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COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND/AOTEAROA (CSEC Project)

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Executive Summary

Definitions

In summary child prostitution is on a continuum of child sexual abuse. It spans from a range of adult sexual use of children (inappropriate touching to the full range of sexual activities) to the actual procuring of clients for the child in exchange for money or goods and may include photographing the young person.

Young people Sexually Active

Of those who worked with children 232 knew of young people under 16 years of age who were sexually active.

Practising Safe Sex

Only 7 respondents thought that the young people they knew who were having sex were practising safe sex., 8% thought they were using safe sex most of the time, 47% thought they were using sex safe some of the time 41% were practising safe sex very little of the time. Respondents in Otago and Southland thought that the young people they knew to be having sex were practising safe sex while Hawkes Bay, East Cape and the Waikato thought that a bigger percent were not practising safe sex.

Awareness

Since sending out the questionnaire counsellors and youth workers have been made more aware that child prostitution could be a factor in some young people's lives.

Young People having Sex For Goods or Money

There were over 190 young people (under 18 years old) described by respondents as having sex for money and goods and over 140 of these children were under the age of 16 years old. . There was an overlap with children who were being abused and being paid money for the 'service' and the younger children were screened out of this survey. The children in this survey were 11 years old upwards.

Contact with Child Prostitutes

Most respondents had regular contact with the young person over several months though there was another group who only saw the young person once or twice. More of these respondents did not know the family circumstances particularly if the young person was over 15 years old. In processing the questionnaire returns some counsellors said they had only seen the young person twice yet they stated that the young person had not been physically or sexually abused. Given the very nature of such abuse and the difficulty people have in disclosing such information it would appear that to say they did not know would have been a more appropriate response

The Provinces They Came From

There were instances of child prostitution reported in country districts and towns as well as cities. They were reported in all districts except Westland which may have been due to our lack of contacts in the area.. While the more populated cities had more instances reported they appeared to follow the population statistics rather than any other pattern.

Gender

There were about 4 females (79%) to each male (21%) reported. There was no category for transgender in this survey and it is possible that transgender were counted as female. The males were reported to come from Auckland, East Coast/Hawkes Bay, Christchurch and the Waikato areas.

Circumstances

There were a variety of background circumstances mentioned by the respondents. These ranged from difficulties with parents who had separated to alcoholic, criminal, and other dysfunctional families. In some families the mother or father had died or the mother had had a mental illness requiring periods of hospitalisation. In other families there was poverty or abuse. There were 64% of child prostitutes known to have been sexually abused and over 68% known to have been physically abused.

Poverty

There were 57% known to have come from poor or very poor families.

Living at Home

Of those over 15 years old there were 30% living at home or with relatives compared with 62% of the under 16 year olds. Forty percent of the over 16 year olds were flatting with others and another 12% were living alone.

Drugs

There is supporting evidence to show that young people who have been abused are more likely to use illegal drugs. Other surveys have shown a high use of drugs when prostitution is involved. In this survey 82% of young people were known to be using drugs and 63% of these had been sexually abused and 72% had been physically abused. These figures could be assumed to be a low estimate since some of these young people were only seen a few times and would have been less likely to divulge such personal details.

Supports Available

While there are a number of counselling agencies that can assist respondents said that many do not have enough information about prostitution and sexual abuse and asked for more specialist training, street workers and respite care.

Satisfaction with the Supports Currently Available

Very few respondents were satisfied with the support available and thought that State Care institutions did not nurture the young people sufficiently.

Stopping Child Prostitution

Main ideas were prosecuting exploiters and abusers of children, reducing the sexual and physical abuse of children and providing respite care and protection for runaways. Some respondents envisioned respite care as Aroha houses on the same lines as those provided by the late Betty Wark.

COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND (CSEC Project)

Aim of the CSEC Project

The primary objectives of this study were:

- 1 To survey the extent and the characteristics of commercial sexual exploitation of children in New Zealand
2. To describe some of the characteristics of commercial sexual exploitation of children in New Zealand
- 3 To produce a report detailing the results of the study and the implications for public health and child welfare policy.

Rationale for this Research

Knowledge of the extent and a description of the driving forces of the problem are required to enable the community to provide the educative, counselling, policy, law changes and economic support to counter child prostitution,. The association between the use of illegal drugs, glue sniffing, street kids, excess consumption of alcohol, disease and prostitution is high which has lead the government to fund the nationwide Prostitutes Collective in a bid to combat the AIDS virus and Hepatitis C. Anecdotal evidence suggests that childhood commercial sexual abuse may precede drug use and/or prostitution but the extent of this association is not well documented. Saphira, (1987), noted that between 92 -97 percent of former drug users (N 300) in the Odyssey House Treatment programme had been sexually abused and all but one woman in prison on sex industry related offenses (N 27) had a personal history of incest).

The clinics for sexually transmitted diseases report that a small number of under age youth present themselves. Clinic workers suggest it is only a percentage of what is actually going on and that young people do not present for fear of prosecution or entrapment. It is suggested that young people may be putting their lives at danger and spreading disease out of fear of the authorities. Information to enable strategic planning around a variety of health and welfare issues is urgently required.

Child prostitution would not continue without the clients/exploiters use of children for commercial sexual exploitation. Information is needed to profile the child prostitutes' clients/exploiters to enable prevention strategies to be put in place.

Definitions

Child prostitution is the use of children for commercial sexual purposes in exchange for money or goods. In New Zealand children are defined as under 16 years old and the United Nations as under 18 years old. New Zealand recognizes the vulnerability of the under 18 year olds by making it an offense to employ women under 18 years old in massage parlours (Massage Parlours Act 1978) but there are no such restrictions and regulations on rap parlours, escort agencies and other ad hoc sex industry businesses.

The United Nations has called for consistency around the world on defining the age of children (under 18 years is the proposal) but to date New Zealand has not responded to this.

Paul Goldstien's definition of adult prostitution was "non-marital sexual service for gain." Usually underage sex is viewed as statutory rape. What has differentiated child prostitution from statutory rape is the exchange of money, drugs or other goods as payment for services rendered.

In some instances from the child's point of view child prostitution may be better renamed survival sex. Many of the children involved are known to have been sexually abused. From a therapist point of view it would be a safe assumption that most people under 16 years who are involved in child prostitution would have been sexually abused to have been in this position. At what point is childhood sexual abuse called prostitution. If a child is paid before or after sex by the offender then the ages of these child prostitutes are from preschoolers to sixteen years old. If a child is paid for sex by several offenders then we are more likely to classify it as an example of child prostitution. Survival sex is also what happens to children who are being sexually abused but money may not be involved but the trade is in meeting the emotional, physical and social needs of the child.

In summary, child prostitution is on a continuum of child sexual abuse, a range of adult sexual use of children from inappropriate touching to the full range of sexual activities to the actual procuring of clients for the child in exchange for money or goods and may include photographing a young person.

Consent to Prostitute

There is an idea that teenagers might choose prostitution as a job and, as such, any intervention is paternalistic and a denial of their rights to make a choice. Making a choice to work as a prostitute assumes a situation of informed choice, of equalling compelling alternatives that would be available to what is, often, a disenfranchised teenager. Such an idea of choice and consent overrides the realities of family breakdown, child abuse, life on the street, life with an addiction and personal damage. The notion of choice puts the responsibility for prostitution on to worker rather than the client/exploiter. Jeffery (1997) maintains that for the vulnerable and often victimised young person there may be too few available and alternative options to choose from.

Barry (1995) suggests that in a liberal idea of consent "it confines sex to a matter of consent and will and does not consider how sex is used, how it is experienced and how it is constructed into power." However, young people often feel they have made a free choice as the alternative is to lose their self respect. There is often a long path of violence, pressure, coercion, hunger and desperation before a young person may get to working in the sex industry. As Catherine MacKinnon (1989) points out, when faced with no alternative, the strategy to acquire self respect and pride is: *I chose it*. Any exploration into child prostitution in New Zealand must take these issues into account and offer some solutions that give the young people self respect rather than try to gather their self image from the predicament that they may find themselves in.

Overseas research

Much overseas research has been based on runaways. In the USA there has been an emphasis on the procuring of teenagers for prostitution by pimps and city based gangs most of which are involved in hard drug dealing. They admit that only a fraction of prostitutes are ever arrested which makes generalisations difficult.

Studies of runaways reveal that over half were victims of sexual or physical abuse at home, 60 percent had parents who abused alcohol and/or drugs, 25 percent had been raped, and almost all came from dysfunctional families. One study found that 78 percent had been forced to submit to sexual intercourse before age 14 and another study found 90 percent of girl prostitutes had been sexually molested (Giobbe, 1990). In one of the first books written on sexual abuse the author makes a connection of how child sexual abuse and more particularly incest trains girls for prostitution, "The father, in effect, forces the daughter to pay with her body for affection and care which should have been freely given. In doing so, he destroys the protective bond between parent and child and initiates his daughter into prostitution." (Herman, 1981)

On the other hand Bracy found that some sought the excitement, adventure, money and sex that they felt others were experiencing by being prostitutes (Bracy, 1999). There has been some evidence to show that some child prostitutes suffer from mental illness, many have 'a host of emotional disorders' and as many as fifty percent have attempted suicide at least once. On the other hand "virtually all teenage prostitutes have tried at least one illicit drug (many have abused legal drugs). (Page 84)

Women involved in prostitution talk about the methods both psychological and physiological that they use to protect their self concept (Hoigard & Finstad, 1992). Most avoid kissing, learn to dissociate and concentrate on making tricks as short as possible. The use of alcohol and drugs both legal and illicit is common.

Why Study Child Prostitution in New Zealand?

In a study of attitudes towards child sex tourism in Europe more people in Ireland, Sweden, Luxembourg, and Austria, thought child sex tourism exists in New Zealand than in their own country (INCRA, 1998).

Currently there is no statistical information on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in New Zealand. Previous research by an Otago medical team suggest that between 20 and 33 percent of girl children have experienced some form of sexual abuse. They reported that 20 percent of the random sample of women they interviewed had been vaginally penetrated before the age of 16 years (Anderson J. & Merry S, 1992). The researchers found that childhood sexual abuse had a significant impact on the later health of the women (Mullins et al 1988). In 1997/98 the Department of Child Youth and Family Services received 18,378 notifications of sexual abuse that required some intervention by social workers (4-5% of the total child population) (New Zealand Government Report, 1998). It is known that early exposure to sexual abuse can lead child victims as teenagers into prostitution and commercial sexual exploitative situations (Briere, 1990).

In the 1998 Annual report on sexually transmitted diseases there were 39 cases of children under 15 years old and 1522 young people between 15 and 19 years old. Some of these cases involve sex in exchange for money or goods.

In New Zealand people under the age of 18 years old are barred from working in massage parlours but this has been difficult to enforce. There is no such legislation for escort agencies, rap parlours, and other sex related businesses. Children on the street are covered by the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 and are considered in need of care and protection but there is little intervention unless a complaint is laid.

Minority groups with socio-economic inequalities are reported to have difficulties accessing health care (Jackson et al 1998) and young people who are having sex for money are no exception. Sexually transmitted diseases if left unattended can lead to serious complications and are more amenable to early intervention (Smith, 1998).

Without more quantitative and qualitative information it is difficult to know the extent of commercial sexual exploitation and child prostitution and how many are seeking health care.

Background

The New Zealand Government attended the World Congress Against Commercial Exploitation of Children in Stockholm, August 1996, but to date has not developed the plan of action agreed to.

With no statistical information on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in New Zealand there has been little effort to study the extent and the characteristics of child prostitution in New Zealand. The relationship between childhood sexual abuse and the commercial sexual exploitation of children has not been delineated.

All victims of commercial sexual offenses are entitled to counselling services paid for by the Sensitive Claims Unit of the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) under the Victim of Offenses Act 1987. Few families continue the counselling through the early pubertal years when crisis are likely to occur as the child grapples with the cognitive significance of the abuse and the emotional fallout from this developmental stage.

An amendment of the Crimes Act 1961, promoted by ECPAT, makes it an offense for a New Zealand citizen or resident to engage in commercial sexual activity with children overseas. It is also an offence to promote or assist people to travel overseas where one of the purposes of the trip is to engage in commercial sexual activity with children.

Children on the street are covered by the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 and are in need of care and protection. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most under-age prostitutes work at escort agencies, for a pimp/s or on the street. Some, who are alienated from family, are in loosely formed groups which support each other. There are steps being taken to legalize prostitution and regulate the industry. The age for such work will be 18 years or over. New Zealand categorizes juvenile offenders are those under 17 years of age and children between 10 and 13 years of age can only be charged with murder, manslaughter or minor traffic infringements. This definition of a young person's criminal responsibility is not widely known among young people and fear of punishment may prevent young people coming forward to get health and welfare assistance.

The Aim of the Study

The intention of this study is to investigate the extent and characteristics of child prostitution in New Zealand.

Method

Questionnaires (1000) were sent to key informants, most of whom were counsellors in school or welfare organisations, Police, social workers, Community Alcohol Services, community workers, Maori Wardens, psychologists, Family Planning Clinics, Youthline, and other front-line workers throughout New Zealand. The questions covered the

background of known cases, known supports for child prostitutes and whether these were adequate and asked for suggestions on ways to stop the commercial exploitation of children. Child Youth and Family Services were asked to participate but seemed unable to do so within the time frame.

Results

Number of Respondents

There were over 100 questionnaires returned as the address was inaccurate or they did not work with this age group. Many of those who did not work with this age group were interested in the topic while others admitted that they had not thought about the possibility.

There were 280 respondents who did work with children.

Of those who worked with children 232 knew of young people under 16 years of age who were sexually active.

The respondents thought that only 7 respondents thought that the young people they knew who were having sex were practising safe sex, 8% thought they were using safe sex most of the time, 47% thought they were using sex safe some of the time and 41% were practising safe sex very little of the time. Respondents in Otago and Southland thought the young people they knew to be having sex were practising safe sex while Hawkes Bay, East Cape and Waikato respondents thought a bigger percent were not practising safe sex.

Table I Children Thought to be Practising Safe Sex

All of the time	7	3%
Most of the time	21	8%
Some of the time	127	47%
A little of the time	100	37%
None of the time	10	4%
Don't Know	52	19% of Total

Sex For money or Goods

Of the 280 respondents, 101 said they knew of at least one child prostitute. At least 38 counsellors knew of more than one. Overall there were 195 child prostitutes described by the respondents and over 145 of these children were under the age of 16 years old. . There was an overlap with children who were being abused and being paid money for the 'service' some of whom had multiple exploiters/offenders. The younger children (aged as young as six years old) were screened out of this survey. One of the overall features of the survey pointed to the notion that child prostitution is on a continuum of child sexual abuse. The children included in this survey were over 10 years old.

Contact with child prostitutes

Most respondents had regular contact with the young person over several months and a smaller group saw the young person once or twice only. The less contact they had with the young person the less likely they knew the family circumstances, particularly if the young person was over 15 years old.

Table II Amount of Contact with Young Person

Weekly	53	27%
Regularly	46	24%
A Few Times	73	37%
Once or twice	15	8%
No response	8	4%

There were no reported instances of child prostitutes in Westland. There were no counselling services listed in the yellow pages in this area and apart from truancy officers and Police Youth Aid the researchers found few other contacts.

Table III Child Prostitute by Regions

Region	Under 16 yrs	16 - 18 yrs	Total	Total Percent
Auckland	34	23	57	21%
Wellington	9	11	20	7%
Northland	12	17	29	11%
Bay of Plenty/Rotorua	9	12	23	9%
Waikato	21	13	34	13%
Taranaki	7	2	9	3%
East Coast/Hawkes Bay	18	1	19	7%
Wanganui/Manuwatu	2	4	6	2%
Nelson/Marlborough	2	7	9	3%
Canterbury	25	21	46	17%
Westland	0	0	0	0%
Otago/Southland	6	10	16	

There were instances of child prostitution reported in country districts and towns as well as cities.

Table IV City and Country Instances Reported

Large City	88	45%
Provincial City	61	31%
Provincial Town	26	14%
Country District	20	10%

Age

In our survey there were children as young as six who were sexually abused and given money as well as favours and goods. It was not always clear whether there were multiple abusers/exploiters of these children and they were not included in this data. However in our interviews with Crown Law it appears there are many instances of childhood sexual abuse that involve the use of bribes in the form of money, favours, and goods and it is on a continuum with the commercial sexual exploitation of children. This may be one factor that leads children who have been sexually abused onto sexual promiscuity or prostitution. In this study the respondents knew 64% of child prostitutes had been sexually abused and over 68% were known to have been physically abused.

Table V Age of Child Prostitutes

11 years	3	2%
12 years	15	8%
13 years	29	15%
14 years	39	20%
15 years	58	30%
16 years	33	17%
17 years	17	8%

Gender

There were 174 females (79%) and 21 males (21%) reported. There was no category for transgender in this survey and it is possible that transgender were counted as female. The males were reported to come from Auckland, East Coast/Hawkes Bay, Christchurch and the Waikato areas. While there were male child prostitutes mentioned as coming from the Wellington area in our interviews none were recorded on the returned questionnaires.

Circumstances

There were a variety of background circumstances mentioned by the respondents. These ranged from difficulties with parents who had separated to alcoholic, criminal, and other dysfunctional families. In some families the mother or father had died or the mother had had a mental illness requiring periods of hospitalisation. In other families there was poverty or abuse. Less than one in ten came from families with an estimated above average income.

In the interviews there were regional variations. In one district a doctor estimated at least 20 prostitutes under 16 years old presented in 1999 but she stated that other known cases were not presenting and still others used false identity and were included in the older age group statistics (personal communication). Some, particularly young females, may attend family planning clinics while others do not seek medical attention. In another district young tertiary students who had been abused in childhood were soliciting to support their studies, while others who had been abused were supporting drug habits for themselves and sometimes for boyfriends. Those that were known to have been physically abused were more likely to be known to be using drugs. This difference was not apparent with those known to have been sexually abused. The 59 young people where the respondent did not know of any sexual abuse were known to use drugs more often than those known to be sexually abused but the difference did not reach significance.

Table VI Estimated Income of Family

Above Average Income	18	9%
Average	55	28%
Poor	73	37%
Very Poor	39	20%
Don't Know	10	5%

The amount of physical and sexual abuse reported by the respondents supported what they considered were the family problems that made these young people vulnerable to

commercial sexual exploitation. Over a third of the respondents did not know whether the young person had been sexually abused and almost two thirds knew that the child prostitute had been sexually abused. There were 68% of respondents who had said the child prostitutes had been physically abused.

Table VII Background circumstances

Alcoholic family	37
Sexual Abuse	32
Dysfunctional family	27
Criminal family	15
Drug Involvement	15
Divorce/ Blurred Roles	13
Mental health problems	11
Group of Friends	8
Violent family	7
Poverty	7
Behaviour problems	6
Immigrant family	6
Lured by Paedophile	6
Mother dead	6
State care	5
Gender Identity Problems	1
Total	195

There is supporting evidence in the literature to show that young people who have been abused are more likely to use illegal drugs. Other surveys have shown a high use of drugs when prostitution is involved. In this survey 82% of young people were known to be using drugs and 63% of these had been sexually abused and 72% had been physically abused. These figures could be assumed to be a low estimate since some of these young people were only seen a few times and would have been less likely to divulge such personal details.

With such a high rate of family problems it is not surprising that many children runaway on to the streets. This does have a seasonal variation and the police note that there are more runaways during the summer months.

Table VIII Where the Child Prostitutes Under 16 years old were Living

At Home with one or both Parents	64	44%
With Relatives	26	39%
On the Street	24	17%
Flatting with Others	23	16%
Living Alone	4	3%
Other	4	3%

Forty percent of the 16 year olds and over were flatting with others and another 12% were living alone. Of those that were 16 years old and over there were 30% living at home or with relatives compared with 62% of the under 16 year olds.

Supports Available

There was a wide range of support mentioned by the respondents and the most frequently mentioned was a range of counselling services.

Table IX Services offering support to child prostitutes

Counselling	75
CYF/Youth Aid	23
Youth Workers	19
Health/Family Planning	11
Prostitutes Collective	10
Alcohol and Drug Services	6
WINZ/Employment	1
CAB?Information Services	1
Total	146

While they all named some services few respondents were satisfied with the services offered.

Table X Satisfaction with services

Very Satisfied	3	3%
Satisfied	23	24%
Some of the time	41	43%
A Little of the Time	26	27%
None of the time	2	2%

Stopping the Commercial Exploitation of Children

Respondents were asked for ideas about ways to stop prostitution and also ways their agency could do more. Both these questions gave a variety of suggestions that could be considered.

Suggested Strategies

Target Clients:

Make men responsible. In one area some men who were concerned about prostitution formed a group to address clients when they tried to pick up young people or dropped them off. Others suggested laying more complaints to the police and to take down number plates to identify the men. More resources to crackdown on child pornography were also suggested.

Post Trauma Issues: Make ACC more responsible for children under sensitive claims, Education programme about the effects of abuse and its victimisation effects, empowering children with respite care, alternative options, strategies for safety and transition from victim to survivor.

Education

- a) young people
- b) parents and general population
- c) specialist staff training, youth workers, school counsellors,
- d) get more information from research and the young people themselves

Resources for youth

More resources were suggested to increase the numbers of youth workers and social workers in the streets, more available STD clinics, earlier intervention to alienated and abused youth in schools, respite care for those already on the streets where they can drop in for food and shelter, reduce family poverty especially families with children. Other ideas that would improve children's lives were to stop violence and abuse in children's lives, stiffer penalties for offences against children, registration and legalisation of prostitution and brothels, ban brothels, get rid of porn, train parents, and have more CYF involvement and reduce their waiting lists.

Table XI How to stop the commercial sexual exploitation of children .

Ways of Stopping Commercial Exploitation of Children	Total	%
Addressing Post trauma/ self esteem/empowerment/assistance,	86	23
Education Young People/TV campaign	66	17
Practical Alternatives lifestyle options/job training Youth resources	48	13
Parent /General Education	48	13
Hold Clients accountable/ Men stopping men from using them	37	10
Respite Care No questions	27	7
Social workers on the streets	18	5
Reduce poverty	13	3
Stiffer Penalties	9	2
More information, speaking out	7	2
Registration/legalization	6	2
CYF Involvement/ more resourcing	5	1
Get rid of porn	2	
Close Brothels	3	
Specialist group & provide staff training	1	
Stop abuse & violence	3	
Improve STD Clinics	2	
Grand Total	381	100%

Prevention

Prevention can be seen under three traditional stages.

Primary Prevention

This would be stopping the areas that lead to the commercial sexual exploitation of children such as getting rid of pornography, child abuse and violence, stopping the sexual exploitators of children, and training young men not to be abusers/offenders/exploitators.

Secondary There should be better resourcing and care for abused children, training males not to be abusers/offenders/exploitators, reducing youth poverty, and free tertiary education.

Tertiary Make abusers/offenders/exploitators accountable, more social workers out on the streets at night, reducing poverty and assisting dysfunctional families, provide respite care for runaways.

Discussion

This first known attempt at surveying the extent of child prostitution in New Zealand has led to several pieces of information. By undertaking this study a number of counsellors became aware that child prostitution could be a factor in young people's lives.

There are a number of cases of commercial sexual exploited children throughout New Zealand/Aotearoa both in cities and in country districts.

In processing the questionnaire returns some counsellors had said they had only seen the young person twice yet they stated that the young person had not been physically or sexually abused. Given the very nature of such abuse and the difficulty people have in disclosing such information it would appear that to say they did not know would have been a more appropriate response. This suggests that counsellors may need more training in the delicate nature of disclosure of abuse and to ensure that the information is freely given.

Interviews suggested that boys were sexually exploited in some areas but there were no questionnaires supporting the interviewers statements. The surveys returned were only from those respondents who were motivated to respond to the survey. The male call research carried out by the New Zealand AIDS Foundation (1996) found that 96 males under 20 years old had been paid for sex with a man in the last six months (P.Saxton, personal communication). In South Auckland Te Huarahi Oranga O Te Po Ki Manukau out reach services run a mobile service and 25 % of the people they assist are between 13 and 18 years old and over 30% are gay males.

There were no discernable double ups on the descriptions of the young people and the numbers are probably a conservative estimate. There was no information given from Child Youth and Family Services and very little from truancy officers.

The backgrounds of the children reported were similar to that in the literature (Giobbe, 1990) and there was mention of a boyfriend and or gang involvement in some instances but not the widespread pimping reported in overseas research.

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