**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