

RETHINKING PROSTITUTION ENFORCEMENT AT
THE SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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A Thesis


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Abstract
of
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In early 2006, the Sacramento Police Department changed the focus of its Vice Unit's enforcement efforts from adult street prostitutes to juvenile prostitutes and pimps. The unit soon determined that a large percentage of the girls they arrested were runaways, particularly runaways from foster care. Current California law prohibits the secure detention of runaways, an unintentional consequence of which is recidivist runaways. This thesis is a case study of the Police Department's effort to combat and reduce female juvenile prostitution, an effort that produced surprising information about the number of runaways in Sacramento.

To further frame the issue and provide comparison data, I analyzed national, state (California), and local (Sacramento) crime statistics involving runaways and female juvenile prostitution. Although runaways have decreased in the nation and in California, runaways in Sacramento have increased. Arrests for juvenile prostitution across America spiked in 2004, and have remained level since. California, leading the nation with over 50% of all arrests for juvenile prostitution, can be considered fertile ground for female juvenile prostitution.

The paper concludes with broad policy alternatives that local and state government should consider, including recommended strategies for law enforcement, child welfare workers, and policymakers. These strategies have the ability to mitigate the problem of runaways and teenage prostitution.

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Date

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It has been said that one should enjoy the journey, as the journey is greater than the destination. As I near the end of my journey toward a Master's degree, I fondly reflect back upon the journey. And I have enjoyed the journey!!

I have thoroughly enjoyed the learned PPA professors who have challenged me in ways they know not. I count them as respected colleagues, friends and mentors. And my fellow peers, those students in the PPA program whom I was fortunate enough to share the journey with, I thank you. You also befriended me and supported me in ways you know not.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Sacramento Police Vice Unit

2005 was a banner year for the Vice Unit. 1,007 total arrests for prostitution related offenses. That figure is nearly five arrests per workday, based upon a four-day workweek (10 hours per day). This is the kind of number that officers are proud of, a regular "Herculean" effort by a small unit consisting of a sergeant and three detectives. A unit that has long had as their primary responsibility the enforcement of prostitution related laws within the City of Sacramento. A unit similar to vice units in other law enforcement agencies, a unit using the "tried and true" enforcement tactic of arresting female "streetwalker" prostitutes with undercover male police officers posing as customers.

Were these arrest statistics effective, or merely efficient? Likely few would argue that the Vice Unit wasn't performing at peak efficiency. But parsing out the numbers from the Police Department's Records Management System, the effectiveness of the Vice Unit was in question. Only 12 arrests, or 1.2% of the total were pimps, those individuals that procure prostitutes for compensation (pimp and pimping are statutorily defined terms within the California Penal Code). And regarding juveniles, only 51 arrests, or 5% of the total were juveniles, those under 18 years of age. As evidenced by these numbers alone, it is apparent that the Vice Unit was concentrating on adult street prostitutes, disregarding the activities of pimps and juvenile prostitutes. Furthermore, there was no indication that

the arrests they did make alleviated or even impacted the amount of prostitution within the City. It was clear that the emphasis was only on arrests, albeit the more the better.

Research on Prostitution

A check of a guide published for law enforcement by the U.S. Department of Justice funded Center for Problem-Oriented Policing (www.popcenter.org) confirmed street prostitution as the most visible form of prostitution, yet noted that street prostitution only accounts for 10% to 20% of all prostitution. Further, the authors asserted that most women “first turn to prostitution at a young age, often before they are 18” (Scott & Dedel, 2006, p. 5).

Additional research from university databases revealed books and articles linking running away, prostitution, and pimping. The research concluded that:

- The majority of runaways are 15-17 years of age (NISMART-2, 2002) and the majority of juvenile prostitutes are 14-17 years of age (Bagley, 1999)
- Running away is a significant precursor to prostitution (Flowers, 2001; Hwang & Bedford, 2004; Mitchell & Smith, 1984)
- Juvenile prostitutes are more likely to have pimps than adult prostitutes (Flowers, 2001; Hwang & Bedford, 2004)
- Juvenile prostitution is a large city phenomenon (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2004)
- The rate of running away is probably declining (Hammer, Finkelhor, Sedlak, & Porcellini, 2004) while the rate of juvenile prostitution is unknown, but presumed

increasing (Flowers, 2001; National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2002)

The Literature Review section provides a comprehensive review of these studies.

The conclusions reached by this research beg the following question(s): To be effective in prostitution enforcement, shouldn't law enforcement address juvenile prostitution and pimps? Won't that provide the added value of locating runaways?

Mission Change for the Vice Unit

It became readily apparent that the Vice Unit's previous mission was addressing only the "tip of the iceberg," as arguably 80% to 90% of prostitution was going unchecked by the Police Department. Furthermore, based upon the research, two key assumptions were made that challenged the previous method of operation:

- 1) Pimps control a significant portion of the prostitution activity.
- 2) Female juvenile prostitutes are prevalent and are much more likely to be controlled by pimps than their female adult counterparts; and as such, are also much more likely to provide information on pimps.

As a result of these assumptions, the goals, mission and direction of the Vice Unit were changed for 2006. The Vice Unit was tasked with arresting pimps and female juvenile prostitutes. The new strategy called for arresting female juvenile prostitutes and working backward to arrest their pimp(s). Simple quantity of arrests was no longer emphasized, quality was. The FBI, interested in the sex trafficking of juveniles, contributed an agent to the effort. This agent brought not only further expertise to the

unit, but additional resources such as equipment, overtime funds, and the option of prosecuting cases federally through the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Additional Organizational Concerns

Street prostitutes, primarily because of their visibility, do serve as nuisance and blight upon a neighborhood or business district. While some members of the general public may consider prostitution either a victimless crime (both parties are involved in a voluntary transaction) or a morality offense, an element of NIMBYism ("not in my backyard") always exists. Since the Vice Unit was directed away from street prostitution, would uniformed patrol officers fill the void? Would the absence of 1,000 plus arrests be noticed by the community?

And the media, how would they respond? They have been known to be critical of prostitution enforcement, whether it is questioning the efficacy of enforcing prostitution related offenses or simply the inherent gender bias of prostitution arrests, as the proportion of arrests of female prostitutes to male customers is never close. However, a strategy of investigating pimping and child exploitation/juvenile prostitution should be relatively free from media criticism. (In a strange twist, *The Sacramento Bee* demonstrated their zeal for a story as the "above the fold" headline for Sunday, April 6, 2008 blared: "In sex trade, seller beware: prostitute arrests far exceed those of customers in Sacramento County" (Reese & Lillis, 2008). An editorial on the following day chastised the Police Department for its gender bias. The data was taken from the year 2005, making the story a few years out-of-date.

Resistance, Then Progress

Summer 2006. After a rocky start and resistance from some detectives about the new direction, the Vice Unit was reconfigured with new personnel. Early attempts at arresting pimps or female juvenile prostitutes were not productive. Few juveniles could be found engaging in street prostitution. As expected, attempts at interviewing arrested female adult street prostitutes and gaining information regarding their pimps proved futile. Prostitution, as a low-grade misdemeanor with a resultant light sentence, simply does not provide the appropriate incentive for the street savvy prostitute to "turn" on her pimp.

A change in tactics was necessary. A check of advertisements on the internet (see <http://sacramento.craigslist.org/cgi-bin/personals.cgi?category=ers> for examples) revealed numerous young, possibly teenage juvenile prostitutes. Undercover operations were conducted at local motels, and female juvenile prostitutes were arrested. While the advertisements claimed that the females were ages 18 to 20, many of them were either juveniles or simply used pictures other than those of themselves to lure customers. Since the juveniles were without valid identification, credit cards or cell phones, the pimps were the ones that had facilitated the internet advertisements and rented the motel rooms. Interviews and follow-up investigation led to the identification and arrest of pimps.

No Surprise: Teen Prostitutes are Runaways

As had been accurately predicted by the research, the Vice Unit discovered the female juvenile prostitutes shared a common characteristic: they were runaways, and often runaways from foster care.

The following scenario, purported to have been encountered by the researcher on several occasions, serves to frame and emphasize the importance of the Vice Unit's new direction:

For example, a girl of 11 or 12 complains to a teacher about sexual abuse at home. Child protection workers are informed. Father (or more commonly, stepfather) denies the abuse, and mother fails to support the child. She is removed into a group home, and recruited by older girls, who are frequent runners, to take off from the home into the downtown scene. For a few weeks life is full of parties, drink, and drugs. But the girl is being set up by a pimp, and is soon beholden to him through a combination of drug dependency and fear of further physical maltreatment. For a few weeks her virginity is sold several times. Then the beatings begin in earnest. She has to serve 20 men a night. She is sold and shipped to another city. By the age of 15, her spirit is entirely broken, and she is shifted from trick pad to the street. By the age of 17 she is dead of a drug overdose; or has killed herself; or has been murdered. (Bagley, 1999, p. 453)

While Sacramento, to its knowledge, has not yet had a scenario like the above, it is now experiencing success in locating runaways that have turned to prostitution. The following email from the Vice Unit is evidence of its efforts:

We are busy chasing a 16 year old right now. Classic case! Has 11 MP (missing person) reports to Sac PD in a two year period. Posted right now with another young looking girl. Pimps moniker tattooed on her hip. His name is CASH! She has a \$ tattooed on her hip. Nice! She was nice enough to post his photo on her my space page for us. (Personal communication, January 8, 2008)

No Lock-Up for Runaways

While the Vice Unit had expected to encounter runaways, the frequency of encountering repeat or habitual runaways was a surprise. Yet the existing law itself may be one reason why the Vice Unit regularly encounters repeat runaways. In California, running away is considered a status offense, in the same category as truancy, curfew, and incorrigibility. Status offenses were decriminalized in 1977 by Assembly Bill 3121. This had the unintended effect of removing the incentive for law enforcement agencies to detain and arrest runaways, as runaways could no longer be kept in secure detention in locked facilities.

In effect, runaways are free to recidivate at will. As long ago as 1984, former Senator Robert Presley (1984), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Children and Youth, lamented the following in a formal committee hearing:

Law enforcement agencies are frustrated and some consider taking the runaway to a shelter a waste of time. Once the runaway is at the shelter, he or she can run away again and the police have no recourse. It may be that a shift toward reliance on secure detention of the child for a short period of time will be more beneficial than the current process of informal supervision (p. 2).

It has been over 30 years since Assembly Bill 3121 was passed, yet the laws mandating non-secure facilities for runaways have not changed. They have survived court challenges, most recently in 2001 with *Michael Wilson v. the County of San Diego*. In this case, a juvenile fled the non-secure facility and was severely injured by a car when crossing the street. The Court found:

Moreover, Michael's duty argument is belied by the statutory requirement that public agencies place dependent minors alleged or adjudged to come within section 300 (Welfare & Institutions Code) in "non-secure" facilities, and to segregate them from minors who are detained for delinquency. The term non-secure facility means a facility that is not characterized by the use of physically restricting construction, hardware, and procedures and which provides its residents access to the surrounding community with minimal supervision.... We are sympathetic to Michael's plight. We are, however, constrained to hold that the County and Flavel were entitled to summary judgment on the ground they had no mandatory duty to prevent him from running away. While perhaps one-on-one

care should have been provided, the decision was discretionary, not mandatory.

(p. 6)

Differing Treatment for Foster Care Runaways

Foster care runaways, because they are already under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court as neglected, abused, or abandoned children, are treated differently than non-foster care runaways. When encountering non-foster care runaways, law enforcement officers have the option of reuniting the juvenile with their parent/guardian, or transporting the juvenile to a shelter. Section 207 W&I permits these juveniles to be maintained in secure custody for up to 24 hours pending the location of their parent/guardian. In effect, this time period serves as a “cooling off” period while the juvenile is assessed and appropriate placement is determined.

Runaways from foster care have no provision for a 24-hour secure detention. The law is clear; they must be housed in a separate non-secure facility. For Sacramento, that facility is the Children’s Receiving Home, a short-term placement location operated by a non-profit organization under contract with the County of Sacramento. Runaways brought to this location are free to leave upon their arrival and/or at their whim.

Project Question

The efforts of the Sacramento Police Department’s Vice Unit at targeting female juvenile prostitution and pimps will serve as a case study. Within the framework of this case study, the following questions will be visited and explored:

- How does the Vice Unit's experience compare with what researchers and scholars have predicted in regards to runaways and female juvenile prostitutes?
- How does Sacramento's runaway situation compare to the nation and to California?
- How does Sacramento's teen prostitution compare to the nation and to California?
- What are the trade-offs, if any, in Sacramento's decision to focus on female teenage prostitution instead of street prostitution?
- Are the laws that mandate runaways must be kept in non-secure facilities providing the optimum result?

To answer these questions, the existing literature and research on the topics of runaways and juvenile prostitution will be reviewed. National, state, and local crime statistics will also be analyzed to determine the extent of the problem of runaways and juvenile prostitution. And lastly, reasonable strategies/solutions that have the ability to mitigate the problem of runaways and teenage prostitution will be discussed and offered.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides the necessary context to understand and/or appreciate Sacramento's experience with runaways, juvenile prostitutes, and the pimps who exploit them. The analysis and findings of experts who have conducted extensive research in these areas will be presented and summarized. This research, based primarily upon the survey and case study methodologies, exists within the shadows of very real crime statistics, statistics that are reported by law enforcement agencies throughout the nation. These crime statistics will provide for a separate analysis of runaways, juvenile prostitution, and pimps. They may stand in similarity or contrast to the findings of researchers and scholars.

This chapter will also integrate what is currently known about runaways, juvenile prostitution, and pimps as evidenced by the existing research while proposing a methodology to further examine the topic using available crime statistics. The crime statistics will be analyzed on three levels: individual agency (Sacramento), statewide (California), and nationally (USA). It is anticipated that the findings of the experts should predict/mirror what occurs with the crime statistics, and further, predict/mirror what occurs in Sacramento.

Since runaways are a subset of the population of missing children, the chapter will start with the broad category of missing children and quickly narrow the focus to

runaways, juvenile prostitutes, and the pimps who exploit them. The chapter will conclude with a framework to use available crime statistics to assess the present trends of runaways, juvenile prostitutes, and pimps.

Missing Youth

The landmark study of missing children is the Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMAART-2) conducted in 1999. For this research, missing children were divided into five separate categories as defined by the type of episode: nonfamily abduction (to include kidnapping), family abduction, runaway/thrownaway, missing involuntary (to include lost or injured), and missing with a benign explanation (usually teenagers due to lack of communication). Figure 1 depicts the distribution of missing children among the five categories. Two-thirds of missing children are runaway/throwaway. The next closest category, at 15%, is missing with a benign explanation.

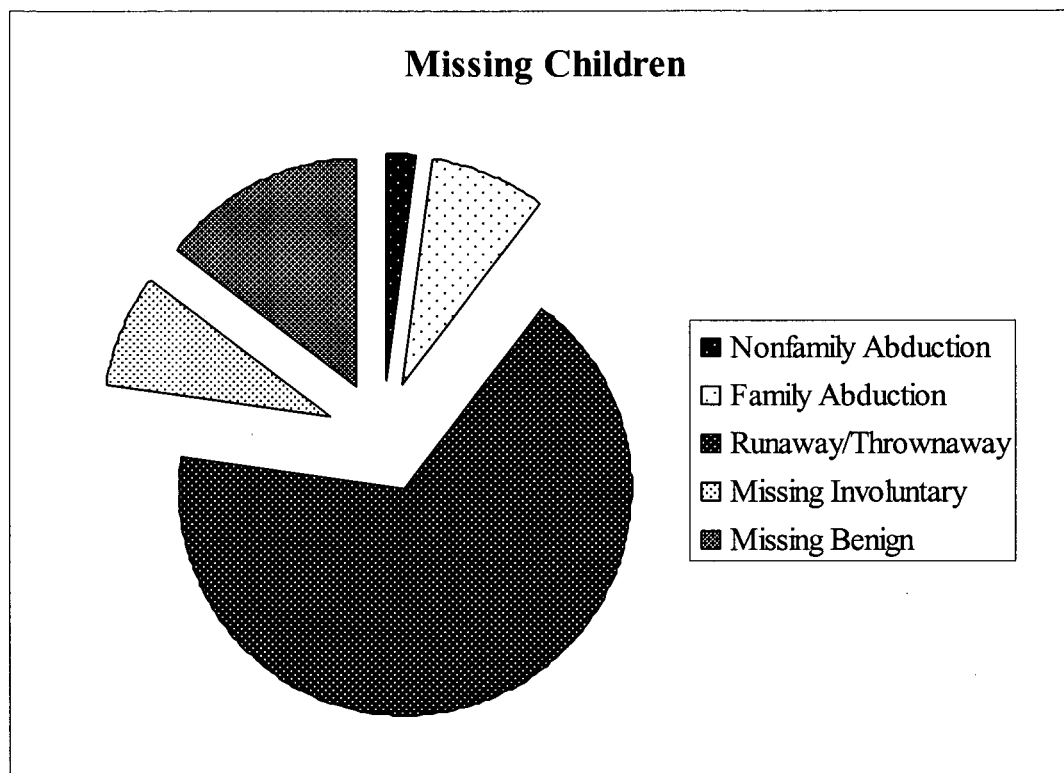


Figure 1. Missing Children in the U.S. (1999).

Runaways/Throwaways

The NISMART study grouped runaways and throwaways together in the same category. Researchers have justified this because of the significant overlap between these two populations. A parent, guardian, or caretaker may claim the child ran away, while the child may claim to be throwaway. The episodes of running away and being thrown away often share similar characteristics and results, and both have the capability to put youth at risk of harm (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines a runaway episode as a child who leaves home without permission and stays away overnight, or a child who

leaves home with permission but chooses not to come home when expected and stays away overnight. A throwaway episode involves a child who is asked or told to leave by an adult and stays away overnight, or a child who is prevented from returning home by an adult and stays away overnight. The runaway/throwaway population is measured by the overnight component, while the missing involuntary and the missing benign are measured by an hourly component.

Key findings of NISMART-2 estimated the runaway/throwaway population to be 1,682,900 (with 95% confidence). There was no difference in gender, as males and females were evenly divided (50/50). As expected, the vast majority of runaway/throwaways were those between the ages of 15-17, which comprised of 68% of the total. Those aged 12-14 accounted for 28%. Shockingly, only 21% of all runaway/throwaway youth were reported missing to police or to a children's agency for the purpose of locating them. Restated, 79% of all runaway/throwaway youth are unknown to police or children's welfare agencies because they are not reported as missing.

A key focus of NISMART-2 was the characteristics of the runaway/throwaway incidents that put youth at risk of harm. 71% of the youth were determined to have been endangered during their runaway/throwaway episode, primarily by such factors as sexual or physical abuse, use (abuse) of drugs, and presence in a place where criminal activity was occurring. In addition, the researchers carefully developed a separate count of those runaways/throwaways that were at risk of sexual endangerment or exploitation

(to include prostitution). Only 38,600 youth, or 2.3%, were determined to fit this characteristic.

Foster Care Runaways

While categorizing missing youth by episode (non-family abduction, family abduction, runaway/throwaway, missing involuntary and missing benign) was beneficial for NISMART, it is not used by foster care programs. Foster care uses the term AWOL, or absent without leave. An AWOL child is generally defined as one who is placed in a licensed foster care facility and who disappears, runs away or is otherwise absent voluntarily or involuntarily without the consent of the caretaker (Finkelstein, Wamsley, Currey, & Miranda, 2004).

Researchers have confirmed that the likelihood of running away (or going AWOL) is greater for juveniles in foster care than for juveniles who live at home with a parent or guardian (Dedel, 2006, p. 3). Much of this is likely due to mandatory reporting policies within the foster care system. However, runaways from juvenile facilities experienced more serious episodes than runaways from households. In a study of thirty chronic runaways from the foster care system in New York, more than 2/3 experienced moderate to high-risk situations. These risk situations included sex, drug use, drug selling, and being the victim or perpetrator of physical violence (Finkelstein et al., 2004, p. 21). This study also concluded that the number of runaways from foster care in New York had increased by 37% during the 1990s. In another study, 2/3 of the runaways engaged in criminal activity while they were away (Kaplan, 2004).

Decline in Runaways

While the risk factors encountered by today's runaways appear to be more significant than in previous years, the incidence rate for runaways in the general population has not increased in the last 30 years. In comparing the 1988 NISMART-1 study to NISMART-2, the researchers determined that the incidence rate for runaways declined from 7.09 per 1,000 children in 1988 to 5.28 per 1,000 children in 1999. Due to issues of statistical significance, researchers were left with the finding that while a decline probably occurred, they were able to positively conclude that an increase did not occur (Hammer et al., 2004, p. 3). Data from NISMART-1, when compared to similar data from the 1975 National Statistical Survey of Runaway Youth, also concluded that there was no higher evidence of running away in 1988 than 1975 (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990).

Researchers attribute the probable decline in runaways to increased communication among juveniles with their parents/guardians (cell phones), increased independence granted to children by parents/guardians, increased knowledge by juveniles of the dangers of running away, and the general improvement in youth well-being in the 1990's as declines were experienced in child poverty, teenage drinking, pregnancy, and youth violence (Hammer et al., 2004, p. 4).

Correlation Between Runaways and Juvenile Prostitutes

Research has shown that being a runaway is one of many characteristics that juvenile prostitutes share. A number of studies have identified common precursors and pathways to prostitution. Regardless of race or class, prostitutes, both juvenile and adult, tend to have a history of parental abuse and neglect, incest, rape, disruptive school activity, running away, and early sexual experiences (Hwang & Bedford, 2004, p. 136).

While precursors to running away do not include prostitution, they do include many of the other characteristics that are similar to those of the juvenile prostitute. Flowers (2001) concluded that family dysfunction, parental neglect, family drug use, and implications of sexual activity by the runaway were strong indicators of running away by youth. Over one-half of runaways experienced physical or sexual abuse at home.

Similarly, based upon their interactions with clients at a long term residential center for adolescent prostitutes in Minnesota, Mitchell and Smith (1984, p. 1) concluded that most juvenile prostitutes are among the ranks of the over one million runaway population each year. They are running to escape home situations that include neglect, divorce, physical abuse and incest. Flowers (2001, p. 52) concurs, estimating that anywhere between several hundred thousand to over a million teenage runaways become prostitutes each year in the United States. Further, he (Flowers, 2001, p. 107) asserts that more than two-thirds of all runaway girls will end up as prostitutes.

In a study of 45 former prostitutes and their childhood experiences, Bagley (1999, p. 448) had the following astounding findings:

- 73.3% were victims of physical and sexual abuse
- 49.0% were runaways
- 55.5% experienced excessive beatings at least once a month
- 11.4 mean age of first intercourse
- 15.4 mean age on becoming a prostitute
- 56.1 average number of clients per week

Researchers have agreed that there exists a correlation between child sexual abuse, running away, and prostitution (Flowers, 2001, p. 89). According to Davis in the *Logic of Causal Order* (1985, p. 11), “after cannot cause before.” Although quantitative studies determining the cause of female juvenile prostitution are non-existent, researchers appear confident in making the argument that the causal flow of female juvenile prostitution is often:

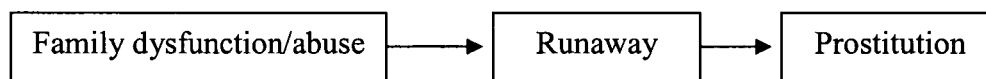


Figure 2. Causal order for juvenile prostitution.

In the New York foster care study, the researchers admittedly used a sample that was different from most youths in foster care: the abused and neglected youth were under-represented and females were over-represented. However, while no questions were directly asked about prostitution and none of the females in the sample admitted to engaging prostitution, several of them brought up the topic. They mentioned that they personally knew girls in foster care who had become involved in prostitution, and that

this was the reason why some had run away and/or was what occurred to others that had run away. Surveyed staff members also brought up knowledge of prostitution for many of the females that had run away (Finkelstein et al., 2004, p. 16).

Pimps: Exclusively Western

Researchers have studied prostitution in other countries and cultures, such as the Philippines (Bagley, 1999) and Taiwan (Hwang & Bedford, 2004). While these studies have noted the existence of juvenile prostitution, it primarily occurs as a form of indentured servitude to brothels with knowledge of the juvenile's family. This is due to the harsh economic conditions and/or lack of economic alternatives in these countries. This is not the situation in America. As noted by Hwang & Bedford (2004):

The case may be somewhat different in the west, where many studies have indicated that emotional support from pimps plays an important role in introducing juveniles to prostitution. That is, a pimp may provide emotional and financial support in the form of comfort, protection, and understanding to a runaway juvenile. Once the juvenile is financially and emotionally dependent on the pimp, he introduces the juvenile to prostitution (p. 144).

In a study of 21 street prostitutes in the Midwest, where the researchers spent six months on the streets, they concluded that runaways without adequate food, clothing, shelter, or other basic needs were particularly vulnerable to pimp influence. The researchers also commented on the unique abilities of a pimp, noting how skilled pimps are at assessing and exploiting a woman's needs and vulnerabilities, and that by fulfilling

these needs, he is able to prostitute her (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002, p. 1080). It is also supported by Flowers (2001, p. 115), as he notes that most juvenile prostitutes have runaway from sexually abusive or otherwise dysfunctional homes “straight into the arms of the manipulative and cunning pimp who seizes the opportunity for sexually exploiting vulnerable, needy girls.” Pimps rely on the powerful emotions of love and fear to manipulate girls into prostituting themselves. In addition, Mitchell and Smith (1984, p. 18) observed how the juveniles in their research had lacked structure in their home life, yet were very receptive to the (needed) structure provided by a pimp.

In a case study of 14 prostitutes by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (2002, p. 14), 13 of them had been introduced into prostitution by a pimp (the other one was introduced by her boyfriend). Flowers (2001, p. 108) determined that as many as 90% of teenage female prostitutes were coerced or charmed into prostitution by pimps.

With the introduction of pimps into the equation, the causal analysis of female juvenile prostitution is very likely:

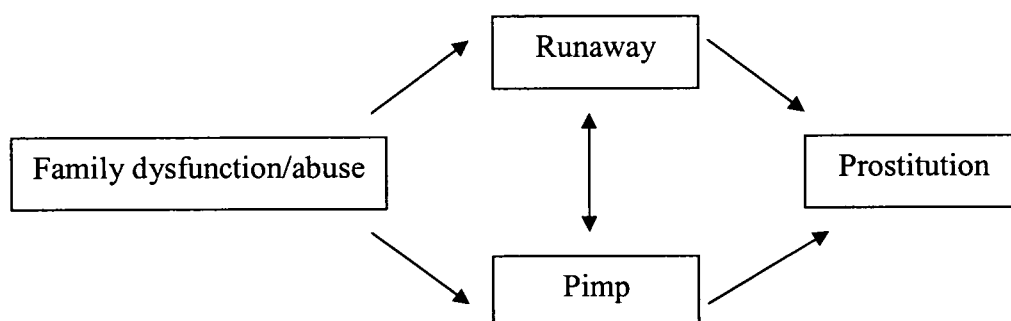


Figure 3. Revised causal order for juvenile prostitution.

Three State Study of Juvenile Prostitution

In an analysis of prostitution activity within the states of Idaho, Iowa, and South Carolina spanning the years 1997-2000, Finkelhor and Ormrod (2004) compared the criminal incidence of adult prostitution to juvenile prostitution. While the authors admit that their analysis suffered from an unrepresentative sample (too few cases, too few large cities), they nevertheless reached conclusions that support the previously discussed case studies.

Ninety percent of the female juvenile prostitutes were between the ages of 14-17. The female juvenile prostitutes were associated with male adult offenders (not a male customer) 81% of the time. This strongly suggests the presence of pimps. This contrasts directly with adult female prostitutes, as 89% of the time they were alone, or categorized as a single offender. Furthermore, juvenile prostitution was found much more likely than adult prostitution to occur in large urban areas and to occur indoors. This suggests that juvenile prostitution is a large city or metropolitan phenomenon, more likely to occur inside a hotel/motel or private residence rather than on the street.

Proposed Research Methodology

According to Bardach (2005), in *A Practical Guide to Policy Analysis*, the first policy alternative to a problem is "let present trends continue undisturbed" (p. 16). What is the present trend of female juvenile prostitution? Current research has not confirmed whether female juvenile prostitution is on the increase or decrease. Yet with a close examination of crime statistics and related data, that question should be answerable. The

current status of problems such as runaways, female juvenile prostitution, and the exploitation of these female juveniles by pimps should be reflected in existing law enforcement crime statistics.

California and National Crime Statistics

Crime in the United States is the FBI's publication of national crime statistics, as compiled by the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Over 17,000 law enforcement agencies across the United States submit offense and arrest data. It is the premier source for nationwide crime data. California participates in the UCR Program by reporting its crime statistics to the FBI via the Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC) within the California Department of Justice. The CJSC also publishes statewide reports of its own.

The crime data are classified into Part I and Part II crimes. There are seven Part I crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson) and twenty-two Part II crimes. Prostitution and commercialized vice are combined to form one of the Part II crime categories. The UCR's definition of prostitution/commercialized vice is:

The unlawful promotion of or participation in sexual activities for profit, including attempts. To solicit customers or transport persons for prostitution purposes; to own, manage, or operate a dwelling or other establishment for the purpose of providing a place where prostitution is performed; or to otherwise assist or promote prostitution. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2007, ¶ 19)

Due to the broadness of this definition, it is impossible to separate the crime of prostitution from the crime of pimping. They have been lumped together in one category, yet they are both separate and distinct crimes. However, using gender and age data as bases for analysis, female juvenile prostitution trends can be parsed from the prostitution/commercialized vice category. This can be done due to the assumption that most pimps are male adults. An analysis of female juveniles arrested for prostitution/commercialized vice should reflect prostitution arrests.

Unfortunately, there is no reasonable way to confidently assess information regarding the number of pimping arrests from the prostitution/commercialized vice category. Male adults that are arrested in law enforcement prostitution stings (commonly referred to as johns) will also be reflected in the prostitution/commercialized vice category. The category is too broad, making the discrimination between pimps and johns impossible. The failure of the UCR to separately record pimping arrests means that any increases or decrease in the exploitation of female juveniles by pimps must be inferred by increases or decreases in female juvenile prostitution arrests.

Runaways are another Part II crime category. The UCR defines runaways as a juvenile (under 18) that is taken into protective custody under the provisions of local statutes. While a wide variance can be expected between jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies when reporting this data, it still should serve a purpose as an indicator of the runaway problem and is worthy of analysis.

Sacramento Statistics

The Sacramento Police Department, similar to other law enforcement agencies, maintains its own crime statistics. The Department provides its data to the state of California, and the state in turn provides Sacramento's data as well as data from all other law enforcement agencies in the state to the FBI.

Using data directly from the Sacramento Police Department Records Management System will provide an accurate picture of pimping and prostitution arrests in the city. In addition to arrest data, calls for service data will also be examined. A call for service is a citizen complaint (telephone call) that is routed through the Police Department's Communication Center and responded to by a patrol officer. An examination of calls for service data should provide insight into the level of street prostitution within the City of Sacramento. Are citizens calling in more or less in regards to complaints of prostitution activity? Is there a correlation between prostitution enforcement and calls for service? More enforcement, less calls; or less enforcement, more calls? As the Sacramento Police Department's Vice Unit has turned its primary focus away from street prostitution, it is expected that arrest data and calls for service data should be indicative of this change in strategy.

Runaways are classified as missing persons within the Police Department. The missing persons' reports will be sorted by age and gender, identifying runaways as those missing persons under age 18. Recalling that the definition of a runaway episode has an overnight component to it, the Police Department data will not accurately reflect true

runaway episodes since a person does not have to be missing overnight before a police report can be filed. Stated differently, there is no minimum time that has to pass before a person can be reported as missing to law enforcement agencies.

Time Frame

National and state data will be analyzed over a period of five years. Both the UCR and the CJSC have published complete crime statistics data through 2006, so 2002-2006 will be the time period for this study. Complete 2007 data is not yet available.

Data from the Sacramento Police Department will be analyzed over a period of three years, from 2005-2007. The Department's Vice Unit began focusing on juvenile prostitution and pimps in mid-2006, so 2005 should provide a good base year for how the Vice Unit previously conducted enforcement efforts. In addition, the Department changed its records management system software in early 2004, meaning that 2005 is the first complete year with the new software system.

Limitations of Methodology

A five-year snapshot of national and state data, combined with a three-year snapshot of local data should provide a current picture of the juvenile prostitution problem. While only arrests and other known incidents to law enforcement will be analyzed, the data should be of value due to consistent reporting. It has long been mandated that crime statistics be maintained by law enforcement agencies, and there is no reason to assume the data is incorrect or inconsistent.

It is generally accepted that not all crime is reported to law enforcement agencies, that crime is under-reported. Posing an additional challenge, especially when dealing with crimes such as prostitution, where all parties (on the face of it) conduct voluntary transactions, measuring and quantifying these crimes can be exceedingly difficult. This is because only those that are caught and arrested are measured, much like estimating the fish population by counting the anglers' take.

Table 1

Summary of Methodology

Research Topic	Level of Analysis	Data Source	Time Frame
Runaways and	National – USA	FBI UCR	2002 – 2006 (5 yrs)
Female Juvenile	State – CA	Ca DOJ Stat Ctr.	2002 – 2006 (5 yrs)
Prostitution	Local – Sacramento	Sacramento PD	2005 – 2007 (3 yrs)

Chapter 3

RESULTS

Runaways

National and State

An analysis of reported runaways at the national and state level during the years 2002-2006 reveals that runaways have decreased by 7.2% and 6% respectively. This is consistent with the analysis of the NISMART-1 and NISMART-2 studies, which strongly suggested that the rate of running away was decreasing.

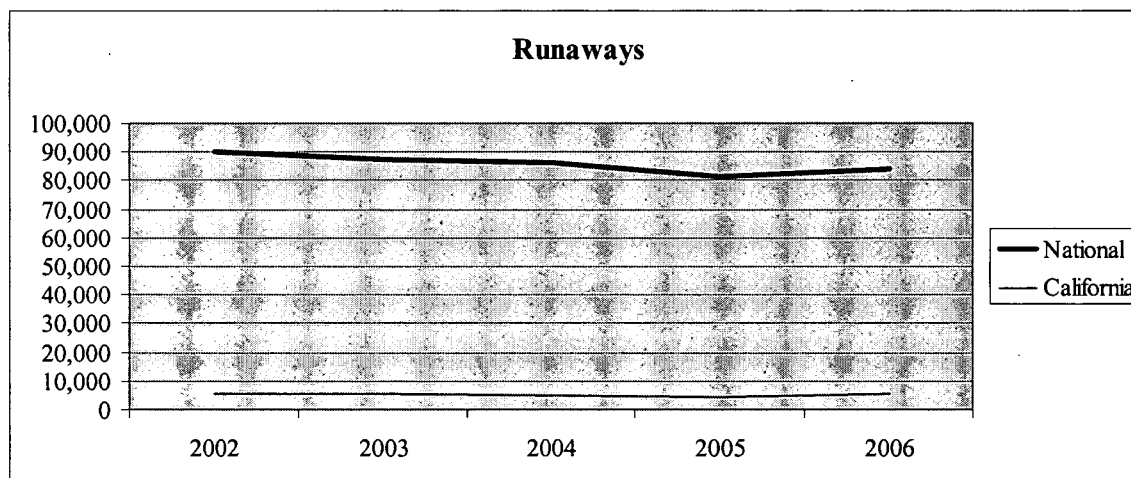


Figure 4. Reported runaways.

However, the reduction in reported runaways has not been even across the sexes. While national runaway rates for males have remained relatively stable, female runaway rates have declined by 12.1% (see Figure 5). Although the gender breakdown of California runaways for 2006 is not yet available, the state experienced an even greater

decline in female runaways than the nation did. For the period of 2002-2005, reported female runaways in California declined by 28%.

The NISMART studies have claimed that there is no difference in the rate of running away between males and females; that males and females run away in equal proportions. Yet reported runaways markedly differ. Even accounting for the decrease in female runaways, females continue to account for 55-60% of reported runaways. Using reported crime data as opposed to NISMART survey data, females are at a greater risk of running away than males.

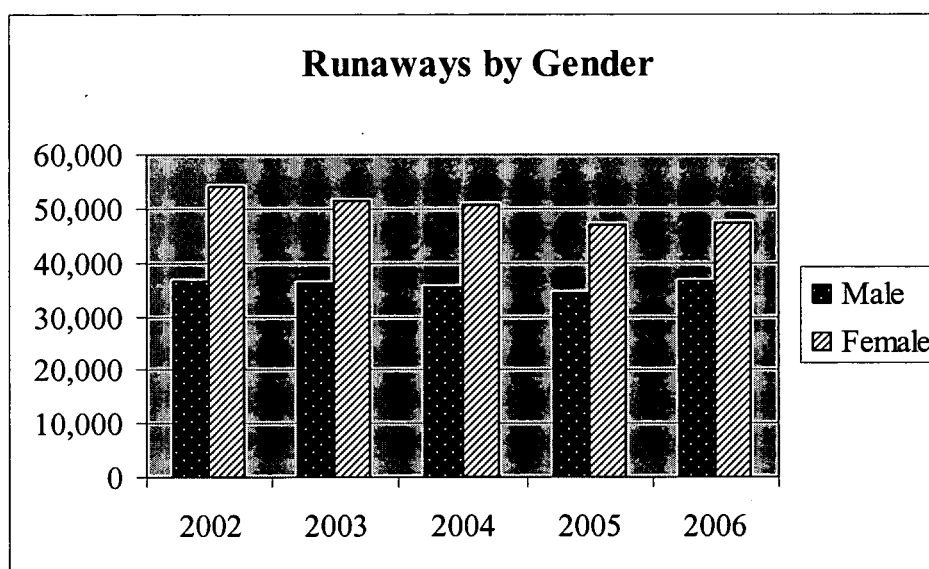


Figure 5. U.S. Reported runaways by gender.

Sacramento

Sacramento has not mirrored national nor state trends in runaways. During the last three years, runaways have increased within the City of Sacramento by 14%. Further,

female runaways have increased by 19.3%, while male runaways increased by 7.2% (see Figure 6).

As the Sacramento data was examined, it became clear that females repeatedly ran away from the Children's Receiving Home, the primary foster care intake location for the County of Sacramento. In 2007, 38.3% of reported runaway females within the City of Sacramento ran away from the Receiving Home. The next most frequent location did not even account for 1% of the total (see Figure 7).

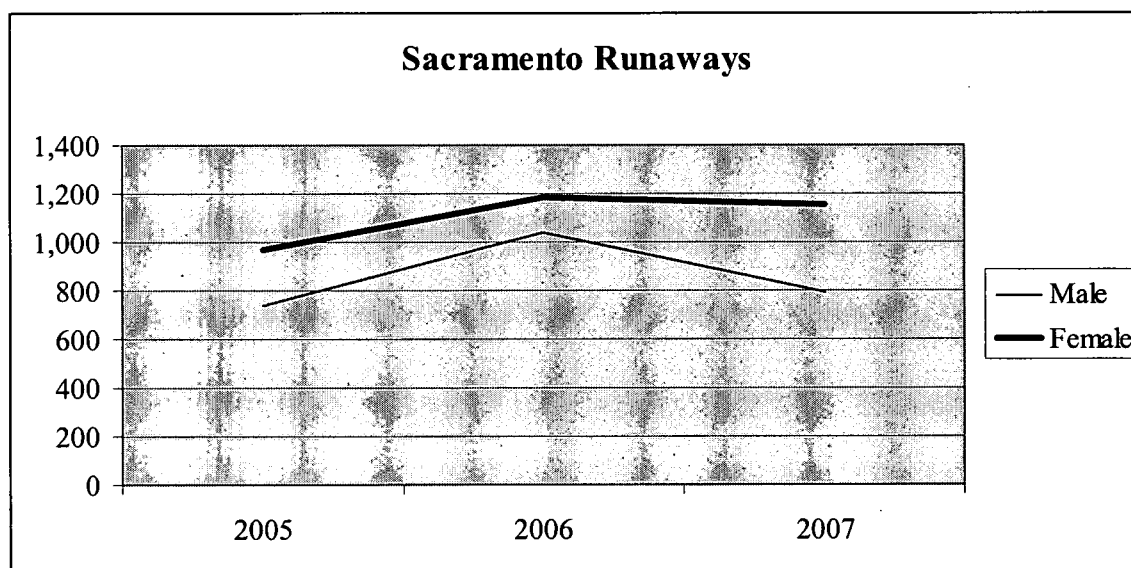


Figure 6. City of Sacramento reported runaways.

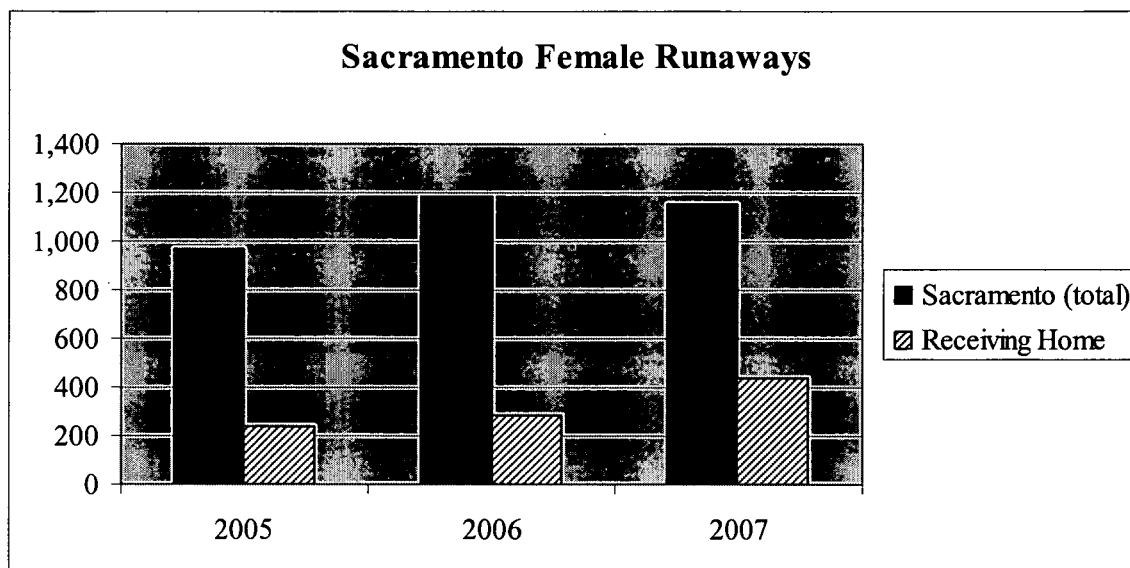


Figure 7. City of Sacramento reported female runaways.

Conducting further analysis of the Children's Receiving Home runaways revealed a "frequent flyer" situation: the same female juveniles were repeatedly running away from the Receiving Home.

- 2005: 44 females, 159 incidents, 67% of the total.
- 2006: 51 females, 221 incidents, 77% of the total.
- 2007: 81 females, 373 incidents, 85% of the total.

Drilling down even further, "super frequent flyers" were discovered. This category of females each had five or more runaways to their credit.

- 2005: 11 females, 77 incidents, 32% of the total.
- 2006: 12 females, 106 incidents, 37% of the total.
- 2007: 27 females, 238 incidents, 54% of the total.

The current system of placement and foster care does not appear to be meeting the needs of these specific “multiple runaway” females as evidenced by their preference to run away at a rate much higher than their peers. It is also likely that these female juveniles, similar to those in the studies of chronic foster care runaways outlined in the previous chapter, are at risk of being involved in criminal activity to include drug use and prostitution.

Prostitution

National and State

Female prostitution arrests throughout the nation decreased by .7% during the period between 2002 and 2006. However, during the same time frame, female juvenile prostitution arrests nationally increased by 22%. The greatest increase was from 2003-2004, as female juvenile prostitution arrests increased by 34%.

In the state of California, female prostitution arrests increased by 24.3% during 2002-2006. During this same time frame, female juvenile prostitution arrests increased 44%. Again, the single greatest increase occurred from 2003-2004, as female juvenile prostitution arrests increased by 35%. I am unable to posit an explanation for the spike in female prostitution arrests and female juvenile prostitution arrests from 2003-2004. Statistical reporting requirements did not change, and since the 2004 increase, the numbers have remained relatively constant. In addition, as previously discussed, runaways have not increased at all, let alone during those two years. While it is clear from the data that prostitution arrests did significantly increase during this time period, it

is less clear whether the crime of prostitution itself increased by the same level. I am unaware of and could not find any law enforcement initiatives designed to combat prostitution that occurred during this time frame that might offer sufficient explanation. But the fact remains, female juvenile prostitution arrests have far outpaced female adult prostitution arrests during the same time period.

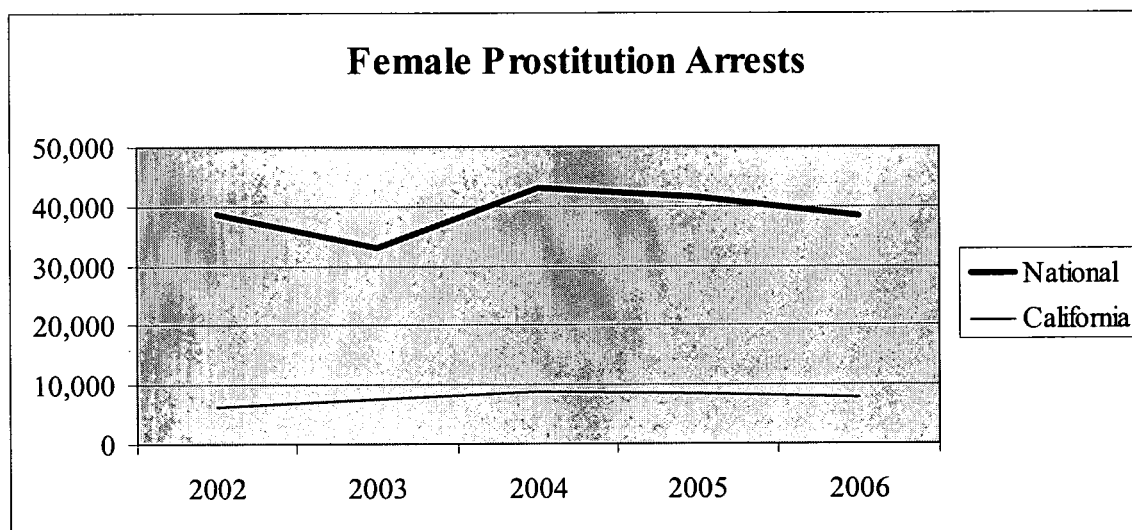


Figure 8. Reported female prostitution arrests.

California has just over 50% of all arrests in the nation for juvenile prostitution. This suggests that juvenile prostitution is a much greater problem in California than in other states, and/or California targets juvenile prostitution much more aggressively than other states. Either way, California's arrest rate is driving much of the increase in juvenile prostitution arrests for the nation.

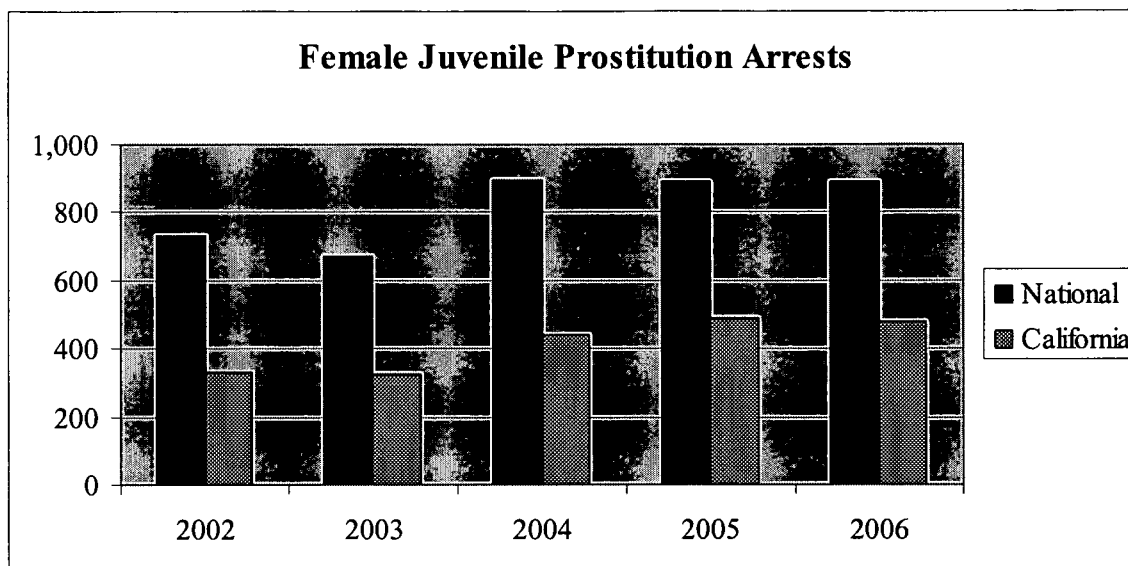


Figure 9. Reported female juvenile prostitution arrests.

Sacramento

The primary way that citizens notify the Police Department of prostitution related activity is by telephoning the Department's Communication Center. For the years 2005, 2006, and 2007, citizens called in 17, 23, and 18 times respectively. This is an amazingly low number of citizen complaints, and serves as a strong indication that either citizens have become numb to street prostitution, or that street prostitution within the City of Sacramento has been effectively displaced to other locations (such as into another jurisdiction or the internet).

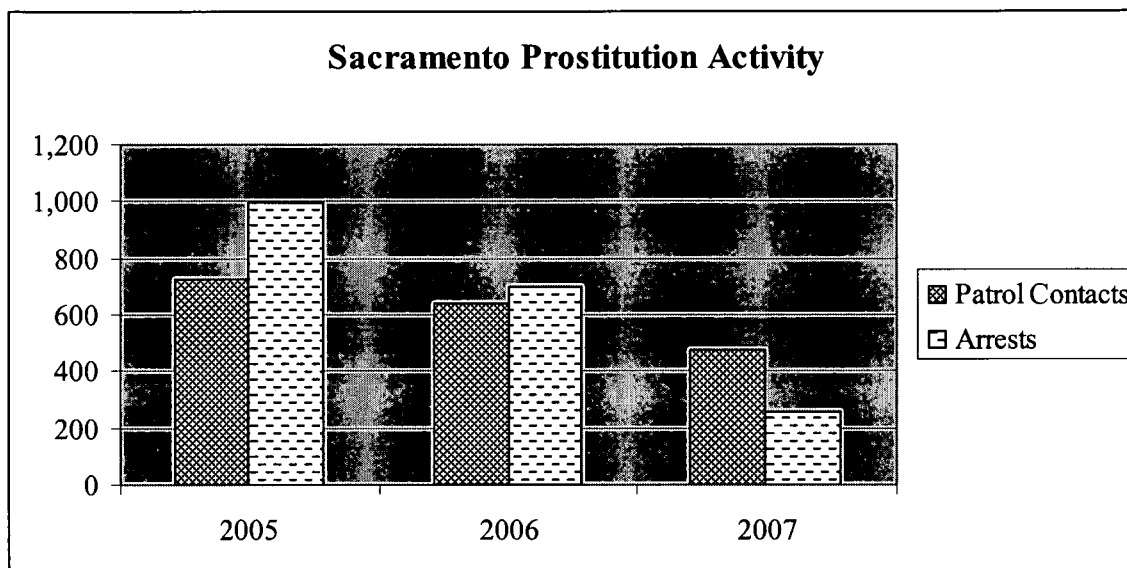


Figure 10. City of Sacramento reported prostitution contacts and arrests.

Enforcement of prostitution laws, as indicated by patrol officer-initiated contacts and arrests by the vice detectives have also waned during the period. Patrol contacts have decreased by 34.9%, while arrests have decreased by 73.8%. Combining the reduction in patrol contacts with the low number of citizen complaints provides further evidence that street prostitution within the City of Sacramento has been displaced. In addition, due to anecdotal information (conversations with vice detectives regarding observations of street prostitute activity) and the increasing popularity of the internet, the internet is increasingly suspected of being the most significant cause of displacement.

Surprisingly, while the Sacramento Police Department has emphasized the arrest of juvenile prostitutes and the arrest of pimps since mid-2006, the number of arrests of juveniles has not significantly increased. It appears that the specific targeting of juvenile

prostitutes as opposed to the targeting of all prostitutes regardless of age has had the effect of decreasing the net arrests of juveniles. In other words, the data suggests that the most effective method of increasing the number of juvenile prostitution arrests may be to increase the number of prostitution arrests in general. However, another possible explanation for the decrease in juvenile prostitution arrests is that the juvenile prostitutes are being used as witnesses or victims in pimping cases, and are not being arrested for prostitution. In fact, the Vice Unit considers juvenile prostitutes as “recoveries,” not offenders. Significant effort is made to avoid charging these youths with a crime, and to reunite them with parents or foster care.

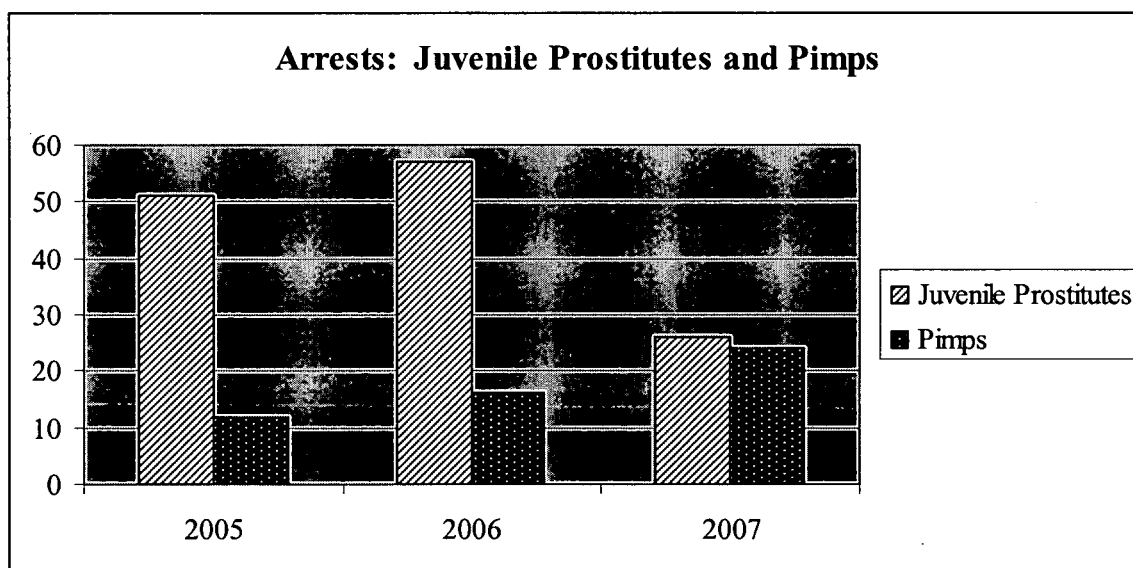


Figure 11. City of Sacramento reported arrests of female juvenile prostitutes and pimps.

As the data shows, the strategy of reunification poses a dilemma. The female juveniles that the Vice Unit encounters as prostitutes are often runaways, runaways who

have been exploited by pimps. Runaways, especially those in Sacramento from the foster care system, tend to be repeaters. And while it is questionable whether treating them like suspects (i.e. arresting them for prostitution) and housing them in juvenile hall is appropriate for a victimized youth, reunification carries with it a high probability that the female juvenile will runaway again. Solely because of the high incidence of repeat runaways in Sacramento, the Police Department should enact a policy mandating the arrest of the female juvenile for charges of prostitution. An arrest for criminal charges with subsequent housing in juvenile hall will greatly alleviate and prevent additional runaway occurrences.

Researchers/Scholars vs. Sacramento

With two notable exceptions, the experience of Sacramento's Vice Unit has been consistent with the predictions and expectations of the existing research in the area of runaways and female juveniles. Both of these exceptions involve runaways.

Reported runaways in Sacramento are not evenly divided by gender. Survey research (NISMART-2) has shown that runaways flee in equal proportions to their gender, 50% of the runaways being male and the remaining 50% being female. Yet in actual reports to the Sacramento Police Department of juvenile runaways, females accounted for 1,149 out of 1,969 incidents in 2007, or 58.4%. That is much closer to a 60/40 split, as opposed to a 50/50 split as should have been anticipated.

NISMART data also strongly suggests that the number of runaways is in decline. This was borne out by the national and state statistics, as both showed significant

decreases in reported runaways over the last five years. However, reported runaways to the Sacramento Police Department have increased significantly over the last three years, with the majority of the increase among females.

This increase in runaways, particularly females, makes Sacramento extremely fertile ground for female juvenile prostitution. In retrospect, it should come as no surprise that the Vice Unit is staying extremely busy investigating female juvenile prostitution.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Current Situation

The national and state rates for runaways are declining. Yet despite that, for the last three years Sacramento has experienced a significant increase in runaways, especially in repeat runaways from its foster care reception center, the Children's Receiving Home. In 2004, within this same time frame, arrests for female juvenile prostitution spiked in California by 35% and it has not returned to its pre-2004 level.

The Sacramento Police Department's Vice Unit, without specific knowledge of the above statistics, changed its "business practices" with regard to prostitution enforcement in 2006, opting to target female juvenile prostitutes and the pimps who exploit them. While the early results from Sacramento's efforts are positive, the data suggests that Sacramento detectives are still growing their newfound skills and techniques. The increase in juvenile prostitution and pimping arrests were not as large as anticipated. However, it is expected that as that as the expertise of Sacramento's vice detectives grows, so will the amount of female juvenile prostitutes and pimps encountered.

The Sacramento Police Department is clearly in its infancy of addressing this problem. But to their credit, the organization is addressing it and making progress. Many (if not most) law enforcement agencies are ignoring this problem. They are continuing to

use their vice detectives to arrest streetwalkers, using the same tactics and techniques that have been used for decades.

It is Not Human Trafficking

To be fair, other agencies do claim to be addressing the problem of female juvenile prostitution. However, they have been addressing it from the very limited angle of human trafficking. On the basis of grants received from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance in 2005 and 2006, 42 task forces have been established throughout the nation. In California alone, law enforcement agencies in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego have received cash awards to identify and interdict human trafficking (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2006). But their primary objective is not the recovery of home grown runaway female juveniles being prostituted by home-grown pimps. Their targets are the “modern day slaveholders” who exploit foreign-born immigrants in America’s agricultural, domestic service, mail order bride, sweatshop, and sex industries. And among the favorite compliance tactics of these traffickers are the withholding of documents and threats to the victim’s family back in their native country (California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery Task Force, 2007).

The issues and problems as discussed in this paper are not the result of human trafficking. Runaways and juvenile prostitution are a domestic problem effecting cities and counties throughout the nation. Unfortunately, this specific domestic problem lacks the international intrigue of human trafficking and likewise, the federal funding

assistance in the form of cash awards that provide for dedicated personnel to address the problem.

Lack of Public Knowledge or Will

But a major question remains. Aside from 42 local jurisdictions in the entire nation that have been awarded a human trafficking grant and can claim some very limited credit for awareness of or intervention in juvenile prostitution, why have other law enforcement agencies not made attempts to address the problem? One reason could be that the response to human trafficking has muddied the waters and allowed law enforcement in general to voice false claims of concern. After all, occasionally human trafficking investigations result in the recovery of foreign born juveniles involved in the sex industry.

But perhaps a better reason is because teenage runaways are truly the voluntary missing; parents/guardians and/or foster care are unable or unwilling to create the necessary public pressure or go to the media to change outcomes. Likely they fear the scrutiny or accusations of neglect that aggressive reporting of runaways would generate. And the law has sided with the runaways, as status offenses are immune from penal consequences.

Additionally, runaways, unlike victims or the involuntary missing, don't generate headlines. And juvenile prostitutes, while being exploited by pimps and customers, also do not make typical victims. Like the pimps and customers, these teen prostitutes are acting in a voluntary manner and are committing a crime. These girls have been

hardened, and absent intense long term intervention and “deprogramming,” often prefer their life on the streets. In short, there appears to be an absence of public knowledge and public will to cause law enforcement to adequately address the problem.

However, an absence of public will is not a valid excuse for the failure of law enforcement or government to act and do the right thing. While individual citizens, special interest groups and the media often bring attention to social problems or injustices, the lack of these entities “beating a drum” offers government the rare opportunity to be proactive, to provide solutions to problems before they become entrenched or reach a “tipping point.”

Law Enforcement Tactical Strategies

Assess Current Tactics

If law enforcement managers were to read this paper, it is hoped that they would find the Literature Review and the Results as presented in this paper very compelling. It should be a call to action for them. Law enforcement managers need to assess their Vice Units. Is the conventional wisdom of repeatedly arresting streetwalkers really a viable strategy? Is arresting street prostitutes ad nauseam really creating public value? Are there other strategies that could create more public value?

The Sacramento Police Department was surprised to learn that only 18 citizen complaints of prostitution activity were received in all of 2007. And this occurred during a time that patrol officer contacts of prostitutes and arrests of prostitutes were at an all time low. If anything, due to a lack of enforcement, it is expected that citizen complaints

would have been much, much higher. Perhaps an earlier analysis of this data would have caused Sacramento to change the mission of its Vice Unit much sooner.

Using Sacramento's model, managers from other law enforcement agencies should collect data on their jurisdiction's:

- runaway rate (increasing or decreasing, male vs. female)
- frequency of running away by location (foster care runaways)
- frequency of running away by person (repeat runaways)
- arrests of prostitutes, juvenile prostitutes, pimps
- calls for service involving prostitution related offenses

It is highly likely that an analysis of this data will lead to the same conclusion that Sacramento reached; that existing resources can and should be diverted to address the growing problem of juvenile prostitution.

Develop New Tactics

Resistance to change from the Vice Unit detectives was Sacramento's biggest obstacle to overcome. Those familiar with law enforcement tactics know that the concept of "officer safety" often dictates what tactics are used. While police officers regularly expose themselves to risk, untoward risk is often a violation of this well-established concept. In the world of undercover officers, a major officer safety violation is to conduct illegal transactions in an unknown subject's home or motel room. Transactions, for the purposes of safety, are to be conducted in public so that back-up officers can observe the event and provide cover or rescue if needed.

Here is where Sacramento faced a dilemma. Female juvenile prostitutes are placed into motel rooms by their pimps. The pimps are often close by, monitoring the situation. Customers must come to the motel room, as the female juvenile prostitutes are not allowed to leave. Yet, it is a violation of officer safety principles for an undercover officer to enter into an unknown motel room and conduct transactions. These kinds of circumstances have gone bad, and officers have been killed or wounded. Yet, without compromising officer safety, how could undercover officers posing as customers enter motel rooms and conduct transactions with prostitutes culminating in the arrest/recovery of the teen prostitute and the arrest/identification of the pimp?

This very dilemma was presented to the members of the Vice Unit. The Vice Unit understood the trade-off, and, undeterred, crafted strategies that would afford them a reasonable (not optimum) amount of safety yet continue to allow them to function in an undercover capacity. While officer safety is important, the members of the Vice Unit agreed as a team that the recovery of a runaway female juvenile being exploited by a pimp was on a higher plane. Sacramento's Vice Unit has developed unique tactics, tactics that permit them to enter motel rooms and maintain their undercover capacity. The specifics of these tactics are regularly shared with inquiring detectives from other agencies.

This is not to say that Sacramento's tactics are superior or will even work for other agencies. The point is that Sacramento has developed new tactics to address the problem. Other tactics, such as those involving surveillance or interviewing, could be

viable alternatives. No longer should law enforcement agencies “put their heads in the sand” regarding internet prostitution. As Sacramento’s experience demonstrates, the internet is rife with female juvenile prostitutes (runaways) being trafficked by pimps. Arguably, this knowledge alone creates a duty, an obligation for law enforcement to act. Law enforcement agencies simply need to review their tactics and change them if they are to have success in arresting juvenile prostitutes and their pimps.

Collaborative Strategies

While missing persons and runaways are among the many responsibilities shouldered by local law enforcement agencies, usually only those instances where foul play is suspected or the missing person is under 12 years of age gain the attention of law enforcement. In these types of situations, section 14213(b) of the California Penal Code defines the missing person as “at risk” and mandates a law enforcement response. All other missing person reports are often just that, a report and not an investigation. No significant follow-up is conducted by the agency. It is a statistical report, often filed by parents/guardians or foster care for liability or statutory purposes. And what may be potentially worse (especially in the case of runaway teenagers), the more frequent the person has been reported missing, the less a law enforcement agency will do. For frequency of running away is interpreted as a chronic problem, meaning that the potential for foul play is negligible. A pattern of running away is deemed by the penal code as behavior that is not considered “at risk.”

Yet in the arena of teenage prostitution, frequency of running away serves as an “at risk” indicator, an indicator of involvement in prostitution. The discovery of the extent of the runaway problem in Sacramento (increase in female runaways by 19%, multiple repeat runaways from foster care) has caused the Sacramento Police Department to begin collaborating with Sacramento County Child Protective Services and the Children’s Receiving Home. These staff members know the girls that frequently run away, and maintain case files on them. These staff members, while qualified social workers and expert interviewers, admittedly don’t have the expertise or the qualification to interview their clients about matters of prostitution.

The social workers had long suspected that many of their runaways were involved in prostitution, and are eager to receive training from the Vice Unit on characteristics and traits of teenage prostitutes. And because of the ability of these runaways to infect the teenage population of the Receiving Home upon their return (glamorize the prostitution experience and cause other teenage girls to join them on their next AWOL adventure), protocols are being established so that the Vice Unit can be contacted at any time for in depth interviews and intervention. The Vice Unit is optimistic that this effort will result in the identification and apprehension of pimps, while at the same time reduce the incidence of teenage prostitution.

Many other ideas and strategies could emanate from continued collaboration among these agencies. It is clear that the foster care system knows of the girls that interest the Vice Unit, and shares their goal of decreasing the problem of multiple

runaways, reducing the incidence of teenage prostitution, and apprehending those that prey on the female runaways.

This is another effort that can easily be duplicated by other law enforcement agencies that likely have a problem with multiple foster care runaways like Sacramento does. The social workers welcomed and embraced the Vice Unit, as the Vice Unit understood their constraints and approached them in a collaborative manner. Sitting at a table having dialogue about the topic produced significant ideas to address the problem. Law enforcement agencies throughout California and the nation should give strong consideration to implementing such a simple and easy strategy.

Policymaker Strategies

Before runaways and female juvenile prostitution garner the attention (and the agenda) of policymakers, law enforcement agencies and social service agencies must first put forth the efforts as discussed in the previous two sections. A record of successes and failures for law enforcement when dealing with the runaway and female juvenile prostitution problem can be compelling to policymakers, especially if the failures are a result of gaps in existing policy. Collaboration among law enforcement and social service agencies will also result in a unified voice, as agencies are working together in an attempt to reduce the problem.

Sacramento, although perhaps still 6-12 months away, is nearing this juncture. An analysis of the Children's Receiving Home client population database could be the next needed step in this direction. While the recidivist runaways exist in both the Police

Department's missing person reports and in the records of the Children's Receiving Home, the Receiving Home's records have the needed depth. Probing the records of the Receiving Home should provide information as to not only the frequency of running away, but the cause of running away. A study as to why these girls repeatedly runaway and their "time to AWOL" (i.e. time lapse between AWOL incidents) could identify gaps in current policies or practices. The gaps could potentially be closed by policymakers.

A key policymaker that is needed to recognize the problem of runaways and juvenile prostitution is the presiding judge of the juvenile court. Each county has one, and this particular judge is in a policymaking position as he/she oversees the government's response to delinquent and dependent youth. Juvenile judges, especially the presiding judge, have jurisdiction in all matters juvenile. For example, a juvenile judge can issue a detention warrant, causing a runaway juvenile to be detained in spite of the current law that mandates non-secure custody and free access to the community. This is but one strategy that a juvenile judge could use on recidivist runaways suspected to be involved in prostitution.

And it has been many, many years since the California legislature last revisited the problem of runaways. Although the incidences of runaways are down throughout the state, the connection between runaways and prostitution likely has never been greater. Since the high school dropout rate is already on the agenda of some legislators, perhaps a window of opportunity will open to re-examine the runaway problem and the relevant laws about status offenses. Solutions to the high school dropout rate could even

potentially impact the runaway rate. Either way, there is the potential to gain political traction on this issue through the efforts and involvement of law enforcement, social services, and the juvenile justice system. The laws involving runaways are in need of review.

Constraints on Solutions

The current state and local budget provides the sufficient constraint and limitation for any solutions. Due to the downturn in the economy, the state of California is facing a deficit estimated to be at \$14.5 billion for fiscal year 2008-2009 (State of California, 2008), while the City of Sacramento is facing a \$58 million deficit for fiscal year 2008-2009 (City of Sacramento Proposed Budget) (City of Sacramento, 2008). A turnaround in revenues is not expected for fiscal year 2009-2010, meaning that deficits for the coming fiscal years will likely be equal or even worse. Yet even without new monies, current resources can be reallocated or policies can be changed to effectively address runaways and female juvenile prostitution.

Conclusion

In the vein of Bardach's (2004) concept of smart practices (as opposed to best practices) and Moore's (1995) concept of creating public value, I have presented strategies to decrease the very real problem of teenage runaways and prostitution. Strategies that are borne out by the research combined with the Sacramento Police Department's experience of targeting female juvenile prostitutes and pimps. The smart practices that I have offered have fit my definition of a smart practice: creating public

value on the cheap. Reallocating existing resources (law enforcement) combined with smarter use of existing resources (law enforcement and Child Protective Services) have the capacity to make a significant impact on this problem. Ultimately, changes in relevant policies and the law are some of the final pieces needed to effectively address this problem.

Because make no mistake about it, runaway juvenile teenagers are prostituting themselves on the internet as you read this. Pimps, with what amounts to immunity in several jurisdictions (not Sacramento!!) are facilitating these illegal transactions. There are 22 separate Craigslist cities/regions in California alone. The website currently has local classified ads for 567 cities in 50 countries worldwide, and is still growing. And each of these sites offers “just about anything, really,” to include romance and erotic services (Craigslist, 2008). Lots and lots of young women, a significant number of them juveniles, are posted offering services.

Postscript

May 2008. I take a weekend evening drive through the “stroll” (areas where street prostitutes frequent). I observe five potential prostitutes, none of them juveniles. At home, a check on Sacramento Craigslist reveals 271 postings for that day alone. Ignore the fact that several hundred postings from previous days are still there. Each and every one of them is a prostitute, a mere phone call away. And I guarantee it, some of them are juveniles; runaway female juveniles being exploited by pimps.

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