The Nature and Extent of Gang Involvement in Sex Trafficking in San Diego County

Final Report

Submitted to

Prepared by

Ami Carpenter, PhD
Principal Investigator
Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies
University of San Diego
5998 Alcala Park, Suite 113
San Diego, CA 92110
Tel: (619) 260-7830
Email: acarpenter@sandiego.edu

Jamie Gates, PhD
Co-Investigator
Department of Sociology and Social Work
Point Loma Nazarene University
3900 Lomaland Drive
San Diego, CA 92106
Tel: (619) 849-2659
Email: jamiegates@pointloma.edu

Jan 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

SUGGESTED CITATION

Carpenter, A. C. and Gates, J. (2016). *The Nature and Extent of Gang Involvement in Sex Trafficking in San Diego County*. San Diego, CA: University of San Diego and Point Loma Nazarene University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, San Diego County created the multi-agency San Diego County Regional Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Advisory Council with the objective to reduce human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children in San Diego County and the Mexico border region through prevention, prosecution, protection and partnerships. As co-chairs of the Research and Data Sub-Committee of this advisory council, Drs. Carpenter and Gates were asked to pursue a research agenda that would help develop robust measures of the scope of human trafficking in San Diego County. Of particular interest to the County Advisory Council was empirical evidence of the suspected relationship between gangs and human trafficking.

BACKGROUND AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of this project was to investigate the nature and assess of the scope of gang involvement in sex trafficking in San Diego County. Human trafficking is a global phenomenon with a variety of local manifestations, including labor and sex trafficking. San Diego is ranked by the FBI as one of the nation's 13 highest areas of commercial sexual exploitation of children. Despite widespread attention on sex trafficking, there has been little empirical research on the nature and process of sex trafficking activities, and even less on the connection between sex trafficking and gangs. Prior to this study, much of what was known about sex trafficking in San Diego County was anecdotal and descriptive. The study's basic premise was that empirical investigation would prove useful for both policy and practice.

This 3-year study reports on three major sets of findings: (1) the scope and nature of gang involvement in sex trafficking and commercial sexual activity, including detailed analysis of sex trafficking facilitation (2) the scope of nature of victimization in San Diego County, and (3) estimates of the regional commercial sex economy. It was designed to improve on seven shortcomings in human or sex trafficking research thus far:

1. Few credible estimates of the scale of sex trafficking in a particular region
2. The common conflation of commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution with sex trafficking
3. Lack of primary data on sex trafficking[1]
4. Inability to identify networks of sex traffickers
5. Understudied extent of gang involvement in sex trafficking
6. Over-reliance on qualitative methods
7. Small sample sizes

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

We used mixed-methods to gather data (qualitative and quantitative) from five major sources: (1) surveys conducted across ten years with 702 participants in a prostitution first offender diversion program, (2) standardized intake forms with 140 sex trafficking survivors conducted across our two year study window by eight nonprofits that provide direct services to human trafficking victims, (3) combined Police arrest records and Sheriff booking datasets, (4) focus groups with staff at 20 high schools in San Diego County, and (5) in depth interviews with gang affiliated individuals involved in or knowledgeable about sex trafficking.

Data gathered from these five sources was collated into four major datasets: Survivor Services Dataset, Law Enforcement Reporting Dataset, Schools Dataset, and Facilitator[2] Interview Dataset. Triangulation and analysis of these datasets generated quantitative and qualitative findings that shed light on the scale and complex challenges associated with Commercial Sexual Exploitation of People (CSEP)[3], Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)[4], and Commercial Sexual Activity (CSA) defined broadly as sex acts for compensation (monetary, other).

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[1] Studies often rely instead on secondary sources - newspaper reports and media investigations, or interviews with intermediaries: social service providers, counselors, law enforcement, victim advocates, pro bono attorneys, and others working with trafficking victims

[2] Facilitator refers to the person/s using force, fraud or coercion for commercial sexual exploitation; collaborators who benefit financially; and all those involved in CSEC.

[3] This term refers to all persons, regardless of age, who have been sexually exploited through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money. CSEC is a subcategory of CSEP.

[4] This term refers to the sexual abuse of a minor "entirely, or at least primarily, for financial or other economic reasons. The economic exchanges involved may be either monetary or non-monetary (i.e.,

FINDINGS

Three main categories of findings emerged from this study: (1) estimates of the regional commercial sex economy, (2) the scope and nature of gang involvement in sex trafficking, and (3) the scope and nature of sex trafficking victimization.

(1) ESTIMATES OF THE REGIONAL COMMERCIAL SEX ECONOMY

We estimate the size of the illicit sex economy in San Diego County in 2013 at $810 million dollars. We reached this number by duplicating and modifying the methods used by the Urban Institute to estimate the size of the underground sex economy in San Diego California in their 2014 study, with two changes. First, we included two industries in our estimate of the cash economy in San Diego that Urban Institute had not – recreation and gambling – industries that intuition might naturally associate with cash spending. In brief, it may be that Dank et al. (2014) considerably underestimated the size of the cash stock in San Diego, which likely biases downward their estimates of the illicit sex economy, as well.

Second, with data from 56 sex trafficking facilitators, including 46 incarcerated interviewees and 10 facilitators we interviewed in the community, we were able to generate more robust estimates of what sex trafficking facilitators earn. Whereas Urban Institute estimated trafficker earn $528,000 per year in San Diego, this study found that facilitators make on average $670,625 per year (based on the assumption that facilitators only take 75% of the revenue generated by each commercial act). [5]

for food, shelter, drugs)." Richard J. Estes & Neil Alan Weiner, Univ. of Pa., The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children In the U.S., Canada and Mexico 10 (rev. Feb. 20, 2002), avail- able at http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/restes/CSEC_Files/Complete_CSEC_020220.pdf.

[5] 50% is the most oft-cited percentage of sex worker earnings charged by sex facilitators. Some report as low as 15% or as high as 100%.

(2) SCOPE AND NATURE OF GANG INVOLVEMENT IN SEX TRAFFICKING

Scope

Evidence from 154 criminally involved persons, 140 victims of sex trafficking and 141 staff members of 20 high schools spread across San Diego County led us to discover 110 gangs in San Diego County from a wide variety of neighborhoods and racial/ethnic backgrounds that have members that are engaged in profiting from sex trafficking in San Diego. The level of centralization and organization of sex trafficking activity among these gangs varies significantly from cliques and sets that loosely affiliate with the gang for protection while they act independently to centrally organized units with a centralized taxation system, even transnational criminal networks.

Our interviews produced strong evidence that gangs in San Diego are engaged in the commercial sexual exploitation of people and children (CSEP and CSEC). Of our sample of persons in protective custody in San Diego County jails, 52.5% (76/139) identified or were identified with a street gang. We identified 33% (46/139) of those interviewed as sex trafficking facilitators, and 80% (37/46) of those that identified as sex trafficking facilitators affiliated with a gang. In all, we interviewed self-identified facilitators (46 in jail and 10 in the community), and only nine (16%) denied any gang affiliation.

Organization

There exist many types of relationships between individual facilitators and the gangs with which they affiliate. Relationships range from individuals selling sex on the side (with no involvement from – or profit to – their gang), small cliques of members (in some cases collaborating with other groups or individuals outside of gang), to significant proportion of members involved & the group or at least group leaders profit. In some cases, individuals not involved in gangs reported that they have working relationships with gangs or gang members.

These relationships reflect different levels of organizational complexity. We drew a distinction between directed sex trafficking**,** defined as *individual activities dictated by,*

and directly profiting, a gang and undirected sex trafficking, defined as *individual activities not dictated by, and directly profiting, a gang*. We found that facilitation in San Diego County was almost evenly split between directed and undirected: Out of 72 gang members (34 of whom were facilitators, and 38 of whom did not identify as facilitators but who had knowledge of how 'pimping' worked in their gang) 25 reported that 'pimping' was purely entrepreneurial (undirected), 29 reported that it was an operation taxed and/or organized by their gang, and 14 facilitators reported arrangements and understandings that represented both directed and undirected facilitation.[6] Directed trafficking is positively and significantly associated with gangs that have clear rules of conduct, and a promotion structure. Gang members' use of violence is also positively and significantly associated with gang organizational complexity, specifically territoriality, duration, role differentiation, promotion, and tax structure.

Race

We encountered roughly equal numbers of White (34%) and Black (32%) facilitators of sex trafficking during interviews in the jails, with Hispanics coming in third (24%). In fact, the ratio of white to minority facilitators may be higher than is reported here given that our data does not account for the over-representation of Black and Hispanic inmates in California jails. Nor does the relatively even split between Black, Hispanic and White facilitators represent a complete picture. For example, in recent years, Somali gangs and Iraqi Chaldean groups have been indicted on sex trafficking charges, and Asian American and Native American gangs were under-represented in our dataset. Our data cannot extrapolate to percentages of all population groups given this under-representation of significant gang populations.

Coerciveness

The three most commonly used types of coercion reported by trafficking facilitators in our sample were:

- Economic Coercion (74%)
  Defined by a high percentage of earnings (50% or above) taken by facilitator.

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[6] An additional 4 interviews were coded 'inconclusive' on this question.

- Psychological Coercion (57%)
  Defined as social and emotional isolation, induced emotional exhaustion, and degradation, including humiliation, denial of the victim's power, and name-calling.[7]

- Chemical Coercion (42%)
  Refers to bringing about altered states of consciousness either by providing drugs, or forcing drugs.

The use of violent coercion was reported by only 12% of facilitators (*Physical* and *Sexual*). Facilitators often talked about how those who have to use violence were not as skilled as those who employed psychological techniques. We suspect the level of violent-vicious facilitation is underreported by facilitators themselves as between 14%-30% of victim/survivors report experiencing violence at the hands of their "pimp" or trafficker.[8]

Facilitator Profile

Interviews with 61 facilitators (46 incarcerated, 15 community) generated four broad profiles of how sex-trafficking facilitators identify themselves and their role. The most common self-identification of facilitators was as Enforcer-Contractor (67%). Enforcer-Contractors reject the 'pimp' label. They claim to work with adults only, and

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[7] Our definition of psychological coercion is adapted from BIDERMAN'S CHART OF COERCION. Amnesty International, Report on Torture (New York: Farra, Strauss, and Giroux), 1973. The additional four grades of force were defined by Ami C. Carpenter.

[8] 14.5% of the 702 first time prostitution offenders from FFE reported experiencing violence (86 individuals reported being forced to have sex "because of a violent pimp" and 16 individuals "to avoid a beating"). A higher 30% (43) of the 140 sex trafficking survivors confirmed by the SSP8 reported experiencing violence at the hands of their pimp or trafficker. Three possible explanations exist for the variation between datasets. First, we are missing data from 95 additional individuals from the SSP8, because we were retrospectively coding intake forms This information simply was not present either in their file, or in the recollection of intake staff. Perhaps many more individuals experienced violence – perhaps not. Secondly, the demographic of the two different populations is very different. FFE is a program for all individuals arrested for the first time, for prostitution. In other words, it is a wide net (all first time offenders) in a very narrow sea (visible 'prostitutes') cast by law enforcement. CSEP account for 50% of that dataset, but the other 50% consists of adult men and women involved in CSA who either work without pimps, are in are in more consensual relationships with them (described in more detail below), are sex hobbyists, etc. SSP8 programs for individuals referred specifically *because* they have been trafficked. It is a narrow net (trafficked people) in a wide sea (forced labor) cast by law enforcement + schools, child welfare organizations, family members, friends, etc. CSEP accounts for 84% of that dataset, and their demographics are different. Third, the FFE dataset extends twelve years (from 2003-2015), whereas the SSP7 extends only two (from 2013-2015). We believe trends in sex trafficking have changed a great deal in the last decade.

often described being recruited by women already involved in CSA. They argue that they function mainly as drivers and provide security against rape and violence from the buyers, or from others trying to control their commercial sex activity. Though the percentages vary, Enforcer-Contractors report that revenue is shared between the facilitator and the one involved in the commercial sex act, making this one of the main distinction from Traditional facilitators.

Traditional facilitators (28% of our sample) are most likely to use the term 'pimp' to describe themselves. They describe the pimp identity in terms of status and recognition. They keep all, or most of money made in each sexual encounter.

Vicious-Violent[9] (4% of our sample) facilitators use extreme tactics of physical and psychological control to force high financial quotas. They are willing, and perhaps prefer, to recruit minors because of the malleability and vulnerability of young people. They control every aspect of commercial sexual exploitation.

The fourth type of sex-trafficking facilitator identified in San Diego is Organized Trafficking Groups (OTGs) in San Diego. OTRs are structured as clandestine, closed networks, run by a small core group of individuals. Examples include a multinational "black book" ring that trades in adults and minors; a child prostitution ring controlling both domestic and international individuals; a residential brothel trafficking children from the Philippines; and a MS-13 clique operating as a closed group that traffics individuals minors and adults from southern Mexico. While none of our interviewees admitted to being involved in OTGs, numerous gave specific detail of their knowledge of such activities.

Online Presence

Consistently interviewees mentioned the way that the selling of sex has moved from the streets predominantly online to sites like *backpage.com*, mobile brothels whose locations are advertised via Snapchat, social media and text based collaboration, as common examples. We found qualitative difference between the use of social media by

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[9] The common street language for this category in San Diego is "Gorilla Pimp." We have chosen "Vicious-Violent Facilitator" as a descriptive term to avoid the racial stereotyping embedded in this term in our context, a stereotyping we believe contributes to ignoring the varying degrees of violent behavior in all population groups.

African American versus Latino gangs. "While there is considerable evidence in the public domain of San Diego-based gangs - especially African American and so-called hybrid groups - having used specific social media tools such as Twitter to recruit and pimp out women and girls, it is not evident in the profiles of specific Latino cartel, gang or affiliate groups on either side of the border...It is possible, then, that gangs are simply not actively discussing their involvement or organizing operational activities associated with sex trafficking on Twitter" (Way and Muggah, 2015).

Transnational Connections

Canadian cyber-research firm SecDev was subcontracted to conduct social media research on gang activity, in order to document the nature of cross-border activity between San Diego gangs and Mexican armed groups. The study documented a significant empirical difference between the use of social media by African American versus Latino gangs. They documented "considerable evidence in the public domain of San Diego-based gangs - especially African American and so-called hybrid groups - having used specific social media tools such as Twitter to recruit and pimp out women and girls". SecDev reported that social media based activity around sex trafficking it is not evident in the profiles of specific Latino cartel, gang or affiliate groups on in San Diego. Despite being widely advertised online, there was virtually no evidence of Latino gang involvement in prostitution and sex work on Twitter.

Location

Commercial sexual activity has moved off the streets and into hotels, casinos and residential brothels. We mined law enforcement data for location of prostitution, pimping and pandering arrests to identify locations where commercial sexual activity is most common. In 2013 for example, the majority of arrests took place in just 13 locations, 10 of which were hotels. Facilitators also reported that hotels/motels are the most common site of CSA, in addition to casinos, and private homes.[10] This pattern of activity is

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[10] We specifically asked facilitators about where prostitution was taking place, to make sure we controlled for the possibility that hotels were not simply the most common *target* for law enforcement sting operations (thereby showing up more frequently in arrest records) as opposed to actually being the most common site of CSA.

associated with concerted efforts by San Diego Police Department that targeted the most visible forms of street prostitution, e.g. El Cajon Blvd in 2011, and the desire by facilitators to avoid law enforcement by "staying off the street".

(3) SCOPE AND NATURE OF VICTIMIZATION

Scope

Based on arrests for sex trafficking crimes and our findings on the average number of victims controlled by facilitators we interviewed, our estimate of the total number of CSEP in San Diego County ranges from 3417-8108 per year. Based on estimates from parallel research on drug and gun trafficking (Goodman & Marizco, 2010; McDougal et al., 2014), we estimate that law enforcement only arrests 15-20% of the persons committing trafficking offenses.

From analysis of our data from first time arrestees for prostitution, 50% of adults arrested for prostitution actually meet the federal definition for classification as victims of human trafficking, but are unidentified or misidentified within the criminal justice system. In addition, our analysis of law enforcement officer incidence reports related to domestic violence lead us to 120 cases per annum that we would advise law enforcement to investigate more deeply on suspicion of sex trafficking.

Country of Origin

Sex-trafficking victims in the social service system are primarily born in the United States (79.3%). The next most significant country of birth is Mexico (11.4%) with less than 10% of victims born in one of the following countries: Cameroon, China, Colombia, Germany, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Korea, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Russia, and Taiwan.

Age and Residence

Combining data from our sample of 302 adult sex trafficking victims identified among first time arrestees for prostitution with data from 321 minors in the same

program, we estimate that the average age of entry into sex trafficking in San Diego County is 16.1 years of age.

Although no community in San Diego is untouched by CSE, the majority of trafficked individuals live in 10 zip codes. Each of these zip codes identifies a particular neighborhood or area of the city that is home to one or more street gangs. To give just three examples, 92113 (Logan Heights) has seven street gangs; 92114 (Southeast San Diego) has six gangs; and 92102 (Golden Hill; Market Street) is home to four gangs with multiple cliques.

Homelessness/Foster Care

We found a strong correlation between victimization, homelessness and foster care. Of our sample of sex trafficking victims among those arrested for prostitution, 55% reported that they were or had been homeless and 28% reported they had been in foster care. Those who had gone through foster care were 2.63 times ($P>|z|=0.000$) more likely to be homeless than those who had not gone through foster care.

Recruitment at High Schools

Of the sex trafficking facilitator we interviewed in county jails, 30% reported they have participated in or witnessed sex trafficking connected to middle schools and high schools. All 20 high schools that participated in this study confirmed that recruitment was happening with their students; 90% (18 schools) reported documented cases of sex trafficking victimization.

In total, 141 staff members from 20 high schools across the county identified 81 reported victims along with an additional 54 suspected victims in the past 5 years. Staff across these 20 schools also identified 17 recruiters targeting their campuses. Staff also named 31 distinct gangs linked in some fashion to sex trafficking, with an additional 7 unnamed gangs involved. In total, 69 named gangs were given by school staff as active in/near these schools with an additional 15 unnamed gangs listed as active).

DISCUSSION

These findings have a variety of implications for San Diego County stakeholders to consider. In this section we discuss the issues raised, the implications these issues have on policy for our region and beyond and the implications this project has for future research. While there are a myriad of findings to be explored from this data in greater detail, here are our interpretations of some of the most significant findings:

First, the *scale of the underground sex economy* is considerably larger than that for which San Diego County has currently taken account or for which it is prepared. At $810m a year it rivals the income from macro-economic forces such as the Otay Mesa Port of Entry, the Natural Resources and Mining Sector, and is about the equivalent of what the San Diego Padres were sold for in 2012.

Second, the *scope of sex trafficking* in San Diego County is wider than expected. Virtually no community in San Diego remains untouched by sex trafficking. Victims have been identified either living or 'working' in every city in San Diego County, and in areas of each that are both wealthy and impoverished. One hundred percent of the 20 schools where we did focus groups, spread across North County, Central San Diego, South Bay and East County, had evidence of sex trafficking happening connected to their students. While we found evidence of victimization happening all in a wide range of neighborhoods, ten zip codes are home to a disproportionate number of victims and these zip codes correlate with underserved populations that deserve special attention.

Third, 110 gangs in San Diego County from a wide variety of neighborhoods and racial/ethnic backgrounds have members that are engaged in profiting from sex trafficking in San Diego. The level of centralization and organization of sex trafficking activity in the gang varies significantly, from cliques and sets that loosely affiliate with the gang for protection while they act independently, to centrally organized units with a centralized taxation system, even transnational criminal networks. As we have no baseline, we cannot judge quantitatively whether this is an increase or decrease from the past, but both the sex trafficking facilitators and the law enforcement officials we interviewed agree that this is a growing income for San Diego area gangs.

Fourth, as the likely first point of contact for victims of sex trafficking, for a variety of reasons law enforcement lacks sufficient information to correctly distinguish victims of sex trafficking from other related crimes (e.g. prostitution, domestic violence, sexual assault). Our finding that 50% of those arrested for prostitution related charges were at one point in their lives in fact sex trafficking victims suggests that the system (law enforcement, social services, schools, etc.) is not yet fine tuned enough to identify sex trafficking victimization at a sufficient scale. Further support to this concern is added by our analysis of law enforcement officer incidence reports related to domestic violence that lead us to approximately 120 cases per annum that we would advise law enforcement to investigate more deeply on suspicion of sex trafficking.

Fifth, further evidence for the need for greater examination of the connections between law enforcement, schools and social services comes from our findings that the median age at the time of a first arrest for prostitution is 19 years old while the average age of entry into sex trafficking is 16.1 years of age. As our "age of entry" estimate is conservative, this means that community leaders are unaware of the average victim being trafficked for about three years before they reach the attention of law enforcement. Further investigation will be needed to understand the full range of reasons why this gap exists.

Sixth, the stereotype that sex trafficking is principally a practice of black gangs is inaccurate for San Diego County and may channel apprehension efforts by law enforcement in too narrow a direction. This disproportionate attention is in part driven by the highly visible social media presence of African American gangs on social media, making them "low hanging fruit" for law enforcement. They are not, however, the only subpopulations involved. Hispanic street gangs are believed *not* to participate in CSEP, but we found that many Hispanic gangs do participate in CSEP - some in a highly organized fashion, and some in purely entrepreneurial ways. A related problem is that, although a wide variety of gangs are involved in sex trafficking, many are loosely networked making them difficult to identify and track.

Seventh, the world of sex trafficking as it relates to gangs is extremely complex and changing, with the structure and function of gangs shifting and morphing and facilitators playing a variety of roles. The majority of facilitators in our sample reported

relying less on physical coercion than on exploitation of socioeconomic vulnerability, prior abuse in the home, drug addiction, and mental health issues. This does not mean that highly coercive networks and organizations are not a major threat in our region, but the majority of sex trafficking activity identified in our interviews was dependent on skills to psychologically manipulate and coerce another person into sex for profit.

Eighth, qualitative responses from older facilitators and from our victims data suggests that teenagers (including minors) are being recruited into sex trafficking facilitation and as victims at rates previously unseen by older facilitators. A common refrain from facilitators is that the age of the up and coming facilitators is getting younger and younger. Combined with our victims data, where the average age of entry into sex trafficking is 16.1 years of age, a central reality that seems to be emerging is that our children and young adults are trafficking our children and young adults.

Policy Implications

Given the findings of this project, the participating researchers make the following recommendations to the San Diego County Regional Advisory Council on County Human and Child Sex Trafficking. The following recommendations can be sorted into three categories: capacity building, service delivery, and new programming.

***Capacity Building*: Specific actions can be taken to engage in capacity-building efforts and to strengthen institutions on the ground, including bolstering the training of officials and frontline practitioners to enhance their engagement with communities.**

> 1. Conduct assessments of local drivers of CSEP: Risk assessments and perception studies help people better understand the local drivers of vulnerability specific to their communities, and are key to providing baseline data to track the impact of counter human trafficking programming, and then drawing on those lessons to inform future programming.

2. Expand and regularize CSEP training for frontline officials and practitioners: Human trafficking is just coming into the formal training systems of frontline officials and practitioners. Practical trainings should be conducted for all frontline officials and practitioners - on both sides of the border - who engage with groups of people who are vulnerable to recruitment into CSEP by gangs, those who are vulnerable to recruitment into facilitating CSEP, and those in both categories who have already been recruited. While front line law enforcement agents and officers are just being brought up to speed, and the social workers of the San Diego County Child Welfare Services are just being given new CSEC protocols, San Diego County should increase resources for the training of school personnel in identifiers and protocols, as well as awareness training for students from middle and high schools. San Diego would also do well to expand the trainings for healthcare professionals in the indicators and protocols. Given its prominence and social impact in San Diego, special concern has been raised in this study for increased awareness training for the military in all its facets.

3. Support Robust Community Policing: This study represented the first two steps (SCANNING AND ANALYSIS) of the SARA model of problem-oriented policing (Goldstein, 1979; Goldstein, 1990). The next two components - Response and Evaluation - require robust community policing - a philosophy that supports police-community partnerships and joint problem-solving - to encourage two-way information sharing and joint public safety initiatives. Community policing offers an opportunity to build trust and partnerships in communities that can help police protect against the criminal sexual exploitation of its members.

Service Delivery: **The following recommendations involve specific actions to improve service delivery to victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and to deter would-be perpetrators.**

4. Increase support for victims and survivors: Supporting victims and survivors of CSEP is an imperative principle of justice, and San Diego is encouraged to

expand rehabilitation of and support for victims of sex trafficking. Three issues are critical.

> 4a. Eliminate existing ordinances that criminalize "child prostitution" and replace with laws that protect them as victims
>
> 4b. Address the shortage of facilities for victim-survivors. The County has just 29 beds for rescued sex trafficking victims. None of them serve men, and none of them are human trafficking specific beds for minors.
>
> 4c. Regularize collaboration between and among victim advocates and law enforcement as a measure to recognize and protect victims. 50% of prostitution arrests may in fact reflect cases of trafficking victims, and their safety, privacy, and physical and psychological well-being should be ensured.

> 5. Amplify Survivor Voices: Amplifying the voices of victims and their stories can also contribute to exposing the brutality and hypocrisy of pimps, facilitators and their narratives. Survivors and family members can be powerful changemakers.

New Programming: **The following recommendations regard specific enhancements within security and criminal justice sectors, and introduce disengagement and reintegration programs.**

> 6. Prison-based Rehabilitation Interventions: San Diego County should develop prison-based rehabilitation interventions for incarcerated facilitators, and programs to assist individuals who are at risk of being recruited into facilitation.

> 7. Intentional Interface with Gang Intervention Programming already in place: San Diego is home to the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention, a network similar in diversity of membership to the HT Advisory Council. Its purpose is to prevent gang-related violence, to disengage at risk youth, and to build relationships between vulnerable communities and San Diego governmental

and law enforcement officials. The Commission has several time-tested programs that are natural entry points for engaging facilitators and those at risk of becoming involved. We strongly recommend and support working with former "pimps" and facilitators to foster disengagement and reintegration programs.

8. Expand apprehension and prosecution efforts to buyers: If growing attention in San Diego is being paid to the sellers (facilitators) and the persons as products being sold in San Diego's sex trafficking market (victims), little policy and infrastructural attention is being given to curbing the demand (buyers). The disincentives for buyers are relatively inconsequential and the facilitators argue that they are just filling a market demand. We recommend both stronger policy addressing demand and public awareness campaigns to make the broader public, especially potential buyers, more aware of the true costs of the underground sex economy in San Diego.

Future Research

Collaborative Research: The results of this research make a strong case for building national databases from the ground up, funding researchers with local and regional expertise to develop partnerships across the sectors needed for access to data and the populations to be researched. The partnerships we nurtured through our involvement in the San Diego County Regional Advisory Council on Human Trafficking and CSEC helped us (1) address research questions that are most pressing to those working to raise awareness, curb sex trafficking activity, intervene with gangs, and rescue/rehabilitate victims, (2) gain access to databases and populations that in the case of sex trafficking research would otherwise have remained hidden and (3) have the most likelihood of impacting public policy and infrastructure for positive change. National policy will be strengthened by the comparative application of lessons learned from the most robust local and regional measures.

Scale*: The surprising scale of the underground sex economy in San Diego demands continued refinement of regional empirical measures of the illicit sex economy,

triangulating findings from other sources, tracking change over time and greater attention to disaggregation of sex trafficking activity from the rest of the illicit sex economy.

Gangs: We consider this research a baseline empirical analysis of the relationship between gangs and sex trafficking in San Diego County. While 110 gangs were named in this research, data on each of these gangs was received from a small number of persons in each gang. Future researchers can build a more ethnographically rich profile from a wider representation of each of these gangs in order to better understand the changing dynamics and significance of gang life in San Diego County.

Law Enforcement: The collaborative nature of San Diego's movement to address human trafficking, combined with the legitimacy conferred by funding from the National Institute for Justice, gave researchers on this project broad and trusted access to non-public data from a wide variety of law enforcement agencies in San Diego County, the Sheriff and the San Diego Police Department in particular. Through this level of access we were able to compare measurements and findings across jurisdictions, something that during the course of our research our regional law enforcement agencies were working to improve. The dialogue between our research team, law enforcement analysts and community based-researchers helped to develop greater insight and more refined empirical measures for each of our respective roles.

Social Services: As many who research sex trafficking from the perspective of social services know, the standardization of measures that identify sex trafficking victims is a work in progress. This research extended the regionally vetted research done by the Vera Institute in New York by field testing a portion of the standardized Trafficking Victim Identification Tool they developed here in San Diego. The eight social service agencies found parts of the tool helpful, and other parts they wanted to modify. The research raised debate about and helped to refine where in the intake process such tools are best administered. While still in process as of the writing of this report, the network of social service agencies that collaborate under the Victims Services umbrella of the San Diego County Regional Advisory Council on Human Trafficking and CSEC are using this research to outline a regionally appropriate intake assessment tool.

Schools: The most exploratory part of our research was the focus groups we conducted in 20 high schools across San Diego County, spread across Central San Diego,

the South Bay, East County and North County. Having identified what school officials think is happening at their schools, a strong follow up research project would be to collect data from the students themselves. One path toward collecting data from students we recommend is to add questions about sex trafficking to standardized student response surveys that already are in use.

  Social Media Analytics: Social media analytics methods are capable of effectively detecting, identifying, tracking, and monitoring the ongoing communications, interactions, activities and operations of criminal gangs in the U.S. and Mexico. When pursued cautiously and mindful of biases, it can usefully supplement ongoing investigations into the domestic and transnational dynamics of cartel and gang activities.

  Collaboration among researchers*:* An important practice and outcome of this project has been the regular interaction of a network of regionally based researchers studying various aspects of human tracking. As co-chairs of the Research and Data Subcommittee of the San Diego County Regional Advisory Council on Human Trafficking and CSEC, the study's investigators hosted quarterly gatherings of other university-based researchers, graduate students, law enforcement analysts, social service research experts and community-based researchers to collaborate on various dimensions of research. The San Diego County Board of Supervisors saw such value in the collaborative gathering of researchers we were modeling that they decided to fund what we called HT-RADAR (Human Trafficking Research and Data Advisory Roundtable), i.e. the ongoing coordination of county-wide human trafficking research. We advocate for the continued support and spread of this research-based contextual policy making.