study.

Assist young women

Young women in the sex trade in the Chicago metropolitan area who are controlled by a pimp should not be regarded as prostitutes but as domestic violence victims in need of assistance. They need safe housing, treatment for drug addiction and posttraumatic stress disorder, and education and job training. A criminal justice approach that responds by arresting and punishing these young women is counter-productive and inhumane. Alternatives to charging, sentencing, and incarceration should be created, and social service programming and safety planning should be employed and supported with adequate resources. Given the nexus of drugs and prostitution, drug treatment programs should address issues of pimp control, safety planning, and domestic violence, without which women and girls will be unable to end their drug addiction.

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Hold pimps and recruiters accountable

Law enforcement should step up efforts to prosecute pimps who recruit young girls locally, hold them in the sex trade industry through violence and coercion, and transport them throughout the metropolitan area and across state lines. Given the local transportation of girls in the Chicago area, technical assistance and resources from federal law enforcement agencies should be sought. Community members should take responsibility to rid their neighborhoods of recruiters, traffickers, and customers. More information is needed about pimps and traffickers as well as the customers who buy sex in Chicago.

Prevention

Communities also need to intervene early to help young women who are being sexually assaulted or otherwise abused and provide them with a safe haven and a future away from coercive and violent boyfriends who are, in reality, their pimps.

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Introduction

During the last 10 years, the fact that poor and vulnerable young girls are trafficked into the United States to meet the demand for bodies in the sex trade industry has received considerable media attention, despite the fact that good data is not available, and may never be available, on who and how many are coming into the country for this purpose. Cases that do surface reveal the many ways that traffickers use false information and promises, violence, and coercion to bring women into this country for prostitution. Trafficking is fueled by the demand of men who wish to buy sex. Research and anecdotal evidence show that many young girls who were born and raised in Chicago are subject to the same kind of recruitment tactics to meet this need.

This research project was structured to examine the recruitment process in metropolitan Chicago. By interviewing young women currently controlled and managed by pimps in Chicago, recruitment methods were revealed, including strategies used, and levels of coercion, control, and violence employed, to hold them in the industry. Where and how the young women were used in the sex trade industry also was established, including transport to prostitution venues near and far.

This report is organized into two main sections. The first section provides responses about involvement in the sex trade during recruitment; the second section provides responses about current involvement in the sex trade. A third section compares the two periods—recruitment and current participation in the sex trade.

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Literature review

Research literature is limited on pimp-controlled women and girls in prostitution. When interviewing women in prostitution, some researchers have delved into the area pimp control, but without representative samples, it is difficult to determine prevalence of pimps in the sex trade. Prevalence in many samples is estimated to be as high as 50 percent.[1] Celia Williamson believes that available research grossly understates the involvement of pimps in the sex trade industry due to methodology limitations. She suggests that those under the control of pimps are unable to stop and speak safely with researchers, and that only the more independent women are likely to be accessible for study purposes.[2]

Even less is known about the girls and women who do have pimps. Researcher Maureen Norton-Hawk reported that a pimp had controlled 40 percent of her sample of 50 women in street prostitution. She reported that women whose parents were divorced, separated, or addicted to drugs and women who had run away from home, were significantly more likely to have a pimp, suggesting that psychological wounds from childhood made living in a "family" run by a pimp attractive. In her research sample, women controlled by pimps were significantly more likely by the age of 18 to have exchanged sex for money on a regular basis than women who had never had a pimp.[3]

In a 2003 prostitution study by Dalla, Xia, and Kennedy, 17 of 43 women interviewed had pimps. Pimps were the source of the majority of, and most severe forms of, abuse reported by participants.[4]

A study by Dunlap, Golub, and Johnson, who completed a series of longitudinal ethnographic studies of 72 African-American households in inner city New York, makes findings that are useful for interpreting data in this study. In a sample of 98 females, 60 were compelled by force or coercion to have sex by the age of 13. As adults, most participants were found to engage in sex in exchange for money or drugs. The researchers concluded that compelled sex is part of the inner-city development process by which girls learn that their sexual favors are a commodity.[5]

However, research is lacking on the process by which these young girls segue into prostitution. In this study, it was hypothesized that dishonest recruitment tactics and outright coercion are often used to entice vulnerable girls into the sex trade industry. A lack of information on how young women and girls are recruited into the sex trade industry has hampered the understanding of this phenomenon.

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Methodology

Between July and December 2007, a sample of young women in prostitution in the Chicago metropolitan area was interviewed. All reported being controlled by a pimp or a boyfriend serving that function during the study period.

Two survivors of prostitution were trained to verbally administer a face-to-face structured interview with young women up to 25 years of age who said a pimp controlled them. A typical interview lasted about 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted in two locations. About half of the interviews were conducted at the program site of *Unhooked*, a court-mandated, anti-prostitution program operated by Footprints, a division of Christian Community Health Centers. *Unhooked* provides an eight-hour curriculum twice a month to women and girls as an alternative to prosecution and/or incarceration. Others were interviewed on the streets, and in restaurants, nail spas, and hotels. The interviews revealed that the young women were involved in a variety of prostitution venues, both on the streets and behind closed doors.

Participants were first asked if they were involved with a pimp, boyfriend, or anyone else to whom they gave the money they earn as prostitutes, in exchange for protection, transportation, or arranging customers or “tricks.” Only women who reported having a pimp, or someone who acted as a pimp, were asked to be a part of the research study, and participants were given $10 cash for their interview. The women were asked to gauge their own safety and to determine the safest place for completing the interview. After the interview, participants were also given information on Footprints, a social service agency that assists women and girls in prostitution.

Survivors of prostitution who were able to share their own experiences in the sex trade were able to obtain information that the participants might otherwise have been unwilling to share with a researcher, lest they be adversely judged.

In this report, the terms prostitution and sex trade are used interchangeably. In addition, the term "customers" is used rather than johns, clients, or tricks.

Limitations

In all, 100 women were interviewed. The sample of young women interviewed was neither random nor representative of the sex trade recruits in the Chicago metropolitan area. Due to the clandestine and illegal nature of prostitution, it is difficult to know how a representative sample would actually look. However, the sample is large enough to illustrate the challenges faced by these young women and help formulate ways to respond to them.

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Research findings

Demographics

Of study participants, 51 percent said they were black, 20 percent said they were white, 15 percent said they were Hispanic, 8 percent identified themselves as bi-racial, and 2 percent said they were Asian. Four percent were unknown.

The age range of participants in the study was 16 to 25 years old. The average and median age of those interviewed was 21 years old. The mode, or most common age in the sample, was age 19 (n=19). However, those over 25 years old were excluded from the study because researchers chose to focus on young women and girls. *Table 1* shows the number and percentage of study participants by age.

Table 1
Ages of study participants

Age	*N*	*Percent*
16	1	1%
17	6	6%
18	14	14%
19	19	19%
20	9	9%
21	5	5%
22	10	10%
23	12	12%
24	16	16%
25	7	7%
unknown	1	1%
TOTAL	**100**	**100%**

Of all participants in the study, 73 percent were born in Illinois and 68 percent were born in Chicago. Others hailed from Canton, Chicago Heights, Joliet, Park Ridge, Pontiac, Waukegan, and Woodstock. One-fifth of study participants were born in other states, including California, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, and Wisconsin. One person was born in Mexico, and 6 percent did not specify a birthplace.

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Recruitment into the sex trade

This section focuses solely on the period when participants were first recruited in to the sex trade. The sex trade operates based on supply and demand. There needs to be a constant supply of girls and young women in the sex trade to meet the demands of customers, which is often facilitated by pimps who profit. Since girls do not often decide on their own to participate in the sex trade and have sex with strangers, pimps or others use strategies such as force and coercion to get them to engage in the sex trade. These strategies are discussed further in this section of the report.

Age of sex trade entry

Participants were asked when they started regularly engaging in the sex trade, which was defined as at least weekly. The average age of participants' entry into the sex trade was 16.4 years old, with ages ranging from 12 to 23 years old at time of entry. The median age of entry in the sex trade was 16 years old. The mode, or most common age, was also age 16 (n=23). *Table 2* depicts the age of those interviewed for the study when they first started engaging in the sex trade.

Most participants started in the sex trade before the age of 18 (73 percent). In Illinois, a juvenile is 16 years old or younger. In our study sample, 56 percent started in the sex trade as a juvenile. Thirty-three percent were between 12 and 15 years old.

Table 2
Age of entry into the sex trade

Age	*N*	*Percent*
12	2	2%
13	6	6%
14	10	10%
15	15	15%
16	23	23%
17	17	17%
18	10	10%
19	3	3%
20	2	2%
21	3	3%
22	1	1%
23	3	3%
unknown	5	5%
TOTAL	**100**	**100%**

Recruiters

The interviews revealed three common recruitment scenarios. Some young women began selling sex to support their drug addiction. Others left home due to family dysfunction or abandonment

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and became involved in prostitution in order to survive. While these young women were not recruited, they did later become involved with a pimp.

Still others were recruited by people acting as pimp, including boyfriends, family members, girlfriends, while still living at home.

Regardless of the scenario, people who recruited the study participants typically fell into one of three categories. These were:

- Family members.
- Girlfriends already in the business.
- Pimps and boyfriends.

Most study participants stated that they were recruited into in the sex trade (68 percent). When asked who recruited them, 23 percent of the sample said their boyfriend, or "my man," 19 percent said a friend or a girlfriend, and 12 percent said a pimp.

Ten percent of participants said a family member had recruited them, including a sister (4 percent), cousin (3 percent), brother, foster parent, and uncle.

One percent of the sample said an escort service or "a guy who was introduced to me" had recruited them. (Thirty-two percent indicated they were not recruited and therefore did not indicate a recruiter.) *Table 3* depicts the individuals who had recruited the study participants into the sex trade.

Table 3
Recruiters into the sex trade

	N	***Percent***
Recruited		
Boyfriend/ my man	23	23%
Friend/ girlfriend	19	19%
Pimp	12	12%
Family member		
Sister	4	4%
Cousin	3	3%
Brother	1	1%
Uncle	1	1%
Foster parent	1	1%
Other		
Escort service	1	1%
Myself	1	1%
A guy	1	1%
Mom's friend	1	1%
Total	68	68%
Not recruited/ on own		
Total	32	32%
TOTAL	**100**	**100%**

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Of those who were recruited into the sex trade as juveniles (n=16), 18 percent were recruited by a family member (n=10) and 14 percent were recruited by a pimp (n=8).

Circumstances of recruitment

Twenty–three percent of participants reported that dire family situations caused them to turn to prostitution for survival at an average age of 15 and one-half years old. Some of the young women found themselves on the streets, where they were recruited by boyfriend/pimps and solicited by customers. Others, needing money for drugs or basic necessities, found themselves swayed by girlfriends or relatives already in the business.

Incest and childhood sexual assault accounted for some of the homelessness. One young woman entered the sex trade on the streets on a regular basis at age 13 years old.

> *"My mom lived with so many different men and people. She would always leave me with people and they would abuse me, so I ran."*

Another study participant began prostituting at age 16 after leaving home to escape the abuse by her father. To survive, she said she routinely sold sex with 15 to 25 customers a day in a variety of prostitution venues. Now 23, she has a drug habit. "I feel like I want to commit suicide sometimes," she said. "I want to get my life back."

One pimp helped a 15-year old girl run away from home because her mother's boyfriend was abusing her. "He was sleeping with me and no one would believe me, so I was out of there," she said. "We ran out of money while on the road and he showed me how to work the truck stops."

Eight years later, she is still with him, having sex with nine customers a day on the street and in hotels. "I am okay with what I have and do," she said. "It's better than where I came from."

Some girls were without parents altogether. One participant reported that at 14, when her mother went to jail, her stepfather recruited her into the sex trade to support them both.

Some became homeless when their mothers locked them out. One said that she was living with her grandmother. "My mom chose a man over her kids," she said.

One 18-year-old described her entry into an escort service.

"We discussed how much his cut would be," she said. "He told me I had to sleep with him first. Then he told me his cut would be 45 percent. I talked him down to 30 percent. I needed money and I needed it fast, because [otherwise] I was intending on committing suicide."
For those whose mothers were not around, one can understand the limited opportunities available for making money, the need for money for basic survival, and the lure of the sex trade. As one

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explained, "I was 14 when I made my first cash exchange for money. I liked the fast money." And another: "I ran away from home and I needed money to live, so I started having sex for money. It is so easy to make $200-300 a day. I can get me a room and buy some clothes."

Three study participants were residing in foster homes and one was living in a group home during recruitment.

One young girl had been evicted from her foster home after too many fights with her foster mother's biological kids, including one who had sexually abused her. She met her pimp on the street when she was 15 years old. Another young woman was recruited into the sex trade by a girl who had run away from the same foster home and had become involved in prostitution.

In another situation, a participant was introduced to her pimp by a girlfriend in the same group home. A foster parent introduced another participant to prostitution at age 12.

> *"He would bring his buddies by from work and they would take turns with me. My foster parent taught me what to do. My foster mother didn't say anything. She said I was a whore anyway."*

One young woman ran away after her adoptive mother married a controlling man. Her biological mother had died when she was six months old.

One 22-year-old had become homeless when her boyfriend kicked her out of the house. As she walked down the street, a man in a car approached her and asked her if she wanted to make some money. He regularly employed violence from slapping and punching to forced sex in order to keep her trading sex with 10 to 15 customers a night.

Another young woman who joined an escort service at age 17 said she needed the money to keep her family together. "Some are illegal and that's why me and my sister needed money to help them," she said.

When 14-years-old a participant was recruited while trying to care for her young siblings. Her mother was in the streets most of the time, and for extra money, she cared for a male cousin's babies. She said, "I could get extra money to feed my two little brothers."

She shared the following. "One day when I asked him for money to pay for some food and to get our lights back on, he said he would set me up with something," she said. "He set me up with a trick. He would make me give him a cut even though he knew I really needed the money for my brothers."
Now she is 19 years old, and separated from her siblings. "I need someone to help me get my little brothers back and a place for us," she said.

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Another participant reported life with her mother, eight siblings, and an aunt with another three children. They all lived in a three-bedroom apartment on Chicago's Northwest Side. Her sister had moved out when she was 17. "She always had nice clothes she would let me wear sometimes," she said. "I asked her how she got them, and that's when she told me [she was a prostitute]. She said it was real easy. She said I could quit when I got ready but that wasn't true. I haven't been able to quit. First I am scared to leave my sister behind, and now I have a heroin habit." She and her sister shared the same pimp.

One participant shared the following:

"I don't know anything else to do and I won't leave my sister. She needs me. If we could get clean and get a house in the country. I'm dreaming, huh?"

Participants described the challenges to leaving the sex trade. Most common was a belief by the young women that they were incapable of surviving any other way.

> *"I used to turn 2-3 tricks after I left school when I was a freshman with some guys in my neighborhood so I could eat and buy clothes. My mom was on drugs. She never had money to feed or clothe me. Once you get out here you are lost and you don't know any other way. People should know that us girls are not different. If anything, we are better because we didn't give up."*

Early prostitution involvement

On average, women and girls who had been recruited into the sex trade by family members were 2.1 years younger ($t=3.247$, $p=0.002$) than those recruited by non-family members.

Two young women in our sample began prostituting regularly at the age of 12. One was introduced to customers by a foster parent. She performed sex acts with 7 to 10 customers per day at her own residence. "He said if I did what he asked, he wouldn't mess with my sister, but he did," she said.

The other 12-year-old had been abused by her brother. When their mother died from an overdose, they went to stay with cousins and then her brother then started setting her up with his friends.
"He said he wouldn't tell anyone about our secret and if I got money he would take care of me, but he did neither," she said. "He told our cousin who decided to put me out. Then he really used me."

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Drug use

Drugs were a constant theme in this study. Almost half of the young women who had started on their own said they did so to buy drugs. The survey did not ask specific questions about drug usage; therefore, either prior to recruitment or now, an increased prevalence of drug involvement in the sample was possible.

"I started using drugs to make myself feel better," reported one participant. "I had no idea that I would turn to prostitution. I would turn dates with mostly drug dealers. I needed fast money. I had a $200 to $300 a day drug habit."

Another said, "I started soliciting to support my drug addiction. I needed money to get drugs in order not to be sick."

One participant shared the following:

"I started getting high. I used to see the other girls getting in the tricks' cars, so I decided to try it myself."

Another scenario involves the drug dealer. In exchange for drugs, sex is demanded. Then the dealer acts as a pimp, bringing customers to the young woman.

"I started smoking weed when I was 14 and hanging out in the street," said one participant. "Guys would give me stuff to sleep with me. I started smoking crack at 16. So I started doing drug dealers, then just anyone. I want to stop but it's hard to quit the drug, now that I have a heroin habit."

In addition, lastly, some of the pimps introduced the women to drugs as a method of reeling them in.

"We met at a gas station by my house where we hung out," said one young woman of her experience at age 15. "He sold weed. Well, I used to get high with him and he was nice to me. He used to buy me food and take me shopping. Then one day he came by with two girls who were dressed nice. He said I could be like that. I was hooked and I wanted to escape from everything that was happening to me."

Broken promises: The mechanics of recruitment

Given the circumstances at the time of recruitment, it is easy to understand why many of the girls were persuaded to trade sex. For those who were homeless or needed to leave home, the offer of a place to stay and some money was compelling.

"He promised me everything and better," said one participant "Clothes, cars, house, himself. I was just looking for someone to love and love me."

One participant shared the following:

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"We started dating. I was homeless at the time. He gave me a place to stay. Shortly after that he introduced me to the game."

Fifty-seven percent of the participants said that they were made promises about their involvement in the sex trade that turned out to be untrue.

"He would buy me things, take me out and flash his money and told me I could benefit from my body if I was smart and he would show me."

Sex and violence

The following are quotes from study participants about promises related to sex and violence.

"He told me that I would be safe. That didn't happen. I got beat up a lot."

"He told me that I would never get hurt. I get hurt on a regular basis."

"He said he would never let anyone hurt me or let me stay in jail, but he lied."

> *"He told me that I would not have to perform sexual acts all the time. As it turned out, I did."*

Money

The following are quotes about promises made by pimps regarding making money or getting rich from prostitution.

"He told me he would buy me a fur coat. He didn't."

"He did not take care of me as promised. There were no clothes or shoes and there was hardly any money. "

"He said he would take care of me. He didn't. He said we would get rich. We didn't. Also, he didn't tell me that he would beat me and he does. "

"He told me how much he loved me and how he wanted the best for me. At first I was not working. He bought me clothes, jewelry, and furs. After about two months or less, he said if I loved him then I would date his friend, then another, and another. "

"He told me he would split the money I made, and he didn't."

"He said we were going to get rich. We didn't. He promised no violence. There is violence. "

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Getting out

Below are quotes from young women about getting out of prostitution or stopping trading sex.

"I was told it was easy money. It is not. I was told that I could stop whenever I wanted, but now I need money for drugs, so I can't stop."

"He said I could leave when I was ready after I made the money I needed, but I can't leave. I never see my money. I am always behind on what I owe or need to get ahead."

"[He said] that the life was easy, fun, safe, and that I could leave whenever I want. That is not the case."

"First my sister told me this would be easy and I could quit when I got ready, but that wasn't true. I haven't been able to quit. First I am scared to leave my sister behind and now I have a habit on heroin and my sister and I have the same man."

> *"Everything he said to me was a lie."*

Place or venue of participation in sex trade during recruitment

Those interviewed were asked where they started engaging in the sex trade on a regular basis (at least weekly). Sixty percent said they began trading sex on the street. Participants also traded sex indoors at hotels, parties, escort services, drug houses, or in their own homes. During recruitment, 60 percent traded sex at hotels, 37 percent at private parties, 28 percent through escort services or drug houses, and 26 percent from their own residence. In our sample, the least likely venues where sex was traded were massage parlor/ health spa (7 percent) or a brothel (2 percent). In the next section of the report on current involvement in the sex trade, participants were asked where they currently engage in the sex trade.

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Table 4 indicates where participation occurred in the sex trade on a regular basis.

Table 4
Place or venue of participation on a regular basis

	Yes	***No***	***Total***
Escort	28%	72%	100%
Exotic dancing	14%	86%	100%
Street	60%	40%	100%
Own residence	26%	74%	100%
Hotels	60%	40%	100%
Massage parlor/ health spa	7%	93%	100%
Private parties	37%	63%	100%
Drug house	28%	72%	100%
Brothel	2%	98%	100%
Bars	17%	83%	100%
Internet/ Craigslist	8%	92%	100%
Other	8%	92%	100%

Eight percent of study participants mentioned obtaining customers through the Internet, specifically on Craigslist. Craigslist provides local classifieds and forums for jobs, housing, items for sale, personals, services, local community, and events.[6]

Craigslist also has been used to conduct criminal activity, including prostitution and trafficking. Substantially reducing Craigslist-related crimes may not be possible, as federal courts have ruled that Web site operators are not liable for what people post on them. In addition, law enforcement lacks the resources to constantly monitor Craigslist.[7] Craigslist receives more than 9 billion page views monthly, and Craigslist users self-publish more than 30 million new classified ads each month.

One-fourth referred to their engagement in the sex trade as for "survival sex." Survival sex is defined, as trading sex for survival needs to obtain food, clothing, and shelter, but not money.

Other sex trade venues used by participants, included an adult bookstore and cars. The following are quotes about other venues.

> *"He would go to bars [and] bring guys to me."*
>
> *"In cars at other friend's apartment[s]."*
>
> *"Private tricks that became my regulars"*
>
> *"Set up by our manager at spa."*

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Those who started as juveniles, younger than 17 years old, most often started in the sex trade on the street or in hotels. Sixty-three percent of those who began participating in the sex trade as juveniles (n=35) started on the street. Fifty-nine percent started in hotels (n=33).

Escorts

Despite what may seem as less violent, more managed, or even glamorous, those serving as escorts had experiences that were similar to others in the sex trade. Twenty-eight percent of women and girls in the study started as escorts when recruited. At recruitment, 93 percent said they had a pimp, with 25 percent of them experiencing at least some violence from their pimp. When recruited, many also traded sex in venues in addition to an escort service. At recruitment, 68 percent also traded sex at a hotel, 43 percent also traded sex at private parties, and 32 percent also traded sex on the street.

At the time of the interview, 41 percent women were escorts. More than two-thirds of them experienced violence by their pimps (67 percent). More than half had to turn their earnings over to their pimp (56 percent). Pimps transported around almost 80 percent of the escorts. Thirty-seven percent said that they could not or were unsure if they could leave the sex trade without harm, and 59 percent said they had been coerced. Many of the escorts also traded sex through other venues in addition to an escort service. Seventy-one percent also traded sex in hotels (not as a part of an escort service), 56 percent on the street, and 39 percent at private parties.

Numbers of customers

Participants were asked how many "customers" they had per day on average during recruitment. The average number of customers was 6.82 and the median was 6.0 customers. Many participants provided a range of the number of customers. If a participant provided a range, the lower number was used to obtain the average, so the average is a conservative estimate of the number of customers. Using the minimum number provided, their responses ranged from 2 to 20 customers per day. A total of 16 percent had 1 to 4 customers per day, 37 percent had 5 to 8 customers, 11 percent had 9 to 12 customers, 4 percent had 13 to 16 customers, and 1 percent had 17 to 20 customers. Again, this is a conservative estimate.

Examining ranges of responses provided, over half (56 percent) indicated that they had to perform sex acts with an average of 10 customers or less per day and 13 percent had to have sex with an average of more then 10 customers (31 percent not applicable).

Transportation by pimps

Most (87 percent) of participants were living in Chicago. Twelve percent were living in the suburbs and some specified the suburban Chicago cities of Harvey, Maywood, and Woodstock. Another twelve percent were living in another state. Other states named were California, Louisiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Eleven of the women interviewed indicated that they were living in more than one location.

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Table 5 illustrates the geographical areas where the young women interviewed were living and trading sex when they started on a regular basis.

Table 5
Geographical areas of where participants were living and trading sex during recruitment

	Area in sex trade				
Area living	***Chicago***	***Chicago suburbs***	***Neighboring state***	***Other state***	***TOTAL***
Chicago	84	19	3	10	*116*
Chicago suburbs	9	10	2	1	*22*
Neighboring state	2	0	3	1	*6*
Other state	3	0	2	4	*9*
TOTAL	*98*	*29*	*10*	*16*	

When recruited, 98 participants said they were trading sex in Chicago and 29 said they were trading sex in the suburbs of Chicago. Twenty-five of the women interviewed were trading sex in more than one area.

Fourteen women reported trading sex in Chicago at or near Midway International Airport and O'Hare International Airport. Ten participants reported trading sex at Midway and in hotels near the airport.

Twenty-six percent of individuals traded sex in another state, including 10 in a neighboring state. Other states named were California, Georgia, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, and Washington. Neighboring states where participants traded sex included Missouri, Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin.

More than half of those interviewed (58 percent) indicated they were physically transported from where they lived to another location to meet customers.

Most participants were living and trading sex in Chicago (n=84). More than half of the study sample (n=52) were trading sex in an area other than Chicago.

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Table 6 depicts the geographical area of participation in sex trade of those living in Chicago during recruitment. Participants could indicate multiple geographical areas they traded sex.

Table 6
Geographical area of participation in sex trade of those living in Chicago during recruitment

	Area in sex trade				
Area living	***Chicago***	***Chicago suburbs***	***Neighboring state***	***Other state***	***TOTAL***
Chicago	84	19	3	10	*116*

While most of those interviewed lived and traded sex in Chicago, 32 lived in Chicago and at times trades sex elsewhere. A total of 19 of those living in Chicago traded sex in the suburbs and 13 traded sex in other states.

Coercion during recruitment

Thirty-five percent of those interviewed reported being subjected to coercion during recruitment into the sex trade. Coercion includes activities that encourage participation in the sex trade and included threats, verbal abuse, and providing or denying certain benefits. A total of 40 percent of participants were coerced with verbal abuse. In addition, money was taken from 37 percent of participants. Almost one-third were told that they were indebted to the recruiters because of the provision of food, clothing, and gifts. Twenty-nine percent were threatened with harm and 23 percent said the person recruiting them threatened to end a romantic relationship

One young woman said her pimp threatened to hurt her younger sister. Another threatened to take her baby from her.

> *"I knew no one would like me or talk to me if I did not do what they asked. I just wanted to be loved."*

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Women interviewed reported a variety of non-violent coercion techniques used by their pimps. *Table 7* details the type of coercion experienced by those recruited into the sex trade.

Table 7
Types of coercion experienced during recruitment

	Yes	*No*	*Unsure*	*N/A*	*Total*
Money taken by pimp	37%	16%	3%	44%	100%
Threats of being kicked out of home	20%	36%	0%	44%	100%
Drugs provided to encourage addiction	15%	40%	2%	43%	100%
Withholding drugs by pimp	12%	44%	1%	43%	100%
Claims of indebtedness for with food, clothing, and gifts	32%	23%	1%	44%	100%
Threats to end romantic relationship	23%	31%	2%	44%	100%
Threats of harm	29%	27%	2%	42%	100%
Verbal abuse	40%	16%	1%	43%	100%
Other	2%	17%	0%	81%	100%

Violence during recruitment

Only 15 percent of participants reported being subjected to violence by recruiters. However, all participants were also asked to report experiences of any specific types of violence that occurred during recruitment, from slapping and hair pulling to kidnapping and forced sex. About one-third (34 percent) of those who initially said that they were not subjected to violence actually had experienced some form of violence during recruitment.

Table 8 specifies the types of violence experienced during recruitment. The interviews revealed that almost 24 percent experienced slapping, and 20 percent experienced forced sex.

Table 8
Violence by pimps during recruitment in the sex trade by type

	Experienced violence	*Experienced no violence*	*Not applicable/ no response*	*Total*
Slapping	24%	32%	44%	100%
Punching	14%	42%	44%	100%
Hair pulled	11%	45%	44%	100%
Pinched	4%	51%	45%	100%
Spanked	10%	44%	46%	100%
Kicked	10%	46%	44%	100%
Kidnapped	5%	49%	46%	100%
Ripped clothes	8%	48%	44%	100%
Something thrown	11%	45%	44%	100%
Threatened rape	9%	46%	45%	100%
Forced sex	20%	38%		100%
Other	2%	33%		100%

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Study participants were asked how often they were subjected to violence during recruitment. Slapping was the most frequent type of violence—13 percent said they had been slapped "sometimes" or "often." Nine percent of those interviewed stated that forced sex and hair pulling occurred sometimes or often. Eight percent said rape was threatened sometimes or often.

Table 9 details the type and frequency of violence endured by those recruited into the sex trade.

Table 9
Violence by pimps during recruitment in the sex trade by type and frequency

	Often	***Sometimes***	***Seldom***	***Never***	***NA/ Unknown***	***Total***
Slapping	8%	5%	11%	32%	44%	100%
Punching	3%	3%	8%	42%	44%	100%
Hair pulling	6%	3%	2%	45%	44%	100%
Pinching	3%	0%	1%	51%	44%	100%
Spanking	4%	2%	4%	44%	46%	100%
Kicking	3%	3%	4%	46%	44%	100%
Kidnapping	1%	1%	3%	49%	46%	100%
Ripping clothes	4%	1%	3%	48%	44%	100%
Throwing objects	3%	5%	3%	45%	44%	100%
Threatening rape	6%	2%	1%	46%	45%	100%
Forcing sex	6%	3%	8%	38%	45%	100%
Other	1%	1%	0%	33%	65%	100%

Interviewers asked female study participants to indicate the weapons with which they were harmed when recruited in the sex trade. Eight percent said fists or feet were used sometimes or often. Other weapons noted by the young women interviewed included a belt, belt buckle, electric cord, sticks, broom stick, pool stick, lamp, scissors, and bricks. One woman who only seldom was hit with fists or feet and nothing else said, "He would always remind me that I was being watched."

One young woman, recruited into prostitution by her foster parent at age 12, was hit with belts, sticks, and electric cords.

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Table 10 details the frequency of weapons used to harm study participants during recruitment in the sex trade.

Table 10
Weapons to harm women and girls during recruitment in the sex trade by type and frequency

	Often	***Sometimes***	***Seldom***	***Never***	***NA/ Unknown***	***Total***
Fists/ feet	3%	5%	7%	40%	45%	100%
Knife	1%	0%	1%	54%	44%	100%
Gun	2%	1%	7%	46%	44%	100%
Matches/cigarettes	1%	0%	2%	52%	45%	100%
Other objects	3%	3%	0%	49%	45%	100%
Other weapon	0%	2%	1%	50%	47%	100%
Other	4%	3%	0%	39%	54%	100%

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Current involvement in the sex trade

This section focuses on the participant's current involvement in the sex trade rather than the time they were recruited. Depending on the person interviewed, the period between recruitment and current involvement could have been long or short. The next section compares participants' responses regarding the sex trade from the time of recruitment to current involvement.

Pimps and managers

At the time of the interview, only 38 percent were with the same pimp or manager that had initially recruited them into prostitution.

Study participants were asked to specify their relationship to their pimp. Most (44 percent) said their boyfriend was their pimp and 20 percent said "my man." A total of 19 percent said that their relationship was a manager, agent, boss, or pimp. A small number said girlfriend (6 percent) and friend (2 percent). Two participants said their pimps were relatives, including the mother of one and the cousin of the other.

Table 11 shows the study participants' relationships to their pimps or managers in the sex trade.

Table 11
Current relationship to pimp or manager in sex trade

	N	***Percent***
Boyfriend/ "My man"	64	44%
Pimp/ manager/ agent/ boss	19	19%
Girlfriend/ friend	8	8%
Family member		
Mother	1	1%
Cousin	1	1%
Other	2	2%
No response/ Not applicable	5	5%
TOTAL	***100***	***100%***

Participants were asked how many other women or girls that they knew of that the pimp had under his or her control. Two-thirds (67 percent) said that they knew of one or more other women or girls under the control of their pimp. Twenty percent knew of no other women or girls under the control of their pimp. A total of 13 percent of the sample were unknown or not applicable.

The average number of women and girls that pimps had under their control was 2.99. When the participants provided researchers with a range, the lower number was used to obtain the average. As a result, the averages listed here are conservative estimates. The range of other women under the control of each participant's pimp was 1 to 15. The median number of women at the service of a pimp was two. One participant indicated that there were 15 other prostitutes with her pimp and one indicated there were 12 other prostitutes.

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Table 12 indicates the number of other women and girls that were under the control of their pimps in addition to the person interviewed.

Table 12
Minimum number of other women and girls under control of participants' pimps

Number of other women and girls	***Number of responses***	***Percent***
1-5	52	52%
6-10	13	13%
11-15	2	2%
None/ Unknown	33	33%

Study participants indicated the number of all the women controlled by their pimp. Including study participants, 187 women were identified as being prostituted in Chicago. That is the 100 participants and 87 other women prostituted by the same pimps.

Place or venue of participation

The young women interviewed were asked to answer questions about current participation in the sex trade on a regular basis. Sixty-seven percent said they participated in the sex trade on the street, as well as indoors at hotels, parties, escort services, drug houses, or their own homes. A total of 67 percent engaged in sex at hotels, 35 percent met customers at private parties, 41 percent of participants through escort services, 29 percent at drug houses, and 28 percent at their own residence.

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Table 13 indicates where participants were trading sex at the time of the interview.

Table 13
Place or venue of current participation in the sex trade

	Yes	***No***	***Total***
Escort	41%	59%	100%
Exotic dancing	18%	82%	100%
Street	67%	33%	100%
Own residence	28%	72%	100%
Hotels	67%	33%	100%
Massage parlor/ health spa	11%	89%	100%
Private parties	35%	65%	100%
Drug house	29%	71%	100%
Survival sex	12%	88%	100%
Brothel	4%	96%	100%
Bars	19%	81%	100%
Internet/ Craigslist	13%	87%	100%
Other	20%	80%	100%

At the time of the interview, 12 percent traded sex for survival, a decrease from the 25 percent who engaged in survival sex when they were starting in the sex trade. This indicates that younger girls starting in the sex trade engage in more survival sex.

Three percent said they used the telephone to connect with customers, citing use of a call-in service, phone numbers of regulars, and a "little black book."

Thirteen percent of participants mentioned obtaining customers through the Internet. Of those, 7 percent specifically mentioned the website Craigslist.

Transportation by pimps

Most study participants (87 percent) said they were living in the city of Chicago. Fifteen percent were living in the suburbs of Chicago. Some participants mentioned living in the suburban cities of Brookfield, Chicago Heights, Des Plaines, Woodstock, and Schaumburg. Ten percent were living in another state—3 percent specified that they were living in Wisconsin and 3 percent were living in Indiana.

Ten women interviewed were living in more than one area. One woman stated she was living in more than five different areas, including Chicago, the Chicago suburbs, Wisconsin, Indiana, and other states.

Some of the young women in the sample said they have no real home. They go to an area, live in a hotel, trade sex with customers for a few days or weeks, and then move on to another location.

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For example, one 21-year old trades sex by Midway Airport, downtown, the south suburbs of Chicago, and sometimes in Indiana. “I live the same place as I work,” she said. “My pimp rents hotels where I work and where I have to stay.” Another, who reported trading sex in Las Vegas, Nevada, California, and Florida, as well as Chicago, said, “We follow the sun.”

Table 14 lists the geographical areas where study participants were living and participating in the sex trade at the time of the interview.

Table 14
Geographical areas where participants were living and participating in the sex trade at the time of interview

	Area participating in the sex trade					
Area living	***Chicago***	***Chicago suburbs***	***Wisconsin***	***Indiana***	***Other state***	***TOTAL***
Chicago	83	14	2	3	3	*108*
Suburbs	23	11	1	2	2	*39*
Wisconsin	4	2	3	1	2	*12*
Indiana	5	5	1	2	2	*15*
Other state	13	3	1	2	1	*20*
TOTAL	*128*	*35*	*8*	*10*	*10*	

Thirty-eight women were trading sex in more than area. One person served customers in the sex trade in five areas, two in four areas, and seven in three areas. Thirty-five women said they were trading sex in the suburbs of Chicago, including Broadview, Dolton, Harvey, Maywood, and South Holland.

Many women were trading sex in another state (n=28). Ten traveled to Indiana and eight to Wisconsin. Another neighboring state mentioned was Missouri. Many other states were mentioned as places where they traded sex, including California, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, and Washington. Six specifically mentioned traveling in Las Vegas, Nevada.

When pimps take women and girls across state lines to trade sex, because of the interstate aspect there is federal jurisdiction. Therefore, the F.B.I. can assist local law enforcement investigate and prosecute cases. In addition, if a pimp is prosecuted under federal law, the penalties are harsher.

Eleven participants specified that they traded sex near one of the airports in Chicago. Eight participants indicated they served customers near Midway International Airport, while three reported trading sex near O’Hare International Airport.

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Table 15 depicts the geographical area of participation in the sex trade of those living in Chicago at the time of the interview.

Table 15
Geographical areas of sex trade participation among those living in Chicago at time of interview

	Area in sex trade				
Area living	***Chicago***	***Chicago suburbs***	***Neighboring state***	***Other state***	***TOTAL***
Chicago	83	14	2	3	3

Map 1 depicts where participants identified they traded sex at in Chicago. These locations are approximate in order to maintain study participants' anonymity. In addition, the areas identified may be hotels, residences, bars, and other indoor locations.

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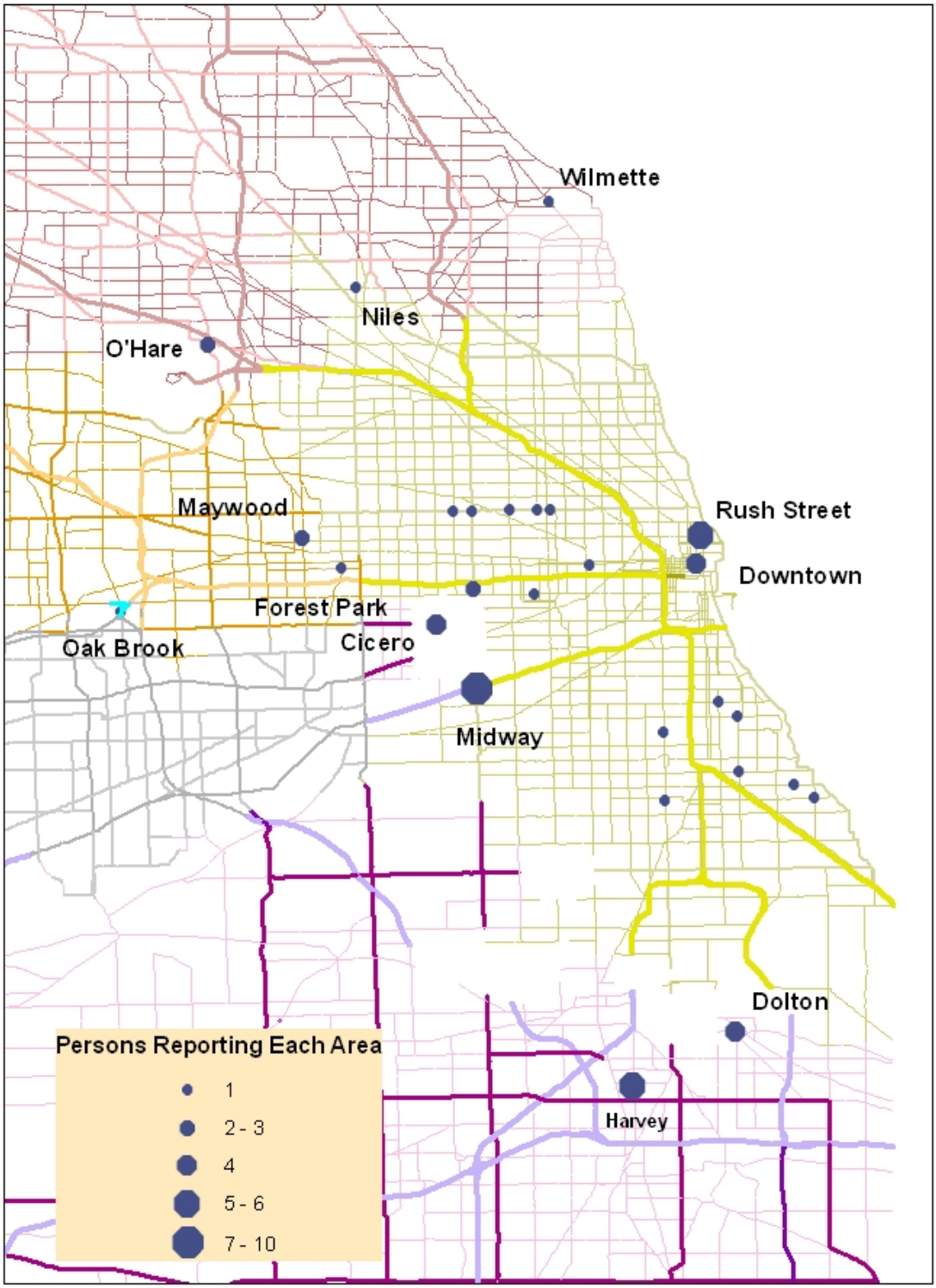
Map 1
Areas of Chicago sex trade venues identified by study participants



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Many participants lived and participated in the Chicago sex trade (n=83). However, almost all of the study sample (n=93) traded sex in an area different from where they were living.

Participants made the following comments on where they traveled:

> "*All over the Midwest on the Interstate*."

> "*Hotels, hotels all over, his connections*."

Pimps transported just over two-thirds of participants (67 percent) to customers. Pimps transported just more than half of participants to customers every day and 19 percent every few days. Only 2 percent were transported once per month and 27 percent did not respond.

Number of customers

Three-fourths of those interviewed traded sex every day. If not trading sex everyday, 22 percent did so every few days and 1 percent did so once a week. Two percent said "other."

Participants were asked how many customers they had per day on average. Responses ranged from zero to 40 customers per day. The average number of customers was 10 and the median was also 10 customers. When the participants provided researchers with a range, the lower number was used to obtain the average. As a result, the averages listed here could be conservative estimates. Nine percent reported having one to four customers per day, 34 percent reported having five to eight customers per day, 32 percent reported having nine to 12 customers per day, 10 percent reported having 13 to 16 customers daily, and 6 percent reported having 17 to 20 customers each day. Five percent had a minimum of more than 20 customers per day.

Examining ranges of responses provided, 51 percent had to trade sex with an average of more then 10 customers per day, and 45 percent indicated that they had to trade sex with an average of 10 customers or less per day. Four percent did not respond.

There was statistically significant and moderately strong correlation between the minimum number of customers daily and the level of violence being perpetrated against them by their pimp ($rho=0.642$, $p<0.000$). (Statistical information reported in Appendix A.)

Coercion by pimps

At the time of the interview, 55 percent of participants said that their pimps were coercing them. Coercion was defined as activities that encourage participation in the sex trade, and included threats, verbal abuse, and providing or denying certain benefits.

Their pimps verbally abused 76 percent of the women. In addition, 63 percent experienced threats of harm, and money was taken from 62 percent of those interviewed. Sixty-one percent experienced threats to end the romantic relationship they had with their pimp. Nearly 60 percent were told that they were indebted to the recruiters because of the provision of food, clothing, and

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gifts. More than one-third of those interviewed said their pimps threatened to kick them out of the house and 29 percent were given drugs by their pimps to get them addicted.

Table 16 details the type of coercion experienced by those recruited into the sex trade.

Table 16
Type of coercion of women and girls by pimps

	Yes	***No***	***N/A***	***Total***
Money taken by pimp	62%	19%	19%	100%
Threats of being kicked out of home	36%	47%	17%	100%
Drugs provided to encourage addiction	29%	54%	17%	100%
Withholding drugs by pimp	23%	57%	20%	100%
Claims of indebtedness for with food, clothing, and gifts	59%	24%	17%	100%
Threats to end romantic relationship	61%	22%	17%	100%
Threats of harm	63%	20%	17%	100%
Verbal abuse	76%	8%	16%	100%
Other	14%	12%	74%	100%

When comparing coercion during recruitment (*Table 7*) to coercion experienced at the time of the study (*Table 16*), the women were experiencing coercion at higher levels at time of the interview. Threats to end the romantic relationship and to be kicked out of the home were much more prevalent at the time of the interview.

> *"You have to understand, he must have his respect."*

Freedom of movement

The study participants were asked questions to help determine their freedom of movement (*Table 17)*. Two-thirds said that they had to live in a certain place. Forty-three percent reported that they could not leave without physical harm and an additional 20 percent said they were unsure if they could leave without physical harm. Thirty-seven percent of participants were not allowed to leave and visit friends and family.

Forty percent of participants said that their pimp watched them when they were not trading sex with customers. Another 20 percent were not sure if they were watched when not trading sex.

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Table 7 shares participant responses on their freedom of movement.

Table 17
Freedom of movement of women and girls in the sex trade

Question	*Yes*	*No*	*Unsure*	*N/A*	*Total*
If you wanted to leave, could you do so without physical harm?	34%	43%	20%	3%	100%
Do you have to live in a certain place?	66%	31%	0%	3%	100%
Are you watched when you are not working?	40%	37%	20%	3%	100%
Are you allowed to leave and visit friends or family?	53%	37%	6%	4%	100%

Turning money over to pimp

More than half of study participants were not allowed to keep any of the money they earned in the sex trade (53 percent). Those who could keep their money were asked to specify how much they were able to keep. Responses varied greatly, from very little to most of the money.

Statements made by participants about how much money they are allowed to keep included:

> "*He uses most to pay bills, keep him from being sick.*"
>
> "*I control the money, but I support both our habits.*"
>
> "*If I get $1,000, I keep $300 because I need care for kids.*"
>
> "*Most of it I keep. I pay him a fee.*"
>
> "*I give him the money to hold, but it's for us.*"

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Violence by pimps

Compared to violence during recruitment, the amount of violence increased after time in the sex trade. A total of 71 percent of those interviewed experienced slapping, 48 percent experienced punching, and 47 percent experienced forced sex (*Table 18*).

Table 18
Current violence by pimps by type

	Experienced violence	***Experienced no violence***	***Not applicable/ no response***	***Total***
Slapping	71%	11%	18%	100%
Punching	48%	33%	19%	100%
Hair pulling	31%	51%	18%	100%
Pinching	17%	64%	19%	100%
Spanking	26%	56%	18%	100%
Kicking	43%	37%	20%	100%
Kidnapping	18%	63%	19%	100%
Ripping clothes	24%	58%	18%	100%
Throwing objects	28%	53%	19%	100%
Threatening rape	23%	58%	19%	100%
Forcing sex	47%	34%	19%	100%
Other	9%	19%	72%	100%

Participants were asked how often they were subjected to violence. Slapping was the most frequent type of violence, with 48 percent reporting that it occurred at least "sometimes" or "often." *Table 19* details the types and frequency of violence experienced by those interviewed at the time of interview.

Table 19
Current violence by pimps by type and frequency

	Often	***Sometimes***	***Seldom***	***Never***	***NA/ Unknown***	***Total***
Slapping	23%	25%	23%	11%	18%	100%
Punching	11%	19%	18%	33%	19%	100%
Hair pulling	12%	9%	10%	51%	18%	100%
Pinching	5%	6%	6%	64%	19%	100%
Spanking	7%	9%	10%	56%	18%	100%
Kicking	7%	14%	22%	37%	20%	100%
Kidnapping	5%	5%	8%	63%	19%	100%
Ripping clothes	8%	8%	8%	58%	18%	100%
Throwing objects	10%	9%	9%	53%	19%	100%
Threatening rape	8%	5%	10%	58%	19%	100%
Forcing sex	10%	10%	27%	34%	19%	100%
Other	1%	6%	2%	19%	72%	100%

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A moderate correlation existed in the sample between the estimated number of other prostitutes under the control the respondent's pimp and the level of violence that the respondent experienced (r=0.460, rho=0.441, p<0.000). When the participants provided researchers with a range, the lower number was used to obtain the correlation. As a result, the correlation could be conservative.

Participants were asked to indicate the weapons used by their pimps to harm them. Twenty-two percent said fist or feet were used sometimes or often. Twelve percent said other objects were used. Other weapons listed by participants were belt, belt buckle, shoes, pillow, book, wire hanger, broom, sticks, baseball bat, telephone, telephone cord, hammer, screwdriver, and brass knuckles. *Table 20* details the frequency of weapons used to harm study participants in the sex trade.

Table 20
Frequency of weapons used by pimps

	Often	***Sometimes***	***Seldom***	***Never***	***NA/ Unknown***	***Total***
Fists/ feet	14%	8%	32%	29%	17%	100%
Knife	0%	4%	4%	74%	18%	100%
Gun	2%	4%	15%	62%	17%	100%
Matches/cigarettes	1%	8%	5%	68%	18%	100%
Other objects	2%	10%	9%	61%	18%	100%
Other weapon	0%	5%	10%	65%	20%	100%
Other	1%	8%	4%	44%	43%	100%

A couple of young women stated that their pimps avoided hurting their face because that is how they make money.

> "*He gave me a black eye once, said he won't hit me on my face again. It mess with his money*."

"*[He] doesn't want to mess my face up*."

"*I saw him do violence to the other girls but never me. He would just send me away*."

"*Once he poured liquor on [me] and said I better get to work*."

One was attacked with brass knuckles and a baseball bat, and had been tied up with a rope by her pimp. The young woman, who started on the streets on her own at age 14, hooked up with a pimp after being beaten and robbed. She will not leave him, she said, out of fear and a lack of a safe place to go.

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Another young woman, who began in the sex trade industry at age 18 on her own, reported being attacked with a hammer and a screwdriver. She was required to have sex with 10 to 15 customers a day on the streets. When asked about wanting to leave prostitution, she said she was prevented by "fear of having little or no money, and no one to watch over [her]."

One girl, age 19, said that although she has been hit with a belt buckle and a broom stick, and is forced to have sex with 25 to 40 customers a day in various prostitution venues, she would not leave her pimp. "I love my man and I have no intentions of leaving him," she said.

Another young woman, who reported having sex with 15 to 16 customers a day at various prostitution venues, revealed that her pimp has put her in the trunk of a car and has threatened to kill her.

One young woman, who reported having sex with 20 to 30 customers a day at various prostitution venues, has been subjected to suffocation with pillows. She said "fear of what he would do, and fear of being alone" prevents her from leaving.

Another young girl, who began on the street at 12 years of age after being recruited by her brother, reported being subject to "S & M" games by her pimp.

"He said I can only leave in a box."

The more venues or places traded sex (i.e., bars, hotels, street, residence, etc.) the higher the level of violence. Participants could indicate up to ten venues where they traded sex. The level of violence is based on an overall violence score based on eleven violent acts listed in *Table 18* and *Table 19*. There was statistically significant and moderate correlation (rho=0.516, $p<0.001$) between the number of places sex was traded and higher levels of violence as assessed by the violence scale.

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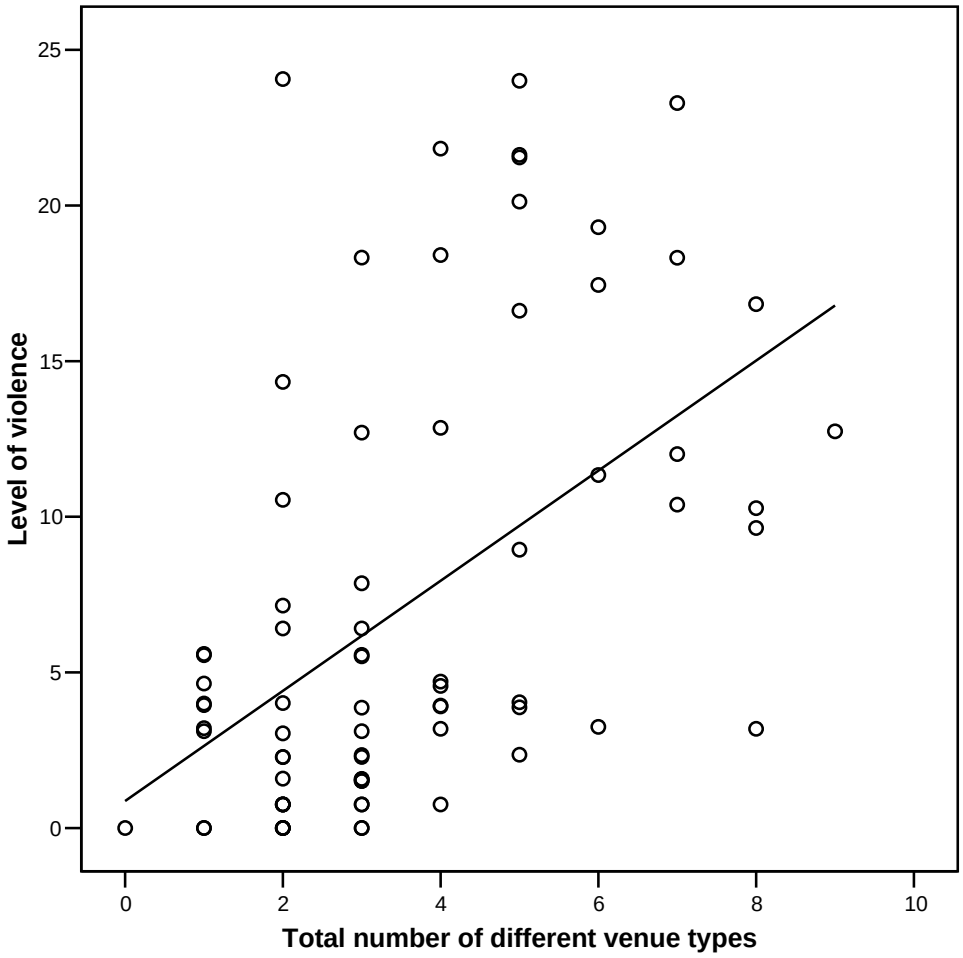
Figure 1 is a graph depicting the correlation between the number of venues of the sex trade and level of violence.

Figure 1
Correlation between violence scale scores and number of venues



Drugs and violence

The two items of coercion by pimps to women in the sex trade regarding drugs—giving drugs to get them addicted and withholding drugs—were highly correlated with higher scores on the violence scale. There were mean and median differences between the "yes" and "no" groups on each question differing by over 10 points on the violence scale.

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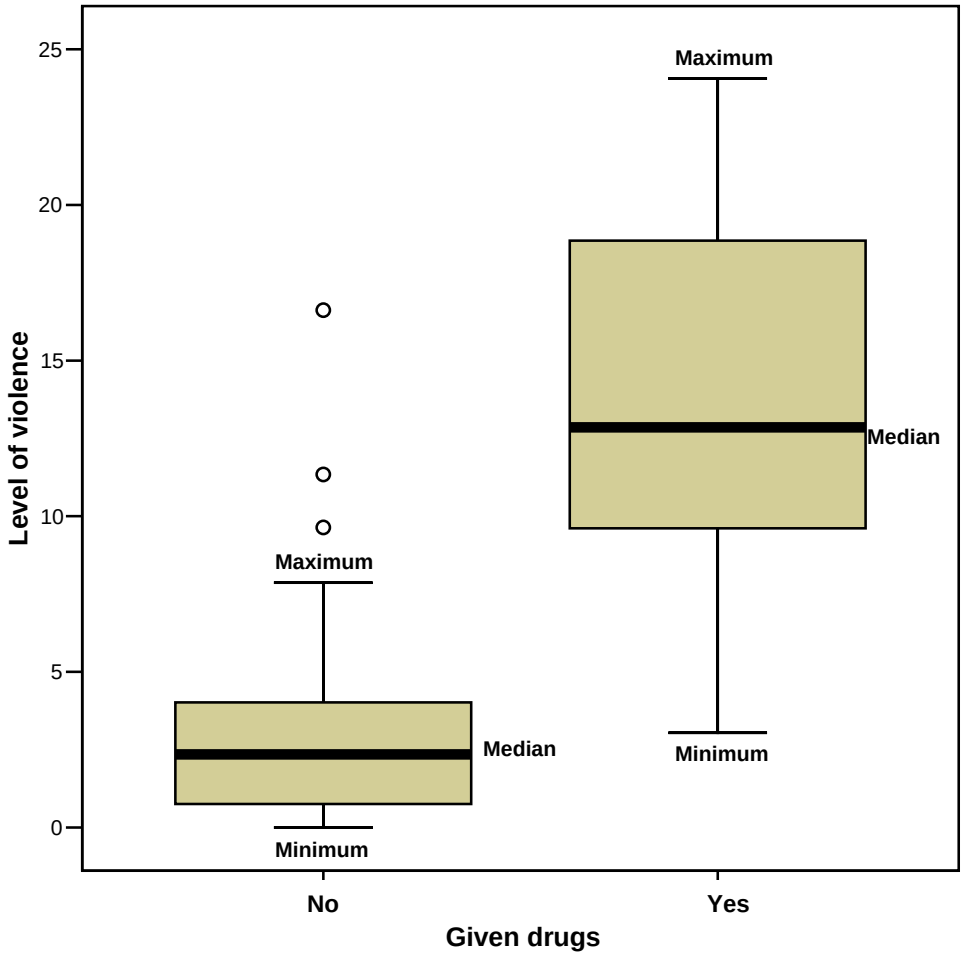
Figure 2 is a box plot that visually depicts the distributions of the current-violence scale for those given drugs to get them addicted. It indicates a high level of violence for those who answered affirmatively that their pimps had given them drugs.

Figure 2
Distribution of violence scale scores of those given or not given drugs



○ symbol indicates an outlier

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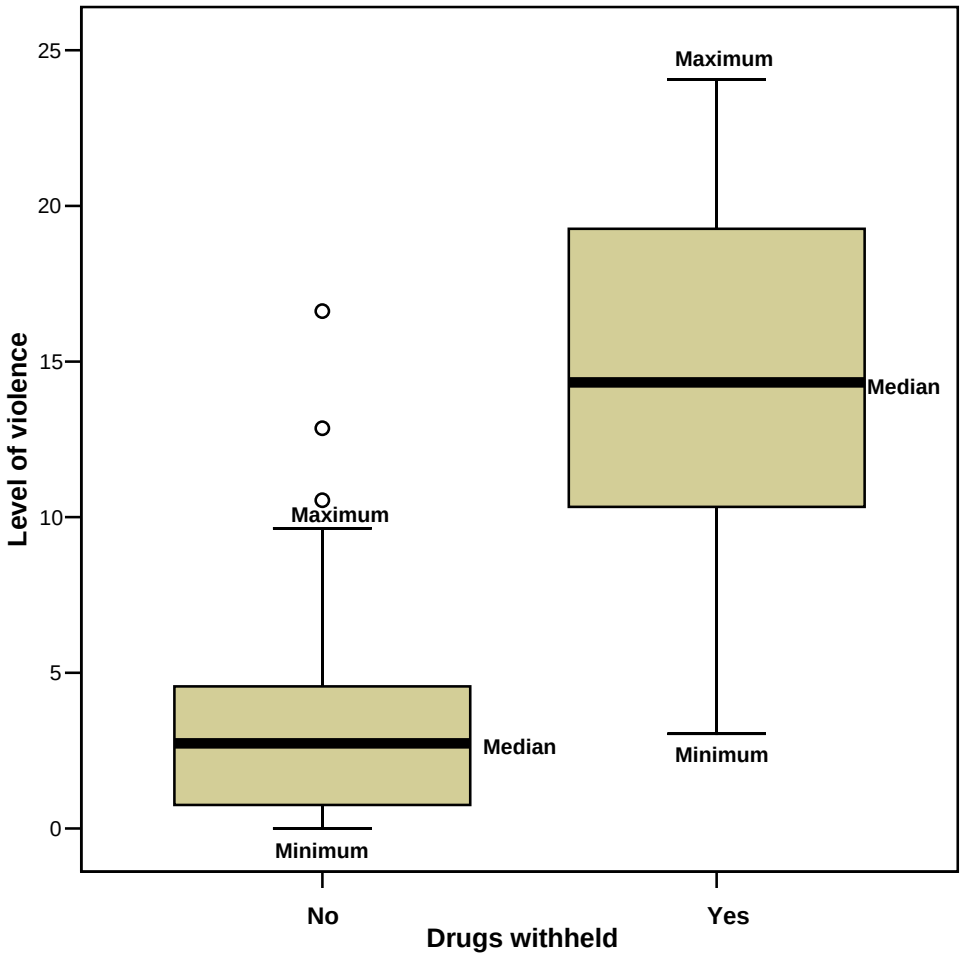
Figure 3 is a box plot that visually depicts the distributions of the current-violence scale for those who had pimps that withheld drugs. It indicates high levels of violence for those who answered affirmatively that their pimp had withheld drugs from them. The overlap on this scale between the two groups is relatively small.

Figure 3
Distribution of violence scale scores
of those whose pimps did and did not withhold drugs



○ Symbol indicates an outlier

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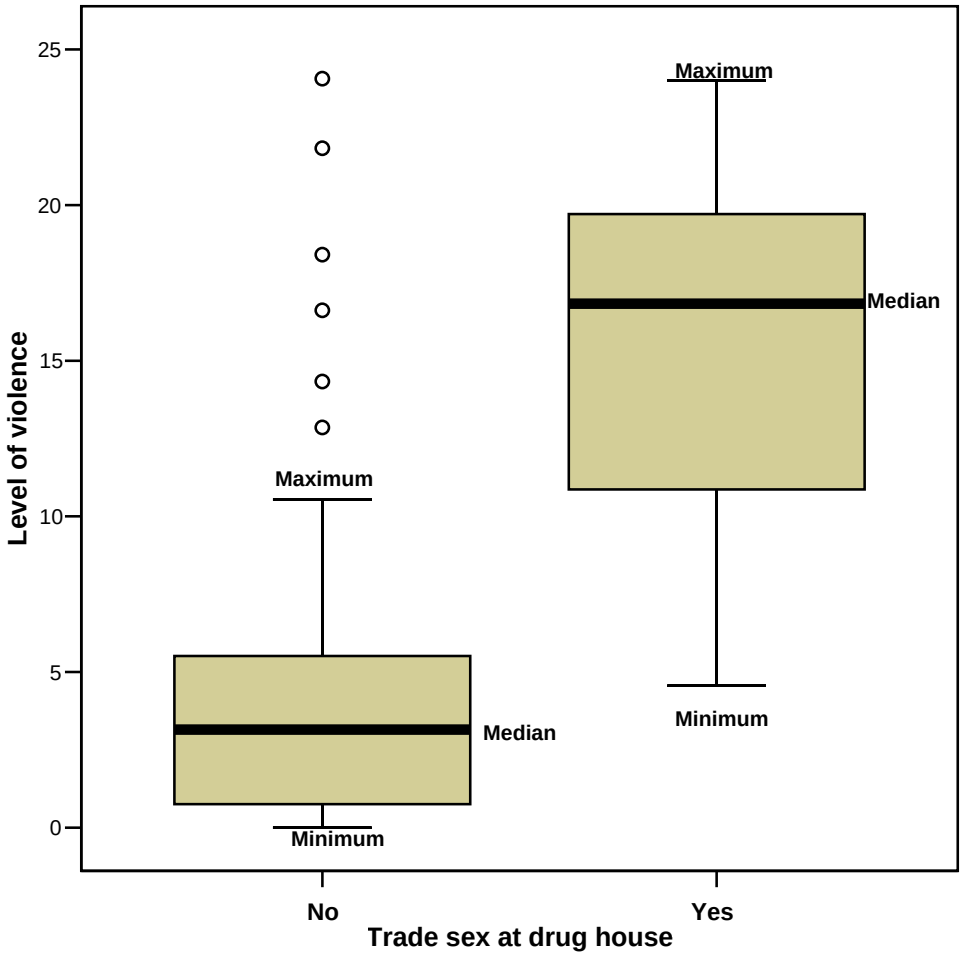
Figure 4 is a box plot that visually depicts the distributions of the current violence scale scores for those who traded sex at a drug house. It indicates high levels of violence for those who answered affirmatively that engaged in sex for money at a drug house.

Figure 4
Distribution of violence scale scores
of those who did and did not trade sex at a drug house



○ Symbol indicates an outlier

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Comparison between recruitment and current involvement

Many aspects of the sex trade appeared to get worse from the period of recruitment to their current activity. There was an increase in travel for the sex trade, there was an increase in the number of customers per day, and there was a significant increase in violence.

Increase in geographical locations

There was increase in the number of those who traded sex in more than one geographical area from when recruited to current activity in the sex trade. During recruitment, 25 percent of participants traded sex in more than one geographical area, while 38 participants indicated they currently traded sex in more than one area. Geographical areas of participation in the sex trade included the city of Chicago, suburban cities, or another state.

Increase in customers

There was an average increase of 3.9 customers or a median of 3.0 customers per day from recruitment to current participation in the sex trade. The correlation between the number of customers and the level of violence increased from the period of recruitment ($rho=0.284$, $p=0.53$) to current sex trade activity ($rho=0.642$, $p<0.000$) in the sex trade. Current sex trade participation featured higher numbers of customers and higher levels of violence from pimps.

Increased violence

Acts of violence increased following recruitment into the sex trade. During the interview, participants were asked about the occurrence of eleven different acts of violence both during recruitment and currently at the time of the interview. The instances of all violent acts increased over time.

After recruitment, women were more than three times as likely to be pinched or kicked and twice as likely to be punched, kidnapped, or to have clothing ripped. In addition, women were more than twice as likely to be forced to have sex with their pimps. This may indicate that those new to the sex trade are not harmed as much by pimps in order to lure or coerce them into a life of prostitution that later becomes much more violent.

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Table 21 compares the current types of violence to the violence experienced during recruitment.

Table 21
Comparison of violent acts by pimps during recruitment and at current involvement in the sex trade

Violent acts	***During recruitment***	***Current involvement***
Slapping	24%	71%
Punching	14%	48%
Hair pulled	11%	31%
Pinched	4%	17%
Spanked	10%	26%
Kicked	10%	43%
Kidnapped	5%	18%
Ripped clothes	8%	24%
Something thrown	11%	28%
Threatened rape	9%	23%
Forced sex	20%	47%
Other	2%	9%

A slight increase was statistically significant in the level of violence from the time of recruitment into the sex trade to current participation in the sex trade. The mean and median increase on the violence scale from recruitment to the current state was 2.07 and 1.96 ($z=-4.083$, $p<0.000$ on Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test), respectively. This is approximately equivalent to an average increase of 2.5 units in the violent acts, which comprise the scale. For example, a respondent increasing from “never” on “getting punched in the face” to “seldom” is a one-unit increase and increasing from “seldom” to “sometimes” is a one unit increase.

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Figure 5 is a box plot that visually depicts the distributions of the violence scale scores at recruitment and at the current time. It indicates higher levels of for those currently involved in the sex trade as compared to those at recruitment.

Figure 5
Distribution of violence scale scores during recruitment and at current involvement in the sex trade

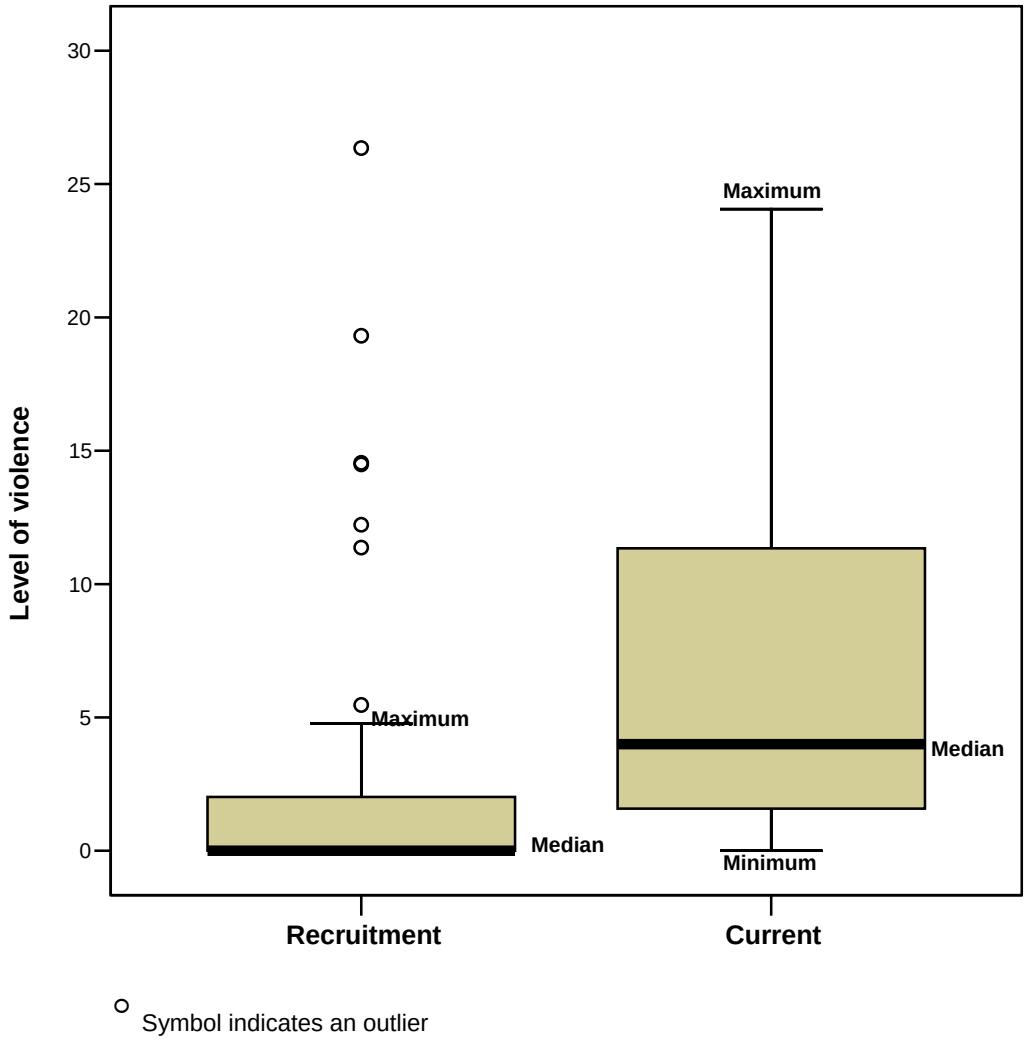

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Table 22 compares the violence scale scores of participants reported at the time of recruitment in the sex trade to current participation in the sex trade. As indicated in the table, there was an increase from the time of recruitment to the present of the number of individuals with higher violence scale scores.

Table 22
Violence scale scores during recruitment and current involvement in the sex trade

Violence scale	**Violence scale scores**	
	At recruitment	***Current***
0	28	9
<1	7	7
1-5	11	32
6-10	0	9
11-15	4	6
16-20	1	8
21+	1	6
Average score	2.62	7.14

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Exiting the sex trade

All participants were asked if they ever wanted to leave the sex trade. A total of 64 percent said that they at one point had wanted to leave the sex trade and 36 percent did not.

When asked what prevents them from leaving the sex trade, the answers fell into several categories. Some said that their drug addiction kept them in prostitution.

> *"I need help getting off drugs."*
>
> *"I got into this because of drugs, I can't get out because of my drug habit."*

Many more cited violence from their pimp as the reason they did not exit the sex trade. Like many women in intimate relationships, they are trapped by fear of greater violence if they were to try to escape. The following quotes from women about fear of violence if they left their pimp.

> *"My man would not stand for it. I make him good money."*
>
> *"I know he won't let me."*
>
> *"Fear of what he might do."*
>
> *"I need help to protect me and house me where he can't find me."*

> *"I need immediate help to stop this lifestyle. I don't want to continue this in fear that I may not survive."*

Many of the girls, however, said that it was more than fear. They felt totally alone in the world and were not ready to leave the one person that seemed to care about them. Their comments reflect the reasons that they were recruited into the sex trade industry in the first place, revealing the needs that their relationship with their pimp/boyfriend meets. Their comments also illustrate the tremendous isolation that participants in prostitution experience, an isolation encouraged and induced by their pimps.

> *"I don't have anybody else who cares about me. Where would I go? What would I do? In the midst of what I endure, I'm in love with my man. He wants me more than any other woman."*
>
> *"I just don't know how."*

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"Fear of having little or no money. No one to watch over me."

"Me being homeless and my mother not caring about me."

"I don't have anyone to take care of me. How would I survive? This is not a fun experience like I thought when I was young. This is a very ugly game."

Many of the young women also expressed concern about where they would go and what they would do. Although they may want to do something else, they do not know how to proceed. And some understand the stigmatization of women and girls in prostitution that is going to make it difficult for them.

"If I was to leave, where would I go?"

"And do what? I can't go home anymore. They know what I do."

"Who would want me now? If they know you have done this for life, you are a throw away."

"I don't know how to leave. Where would I go?"

"I guess I'm used to it now. What else can I do?"

"Fear of him and of being alone in the world. I have nowhere to go.

"I would like to stop the sex trade but every time my boyfriend gets angry at me, he puts me out. So I end up using all my money to get a hotel and survive."

"Fear of not being able to survive alone."

Lastly, some of the young women, still being young, have not yet learned to rely upon themselves. They are still looking for someone to take care of them.

"Haven't met the right person."

"I don't have anyone to take care of me. How would I survive?"

"If something could help me accomplish my dreams or that right person would come along and take me away from this."

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Recommendations

This study challenges many of the current beliefs about prostitution and approaches in place to combat it in the Chicago metropolitan area. The following recommendations developed by the researchers are based the results of this study.

Responding to "teen prostitutes"

In light of our data about age of entry into the sex trade, recruitment into prostitution, and the characteristics of the young women's families of origin, young women in the sex trade who are controlled by a pimp should not be regarded as girls in prostitution, but as victims of violence who need assistance in safely exiting prostitution. Like domestic violence victims, they need safe housing, treatment for drug addiction and posttraumatic stress disorder, and assistance with education and job training. As with domestic violence victims, it is this sense of vulnerability— homelessness, drug abuse, and sexual abuse— that makes it difficult for the girls to leave their pimp, because over time their isolation and disconnection has only increased, in part due to the actions of the pimp and to the stigmatization of prostitution. They may also need assistance in reuniting with their children.

Given the nexus of drug addiction and prostitution, drug treatment providers should make certain that issues stemming from pimp control are addressed. Women and girls will be unable to stay drug-free unless they also remain free from control, abuse, and violence, all used to keep them in the sex trade. Drug treatment providers, from whom women and girls may seek help, can be instrumental in assisting women and girls to safely exit prostitution.

However, our data reveal that not all girls are ready to leave their pimp and prostitution because of their isolation and inability to imagine another life because this is all that they know or have ever had. Like exiting domestic violence, leaving the sex trade will involve a process of sharing information and offering support over time.

A criminal justice approach that instead responds by arresting and punishing these girls is not only counter-productive, but also inhumanely punishing. Data from this study strongly support programs that provide social service programming (drug treatment, prostitution, and domestic violence programs) in lieu of charges, sentencing, and incarceration. The Chicago-based *Unhooked* program is currently the only diversionary program in existence in Chicago and its capacity needs to be enlarged.

Local girls being trafficked should be treated no differently than girls and women trafficked from outside the United States for the sex trade industry. At the time of recruitment, our data finds them no less needy and subject to coercion, violence, isolation, and false promises. Many are also transported to different prostitution venues throughout the metropolitan Chicago area or to other states.

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Holding pimps and recruiters accountable

As demonstrated by this data and by their actions, pimps make money by coercing needy and vulnerable girls through violence and isolation from more legitimate sources of support and assistance. This economic exploitation should not be tolerated.

Law enforcement should increase efforts to prosecute pimps who recruit young girls locally, hold them in the sex trade industry through violence and coercion, and transport them throughout the metropolitan area to other states. Because these young women are transported in this way, local law enforcement officials can seek technical assistance and resources from federal law enforcement entities.

Strategies are needed to identify these pimps and traffickers. It is unreasonable to expect that the girls in our sample can either safely come forward and identify them or even cooperate in prosecutions. More creative strategies—possibly involving community residents and groups—are needed.

One strategy worth exploration is to reduce demand for paid sex and to eliminate the source of profits. Men who buy sex from these needy and vulnerable girls and women, especially those who are young teens, should be arrested. Those buying sex from teens should be more seriously penalized than the current law affords. Arrests and prosecution of men who buy sex in Chicago may serve as a deterrent that might lessen some of the demand, at the same time reducing the need for so many young girls selling sex.

Communities are critical in responding to the sex trade in their midst. Our data show that many of the girls were recruited into prostitution by family members, neighbors, and neighborhood friends, as well as by boyfriends and pimps. Acceptance of prostitution in many Chicago neighborhoods needs to be challenged by community and family members. A thriving sex trade industry in a community (especially one in which customers are visible) sends a message to poor and vulnerable young girls that this is the way out of their monetary difficulties, their loneliness, and lack of connection. Normalization of the sex trade industry in these Chicago communities needs to change. Its existence is highly injurious to our community's female youth.

To this end, more research on pimps and customers in Chicago is also needed, to more fully understand the trafficking of Chicago girls and women into prostitution. The current research emphasis upon the trafficking of women internationally needs to be supplemented to obtain further information about the traffickers and pimps who recruit girls locally.

Preventing girls from exploitation

Communities need to intervene earlier to help young girls who are sexually assaulted and abused. In community settings, girls need to be encouraged to feel safe to reveal the abuse they are suffering. Communities can offer them with safe havens and a future away from coercive and violent family members, pimps, and boyfriends.

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Conclusion

Hearing from these young Chicago women is powerful. Despite what is commonly believed, young women and girls participate in many sex trade venues simultaneously, and almost none are free from pimp control and violence. In addition, as time progresses for young women in prostitution, they are forced to have sex with more customers on a daily basis, are transported more often, and are subject to increasing amounts of violence and coercion from their pimps. This downward spiral weakens the viability of statements made about prostitution being a victimless crime.

The information from this research study raises serious issues that metropolitan Chicago communities must confront about the exploitation of needy girls within their midst to meet the needs of men in Chicago who want to buy sex.

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Appendix A

The 11 items indicating forms of violent victimization were combined into a numeric summary using principal components factor analysis. The Spearman correlation matrix (*Table B*) was used due to the ordinal measurement level of the indicators and the skewed distributions present in the data. Principal Components forces a mathematical structure onto the data to reduce the number of items into a smaller set of dimensions.

A total of 63.91 percent of the variance was explained with this first component. A second component, consisting of the punching and slapping indicators also explained an additional 9.3 percent of the variance, but loadings for these two indicators on this component were higher on the first component. Only the primary factor was used to construct the scale. The original scores measuring the items ("never" = 0, "seldom" = 1, "sometimes" =2 , "often" = 3) was multiplied by the factor loading of the first component and summed to create a violent victimization scale to numerically summarize the violent victimization experienced by the subjects by their pimps. (*See Table A*).

Inter-item correlations were moderately strong, and internal consistency measures were also quite high (α=0.943, rho=0.941). However, this scale is not intended to be a true latent construct measuring violent victimization, but is instead a numerical summary to simplify data analysis. The loss of approximately 36 percent of the variance is a sacrifice made to do so.

Table A
Violent victimization scale – principal components factor analysis

Item	*1st component*	*2nd component*
Slapping	0.757	0.459
Punching	0.764	0.508
Hair pulled	0.848	
Pinched	0.770	
Spanked	0.806	
Kicked	0.841	
Kidnapped	0.738	
Ripped clothes	0.763	
Something thrown	0.821	
Threatened rape	0.844	
Forced sex	0.831	
Percent of variance explained	*63.91%*	*9.35%*
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure = 0.903 *Bartlett's Test of Sphericity X2 = 920.6, df=55, p < 0.000* *α = 0.943, rho =0.941*		
Spearman non-parametric correlation matrix used due to ordinal level of data.		

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Table B
Violent victimization items – Spearman correlation matrix

	Slapping	**Punching**	**Hair pulling**	**Pinching**	**Spanking**	**Kicking**	**Kidnapping**	**Ripping clothes**	**Something thrown**	**Threaten rape**	**Forced sex**
Slapping	1	0.7712	0.5476	0.4720	0.5345	0.6831	0.4573	0.4841	0.5730	0.4937	0.6623
Punching		1	0.5924	0.4116	0.5528	0.6855	0.5303	0.4040	0.6167	0.4857	0.6834
Hair pulling			1	0.7291	0.6554	0.6471	0.5958	0.6892	0.5643	0.7546	0.6541
Pinching				1	0.6694	0.5931	0.5891	0.6196	0.5681	0.6526	0.4699
Spanking					1	0.5837	0.4841	0.5600	0.7251	0.7041	0.6001
Kicking						1	0.5657	0.5669	0.6781	0.6129	0.7566
Kidnapping							1	0.5580	0.5481	0.6433	0.5455
Ripping clothes								1	0.5717	0.7099	0.5498
Something thrown									1	0.6702	0.6848
Threaten rape										1	0.6674
Forced sex											1

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Endnotes

[1] For a review of research literature on pimps, see Jody Raphael, *Listening to Olivia: Violence, Poverty, and Prostitution* (Boston: Northeastern University Press), 2004.
[2] Celia Williamson, "Pimp Controlled Prostitution: Still an Integral Part of Street Life." *Violence against Women* 8 (9) (2002): 1074-92.
[3] Maureen Norton-Hawk. "The Lifecourse of Prostitution." *Women, Girls & Criminal Justice* 3, no 1 (2002): 1, 7, 8-9.
[4] Rochelle L. Dalla, Yan Xia, and Heather Kennedy, "You Just Give Them What They Want and Pray They Don't Kill You": Street-Level Sex Workers' Reports of Victimization, Personal Resources, and Coping Strategies." *Violence Against Women* 9 (11)(2003): 1367-1395.
[5] Eloise Dunlap, Andrew Golub, and Bruce D. Johnson, "Girls' Sexual Development in the Inner City: From Compelled Childhood Sexual Contact to Sex-for-Things Exchanges." *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 12 (2) (2003): 73-96.
[6] Retreived from the World Wide Web at http://www.craigslist.org/about/factsheet.html on March 24, 2008.
[7] Redden, Jim, "Craigslist or Crimeslist? Popular online classified home to thieves, con artists, prostitution," T*he Portland Tribune*, November 27, 2007.