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Latina Youth in Commercial Sexual Exploitation

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Abstract
Human trafficking and specifically human sex trafficking occurs throughout the world, in nearly all countries. Increased awareness of this problem has led many organizations to begin taking action to prevent sexual exploitation. For example, Portland, Oregon is already making a huge difference in the lives of numerous trafficking survivors through the work of organizations such as the Sexual Assault Resource Center and Janus Youth Programs. Their central focus has been on U.S.-born minors who have been forced to participate in the sex trade, both in Oregon and elsewhere. However, resources are limited and culturally specific programs are lacking in our area. Latina survivors of trafficking present a different set of needs that require culturally aware and sensitive care. My research aims to highlight the unique needs of Latina survivors and provide an outline of how Portland can better support all survivors.

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Latina Youth in Commercial Sexual Exploitation

by
Sarah M. Flinn

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in International Studies

Pacific University
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Approved by

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Abstract

Human trafficking and specifically human sex trafficking occurs throughout the world, in nearly all countries. Increased awareness of this problem has led many organizations to begin taking action to prevent sexual exploitation. For example, Portland, Oregon is already making a huge difference in the lives of numerous trafficking survivors through the work of organizations such as the Sexual Assault Resource Center and Janus Youth Programs. Their central focus has been on U.S.-born minors who have been forced to participate in the sex trade, both in Oregon and elsewhere. However, resources are limited and culturally specific programs are lacking in our area. Latina survivors of trafficking present a different set of needs that require culturally aware and sensitive care. My research aims to highlight the unique needs of Latina survivors and provide an outline of how Portland can better support all survivors.
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Another thank you to Emma Jacobsen for trading theses and offering great suggestions (I now have many more semicolons and colons in my paper!). Having a set deadline really helped me push through the end.

I am incredibly grateful for the solid support and encouragement offered by my wonderful boyfriend, Lucas Turpin. The past few months have been easier as a result of your belief in my capabilities and your reminders that I am so close to graduation.

And finally, I would not have gotten through the process without the incredible support of my roommates and friends Helen and Gabi Fibbs. More than anybody they stood by me through the entire process with all of the joys and frustrations that went along with it.
Introduction

In this thesis I explore the unique situation presented by Latinas in commercial sexual exploitation of children. Latinas bring a broad spectrum of cultural values, beliefs and barriers that prevent them from accessing services and also prevent them from leaving situations of exploitation in general, specifically situations of sexual exploitation. I interviewed various community members that work directly with Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) in the Portland area to gain insight into the challenges faced not only by youth in general but specifically Latinas.

One thirteen year-old attends class, plays volleyball, secretly still cares for her dolls, and reads incessantly. She is all arms and legs and her biggest concern is what book to read next. Her meals are regular, her parents love unconditional, and she never worries about her safety. Another thirteen year old enjoys music, wants to be a doctor when she is older and has a $1000 quota she must fulfill before she comes home for the night. She receives love only when she is being manipulated. She never knows when she will get her next meal or her next beating. Her trafficker sells her services on the Internet to avoid detection by law enforcement.

These two scenarios appear to be the stories of girls from different countries, perhaps one in the U.S., one in Southeast Asia. The truth? Both could be here in U.S., including Oregon. Sex traffickers attempt to recruit an estimated 150,000 youth into the
sex trade each year in the U.S. alone. These youth enter the trade on average between 12 and 14 years of age and 80-90% of them come from homes where they were previously abused.\(^1\) The unfortunate truth remains that actual statistics are hard to come by when looking at specific cities because these youth are often overlooked and fall through the cracks in our systems. However, in recent years they have begun to appear in the spotlight of the media and numerous non-profit as well as governmental organizations have been creating programs specifically oriented towards helping commercially sexually exploited youth.

I was fortunate enough to be raised in a similar fashion to the first scenario. I never questioned my parents’ love for me and I grew up knowing the importance of service to others. My parents instilled a strong sense of civic duty in me that I have upheld throughout my life. I volunteer at Centro Cultural to teach English to non-English speakers, as well as the New Dawn program that essentially does the same thing for the custodial staff at Pacific University. I also volunteer with the Sexual Assault Resource Center as a Sexual Assault Advocate.

I first encountered the problem of sexual exploitation two summers ago. Until that point I imagined that people who sold sex were prostitutes who chose to do so, mainly for economic reasons. I did not understand why anyone would choose such a life and in general thought of it as a degrading occupation. It never occurred to me that some of those women were forced to sell themselves. While on a trip to Mexico, I happened to purchase two unrelated novels that both described women in situations of forced prostitution. As I read the first novel, I began to realize that perhaps there was more to the story of

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\(^1\) Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor “Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II” (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
prostitution than I had previously thought. Both novels told the journeys of Eastern European girls trafficked to the U.S. after false promises of a job as an actress or as a waitress in a restaurant. I immediately began to feel frustration and concern that traffickers were deceiving women and children into leaving their homes and native countries only to sell them into prostitution.

In a sense those two novels served as my Pandora’s box. Once I learned that women were being trafficked to the U.S. against their will to serve American clients in brothels, hotels, and houses, I became incensed. This is not okay. I returned home and began researching the problem to see what information existed and what was being done about it. What I encountered only infuriated me further: not only are women being trafficked into the U.S. from foreign countries, but they are also being trafficked from within our own country and from our own families. On top of this assault on our own citizens, traffickers are targeting young boys and girls, some as young as ten. I could not believe it. And then, even more shocking news, my lovely state of Oregon was not exempt from this awful crime against young boys and girls. In fact, news reports declared that Portland had a very high number of youth being sexually exploited.

Since encountering this disturbing information, I have continued following the news and I realized at the beginning of my junior year that somehow I wanted to incorporate commercially sexually exploited youth into my senior thesis. I knew that the project would be large enough to obtain a thorough understanding of the problem and that I would also have time to talk with community members on how Oregon is combating sexual exploitation. Additionally, through my research I hoped to find the best way that I would

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2 Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor “Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II” (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
personally be able to help in the fight against the sexual exploitation of America’s youth.

With this thought in mind I left for a semester in Ecuador, where I received my first thorough introduction to a Latin American culture. Before I left I took a few classes that included cultural studies of Latin America, so I understood in theory the concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo.*³ Real-life *machismo* felt incredibly degrading and uncomfortable. The fact that it is socially acceptable for men--strangers--to comment on my physical appearance, whistle, and in certain situations touch me without my permission was completely foreign and difficult to comprehend. Eventually, I learned to mostly ignore the comments and continue on with my activities as if they were not there. However, the fact still remains that Ecuadorian society, as well as most Latin American societies, allows men to sexually harass women on the street and the women are expected to ignore them, as any response is viewed as provocative.

This year, after beginning work on my thesis and continuing research on commercially sexually exploited youth, I began to think about my experiences in Ecuador and how characteristics of the Latina culture might affect the experience of Latinas in sexual exploitation. If these young girls come from a culture where the men are expected to act dominant and “manly” and the women are expected to be submissive and follow directions of the man, this would have a huge impact on the experience of being trafficked and prostituted.

In addition to my experience in Ecuador last spring, I began volunteering with SARC, the Sexual Assault Resource Center, in October. SARC provides advocates for all of Washington County for acute sexual assault of adults. Additionally, they are the only entity

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³ *Machismo* and *Marianismo* are cultural values that will be further explored and explained in this paper. They provide guidelines for how the sexes should behave in Latina society.
in the Greater Portland area to serve the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) population as confidential advocates. Therefore, when a CSEC youth is picked up by police or arrives at a youth shelter or hospital, SARC responds in person and provides advocacy for the youth. Becoming an advocate with SARC involves a 50-hour training that includes large quantities of information on how best to work as an advocate and also the necessary background information on possible situations that a volunteer might encounter. Because they serve the CSEC population as well, the training included extensive background information as well as best advocacy practices when working with CSEC youth.

Another component of the training presented information about the Latina community in the Portland area and the unique cultural situations Latinas present. A large component of this presentation involved the cultural values that differ from Anglo-American culture. The main cultural values that affect how a Latina survivor of both sexual assault and commercial sexual exploitation (an intense and expanded form of sexual assault) include *machismo, marianismo, familismo*, and *una cultura de respeto* (culture of respect). These values will be explored later on, but each on its own affects how a Latina CSEC youth might face more obstacles to obtaining help or leaving the system of exploitation than perhaps an Anglo counterpart.

This thesis is a culmination of a passion to help others as well as my life experiences that have brought into light a horrific crime that is being perpetrated in my own backyard. My goal is to eventually work directly with CSEC youth and I hope that my bilingual skills will be an added advantage that will help me to assist a broader spectrum of youth. I will focus on the unique situation of Latinas in the CSEC community, the specific challenges they face and how they fit into the overall system. It will investigate the various cultural
components that increase the difficulty of obtaining help as well as leaving the situation of sexual exploitation. My experience working within the Latina community through volunteer and classroom learning will help me to understand the cultural values brought from their native Latin American countries. Living in a Latin American country provides the inside perspective of a *machista* culture that I have not received here in Oregon. Finally, my work with SARC will offer a solid view of the problem as it stands here in Portland. I plan to interview various community members that are working to help the victims as well as penalize the perpetrators. It is my hope that this thesis will raise awareness amongst those that do not realize or understand the existence of this problem and also to highlight the hard work that many people of the many people working to end commercial sexual exploitation of children.
Review of the Literature

Despite the increase in awareness of the high number of youth involved in commercial sexual exploitation, accurate statistics remain incredibly difficult to come by. A variety of sources state that between 100,000 and 300,000 boys and girls in the U.S. become involved in sexual exploitation each year.\(^4\) This number remains on the conservative side and the actual number of sexually exploited youth could be much higher. An assortment of reasons exists for the difficulty of pinpointing the exact number of youth involved in sexual exploitation.

To begin with, 124 member states of the United Nations have approved, ratified, accepted or acceded the following definition as part of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,

(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation...
(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article.
(d) “Child” shall mean any person under 18 years of age.\(^5\)

By the U.N. definition any youth in a situation of sexual exploitation is considered a trafficking victim and the person trafficking him/her, a criminal. The sentences that a

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trafficker may receive vary from ten years to life depending on the crime as well as the court in which they receive sentencing.\textsuperscript{6} For the purposes of this paper, I will consider a sexually commercially exploited youth to be under 18 years of age. Furthermore, I will focus on boys and girls for general conversations about sexual exploitation, but specifically on girls when speaking about the unique situation and cultural values of Latinas.

The problem of human trafficking continues to be a global dilemma that many countries appear to be fighting. Estimates of the number of persons trafficked across international borders range from 600,000 to 4 million each year.\textsuperscript{7} Additionally, women and girls comprise 80\% of those trafficked.\textsuperscript{8} These women and girls come from any number of countries; however, often countries at war, countries in poverty, and countries with cultures of tolerance with regard to commercial sexual exploitation have higher numbers of trafficked women and children, both into and out of those countries. For example, much of Latin America has seen the strife of war in the past few decades as well as crippling poverty for much of the population. An estimated 100,000 women are trafficked across state borders each year in Latin America.\textsuperscript{9} Furthermore, Latin Americans comprise nearly one third of all humans trafficked to the United States.\textsuperscript{10}

Latin Americans trafficked to the United States for the purpose of sexual exploitation present a unique situation where the trafficking victims become increasingly vulnerable. Foreigners trafficked to the U.S. are often lured into the exploitation through a

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{10}] Ibid, 149.
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false promise.\textsuperscript{11} That promise varies; however, the majority of the time it includes the availability of a job in a restaurant or as a model. The poverty-stricken individual views the opportunity as one to help themselves and often their families. They are removed from any connections with family or friends, often taken to a place where they do not speak the language very well, are threatened with violence and are forced to prostitute and serve buyers.\textsuperscript{12}

Unfortunately, the story of trafficked women and children repeats itself within the United States. Additionally, because immigration to the U.S. is becoming increasingly more difficult, traffickers are turning to domestic youth as a means to provide the product demanded by the sex industry. Within the U.S. an estimated 100,000-300,000 youth are introduced to sexual exploitation each year.\textsuperscript{13} These youth often come from previous situations of abuse and are already vulnerable individuals. Approximately 80\% of commercially sexually exploited children report previous abuse, often in the home.\textsuperscript{14}

Linda Smith and Samantha Healy Vardaman define the exploitation of America’s youth as, “domestic minor sex trafficking [DMST] is the commercial sexual exploitation of America’s children through prostitution, pornography, and sexual performance within U.S. borders”.\textsuperscript{15} This definition includes youth of all backgrounds, ethnicities, races, socio-economic statuses, etc. However, that does not mean that all children are sexually exploited equally. Certain factors cause some children to be more vulnerable. The most prevalent factor that leads to sexual exploitation is overwhelmingly homelessness.


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 86. Also found in Suzanna L. Tiapula and Allison Turkel, “Identifying the Victims of Human Trafficking,” \textit{The Prosecutor} April-May-June (2008): 11.


Children and teens that have run away, been thrown away, or are homeless are the most at risk group to be sexually exploited.

Runaway children are those who willingly choose to not return home for one night if the child is 14 years or younger and two nights if the child is 15 years or older. This differs from throwaway children, or those who are told to leave home and who stay or are forced to stay away overnight. These children are forced out of their home by a parent, a guardian, or another adult. Additionally, some of these children live in shelters or on the streets due to familial circumstances. Traffickers will specifically target youth that have runaway, are throwaways, or are homeless. For example, a study in Boston found that 38 of 40 girls living in a foster care system group home had been previously approached by a trafficker or recruiter.

The estimated number of runaways and throwaways per year varies immensely; however, the estimates consistently range from 1 to 2.8 million. On average, a runaway child will be approached by a trafficker within 48 hours of leaving home. Furthermore, a runaway will encounter a trafficker or recruiter every three times they run away. This means that chronic runaways are increasingly at risk and most likely will end up encountering a trafficker at some point. Youth generally begin running away between the ages of 12 and 14 and because they often escape from situations of abuse or neglect, the

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17 It is unclear the result of the encounter with the trafficker. The study does not state whether the girls were then taken into sexual exploitation or were able to walk away. Linda A. Smith, Samantha Healy Vardaman, and Melissa A. Snow, “The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking,” Shared Hope International. Accessed October 9, 2011, 35.
trafficker (almost always male) presents himself as the person to fulfill a need or lack of something in their lives. He will present himself as a boyfriend or other person who can provide support. He establishes a “loving and caring” relationship to gain trust and perhaps for the first time in her life, the girl feels wanted.21

Unfortunately, the “boyfriend” is incredibly adept at manipulation. He buys the girl new clothes, takes her out to eat, and establishes a strong relationship of dependency and “love”. This loving relationship generally ends badly. He will “run out of money” and ask her to prostitute just one night so they can get back home. He will then begin to belittle her and criticize her, telling her that she is a whore and that if she sleeps with him why won’t she sleep with other people. The relationship might take a more violent turn and he will rape her, have his friends rape her, until she submits and is willing to do whatever he demands. The relationship then develops along the lines of domestic violence, with spells of happiness and reward followed by violence and manipulation. The happiness and prospect of happiness keep the girl under the control of the trafficker.22

The trafficker further manipulates the youth by alienating her from all previous contacts. He keeps her financially dependent by requiring her to hand over the money she earns and never giving her any cash. All food, clothing, housing, and personal hygiene products come from the trafficker. He controls how she looks, what she wears, how she does her hair. Traffickers will also intentionally impregnate the girl and then hold the child as a hostage to keep the mother working. They verbally manipulate the girl by telling her that she is worthless and that no one will believe her. They threaten the girl’s personal

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21 The recruitment of young boys follows a different pattern and is much less researched. I found no mention of how boys are recruited in the U.S. apart from stating that they most often engage in survival sex to obtain basic needs such as shelter and food. Ibid, 31.

safety as well as the safety of her family. Essentially, if there is one overriding characteristic that all traffickers excel in, it is their ability to manipulate.

In order to escape the Life of sexual exploitation the youth often attempts to leave upwards of eleven times before they successfully leave the Life. The process requires an incredible number of resources as well as coordination of all organizations involved. Leaving can be deadly for the youth and the trafficker often threatens to kill the youth and also threatens their family. Often the youth feel the negative affects of the label they have received from sexual exploitation. The label “prostitute” connotes choice as well as a myriad of negative stereotypes. The stereotypes and labels of prostitution impede access to social services and legal aid. A child prostitute is prosecuted for illegal activity, a victim of sexual exploitation requires assistance and help.

These youth face tremendous adversity not only in the Life, but also in any attempt to “square up” or leave. The traffickers manipulate them from the beginning, and they also face immense social stigmatization and often become dependent on their trafficker economically. They rarely have places to go, because they ran away from an abusive situation in the first place. Returning a survivor of sexual exploitation to a situation of abuse furthers the physical and psychological trauma and damage experienced by the youth.

In light of the numerous difficulties encountered by youths leaving the Life of sexual

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23 Despite the frequency that a girl has been removed from all connections with family and friends, the trafficker will threaten them. The girl still feels a need to protect them despite the lack of connection or support she feels from them.
24 Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor “Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II” (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
25 The Life or the Game are both used to refer to sexual exploitation and prostitution by the girls that are being exploited.
27 Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor “Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II” (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
exploitation, it remains imperative that they are assisted by a multi-disciplinary response. In order to best support survivors, all agencies must be knowledgeable in all parts of the situation. Law enforcement, medical staff, youth shelters, advocates, and any other organization that may come into contact with the youth need extensive training and should commit to utilize as many services as possible.\(^{29}\) Furthermore, an advocate should always be present to emotionally support the youth during any interviews, medical exams, or other times when they may require support.\(^{30}\)

In addition to the difficulties and challenges faced by sexually exploited youth, those that originate from families of minorities bring a unique set of challenges to escaping sexual exploitation. The majority of trafficked youth are of a minority.\(^{31}\) Due to the strong Latina presence in Oregon, I plan to focus on the cultural values that contribute to the shame and guilt experienced by Latina youth in commercial sexual exploitation. Twelve percent of Oregon’s population identifies as Hispanic, a total of 450,062 people.\(^{32}\) Within that, an estimated 200,000 Hispanics work as farm workers or are the family of a farm worker.\(^{33}\) Latin Americans bring to the United States with a long history of religious and legal institutions that reinforce male supremacy, such as the Catholic Church and militaristic dictatorships.\(^{34}\) Additionally, a strong duo of cultural values known as *marianismo* and *machismo* further creates situations of guilt for the sexually exploited female; each of these cultural concepts deserves its own explanation and will be discussed

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33 Mavel Morales (Oregon Law Center), "Addressing Sexual Assault with Migrant Workers," (Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011).
The cultural values strongly identified with Latina culture include *machismo* and *marianismo*, although *familismo* is also important when considering the unique situation of sexually exploited Latina youth. *Familismo* is the duty to preserve the honor of the family. This includes, for women, remaining a virgin until marriage and in general being a “mujer decente” or a good woman. Furthermore, the individual identifies as “we”, as part of the family, as opposed to “I”. The extended family often serves as the primary source of support.

An assaulted woman or girl, including those involved in commercial sexual exploitation, views herself as a *mujer marcada*. The deep shame results from a failure to preserve the honor of the family. Often the family views the woman or girl as the culprit of the assault, stating that she should have done more to protect herself.

Another important aspect of Latina culture is the *machismo/marianismo* dichotomy that exists as a behavioral outline for males and females. Iris Ylenia Carrillo emphasizes that the expected characteristics for each gender do not necessarily represent the actual behaviors of Latinos and Latinas, but instead exist as guidelines (2010, p. 27-30). Paul Allatson defines *machismo* as “the conventional term for the codes, ideals, behaviors, and appearances by which masculinity is structured and assumes meaning in Latin American and Latino/a societies”. He continues on to define *marianismo* as “the name for the social conventions, divisions of labor, and gendered spatializations said to govern the role and

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36 Lucrecia Suárez (Conexiones, Latino/a Counseling), “Cultural Competency with Latinos/as.” (Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011).

37 Una mujer marcada translates to a marked woman, describing a woman who often times has lost her virginity or who does not follow the social norms set forth by *marianismo*.


status of Latin American and Latina women.”\textsuperscript{41} Lucrecia Suárez of Conexiones defines \textit{machismo} as the belief that the male is the authority and is responsible for providing food, shelter, protection, etc. She defines \textit{marianismo} as the belief that the female must provide for the emotional and spiritual needs of the family. Additionally she must be submissive, dependent and remain a virgin until marriage.\textsuperscript{42}

In addition to a general definition of both \textit{machismo} and \textit{marianismo}, Carrillo provides a list of characteristics often thought to be inherent to the two genders. For \textit{machismo} she includes characteristics such as toughness, aggressiveness, sexual prowess and virility, sexism, promiscuity, and the proclivity to oppress and abuse women.\textsuperscript{43} She lists submission, self-sacrifice, dependence, sexual purity, acceptance of men’s public and private behavior, and lack of knowledge or enjoyment of sex as a few of the characteristics important to \textit{marianismo}.\textsuperscript{44}

However, Carrillo also argues that the masculine and feminine roles set forth by \textit{machismo} and \textit{marianismo} do not represent the behaviors of all Latinos/Latinas. She indicates that all cultures provide good versus bad dichotomies within gender roles.\textsuperscript{45} She also states that there exists a spectrum of patriarchal dominance and its affect on the adherence to the gender roles of \textit{machismo} and \textit{marianismo}. Moreover, she suggests that greater adherence to traditional values leads to an increased prevalence of the strong stereotypical characteristics of \textit{machismo} and \textit{marianismo}. In contrast, declined adherence to traditional values is associated with increased acculturation to U.S. culture, as well as

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 153.
\textsuperscript{42} Lucrecia Suárez (Conexiones, Latino/a Counselling). “Cultural Competency with Latinos/as.” (Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011).
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 28.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 30.
increased education, modernity and increased economic opportunities for women and therefore declined acceptance of machismo and marianismo gender expectations.\footnote{Ibid, 30.}

Ugarte, Zarate, and Farley focus on the detrimental effects of machismo and marianismo. While they acknowledge the spectrum of adherence to the traditional values, they also highlight that machismo and marianismo contribute the increased control that a trafficker may hold over a Latina youth. They state, “Mexican and other Latin American men generally assume the right to sexually exploit any female”.\footnote{Marisa B. Ugarte, Laura Zarate, and Melissa Farley, “Prostitution and Trafficking of Women and Children from Mexico to the United States.” \textit{Journal of Trauma Practice} 2, no. 3/4 (2003): 156.} This right to sexually exploit any female suggests that Latin American men in a sexually exploited female’s life assume the right to use her, including the traffickers and the buyers. Additionally, the idea that women should accept men’s public and private behavior leads to the idea that they would be unwilling to seek help for the violent behavior they receive at the hands of a trafficker.

The cultural values of familismo, marianismo, and machismo apply to the majority of Latin American women and create a distinct situation of manipulation and abuse. Additionally, women and girls trafficked to the U.S. directly from Mexico face additional challenges that include a lack of access to bilingual materials, fear of immigration authorities and their lack of immigration status, as well as a lack of home to return to in Mexico. An estimated 16,000 girls are sexually exploited in Mexico each year. The majority of those sexually exploited in Mexico as well as those trafficked to the U.S. come from rural areas that uphold traditional values. The home that they might return to is a home stricken with poverty and the family they return to most likely would not accept them nor would
they be able to find a husband willing to accept a *mujer marcada*.48

In recent years the problem of sexual exploitation has increasingly gained awareness; however, the world community continues to reveal situations of terrible abuse perpetrated against millions throughout the world. Within the U.S. an estimated 100,000 and 300,000 youth enter sexual exploitation each year. Traffickers use a variety of tactics to manipulate and control the youths. Leaving the Life is a dangerous prospect and psychologically difficult. The unique cultural situation of Latinas further perpetuates the difficulties faced in escaping their life in exploitation. Increasingly, it is clear that the best course of action is a multi-disciplinary response of well-informed individuals. Knowledge is power when working with survivors of sexual exploitation; it is essential not only to their survival, but also to their willingness to assist in prosecuting their exploiters, both the buyers and the traffickers.49

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Methodologies

John W. Creswell defines qualitative study “as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural study”. Qualitative study follows an inductive process to gather information and then forms a hypothesis about the social or human problem. In comparison, quantitative study begins with a hypothesis and seeks to support or falsify the hypothesis by gathering data, often in a fabricated setting. Commercial sexual exploitation of children is a social and human problem that involves a variety of information as well as resources.

To begin with, when I considered the variety of qualitative methods available to me, there existed a select few that I was able to utilize due to the time and scope limit of my project. I truly wish that I had years to investigate the unique effect of being Latina in sexually exploitive situations; unfortunately I only had a few short months. This project has the ability to be extended and deepened if I choose to return to it in further studies. For now, though, I focused on reviewing the existing literature, used unstructured interviews and informational conferences to supplement the information that I gathered.

The information that currently exists is both extensive and minimal. While that may sound contradictory, after spending months researching information, statistics, estimates, etc. on sexually exploited youth in the United States, I found that information can be found in a large variety of places, from county websites to international organizations.

This signifies that the information is available, people are encountering the problem and many are working hard to fight against it. Unfortunately, the majority of the information repeats itself. The sources frequently cite each other as their sources and locating the original statistic is sometimes near impossible. Furthermore, information about specific geographic locations, aside from New York City, is almost nonexistent. There is very little information about Portland or Oregon.

This is where interviews and the conferences I attended were of great assistance to my project. I interviewed a few community members in the Portland area who work with Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. They know the specific problems encountered in Portland as well as what is currently being done. They work directly with the youth and therefore understand the lived experience of the survivors. They also have experience and motivation to raise awareness about the problem. They included a Case Manager at SARC, the Multnomah County Collaboration Specialist for CSEC, and a Case Manager for Latina survivors of sexual assault. The conferences I attended provided general information about Oregon, and included presentations by police officers, legislators, professors and members of various organizations that work directly with the affected population.

The interviews were semi-structured and I had an interview guide with a series of questions I asked, although I allowed the conversation to adapt according to the interviewee. I used a voice recorder during the interview to ensure that I did not need to rely on my stressed, senior-year brain to remember what was said during the interview. Additionally, I took notes during the interview to record my reactions and thoughts as well as other important components to the interview. I provided the option of remaining anonymous to the interviewee and only recorded them if they allowed it. They also had the
option to terminate the interview at any time or to not answer any question I asked. I encouraged them to interrupt me at any point if they felt they had information they wished to share.

Upon completion of the interviews I transcribed the audio recordings onto my personal computer within a week of the interview and then deleted the audio files from both the recorder and the computer. In the transcribed notes I coded using highlighting to demonstrate related themes. I developed this process more thoroughly after I began to transcribe the interviews.

In addition to the interviews I had the experience of being able to be a participant observer through my work with the Sexual Assault Resource Center. As an advocate, every person I meet with or talk with remains completely confidential and I would never compromise the incredible organization that SARC is, however I am able to record my feelings and reactions to the more difficult calls that I receive. For example, in November I had my first in-person hospital response and the effect on me was much larger than I had anticipated. It required that I talk to my support at SARC to help debrief the feelings I was experiencing.

An ethnographic study or participant observation of the actual process of sexual exploitation was not a component of my project. Primarily, the survivors of sexual exploitation are already in incredibly vulnerable positions when they are met by law enforcement, medical staff or SARC advocates and it would be unethical to subject them to a study conducted for a thesis. Furthermore, because the population I wished to study consisted of minors, they are a protected population, which would have required extensive approval from the Institutional Review Board. It was not feasible to investigate sexual
exploitation from the first hand perspective of the exploited.

Ultimately, due to the humanistic nature of my project I used qualitative methods to inductively gather information about Latinas in situations of sexual exploitation. I supplemented my research with interviews as well as attended conferences. I used a variety of the techniques suggested by Bernard in his tips for interviewing, such as asking open-ended questions and probing, both silently and verbally.\textsuperscript{51}

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Chapter 1: The Situation of Sexual Exploitation Throughout the World and in the U.S.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children occurs everywhere. The statistics vary but one thing remains constant; it occurs in all nations and to all populations. People are trafficked to and from a variety of nations, including developing and developed nations (see Figure 1). The estimates range from 600,000 to over 1 million people trafficked into the sex industry worldwide each year.\textsuperscript{52} In the U.S. alone an estimated 100,000 youth will enter the sex trade this year alone.\textsuperscript{53} A variety of reasons exist that lead a person to enter the sex trade; most of them are out of their control.

![Figure 1: Directions of trafficking throughout the world](image)

A number of organizations, such as the United Nations and the International


Organization for Migration (IOM), have begun focusing on trafficking in humans and specifically on the sex trafficking of women and children. Women and children form about 80% of all trafficking victims and are often trafficked into prostitution or domestic servitude (which may also include a component of sexual assault). Frequent characteristics of trafficked women and children are that they come from poverty-stricken backgrounds, unhealthy and abusive families and are deceived and tricked by sex traffickers into doing sex work.

Traffickers focus on vulnerable populations, a trait shared by traffickers worldwide. Specifically, in developing nations, traffickers will offer “good jobs” to women and girls that have relatively few options for work in their home countries. These women and girls live in unstable, transitional countries. Additionally, the traffickers target rural areas where knowledge of the practice is less common and the girls may be more desperate for jobs. Despite the prospect of a lucrative job that will provide money to send home, the woman or child is often hesitant to leave her family and local area. At this point the trafficker may utilize local connections to help persuade the girl to leave. Often a trafficker will have a local “recruiter” who is part of the organization and either grew up in the local area or still lives there. The Cadena Family of Mexico offers a perfect example of a group that utilized their local connections to exploit young girls. The Cadena brothers were viewed by locals as neighbors with good intentions and so were able to convince both girls and their parents that a job in Florida was a great option. Once the girl arrived in Florida she did not work as a nanny or a waitress, but was instead forced into prostitution.

An alternative method of deceit employed by traffickers and recruiters is the

56 Ibid.
prospect of marriage. The trafficker may propose or offer a proposal to a stranger in a more prosperous country. This method works especially well in developing but impoverished countries where local prospects are less appealing than a rich foreigner might be. Both the parents and the girl wish to escape the desperate lives they live and a charming, rich man can offer an easy way out.57 A trait that will reappear the people that are involved in all forms of trafficking, whether domestic or international, is the ability to persuade. In order to gain the trust of the girls and their parents, the traffickers often have to be charming and are frighteningly adept at manipulating people.

These methods are all used to bring women and girls to the United States. An estimated 50,000 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year.58 Women and children are trafficked from a variety of countries and often enter through Mexico and other port cities (see Figure 2). Furthermore, one-third of persons trafficked into the U.S. are estimated to be Latin American, approximately 16,500 people. The trafficker obtains the necessary documents and often works with coyotes to smuggle the girl into the U.S.59 However, domestic trafficking of minors60 presents a different side to trafficking. Often it is the promise of love and a deceptive personal relationship that begins the interaction rather than the promise of a lucrative job.

Whichever way a woman or child is persuaded to leave their family, a number of the factors that lead to entry into sexual exploitation are similar. To begin with, the traffickers

59 Necessary documents include passports, visas and personal identification.
60 "Domestic minor sex trafficking is the commercial sexual exploitation of America’s children through prostitution, pornography, and sexual performance within U.S. borders. ‘It is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” when the person is under the age of eighteen years’” Linda A. Smith and Samantha Healy Vardaman, “A Legislative Framework for Combating Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking,” Regent University Law Review 23, no. 2 (2011).
focus on vulnerable populations and spend time with those populations to build rapport. Additionally, once the relationship is formed they work to sever ties with support networks and move the girls away from family or friends. Once the girls begin work in prostitution many similar methods of manipulation and control are used.

![Figure 2: Routes that traffickers take to bring women and children to the United States.](Image from Girlforsale.org)

Traffickers within the United States have a very easy population to target. An estimated 1 to 1 ½ million children run away\(^{61}\) or are thrown away\(^{62}\) from their place of

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\(^{61}\) "A runaway episode is one that meets any one of the following criteria: 1) A child leaves home without permission and stays away overnight 2) A child 14 years old or younger (or older and mentally incompetent) who is away from home chooses not to come home when expected to and stays away overnight 3) A child 15 years old or older who is away from home chooses not to come home and stays away two nights.” Heather Hammer, David Finkelhor, and Andrea J. Sedlak. "Runaway/Thrownaway Children: National Estimates and Characteristics.” NISMAFT: U.S. Department of Justice.

\(^{62}\) "A throwaway episode is one that meets either of the following criteria: 1) A child is asked or told to leave home by a parent or other household adult, no adequate alternative care is arranged for the child by a household adult, and the child is out of the household overnight 2) A child who is away from home is prevented from returning home by a parent or other household adult, no adequate
residence each year. Of those that run away one in three will be approached by a trafficker or recruiter within 48 hours of leaving home. The average age that a girl enters into sexual exploitation is between 12 and 14 years old. Linda Smith and Samantha Healy Vardaman estimate that runaway and throwaway children constitute 75% of juvenile prostitutes. Furthermore, about 80% of the children currently in situations of sexual exploitation come from previous home situations of abuse. These children are running away from abuse, they are at an age where making decisions can be difficult, and they often lack support networks.

Within the already vulnerable population of abused children, runaway children and throwaway children, the added component of a different culture amplifies the difficulties of obtaining help in leaving the Life of prostitution. In the state of Oregon 12% of the recorded population is Hispanic. The Oregon Law Center estimates that 200,000 Latina

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66 Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor "Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II" (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
farm workers and their families currently live and work in Oregon. Whether a youth is originally from a Latin American country or whether they were born in the U.S. to Latino parents, the presence of Latina values will play a role in their life (see Chapter 2). This leads to an increased situation of vulnerability that a trafficker will use to their benefit.

The trafficker often begins the introduction to the girl, not with “hey you want to prostitute for me?” but rather with compliments. The grooming process can last anywhere from a few months to a few years. The trafficker will introduce himself to the girl with a compliment, “you’re really beautiful” or “you’ve got a great smile”. For a girl that comes from a home of abuse or neglect, just the fact that someone is paying attention to her is an attraction in itself. Eventually he will present as a boyfriend, he buys the girl new clothes, gifts, they go out to eat and she feels loved in a way that she has not felt before.

Unfortunately, the wonderful, caring relationship begins to spiral into what resembles a domestic violence relationship, on drugs. Domestic violence relationships follow a cycle known as the domestic violence cycle (see Figure 3). It includes three main phases: a honeymoon phase, a tension-building phase, and an explosion phase. The honeymoon phase resembles the initial relationship; it is filled with compliments, gifts, reminders of the “love” the abuser has for the abused. After the

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68 Mavel Morales (Oregon Law Center), “Addressing Sexual Assault with Migrant Workers,” (Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011).
69 Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor “Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II” (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
honeymoon phase, the tension begins to build, and the abused understands that an explosion, or episode of violence, will occur. Once the episode of violence occurs the cycle returns to the honeymoon phase and then the tension-building phase. This same set of phases occurs within the relationship that a youth has with their trafficker, although often at a more rapid pace. The trafficker uses violence and the threat of violence to force the youth into prostitution.\(^{70}\)

Many traffickers utilize the threat of violence both towards the youth and also to the family of the youth as a form of control. At a conference I attended in January 2012 I heard the story of a young girl from Vancouver, Washington who attempted to leave the Life. Kelsey Emily Collins had agreed to help testify in the court trial of her trafficker, however because she was going to be eighteen years old shortly she was not allowed to stay in a safe residence and instead was forced to return home. Shortly before her trial, in 2009, she disappeared and has not been seen or heard from since.\(^{71}\)

Traffickers will threaten the youth directly and also use stories such as Kelsey’s to instill a fear of leaving. Furthermore, the traffickers may be part of a gang or have connections to help them keep an eye on the youth’s whereabouts. The threat of violence and the use of violence becomes an integral part of the life of many of these youths. Often staying in the Life is safer than trying to escape, especially due to the lack of safe shelters specifically oriented towards youth trying to leave such difficult cycles of violence and dependence.

Youth who are ready to leave the Life currently face few options for safe and secure

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\(^{70}\) Christie Costello (Domestic Violence Resource Center of Oregon), ”Dating Violence and Domestic Violence,” (Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011).

housing. Leaving prostitution and the cycles of violence and dependence that go along with it requires a specific set of support people and safety considerations. These children have been traumatized repeatedly, often over years. They are leaving a highly dangerous domestic violence relationship that often includes gang involvement. Drugs and alcohol play an important role as coping mechanisms, and thus trying to end their addictions is especially difficult. Furthermore, these youth need direct protection in the form of anonymous addresses, where their trafficker cannot find them. They need, at a minimum, protection, addictions and trauma counseling, and opportunities to return to school or learn a profession so that they can begin to have a life of their own, not dependent on a trafficker.72

The trafficker creates a severe situation of dependence. The youth is dependent on the trafficker for basic needs such as food, housing, clothing, as well as emotional needs such as love and nurturing, which, through a process of misrecognition, the youth accepts as real from the trafficker. The cycle of violence aspect of the relationship creates the dependence often seen in domestic violence relationships, where the abused often loves the abuser, and is unable to leave because of that misplaced and misunderstood love. A trafficked youth earns around $67,000 per year, and all of that money goes to the trafficker.73 The trafficker does not allow the youth to keep any of the money made during a night of work. This economic dependence creates a barrier just as difficult to overcome as the emotional dependence fostered by the trafficker. Any program focused on the rehabilitation of these youth also needs to focus on providing schooling and training so that the economic factor becomes less of a barrier.

72 Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor “Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II” (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
The youth that are trafficked in the United States come from the United States as well as other countries. They come from situations of vulnerability, and are unable to leave the Life safely. The complexity of cultural values and barriers only compound the situation faced by trafficked youth. The programs to help them leave the Life, if they are to be successful, need to focus on the entire picture of dependence and provide for the future of the youth. Shelters must be long term, with a plan to rehabilitate and reintegrate the youth into society. Furthermore, a focus must also be added to preventing the exposure of vulnerable youth to situations where they might encounter a trafficker. An investigation into the reason for such high numbers of runaway and throwaway children is imperative to understanding how best to prevent sexual exploitation of those youth.
Chapter 2: Machismo, Marianismo, and Latina Cultural Values

“In every society we find a pattern of expectations based on real or imagined attributes of the individuals or groups who perform certain tasks”. Also known as cultural values, these patterns of expectations define and create guidelines for how individuals are expected to act within society. Cultural values vary from abstract and difficult to define ideas, to more concrete and set guidelines. They describe expected behaviors and actions specific to each gender, but they can also provide expectations for the culture as a whole. Cultural values lay the framework for how society expects an individual to act. However, within the definition of each cultural value there exists a broad spectrum of how individuals choose to interpret and follow those expectations.

Latin American culture is often characterized as a machista culture. In general, this references the cultural value of machismo, also known as the cult of virility or manliness. The lesser-known cultural value, also known as the other half of machismo, is marianismo, the cult of Mary. “Both marianismo and machismo are New World phenomena with ancient roots in Old World cultures. Many of the contributing elements can be found even today in Italy and Spain, but the fully developed syndrome occurs only in Latin America”. These cultural values are brought by immigrants to the United States and therefore are a part of the Latina culture here. However, as acculturation to U.S. culture occurs, adherence to the concretely defined values lessens, as Iris Ylenia Carrillo states,

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75 Ibid, 91.
The prevalence of *machismo* and *marianismo* is believed to be associated with a greater adherence to traditional values and on the decline due to various factors, including acculturation to mainstream U.S. culture, increasing levels of education, modernity, and changing economic opportunities that benefit women and influence gender dynamics, particularly within the household.\(^{77}\)

Furthermore, adherence to the cultural values of *machismo* and *marianismo* play an important role in the interactions between sexually exploited youth and traffickers. Organizations that work directly with sexually exploited youth should have a thorough understanding of the effects of these cultural values on the relationships formed.

The more well known of the two cultural values, *machismo* has been incorporated into mainstream U.S. dialogue and is often synonymous with a man acting “too manly”. Nonetheless, the cultural value of *machismo* includes many more traits and expectations than being manly, instead “[m]achismo is a bi-dimensional construct with positive qualities associated with the construct of “caballerismo”\(^{78}\) and negative characteristics associated with the construct of “traditional *machismo*.\(^{79}\) Unfortunately, the “traditional *machismo*” that Carrillo refers to remains the stronger half that people think of when referencing *machismo*.

More specifically, “[m]achismo is the conventional term for the codes, ideals, behaviors, and appearances by which masculinity is structured and assumes meaning in Latin American and Latino/a societies...characterized by aggressive and “intransigent” relations between men that also overdetermine men’s sexually aggressive and arrogant


\(^{78}\) i.e. an ethical code of chivalry that focuses on “social responsibility and an emotional connectedness”

\(^{79}\) i.e. hypermasculinity, male dominance

treatment of women”. Carrillo specifically points out that these traits that have become a part of the definition of machismo are expected, but not necessarily portrayed by all men, “[m]achismo, or the cult of manliness and virility, has come to represent the archetype of Mexican American masculinity. Mexican American men are expected to display a set of behavioral characteristics that have been associated with machismo and believed to be inherent in all Mexican American men”.

Characteristics often included when describing machismo include, “toughness, aggressiveness, fearlessness...authoritarianism, stoicism, sexism, sexual prowess and virility, promiscuity, and the proclivity to oppress and abuse women”. Furthermore, in regards to sexual relations, “[m]en are expected to be “dominant and knowledgeable in sexual relationships with women” and display unbridled passion and sexual desire, with sexual promiscuity a cultural indicator of manhood”. The traits ascribed above appear to portray a man that victimizes women in a variety of ways, however machismo also includes a more positive side. As Carrillo points out, though, those qualities are often overlooked, “[p]ositive qualities historically associated with the construct of machismo, such as courage, honor, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness, have been typically overridden by scholars and emphasis placed on the sensationalized characteristics that give the term machismo a negative connotation and one-dimensionality”. This one-dimensionality has negative consequences for the average Latino man. On the other hand, specifically related to all forms of abuse, one can imagine that the more positive qualities are lacking in the male abuser.

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80 Paul Allatson, Key Terms in Latino/a Cultural and Literary Studies. (Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 146.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid, 29.
“Marianismo, or the cult of the Virgin Mary, has been assigned to Mexican American women as a complementary role to machismo”. Although marianismo is often referred to as the complementary cultural value to machismo, it is of equal importance as it includes the expectations for how half of Latina society should behave. Specifically, “[m]arianismo is the name for the social conventions, divisions of labor, and gendered spatializations said to govern the role and status of Latin American and Latina women”. This definition includes characteristics such as “submission, self-sacrifice, nurturance...respect for and deference to authority, acceptance of men’s public and private behavior, and lack of knowledge or enjoyment of sex”. These characteristics specifically refer to relations with men: fathers, brothers, boyfriends, husbands, etc. The woman is “submissive to the demands of the men: husbands, sons, fathers, brothers”.

Rosa Maria Gil and Carmen Inoa Vazquez further point out the emphasis on sacrifice, “[m]arianismo is about sacred duty, self-sacrifice, and chastity...about living in the shadows, literally and figuratively, of your men - father, boyfriend, husband, son - your kids, and your family”. Additionally, Paul Allatson points out that “[m]arianismo emphasizes, when occasions merit it, quiet suffering, and accepting of male behavior (aggression, violence, selfishness, wickedness)”. Latina women are expected to accept the behavior of the men in their lives, both in the public and private spheres.

Another key component of marianismo is the emphasis on remaining a virgin until

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marriage. Gil and Vazquez emphasize

[F]or the Latina, virginity is *un asunto de honor*, a matter of honor. Indeed, it becomes a critical family issue because of the overwhelming importance attributed both to *macho* honor and *marianista* sexual purity in Latino society...Virginitiy is inextricably linked to *familismo*, which is the glue that holds Hispanic cultural expectations together.\(^91\)

The loss of virginity is viewed as an affront not only to the girl/woman but also to her entire family as well as the men involved. Men are expected to protect the women in their lives, while women are expected to protect their virginity until marriage. Loss of virginity, regardless of how, is a grievous error on the woman’s part. Virginity remains an important aspect of being a *mujer decente* in Latin America and “[i]n fact, the Cuban psychologist Oliva Espin believes that the virginity mandate continues to be a cultural expectation for countless Latinas living in the United States”.\(^92\) If a woman loses her virginity before marriage she risks become a *mala mujer* or *puta* (whore).

Within the construct of *marianismo* “is the binary opposition of virgin/mother-puta/whore that is used to establish and enforce a set of behavioral characteristics that ascribe to women the status of *mujer decente*”.\(^93\) In being a *mujer decente*, “Mexican American women are expected to maintain their virginity until marriage and serve as sexual gatekeepers, restraining men’s sexual drives and advancements towards them”.\(^94\)

Women who fail to maintain virginity or who appear to enjoy sex are labeled * putas*, as Carrillo point out, “Women who violate any of the edicts established by *marianismo* risk being relegated to the *puta*/whore category, regardless of the sexual or asexual nature of


\(^{92}\) Ibid.


\(^{94}\) Ibid.
their transgression”.\textsuperscript{95} Violation of the structures set forth by \textit{marianismo} includes sexual expression apart from the satisfaction of the husband. “The second expression of female sexuality among Latinos is eroticism, which is considered utterly negative [in women]”.\textsuperscript{96} However, violation can include being a “prostitute, a mistress, a single mother, a divorcée, a seductress, a flirt, a “hot number,” or una mujer sola, a woman alone”.\textsuperscript{97} Not only does the label \textit{puta} or \textit{mala mujer} degrade the family, but it also leads to inner guilt and self-rejection on the part of the woman due to the ingrained cultural expectations of being a \textit{marianista} woman.

Both \textit{marianismo} and \textit{machismo} have profound effects on the lives of the average Latino, whether in Latin America or in the United States. These cultural values compound the already difficult situation faced by youth in situations of sexual exploitation. As has already been discussed, sexually exploited youth face a huge number of obstacles when attempting to leave the Life. The cultural expectations of males and females outlined by \textit{marianismo} and \textit{machismo} define roles that are played out in situations of abuse. Further, the dichotomy of \textit{mujer decente} and \textit{puta} place negative social stigma on women who were part of prostitution.

\textit{Marianismo} includes two major expectations that Latina youth involved in prostitution must negotiate. Primarily, \textit{marianismo} emphasizes submission especially to male figures. The majority of traffickers are male who have created some form of relationship with the girl. Latinas are taught to respect males and to tolerate their behavior in all arenas of life. Following the example of the trafficker who approaches a vulnerable

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
young girl as a boyfriend, he thus establishes that relationship of respect and submission with her. None of the definitions of marianismo include a clause about breaking the submission or fighting back if the male figure is abusive; in fact most scholars agree that women are expected to endure male abuse.

In addition to the submission component, there is the added loss of the highly important virginity. Often these girls are viewed as bringing shame to themselves as well as their families. Additionally Latina youth in CSEC are confronted with a huge amount of misunderstanding on the part of their families. As Celia Higueras of SARC summarizes, “men are the ones who lead and who make the major decisions. Women have to be very submissive. I think there is something very ingrained there, for these girls [CSEC girls]…I definitely think there's that added shame of not being a virgin, of being on the streets, the perception that it's a life choice, that they are choosing freely because they are crazy wild and out of control”.

This perception is often a result of a lack of information on the behalf of the family members that are involved. Celia continues on to say, “I've also seen Latina families [where there is] a huge disconnect between parents being really conservative, really protective and not being able to understand that their kids are being victims”.

_Machismo_ also plays its role in the relationship of victimized Latina youth. Men who are expected to be dominant in the relationship can use this to their advantage. Additionally, abusive and exploitative relationships may be overlooked within the Latina community due to a lack of information as well as the assumption of a _machista/marianista_ relationship between the trafficker and the youth. _Machismo_ and _marianismo_ also allow for and in some ways help to perpetuate prostitution as a way for men to express themselves

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98 Celia Higueras (Latina Case Manager, SARC) in discussion with the author, February 2012.
sexually. These men cannot have sexual relations with the women they will eventually marry due to the high emphasis on female virginity and some end up seeking prostitutes for sexual satisfaction.

In addition, being Latina in the U.S. requires girls and women to navigate the cultural values brought from Latin American as well as of the cultural systems in place here. Further cultural barriers including English as a second language or speaking no English further complicate the situation of Latinas within the United States. At the same time, it is important to remember that there is no single experience of Latinas in the U.S. The experience varies immensely as Gil and Vazquez articulate,

What exactly does it mean to be Latina? Clearly there is no single description that fits every Hispanic woman’s personality—individuals can’t be reduced to cultural stereotypes...[however] there are critical issues and problems centering on self-esteem which we commonly share—and which are magnified by the pressures to acculturate clashing with the pressures not to change.99

Furthermore, marianismo and machismo do not define the behavior of every Latina or Latino, whether in the United States or elsewhere. There exists a broad spectrum of adherence to the traits and characteristics set forth by the two concepts. It is important to remember that these cultural values do have an effect on Latina youth in situations of sexual exploitation, although that effect varies from case to case. Agencies and organizations working with Latina youth should have a thorough understanding of marianismo and machismo, both the expectations set forth by them as well as the results of adhering to those values.

Chapter 3: Current Action to End CSEC

John Kroger, Attorney General for the State of Oregon, recently spoke at the Northwest Conference Against Trafficking held by Soroptimist International in Portland, Oregon. At the conference he pointed out that little over five years ago the United States was still in denial about human sex trafficking within its own borders. He mentions that today the problem is more widely recognized and many individuals and organizations across the country work tirelessly to both prevent and treat the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children.\(^{100}\) Citizen-Activists have led the charge in combating the problem: the support of governmental agencies is continually increasing. Further demonstrating Attorney General John Kroger’s point, Obama released the following press release on March 15, 2012:

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary
For Immediate Release
March 15, 2012
Statement by the President on the Meeting of the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

Nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, in issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to the enduring cause of freedom. Then as now, we remain steadfast in our resolve to see that all men, women, and children have the opportunity to realize this greatest of gifts. Yet millions around the world—including here in the United States—toil under the boot of modern slavery. Mothers and fathers are forced to work in fields and factories against their will or in service to debts that can never be repaid. Sons and daughters are sold for sex, abducted as child soldiers, or coerced into involuntary labor. In dark corners of our world, and hidden in plain sight in our own communities,

human beings are exploited for financial gain and subjected to unspeakable cruelty.

Slavery remains the affront to human dignity and stain on our collective conscience that it has always been. That is why members of my cabinet and senior advisors gathered at the White House today, at a meeting chaired by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to lay out their plans for meeting this challenge. The United States is committed to eradicating trafficking in persons, and we will draw on tools ranging from law enforcement and victim service provision, to public awareness building and diplomatic pressure. Because we know that government efforts are not enough, we are also increasing our partnerships with a broad coalition of local communities, faith-based and non-governmental organizations, schools, and businesses.

To bring all these elements together, and to be sure we are maximizing our efforts, today I am directing my cabinet to find ways to strengthen our current work, and to expand on partnerships with civil society and the private sector, so that we can bring more resources to bear in fighting this horrific injustice. In the coming weeks the White House will build on this gathering on behalf of human dignity. I am confident that we will one day end the scourge of modern slavery, because I believe in those committed to this issue: young people, people of faith and station, Americans who refuse to accept this injustice and will not rest until it is vanquished. Today, I reaffirm that the United States stands with them, and that together we will realize the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation and our country’s ideal of freedom.\footnote{President Barack Obama (of the United States), “Statement by the President on the Meeting of the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons,” \textit{Office of the Press Secretary}, March 15, 2012.}

President Obama and U.S. Attorney General John Kroger make it clear that trafficking in humans not only is in full public view, but also that it will not be tolerated. Furthermore, legislators have now begun to address the issue. In 2010 Senator Wyden (D-OR) helped pass \textit{Act S. 2925} the \textbf{Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2010} in the Senate. “The \textbf{Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act} would authorize block grants to six locations deemed to have significant sex trafficking activity, require a workable plan to provide comprehensive,
wrap-around services to sex trafficking victims – including the establishment of a shelter facility – and require demonstrated participation by all levels of law enforcement, prosecutors, and social service providers”.

The grants would have funded each of the six locations with $2-2.5 million per year with the option of renewing the funding for two additional years.

Specifically, the grants would have permitted the funding to be utilized in a variety of areas including “shelters specifically for trafficking victims, daily necessities to keep victims from returning to the street, victims’ assistance counseling and legal services, education or job training classes, specialized training for law enforcement and social service providers, police officer salaries - patrol officers, detectives, investigators, prosecutor salaries, and other trial expenses, investigation expenses - wire taps, expert consultants, travel, other "technical assistance" expenditures, and outreach, education, and prevention efforts, including programs to deter offenders”.

All of these components are necessary in the prevention and treatment of sexual exploitation.

Unfortunately, while Act S. 2925 also passed the House, it passed non-identically and the amendments between the two chambers were never resolved. Senator Wyden again introduced the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act of 2011 (S. 596) on March 16th, 2011. However Act S. 596 of 2011 has not moved beyond the introduction phase, according to govtrack.us, a website that tracks the bills and acts in the Senate and the House.

Senator Wyden’s Act demonstrates that while legislators are helping the fight to end

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103 Ibid.

sex trafficking, there is still a long way to go at both the national and local level. Over the past three years a variety of organizations in Multnomah County have come together to address the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children. In August 2009 Multnomah County received grant funding to create a collaborative effort to work towards ending the trafficking of minors in the local area.\textsuperscript{105} Joslyn Baker, the Multnomah County Collaboration Specialist for the Task Force against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), noted that previous to 2009, when Multnomah County received the funding, the Sexual Assault Resource Center as well as others had already begun a lot of the groundwork to begin a CSEC-specific collaborative effort. “The purpose of this three‐year project [the Multnomah County Grant] is to improve local capacity to address CSEC in Multnomah County (OR) and to build upon current collaborative efforts. The project will address the OJJDP\textsuperscript{106} intended goals:

1. Recognize exploited youth and youth at risk for exploitation;
2. Effectively investigate and prosecute cases against adults who exploit children and youth;
3. And intervene appropriately with and compassionately serve victims, including providing essential services”.\textsuperscript{107}

There are currently six main partners working together to achieve the grant goals: The Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC), Janus Youth Programs, LifeWorks NW, Local Law Enforcement, the FBI, and DHS/Child Welfare.\textsuperscript{108}


\textsuperscript{106} Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention


\textsuperscript{108} Department of Human Services
However, while this great collaboration effort has started, and is continually developing, one huge question is “Why Portland?” Why is Portland a destination for traffickers and why do we have such high numbers? To begin with, Portland is highly accessible from a variety of routes, specifically I-5 and I-84. Additionally, the close border with Washington and Canada allows traffickers to capitalize on the distance and differing laws between different states and countries.109 Furthermore, Portland has a large population of vulnerable street youth110, an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 minors, as well as the highest number of children in foster care in the U.S.111 SARC reports that 30% of shelter youth and 70% of street youth report being victims of formal commercial sexual exploitation.112 Portland’s zoning laws add to the difficulty of locating the youth. In the city of Portland any type of sex venue is zoned as commercial, which allows it to be in any commercial zone. There is no specific “red light” district, thus sex shops, erotic massage parlors, strip clubs, etc. can be located almost anywhere. This lack of specific zoning for sex-related industry leads to Portland having the highest commercial sex venues per-capita in the nation.

Additionally, a variety of legislative oversights cause traffickers to be attracted to Oregon. Primarily, Oregon has much more lenient trafficking laws in comparison with Washington and California. Trafficking is a Class B Felony in Oregon, whereas it is a Class A Felony in California and Washington. It also is not on the sentencing grid used by the

110 Street Youth are youth living on the street without consistent shelter.
112 Esther Nelson, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor, “Commerically Sexually Exploited Youth I & II” (presentation, Training for SARC Advocates, Beaverton, OR October 2011).
judicial system; therefore prosecutors try traffickers for compelling prostitution (a Class A Felony) because it results in a guaranteed minimum sentence.\textsuperscript{113} In addition Oregon has fewer penalties and no asset forfeiture for trafficking. The large rural farming and forestry industries in Oregon are difficult to monitor, and they often employ illegal immigrants that may not report abuse or trafficking. These combined factors work together to create an environment that is easy to move in and out of, where sex is highly visible, and where an easily accessible vulnerable population of youth resides.\textsuperscript{114}

As a result of Portland’s increased vulnerability for the commercial sexual exploitation of children, a few organizations have been working for a number of years to provide services to trafficked youth and work towards the prevention. Specifically within Multnomah County, the Sexual Assault Resource Center reports about 200 youth currently being served in their CSEC program while DHS reports around 70 open cases involving CSEC.\textsuperscript{115} Meanwhile, Law Enforcement reports encountering around 4-5 trafficked youth per week.\textsuperscript{116} These organizations work closely with the FBI, Janus Youth Programs, and LifeWorks NW to provide services to the survivors of sexual exploitation as well as to pursue prevention.

The Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC) works mainly with acute sexual assault survivors\textsuperscript{117} and survivors of past sexual abuse. They respond in person to hospitals and police stations when a sexual assault survivor is involved. SARC also offers ongoing case


\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{115} Rebecca Cook (CSEC Case Manager), Interview by Sarah Flinn, December 2, 2011, transcript.


\textsuperscript{117} Acute sexual assault refers to a single event. The survivor was sexually assaulted once, not repeatedly as in the case of commercially sexually exploited persons.
management and counseling to survivors. Due to the work they do, they were some of the first in the area to recognize the victims of commercial sexual exploitation. In 2008 Esther Nelson began work with the FBI and the Portland Police Department to create a coordinated response with supportive advocacy for these youth.\textsuperscript{118} Currently SARC responds in person to youth shelters, police stations, hospitals and other safe locations to provide advocacy for the youth 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They also created a CSEC specific unit that provides case management for the youth and includes five case managers and two volunteers. SARC provides the confidential advocacy that the youth need to support them through the transition of leaving the Life. The benefit of SARC is their complete confidentiality, so the youth can disclose anything without worry of being reported. In contrast, if the youth discloses information of abuse to, for example, a police officer or DHS worker, both mandated reporters\textsuperscript{119}, the abuse must be reported.

The Multnomah County Child Welfare Department of the Department of Human Services created a CSEC specific unit in June 2011.\textsuperscript{120} The DHS workers have specific knowledge of the needs of CSEC youth. They work closely with SARC and the other partners to provide for the basic needs of the youth, specifically when the youth does not have another option, such as a home, to return to after leaving the Life. They become the parent in cases where the parent is non-existent or incapable of providing for the youth. The Child Welfare unit is unique to Multnomah County and an integral part of the CSEC prevention; in other areas Child Welfare has chosen to ignore the issue and not be part of

\textsuperscript{118} Rebecca Cook (CSEC Case Manager), Interview by Sarah Flinn, December 2, 2011, transcript.

\textsuperscript{119} Mandated Reporters are required by law to report or cause to be reported child abuse that is either suspected or observed.

Another integral partner, Janus Youth Programs, often receives CSEC youth at its emergency youth shelter in Portland. SARC often responds to Harry’s Mother, the emergency shelter, after the police bring in a youth or if the staff suspects he/she is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation. Beyond their important role as a reception center and one of the first points of contact, Janus Youth Programs has also begun the next step in providing for CSEC victims trying to leave the Life. On December 1, 2012 they opened a long-term shelter with seven beds dedicated specifically to survivors of CSEC trying to leave the Life. Janus Youth Programs and specifically Harry’s Mother are an important entry point for CSEC youth where they encounter for the first time a number of the services available to them, including SARC.

The police departments of Multnomah County represent another integral component to the work against CSEC. The police departments have taken a unique and essential approach to working with CSEC youth. Previously, and still in many cities in the U.S., these youth were arrested under prostitution charges and put in jail. Joslyn Baker points out that often this was the community’s response to try to help the youth; the youth in jail was safer than the youth on the street. However, today the Portland Police Department’s approach focuses on jailing the trafficker and not the trafficked youth. Often the police bring the youth either to the precinct or to Harry's Mother’s Juvenile Reception Center to begin the first steps of contact with them. In either case SARC is called and an advocate will often be present when law enforcement engages with a youth in an interview.

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121 Rebecca Cook (CSEC Case Manager), Interview by Sarah Flinn, December 2, 2011, transcript.
Sergeant Geiger, Portland Police and Supervisor of the Human Trafficking Crimes Task Force, highlighted two main problems faced by law enforcement: victim identification and victim engagement. Often the trafficked youth do not self-identify or self report and frequently deny being a victim of any crime. Their biggest task is determining who these youth are and then locating them. The Portland Police search for the youth on the streets, on websites such as Craigslist and BackPage, and also follow tips from DHS Child Welfare and members of the community. As Sergeant Geiger points out, technology development is also increasing the difficulty of finding trafficked youth because they are able to contract services and dates through the Internet without walking the streets.

Once the police department has a lead on a trafficked youth they might perform a sting and set up a “date” with the youth. Other methods used to arrest buyers and traffickers as well as to identify trafficked youth include: “neighbor/business complaints, anonymous complaints, business and other surveillance systems, undercover officers, district officers, off-duty officers, informants, Trimet and public transportation resources, Law enforcement surveillance cameras, plate readers, stop light cameras, the women purchased, [and other] pimps”. After the youth arrives at the “date” they are brought either to Harry’s Mother or to a police precinct. At this point the police officers in Portland who work with trafficked youth will begin the interview and begin work on the second problem highlighted by Sergeant Geiger: victim engagement. The Police Departments in

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Portland often do not have the goal to arrest the youth and attempt to make this clear through non-traditional interviewing. Non-traditional interviewing takes a more personal approach and attempts to create a relationship of trust with the youth. The interviewing officer will often begin with a lot of questions about the youth, such as “Where did you grow up? What’s your favorite sport?” The purpose of the interview is to gain information and accumulate evidence against the trafficker to help build the case for the prosecution.127

Additionally, the police departments in Multnomah County work closely with prosecutors to obtain the necessary evidence to prosecute traffickers and buyers. Evidence they collect can include text messages, e-mails, and phone calls to link communication between the trafficked youth and the buyer who purchases the services. They also gather hotel receipts, condom receipts, hotel surveillance videos and work with other jurisdictions to gather evidence from other cities.128

The Portland Police Department recognizes the need to work cooperatively with other jurisdictions and recently attended an I-5 Summit that included the Mayors, Chiefs of Police and their staffs along the I-5 corridor from Talent to Seattle. They focused on the movement of trafficked youth along the I-5 Track that runs from Sacramento to Seattle and includes most of the cities along the freeway. Sergeant Geiger stated that all of the police departments of these cities are working together to identify trafficked youth and traffickers and also to prosecute the traffickers and buyers.129

However, Sergeant Geiger, as well as numerous others, emphasizes the numerous areas that still need improvement. He specifically mentions the need to educate all police

128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
officers in the identification of trafficked youth and how to interact with those youth.\textsuperscript{130} 
Professor Gwynne Skinner also mentioned that the Oregon police force’s lack of training in identification of trafficking victims contributes to a lack of information on the number of victims in situations of sexual exploitation.\textsuperscript{131} Training would allow police officers to actively look for sexually exploited youth as a part of their daily duties.

Furthermore, Sergeant Geiger articulates various legislative changes that are needed to help in the prosecution of both traffickers and buyers. Recently Oregon eliminated age as a defense, stating that buyers who purchase sex with underage persons are held accountable for sex with a minor\textsuperscript{132}, whether they knew the age or not. The legislation that needs to be passed, according to Sergeant Geiger, includes defining and separating sexual assault in the context of a prostitution date as well as an increase to the minimum mandatory sentences for these crimes of unlawful procurement.\textsuperscript{133}

Currently in Oregon the law defines prostitution procurement activities as, “14A.40.050 Unlawful Prostitution Procurement Activities: Any conduct by any person that constitutes a substantial step in furtherance of an act of prostitution. Such activity includes, but is not limited to, lingering in or near any street or public place, repeatedly circling an area in a motor vehicle, or repeatedly beckoning to, contacting or attempting to stop pedestrians or motor vehicle operators”.\textsuperscript{134} The website continues on to state that “[i]t is unlawful for any person to engage in any prostitution procurement activity with

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{131} Professor Gwynne Skinner (Willamette University School of Law), “Oregon’s Response to Human Trafficking: Is it Enough?” (Presentation at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Sex Trafficking: Researching Vulnerable Populations, Corvallis, OR, February 16-18, 2012).
\item\textsuperscript{132} Any person under the age of 18 cannot legally consent to sexual relations.
\end{footnotes}
intent to induce, entice, solicit, procure, locate, or contact another person to commit an act of prostitution. The law is clear that there does not need to be a sex act or an exchange of money for officers to arrest you or for a jury to find you guilty of misdemeanor charges”.

If convicted of engaging in prostitution activities, the buyer has a one-time chance for diversion and dismissal of the charge with attendance of the Sex Buyer Accountability and Diversion (SBAD) program. Additionally, the buyer will be required to register as a sex offender if charged with any of the listed charges (felony or not).\textsuperscript{135} Repeat engaging leads to the following consequences if convicted:

- Conviction on your record
- Put on probation for upwards of two years with the requirements that you attend the program again (SBAD) and pay the fee again
- Will be restricted for 1000 feet from any High Vice area in the city (this includes 82\textsuperscript{nd} Ave, Sandy Blvd, and areas of the NW)
- You will have to do Community Service and Jail Time
- You will be required to consent to a search if an officer is reasonable in believing you have evidence in your car, on your property or on your person.
- You will not be allowed to have any contact with known prostitutes or pimps

Furthermore, the website lists charges for purchasing sex from minors that are in addition to any prostitution charges received:

- Rape in the first/second/third degree
- Sodomy in the first/second/third degree
- Sex abuse in the first/second/third degree

• Contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor

• Public/Private indecency

A major component of the police department’s attempt to deter repeat offenders is the Sex Buyer Accountability and Diversion School (also known colloquially as John School). The school opened in January 2011 and about 60 people have taken part in the program so far. There is a required $1000 fee to take the course and participants learn about health education, sexually transmitted diseases, and relapse prevention. They also learn the effects of prostitution on women and children as well as the penalties they face for continued illegal engagement in prostitution. Presenters include medical professionals, sexual assault advocates, Portland police, a deputy district attorney, and a woman who worked as a prostitute.136

The program appears to have some impact on the participants, as Gary Kissel-Nielsen explains, “Generally when they’re coming in and sitting down, the overall attitude is pretty resistant and closed. By the time they leave, it’s usually very emotional. They are asking questions throughout the process and they’re thanking us for the opportunity to do this. It’s an amazing transition throughout one day”.137 While they are able to track some statistics, due to the program’s short period of existence, it is difficult to tell whether it is successful in preventing recurrences. It has shown that “[a]bout 76 percent of the buyers are employed at the time of their arrest, according to the surveys. About 66 percent of the buyers are married, 63 percent had children and 65 percent of people made $50,000 or less per year”.138

137 Ibid.
138 Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, “Multnomah County Community Response to Commercial Sexual Exploitation
Local Law Enforcement also works closely with the FBI Innocence Lost Task Force. The Innocence Lost Task Force performs countrywide stings to find and jail traffickers. These operations are named Operation Cross Country, and the most recent sting was in 2010. In the 2010 sting the FBI found 69 sexually exploited youth and arrested 99 traffickers nation wide: Portland had the second highest number of trafficked youth in the nation.139 Caroline Holmes, the FBI Victims Advocate, works closely with the Innocence Lost Task Force to ensure that during all operations the victim (trafficked youth) is properly provided for. Often she also works with SARC or other advocacy agencies to ensure that advocates are on hand for the youth immediately after the sting.140

Despite the numerous organizations working to prevent sexual exploitation of minors, Portland still has a long way to go in the fight against traffickers and buyers of underage youth for sexual purposes. One of the major problems faced by the organizations involved with the youth is the lack of adequate shelter. Dennis Morrow of Janus Youth Programs states that youth leaving the Life require specialized care: they have a near 100% failure rate if returned to foster care.141 Trafficked youth require care that is secure, provides for their unique needs, and that offers long term solutions and reintegration into society. These youth suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, are often attempting to leave a highly violent domestic violence relationship, and have been marginalized by all parts of society. They require intensive counseling and support 24 hours a day. Additionally, the staff that support the youth also need intense support and often a

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141 Ibid.
counselor is required to be available purely for the staff to utilize. All of these services require money that is not currently available, and many programs are forced to rely on other parts of the umbrella organization to fund the CSEC specific programs.\footnote{Joslyn Baker, Caroline Holmes, Miriam Green, Diane McKeel, Cory Grose, Dennis L. Morrow, and Esther Nelson, "Call for Community Action Training." (Presentation at the Soroptimist Northwest Conference Against Trafficking, Portland, OR, January 13-15, 2012).}

One of the greatest barriers to funding is the almost complete lack of data or statistics on this population. Oregon, as well as many other states and the nation as a whole, has not engaged in a credible attempt to count the number of trafficked youth requiring services. In part, this is due to the lack of training for police, first responders, and social service providers on the identification of these youth. The lack of accurate numbers leads people and organizations to make guesses at the numbers, which leads to unsupportable statistics. The lack of credible numbers and unsupportable statistics results in little or no funding for further prevention. If funding was available it could be used to train police, first responders, and social services providers in the recognition of trafficked youth.\footnote{Ibid. Also in Also Professor Gwynne Skinner (Willamette University School of Law), “Oregon’s Response to Human Trafficking: Is it Enough?” (Presentation at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Sex Trafficking: Researching Vulnerable Populations, Corvallis, OR, February 16-18, 2012).} If we could obtain credible numbers we could break this cycle, but an investigation itself requires funding that does not exist.

Credible numbers would most easily be obtained by amending the current Oregon Trafficking Laws. By increasing the penalties for trafficking, prosecutors would choose to prosecute for trafficking instead of the currently more penalized compelling prostitution and therefore the state would have a more accurate estimate of the number of trafficking victims in the state.\footnote{Also Professor Gwynne Skinner (Willamette University School of Law), “Oregon’s Response to Human Trafficking: Is it Enough?” (Presentation at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Sex Trafficking: Researching Vulnerable Populations, Corvallis, OR, February 16-18, 2012).} Additionally, the increase in penalties for trafficking would put
traffickers in jail, preventing them from trafficking other youth. It would also reduce the appeal that Oregon currently holds over Washington and California for these criminals.

However, a stricter trafficking law in Oregon is only one component of the prevention. The largest component of the prevention of the sexual exploitation of minors is the demand. As Meagan Morris from the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking put it simply, “demand creates supply”. She defined demand as “the amount of a particular good or service that a consumer will want to purchase”.145 It is the buyers of sex who create the demand for sex trafficking. If no one purchased sex from underage youth then the traffickers would have no incentive to traffic them.

There exist a variety of approaches to the prevention of the purchase of sex including John Schools/Diversion programs such as SBAD in Portland, vehicle seizures, naming and shaming campaigns, public education and awareness programs, media campaigns, as well as the criminalization of purchasing commercial sex. In the Portland area signs such as these catch the eye along I-84 E, part of Shared Hope International’s media campaign to raise awareness about sex trafficking.

In each of my interviews the last question I asked was, “If you were able to implement a change, whether it be city/state/nationwide, legislative or otherwise, to help in the prevention of sexual exploitation, what would it be?” The answer often included naming and shaming campaigns that would put the faces of the buyers on billboards for everyone to see. While this tend to the more extreme end, the point is clear: the consequences need to be severe enough that potential buyers will not pursue further engagement out of fear of the consequences.\(^\text{146}\)

Of equal importance, men need to be part of the solution and prevention. Male involvement is of the utmost importance because they represent the majority of the buyers. There needs to be a zero tolerance policy but also an understanding of the reasons that a man would purchase sex. They need to understand the consequences of their actions on the lives of the youth they are exploiting. So while public shaming sounds effective, perhaps a more practical solution would be to start educating the public, males specifically, about their choices and about respecting other people.\(^\text{147}\)

Ultimately, there are three elements that are necessary for human trafficking to occur: vulnerable populations, viable traffickers and a market demand.\(^\text{148}\) The removal of any one of these components would end sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. In regards to this, John Kroger, U.S. Attorney General for the state of Oregon, outlines the major challenges that need addressing: the lack of shelter space dedicated to victims of trafficking, the lack of training among law enforcement officers to recognize trafficked youth, the lack of training for prosecutors who work with highly traumatized youth, the


lack of resources to combat sex trafficking online and the lack of focus on the demand. There needs to be an increased focus on the prevention, specifically the identification of trafficked youth, consequences need to be increased for traffickers and buyers, and there needs to be more options to house and provide for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation.

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Conclusion

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children is a worldwide phenomenon. It occurs in nearly every country and focuses on the most vulnerable populations within those countries. In developing and impoverished nations, poverty and the search for a job often lure women and children away from their home and into prostitution. More developed nations, including the United States, suffer less from poverty but have their own unique sets of vulnerable populations that are targeted and exploited in situations of prostitution. Numerous organizations work to support survivors and end trafficking, both on a global and local level.

Specifically in the United States the runaway, throwaway, homeless and foster care children continue to be exploited by traffickers every day. These youth are overlooked by the systems meant to protect them. Nearly 80% of sexually exploited youth experienced abuse prior to entering the sex trade. These boys and girls do not enter voluntarily. They are tricked, coerced, manipulated, and forced to sell their bodies every night. If they try to leave the Life they have few options for safe shelter and few systems of support. The number of challenges faced by youth in situations of sexual exploitation seems insurmountable.

Despite this, in Multnomah County a select and growing group of people works hard to offer alternatives to these youth and get them off of the street. The work that the Portland Police Department, FBI, SARC, Janus Youth Programs, LifeWorks NW, and DHS Child Welfare do is imperative and invaluable to the fight against sexual exploitation of
Oregon’s youth. The services provided by each of these organizations are an integral component of helping youth leave the Life and the loss of any of these resources would be a major setback. The cooperation and collaboration between these organizations is crucial to the development of programs as well as to the coordination of the necessary response from these entities when a youth is encountered and decides to leave the Life.

However, there is a lack of focus on Latinas in a state that is nearly 12% self-identified Latino/a. Both SARC and the Multnomah County Collaboration Specialist agree that there are sexually exploited Latinas in Portland; they also agree that they are a harder population to reach and are often overlooked. This population requires increased assistance in leaving the Life due to specific cultural and situational barriers. *Machismo* and *marianismo* play a role in the lives of Latinos/as in the U.S. and they affect male and female interactions. The female expectation of submission and deference can be further manipulated in the domestic violence aspects of the trafficker and exploited youth relationship. Further obstacles such as language or a lack of familial support (either from absence or from rejection) compound the difficult situation.

The solution to ending sex trafficking lies in resources. More resources are needed by all of the organizations involved in the prevention and treatment of sexual exploitation of minors. The police department needs to expand their unit, hire more investigators, and train all police officers in identification of these youth. LifeWorks NW recently discussed cutting the NOW program (New Options for Women) that offers services to survivors of trafficking that are over 18 years of age. SARC could use more full time case managers to support the needs of their clients. DHS Child Welfare is chronically underfunded and would be able to investigate more reports of abuse and perhaps prevent some of the
runaway and abuse situations that precipitate entrance into sexual exploitation. Furthermore, increased resources would allow for the creation of programs specifically oriented towards Latino/a survivors. At a minimum, an intensive cultural training could be created and taught to all of the people who come into contact with survivors of sexual exploitation.

Additional resources would also allow law enforcement, prosecutors, and legislators to begin focusing on the causes of the problem. Oregon law needs to be amended to increase the penalties for traffickers and buyers of commercial sex. Prosecutors need to be able to prosecute both the traffickers and the buyers with confidence that the judge will sentence appropriately and consistently. Law Enforcement needs more resources to both track down evidence and actively search out sexually exploited youth. The Internet is the perfect mode of communication for traffickers and buyers, but it is a huge obstacle for law enforcement officers, who have to sift through countless websites specifically searching for underage youth\textsuperscript{150}.

Trafficking in humans and specifically sex trafficking is a worldwide crisis. Nonetheless, it would be impossible to end international trafficking without first focusing on the trafficking that occurs locally. Local organizations have begun the difficult fight, but they need more resources. Additional focus needs to be added for the unique cultural aspects minority populations present that require additional assistance and support. The current lack of resources is the biggest barrier to ending the sex trafficking of Oregon’s youth, but it is a barrier that, in theory, is easily surmountable.

\textsuperscript{150} While prostitution is illegal in Oregon, law enforcement specifically looks for those that are underage because of the limited time and resources available.


http://www.sharedhope.org/Resources/DEMAND.aspx


Morales, Mavel. “Addressing Sexual Assault with Migrant Workers.” Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011.


Nelson, Esther, Rebecca Cook and Sarah Taylor. “Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth I & II.” Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011.


Suárez, Lucrecia. “Cultural Competency with Latinos/as.” Presentation at the Sexual Assault Resource Center Advocate Training, Beaverton, OR, 2011.


A Note on Vocabulary and Pimp Culture

In this thesis I chose specific vocabulary to represent the different players involved in sexual exploitation of minors. To begin with, I specifically refer to the youth exploited as youth, children, victims, and survivors. Often I refer to them as CSEC youth or exploited youth. In part this pertains to the connotations we have in regards to words such as prostitute. Prostitute not only connotes choice, but it has also been glamorized in movies such as Pretty Woman that idealize the prostitute. These youth are not living in a fairy tale, waiting to be swept away by some rich man. They are violently forced to sell sex for money, and the terminology we use to refer to them should reflect that. Furthermore, while they are the victims of sexual exploitation they are more than victims; they are resilient and strong and so while the use of the term victim is in some cases unavoidable, I tried to use the term survivor or simply refer to them as an exploited youth.

In reference to the men who purchase sex, the term john is often used. I chose to not use this term that depersonalizes the crime they are perpetrating and instead label them with what they are: buyers of sex. Additionally, the term john creates a sense of normalcy, that it is normal to purchase sex. In truth, it is not normal, it is aberrant behavior as demonstrated by the laws prohibiting it.

Finally, in reference to the people who participate in the trafficking of the youth a variety of labels exist. Specifically, I focused on the relationship between the trafficker (the pimp) and the trafficked youth. The term pimp is often used to represent the male (almost
always) who forces the youth to have sex for money. Unfortunately, the term pimp has also become synonymous with “cool” in our society. Think of the TV show “Pimp My Ride”, the song “P.I.M.P.” by 50 cent, and the website “Pimpthatsnack.com”. Pimping is not cool, it is abuse and exploitation, it is taking advantage completely of another person and profiting from that abuse and exploitation. In my thesis I chose to use trafficker to demonstrate my rejection of the term pimp and, similar to the word john vs. buyer, to highlight exactly what it is that these men are doing. The terminology that we use to refer to another person affects how we view that person; therefore it is of utmost importance that we are mindfully aware of our vocabulary.

Please watch the following video on YouTube that emphasizes the importance of the words we use:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzgzim5m7oU