**SOC 3290 Deviance**

**Overheads Lecture 23: Prostitution 1**

\* Today we begin our look at prostitution. We cover the following:

-types of prostitutes

-the world of prostitution

-the subculture of prostitution

-other participants in prostitution

-social reaction to prostitution

-prostitution in a global perspective

**Types of Prostitutes:**

\* While there is great variety among prostitutes, common varieties include: streetwalkers, child/adolescent prostitutes, house prostitutes & call girls

\* *Streetwalkers:* low status

less educated

more drug use/ STD’s

work on street/in cars

most subject to arrest

most likely to be abused (customers/pimps/police)

\* *Child prostitutes*:

“Baby pros” (pre-teen to young teenage)

raised/live in chaotic families

have suffered physical/sexual abuse

work part time

\* *Adolescent prostitutes*:

aged 13-17

disorganized families

physically/sexually abused

runaways

often heavy drug users

may be pimped

demand driven by belief youth=less chance of STD’s

\* *House prostitutes*:

work in a brothel

share earnings with operator (the “madam”)

less common now (though in some areas legal)

madam encourages condom use/screens for cops

workers generally don’t stay for extended time

advantage: relative safety/security/comraderie

disadvantage: work hours set/sharing

earnings/vulnerability in room with client

\* *Call girls*: highest status/charge more

more educated/sophisticated/tasteful attire

use answering service/referrals

careful not to give wrong impression in public

often claim lucrative career/ independence?

**The World of Prostitution:**

\* The social/working lives of prostitutes: common features:

- not all victims of child abuse, heavy drug users, suffer low self

esteem , immature, etc.

- such stereotypes come from clinical samples/ those arrested

- many prostitutes don’t differ significantly from conventional

women of same social/demographic background (though their

work places them at greater risk of sexual assault)

- stereotypes about entering prostitution don’t stand up in most

cases: major factor is economic, supplemented by personal

contacts

- most Western prostitutes don’t have a high incidence of STD’s

(except IV drug users)

- many Western prostitutes practice safe sex

**The Subculture of Prostitution:**

\* Prostitutes often hold beliefs about themselves & their work:

- as morally superior/ “honest” about what they do

- “respectable” customers are hypocrites

- prostitution as functional for society/ ‘humanitarian’ focus

- fueled prostitutes civil rights movement (i.e. “right to sell their bodies just as others do in conventional ways”/feminists disagree)

**Other Participants in Prostitution:**

\* The *madam*: - owner/manager of brothel/experienced

- runs establishment as a business

- deals with problems of illegality: customers & police

- recruits employees/ trains/ supervises them/ ensures

harmony & enforces rules

- helps find clients/ ensures satisfaction so will return

- deals with police/ avoids or works out “arrangements”

\* The *pimp*: - usually take virtually all prostitute’s earnings

- tells them to go out & solicit

- maintains “stable” of prostitutes that support him

- male-dominant subculture (money is everything/

conspicuous consumption the norm/ no thought to

future)

- often resort to violence to control women/ yet women

so emotionally entangled often cannot see it as such

\* The *john*: - tend to be men who have slept with a variety of women/ not monogamous

- many prefer quick, uncomplicated sex to dating ritual/

problems of commitment/ others enabled to avoid

rejection

- may be able to enjoy variety of sexual experiences/

practices

- most johns are occasional/ but some are habitual or

compulsive (i.e. with psychological issues)

**Societal Reaction to Prostitution:**

\* In some civilizations, prostitution not considered evil (e.g. ancient “Temple prostitution” seen as sacred)

\* Today regarded as a social evil in most societies, but one that cannot be easily eradicated. Two common responses:

(1) Prostitution legal, but public solicitation is not; or

(2) Prostitution is illegal, but law is not strictly enforced

\* Arguments for strictly enforcing anti-prostitution laws:

(1) It brings with it mugging, robbery or assault

(2) It is a breeding ground for organized crime

(3) It spreads STD’s & AIDS

(4) It subjects innocent citizens to offensive solicitation

(5) It is destructive to public morals

(6) It is a form of female sexual slavery

\* Arguments for legalization:

(1) Most problems associated with prostitution stem from the laws

(2) If legalized, prostitution can be regulated & made safer

(3) Current laws don’t uphold public morals, but encourage police

corruption, moral hypocrisy, & disrespect for the law

(4) Money spent on police enforcement could be better spent

\* Public opinion varies, though many remain against legalization

**Prostitution in Global Perspective:**

\* Prostitution a growing industry worldwide: yet sex workers in other countries suffer more than those in the West (e.g. “Sex tourism”)

\* Many women from former Soviet bloc & Asia either choose, or, more often are forced or tricked into the trade

\* Prostitution more prevalent in developing world than in West (some claim due to poverty, neocolonialism, globalization, traditional patriarchal societies)

**Conclusion:**

\* Today we introduced the prostitution by examining its types, subculture, participants, social reactions, & global context

\* Next class: defining prostitution, common misconceptions, extent of prostitution, its Canadian profile & explanatory theories