

What We Know – and Don't Know – About Perpetrators of Domestic Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation



KATHERINE GOTCH, MA, LPC, CSOT

PRESENTED AT THE 22ND INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON VIOLENCE, ABUSE & TRAUMA

SEPTEMBER 24, 2017

Goals & Objectives

- ▶ Participants will learn about the psychological characteristics and criminogenic risk/need factors of perpetrators of domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- ▶ Participants will learn why perpetrators of domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation present as a unique offender population requiring specialized management and therapeutic interventions.
- ▶ Participants will learn about suggested strategies for the assessment, treatment and management of perpetrators of domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Overarching Framework

- ▶ Six Dominant Perspectives for Human Trafficking
 1. Prostitution
 2. Migration
 3. Criminal justice
 4. Forced labor
 5. Human rights
 6. Slavery
- ▶ My research:
 - ▶ Psychology & Criminology
 - ▶ Best contextualized as addressing domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation within the **criminal justice** and **human rights** perspectives

Why is this research important?

- ▶ Growing body of literature focusing on perpetrators of trafficking for sexual exploitation at the international level
- ▶ In contrast, very little is known about perpetrators who profit from street-level domestic sex trafficking in the US, specifically:
 - ▶ Developmental or environmental factors?
 - ▶ Psychological characteristics?
 - ▶ Criminogenic risk/need factors?
 - ▶ Effective treatment interventions?
- ▶ Additionally, charging and sentencing practices applied at the state level often fall under sexual crime statutes associated with prostitution related activities (i.e., pimping and/or pandering statutes) rather than human-trafficking statutes

Why is this research important? (cont.)

- ▶ Experiential data has identified potential intersections between multiple forms of violence (e.g., sexual, intimate partner, general) but...
 - ▶ Limited to no research!
- ▶ **Prevention!**
 - ▶ Requires development of effective interventions and empirical knowledge about potential predisposing factors, motivations, reasoning, and tactics of these perpetrators

Legal Definitions (Oregon)

- ▶ **Human Trafficking** (ORS 163.266): recruitment, harboring, transporting, obtaining, or maintaining of a person by means of force, fraud or coercion, for purposes of involuntary servitude, debt bondage, slavery, or participation in the sex trade
- ▶ **Compelling Prostitution** (ORS 167.017): aiding or facilitating a person under 18 to engage in prostitution, inducing, or causing the spouse, child, or stepchild of the offender to engage in prostitution or use of force or intimidation to compel any person of any age to engage in prostitution
- ▶ **Promoting Prostitution** (ORS 167.012): owning, controlling, managing, supervising, or otherwise maintaining a place of prostitution or prostitution enterprise, receiving or agreeing to receive money or other property derived from prostitution activity, or engaging in any conduct that institutes, aids or facilitates an act or enterprise of prostitution

Sample

- ▶ 28 adult male offenders with an arrest, charge, and/or conviction for Promoting or Compelling Prostitution in their history
- ▶ Participated in a pretreatment sexual-offense specific evaluation between 2004 and 2015 while on community supervision in Multnomah County, Oregon
- ▶ Three adult females were excluded from the sample
 - ▶ Well-established differences between adult males and adult females convicted of sexual crimes, as well as established differences for general criminal offenders
 - ▶ However, recent study demonstrated adult females had criminal histories more consistent with general criminality and exhibited more general antisocial features than women convicted of traditional sexual offenses

Demographics

▶ **Age At Assessment:** 24–54, Mean = 37

▶ **Ethnicity:**

▶ African American 89% (n = 25)

▶ Caucasian 7% (n = 2)

▶ Mixed 4% (n = 1)

▶ **Education:**

▶ Less than 12th 61% (n = 17)

▶ HS diploma 21% (n = 6)

▶ GED 54% (n = 15)

*includes 59% (n = 10) of HS drop outs

Demographics (cont.)

▶ **Childhood Abuse:**

- ▶ Physical 18.5% (n = 5)
- ▶ Sexual 26% (n = 7)
- ▶ Removed from home 41% (n = 11)

▶ **Parental Behavior:**

- ▶ Substance abuse 77% (n = 10)
*n = 13, 52% unknown (n = 14)
- ▶ Domestic Abuse 29% (n = 2)
*n = 7, 74% unknown (n = 20)
- ▶ Prostitution 11% (n = 3)
*89% unknown (n = 25)

Trafficking Data

▶ **Age of onset:**

- ▶ Preadolescence 4% (n = 1)
- ▶ Adolescence 33% (n = 9)
- ▶ Adult 63% (n = 17)

▶ **Length Involved:**

- ▶ Less than 5 years 52% (n = 14)
- ▶ 5 to 10 years 26% (n = 7)
- ▶ More than 10 years 22% (n = 6)

Trafficking Data (cont.)

▶ **Victims:**

▶ Female (unrelated)	100% (n = 28)
▶ Adolescent	21% (n = 6)
▶ Adult	25% (n = 7)
▶ Both	54% (n = 15)

- ▶ One subject also reported prostituting himself in addition to sex trafficking

Trafficking Data (cont.)

▶ **Control tactics:**

- ▶ Threats only 7% (n = 2)
- ▶ Threats & Violence 50% (n = 14)
- ▶ None 11% (n = 3)

*32% (n = 9) unknown due to a lack of information

▶ **Gang involvement:**

- ▶ Yes 22% (n = 6)
- ▶ No 26% (n = 7)
- ▶ Unknown 52% (n = 14)

Trafficking Data (cont.)

▶ **Other Violent Behavior:**

▶ Domestic 71% (n = 20)

▶ Sexual 46% (n = 13)

▶ 100% forcible rape + 1 child molestation, 1 indecent exposure

▶ General 64% (n = 18)

▶ 46% (n = 13) also had a documented history of selling illegal drugs, primarily marijuana and cocaine

Risk Assessment

▶ **PCL-R** (2nd Edition)

- ▶ Low 3% (n = 1)
- ▶ Moderate-High 18% (n = 5)
- ▶ High 61% (n = 17)
- ▶ Very High 18% (n = 5)

▶ **Static-99/R** (n = 17)

- ▶ Low 6% (n = 1)
- ▶ Moderate-Low 12% (n = 2)
- ▶ Moderate-High 41% (n = 7)
- ▶ High 41% (n = 7)

LS/CMI (n = 6)

- High 17% (n = 1)
- Very High 83% (n = 5)

Limitations

- ▶ Small sample size
- ▶ Single data collection site
 - ▶ Generalizability is limited
- ▶ Overrepresentation of African American males
 - ▶ Not representative of other ethnic groups involved in other areas of the US
- ▶ Females involved in domestic sex trafficking of others were excluded

Future Research

- ▶ Potential differences between male and female perpetrators of domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation
- ▶ Potential differences between offender populations in other geographic locations due to sentencing practices or other factors
- ▶ Similarities and/or differences between prosecution of domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation at the federal and state levels
- ▶ Further investigation into the involvement of street gangs and the role these gangs may play in the facilitation, strategies, and implementation of domestic sex trafficking
- ▶ Additional research on psychological characteristics, developmental and environmental experiences, criminogenic risk/need factors, and effective interventions

Punishment, Interventions, Both?

- ▶ Incarceration & Containment
 - ▶ Does not address root causes
 - ▶ Does not address environmental factors
 - ▶ Does not provide alternatives
 - ▶ Does not prevent future behavior
- ▶ Treatment/Interventions
 - ▶ Has potential to address individual causes
 - ▶ Has potential to address environmental factors
 - ▶ Has potential to provide alternatives
 - ▶ Has potential for prevention

Development of a Program for ST

- ▶ Professional exposure to ST offenders
- ▶ Recognition ST offenders are a unique population
- ▶ Growing societal awareness and understanding of the impact ST has on victims and our communities
- ▶ Lack of research on the psychological characteristics and RNR factors of ST offenders
- ▶ Lack of evidence based interventions for ST offenders

Working Hypothesis: Perpetrators

- ▶ High psychopathic traits as measured by PCL-R:
 - ▶ High grandiosity
 - ▶ High charm and manipulation
 - ▶ Low guilt and remorse
 - ▶ Entrenched and highly reinforced criminal lifestyle
- ▶ Money is the primary motivating factor, excitement/sex is secondary
- ▶ Extensive use of power and control tactics and violence outlined in domestic violence literature

Working Hypothesis: Exploitation of Victims

- ▶ Use of manipulation/power and control tactics is extensive and reinforces learned helplessness
- ▶ Threats and use of violence to maintain control
- ▶ Manipulation of “anxious” and/or “ambivalent” attachment issues within victims:
 - ▶ Perception of perpetrator as “caring” and victim needs reassurance
 - ▶ Perception of perpetrator as “caring” and inconsistent with reinforcement (caring and neglectful)

Working Hypothesis: Risk

- ▶ High risk for re-offense given several potential factors:
 - ▶ Criminally versatile
 - ▶ Aggressive narcissism/grandiosity/identity
 - ▶ Unresponsive to punishments/negative consequences
 - ▶ Highly reinforcing criminal lifestyle (i.e. high frequency behaviors, low consequences)
 - ▶ Lack of social emotions/empathy/inhibitors
 - ▶ Inability/resistance to pro-social reinforcers

Working Hypothesis: Needs

- ▶ Identity is a major component of sex trafficking and is repeatedly reinforced
- ▶ Personality features which require some attention - some may be flexible to change, others will not:
 - ▶ Possibly untreatable: grandiosity, excitement seeking
 - ▶ Possibly treatable: identity, pro-social lifestyle development, development of inhibitions & pro-social motivators
- ▶ Generalized & Domestic violence issues:
 - ▶ Malevolent sexist attitudes (open hostility toward women)
 - ▶ Benevolent sexist attitudes (females “need” to be protected)

Working Hypothesis: Needs (cont.)

- ▶ Sexual offense specific risk/need factors:
 - ▶ Significant Social Influences
 - ▶ Hostility toward women
 - ▶ Lack of Concern for Others
 - ▶ Sexual preoccupation
 - ▶ Generalized violence

Working Hypothesis: Needs (cont.)

- ▶ Motivation for change:
 - ▶ Attempts at changing empathy as a motivator will be ineffective
 - ▶ Attempts at motivation through punishment will have only short-term impact
 - ▶ Decreasing use of violence/power and control could be effective
 - ▶ Motivation through obtaining consistent rewards (e.g. freedom, stimulating employment) will likely prove the most effective
 - ▶ Lifestyle stability will hopefully develop as intrinsically motivating

Working Hypothesis: How change may occur

- ▶ Containment, strict supervision and development of maintenance of alternative (prosocial) lifestyle
- ▶ Deliberate change of identity within themselves and community
- ▶ Rational and narcissistic (as opposed to empathy) identification with reasons for change
- ▶ Development of lifestyle consistent with more pro-social behaviors

Working Hypothesis: Responsivity

- ▶ Clinicians need experience in sexual violence, domestic violence, generalized violence and psychopathy
- ▶ Clinicians must address motivation in a realistic manner (i.e. what is in their best interest?)
- ▶ Clinicians must address issues related to criminal lifestyle (e.g. identity, reinforcers)
- ▶ Clinicians need to work closely with supervising authorities without appearing to “choose sides”

Potential Dangers

- ▶ Influence of associates within the group
- ▶ Inflexibility of motivations for continuing the lifestyle choice
- ▶ Refinement of control techniques which may increase risk
- ▶ Potential “disarming” of clinicians and supervising authorities

Recommended Guidance for Interventions

- ▶ Effective response, management, and intervention requires incorporation of:
 - ▶ **sexual offense-specific** and **domestic violence** concepts
 - ▶ **culturally relevant** (e.g., ethnicity, experiences of structural inequality or racism, gang culture) and **responsivity-based** approaches (e.g., adverse developmental/childhood experiences, high psychopathic traits, familial/environmental influences)

Recommended Guidance for Interventions (cont.)

- ▶ Suggested primary areas of risk/need:
 - ▶ Personality/characterological (e.g., psychopathy)
 - ▶ Environmental/subcultural influences
 - ▶ General criminality
 - ▶ Values related to use of interpersonal violence, including extreme forms of power and control tactics, to manipulate and control victims.
- ▶ Motivations
 - ▶ Money and status
 - ▶ Fundamental beliefs in both hostile and benevolent (i.e., women need men to protect them) sexism

Questions?



References

Gotch, K. (2016). Preliminary data on a sample of perpetrators of domestic trafficking for sexual exploitation: Suggestions for research and practice, *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 2:1, 99-109, DOI: 10.1080/23322705.2016.1136539

Gotch, K., & St. Denis, C. (2015, Spring). Working with perpetrators of sex trafficking: Suggestions for research and practice. *Perspectives: California Coalition on Sexual Offending (CCOSO) Quarterly Newsletter*, pp. 1, 4-6, 14.

Contact Info

Katherine “Katie” Gotch, MA, LPC, CSOT
Integrated Clinical & Correctional Services
2920 SW Dolph Court, Suite 4
Portland, OR 97219
(503) 206-5239
iccsnw@gmail.com
www.iccsnorthwest.com