

Handbook of Sex Trafficking

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Editors

Handbook of Sex Trafficking

Feminist Transnational Perspectives

 Springer

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Preface

We called this book *Handbook of Sex Trafficking: Feminist Transnational Perspectives* to reflect the most recent scholarship and practice for mental health clinicians working with survivors of the commercial sex trade. We have brought together authors from a variety of perspectives who have knowledge of working within the commercial sex trade industry. Given the recent focus on the topic of sex trafficking, we have included chapters with information from both academic scholars and those who are working in this area in various countries.

The term *transnational feminism* is now being used to denote what is perhaps the fourth wave of feminist scholarship that originated with the social science studies of the global economy and politics that transcends national and even regional borders. This is often due to supply and demand, with the demand for sex workers taking place in countries with resources to afford the trafficking industry and the supply that can be filled by those poorer countries, often in the Third World or colonized areas, where the supply is available and people are willing to emigrate to another country. Although the politics of the various governments continue to play a role, in fact, movement across borders for both people and goods has become much easier than ever reported previously.

The *feminist* part of the definition includes the study of power relationships and how gender, economics, and class impact on migration. In this book we particularly study the sex workers, many of whom migrate with or without knowing what the sex work will entail. We also discuss the conditions that give rise to the desire for migration, the economics that particularly impact women and the LGBTQ population, and the gender politics that intersect with vulnerability and recovery. We understand that our analyses come from sex workers who have left what is called “the life” and not from sex workers currently inside, often working under the belief that they stay because of free choice. We have read their reports in the literature but have not been persuaded that they entered the life all that voluntarily. Many sex workers have witnessed or experienced other forms of gender violence such as child abuse, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and harassment, and rape in addition to poverty, hunger, poor or no education, and lack of opportunity. Some are kidnapped and sold into trafficking, while others are lured and recruited in specific

ways, but most go through certain similar stages of commitment to their new work that are visible when we study large numbers of girls and women. One stage of commitment occurs when the sex worker makes the choice to remain in the life without coercion and with the knowledge of what the work will encompass. After all, if everyone entered the commercial sex trade voluntarily because it is such a desirable job, why would it be necessary for traffickers to lure, trick, purchase, kidnap, and enslave the women into their stables? Nonetheless, we continue to explore and respect the discussions of choice and consent provided by those active sex workers themselves.

The issue of sex trafficking has been added to the list of gender-based violence topics during the past 20 years following a period of about 30 years of feminist discourse around the issue of consent and choice for those women (and some heterosexual men and identified LGBTQ persons). Both groups of feminists believe that sex trafficking comes about because of the sexual, economic, and inequitable development and globalization of the world causing some girls and women to believe they have no other future. Both groups believe in the feminist understanding that the inequality between women and men causes men to have more power than women and therefore more options to earn money and have a future in the world. This is a social construction of the problems we are discussing. The divergence comes about with the issue of whether or not some sex workers have consented to work in the commercial sex industry with understanding of what is required. One group, often referred to as the “transnational anti-trafficking networkers,” believes that such consent is impossible because of the intersecting conditions that cause the lack of other choices, while the other group, often referred to as the “sex worker activists,” claims that a large number of sex workers who migrate know what the work entails and freely choose it.

The differences between these two groups, despite their feminist similarities, are important for those of us who are interested in prevention and recovery when working with survivors of sex trafficking. If our portrayal of the typical sex worker is one who is naively duped into their life of horror from which escape is nearly impossible, we miss the positive parts of the experience that keep these girls and women going back to what they call “the life.” Human rights networks suggest that prostitution should be seen as a form of labor engaged with self-determination and not as a result of violence against women although they do concede that sex trafficking may not be voluntarily entered into by many young girls, boys, and LGBTQ-identified persons. In these discussions there is often a distinction made between prostitution and sex trafficking with the former being voluntary and the latter coerced. Other feminists conclude that the gendered structure of life prohibits true free choice. We include these discussions in various articles throughout this book, hoping that readers will form their own opinions, listening to both sides of the story.

In the first part, we include chapters that describe many of the compromises made internationally with the two most important actions taken: the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons* (2000) and the *US Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (PL-106-386)* (2000) which has been reauthorized every 5 years with the latest in 2015 titled *Justice for Victims of Trafficking*

Act (PL-114-22) in response to desiring a greater emphasis on programs for victims rather than criminalization of traffickers. Belle gives an excellent account of the typical definitions used in the field of study and explains some of the differences in philosophy, while Walker and Gaviria further describe the US actions around the world. Dryjanska argues that sex trafficking is akin to modern-day slavery, while Pataki and Robison argue just as forcefully that choice and consent must be considered. Mesa adds the view of a government agency creating policy and offering services. Drain looks at sex trafficking from an organizational systems view. We believe this is the essence of *transnational feminism*: understanding these issues from all sides of the discussion.

There is no question that sex is power for women. But does commercial sex work actually give power to women? Those of us who are mental health workers see so many who are harmed by their work, similar to others who have been victims of other forms of violence against women. The stigmatization and degradation are all part of the job. The activist sex workers claim that decriminalizing it and providing prostitutes with the human rights and labor conditions typically found in a job would eliminate the negative effects of prostitution. The finances behind what is sometimes called the transnational shadow market of trafficking make it difficult to combat and demand change. Yet, legalization of prostitution in the Netherlands has not had such an impact although health conditions for the workers and police protection have definitely improved some job conditions.

One of the issues needing more information is the impact racism has had on part of the sex worker's conditions. We explore the question of who are the victims in the second part looking at race, culture, ethnicity, poverty, and war as they intersect with children, gender, and sexual orientation. Until recently, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the typical sex worker was a woman of color, usually from Asia or Africa. Today, Russian women, especially those from the Ukraine, are in demand even in Iowa.¹ Gill and Gaviria describe the high risk factors that make a girl vulnerable to being seduced by a trafficker, and Barron describes the risk factors for boys and men as well as those identifying as LGBTQ. Sarachaga-Barato writes about child brides who are forced into marriages with adult men who have raped them and then sexually exploit them for their own commercial gain. War has always been associated with the rape and pillage of the women in a country. Antonopoulou describes the plight of the Syrian children who are forced to flee their war-torn country in search of a better life. With or without their families, many of these children end up being trafficked as a way to survive.

In the third part, we turn our attention to the traffickers about whom less is known. Sidun describes what we do know about the traffickers and presents some ideas about what to do about them. We include issues around the seduction of

¹ See, e.g., Erin Murphy, Sex Trafficking in Iowa Widespread, Experts Say, *The Gazette*, Aug. 26, 2016 <http://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/government/sex-trafficking-in-iowa-widespread-experts-say-20160826>; Lee Rood, Des Moines Identified as Top 100 Human Trafficking Site, *The Des Moines Register*, Nov. 16, 2016 <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2016/11/16/des-moines-identified-top-100-human-trafficking-site/93952890/>.

children by other children and gangs, an important source of those sex trafficked. Lambine and Gaviria suggest that sex trafficking is more lucrative than even the drug trade for gangs as it is not a commodity that gets used up. We also include several stories by Antonopoulou about missing children and a possible sex trafficking ring with parents who themselves may have been trafficked at one point in their lives, engaging in selling their boys in Greece. Sarachaga-Barato and Walker attempt to understand the phenomenon of women who were once victims and then become the victimizer of other girls and women. Many of those who are arrested cover for the usually male head trafficker, so the statistics make it appear that there are more women who are in charge than actually are. Finally, Alicea and Gopal describe the role of financial institutions and economic structure that keeps trafficking a flourishing business despite all the laws and policies outlawing it.

Preventing people from being trafficking victims must start when boys and girls are young, learning to recognize the signs of seduction. Gopal describes the Safe Schools curriculum used in the schools that both boosts the youth's self-esteem and mood and educates them of the dangers behind the seduction. The SAFECHR group led by Gopal has worked with community leaders to help them be aware of these dangerous lures. A fascinating new program developed by groups of long-distance truckers and airline flight attendants has saved many of those trafficking victims being transported when recognized by a trained person who had learned what to do is described in Trimble, Rivard and Gopal's chapter.

In Part V, we present the discussion about trauma treatment and Walker's STEP and Mahler's description of Complex Trauma Treatment, two evidence-based treatment programs with the caveat that most of the psychotherapy treatment has been studied in the United States and not in other countries around the world. Nonetheless, it is important to provide these tools for clinicians who will see survivors needing help in recovery from their time as a sex worker. Meichenbaum describes the most important evidence-informed core therapeutic tasks that those who were sex trafficked need to become survivors. It is important to identify these survivors as experiencing complex post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms rather than personality disorders that do not lend to designing helpful interventions.

Survivors who get out describe their feelings from the abuse, degradation, and harm done to their health and well-being. Dealing with the feelings of betrayal when the man (or sometimes woman) who made them promises reneged or failed to mention the rest of the deal when luring them into "the life" is similar to battered women who feel betrayed by the loving partner who turns abusive when he doesn't get her to do what he wants or the child who feels betrayed when her father or his priest demands sex in return for love. These are difficulties psychotherapists trained in trauma-specific approaches have learned to help clients deal with. Re-empowerment, a specific feminist therapy intervention, is helpful in these situations as are many of the other techniques working with regaining power and control to rebuild a future with choice. Adapting many of the trauma-specific techniques to the sex trafficking victim seeking recovery is still a daunting task. Needle applies her work with women and couples who have had sexual issues to those survivors who may want to engage in a negotiated couple relationship also in this part.

One of the major areas affected when people are exposed to trauma is their ability to recover with resilience should a future trauma occur. Meichenbaum has explored the various approaches to restore resilience in survivors who are known to succumb to new traumatic experiences without rebuilding their capacity to heal and recover. He also includes a chapter on special ways to bolster resilience in LGBTQ youth who have come from homes where they witnessed or experienced abuse even prior to having been trafficked. In that chapter, he presents a checklist of core tasks that can help rebuild resilience.

In Part VI we present Dykstra's chapter discussing the program utilized by many religious organizations in attempting to restore hope, faith, and spirituality in those recovering from being sex trafficked. Her organization has developed this curriculum used to train others in countries around the world where the culture trusts their religious advisors more than a psychotherapist. Gopal shares the Safe Village Project where the girls and women go from having been trafficked to safe homes as a transition step toward recovery.

We end the book with Part VII where we examine what else is known about sex trafficking and the most recent statistics provided by the various groups dealing with this issue around the world. Obviously, Mahler, Sarachaga-Barato, and Gaviria's compilation is incomplete; these numbers change daily despite our best efforts to document the help given to those who wish to leave the life. Nonetheless, they give an important glimpse into the enormity of the problem around the world. Lambine gives us a glimpse of the work going on in the United Kingdom, while Antonopoulou focuses on Greece and Gaviria and Masias on Latin America as an attempt to describe the similarities and differences in each of these regions. We close with Cook's description of the plight of the Yazidi who are enslaved in the world of the Islamic terrorists. Women's rights are woefully absent in many regions of the world and compromised in other areas including those of Europe and the United States where it is often thought that there is more freedom than actually experienced.

In the end, if we truly come from a perspective of transnational feminism, we must consider the possibility that the middle-class values of obtaining gender equality, which may indeed help eradicate the commercial sex trade industry or at least sex trafficking, may be highly oppressive to poor women of color and further cause them to be trapped in the role of sexual servants if the other intersections are not also addressed. These include the intersection of poverty, race, economics, politics, class, as well as gender issues. We hope you keep this perspective in mind as you read through the various chapters in this book.

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Dugal Trimble is from Columbus, Ohio, a 17-year veteran of the trucking industry and now he currently works in the hospitality industry. He founded the Truckers Missing Child Project in 2012 to bring awareness to the transportation industry of all the missing children in the United States and hopefully help bring them home along the way.



Lenore Walker is a pioneer in studying the psychological impact of interpersonal violence and trauma. She began her early work when she was on the faculty at Rutgers Medical School at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey in the early 1970s at first studying psychological effects from child abuse, then added battered women, and now sex trafficking and other forms of gender violence. Her later research funded by the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health named the Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS) and helped introduce it into the courts around

the USA and the world. In the 1980s it was her work on BWS that helped battered women who killed their abusive partners in self-defense get that testimony admitted in criminal trials. She had an independent practice of psychology for many years as well as contributed to policy development in many countries around the world as Director of the International Domestic Violence Institute. Although she has now retired from her long academic career at Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology, she continues her research there as Professor Emeritus. She also maintains a small forensic private practice specializing on cases where gender violence issues are raised and is a keynote speaker and consultant around the world. Walker has published over 20 books on psychology covering women's issues, gender violence, and forensic psychology. Her most recent is the *Battered Woman Syndrome, 4th Edition*, in 2017 and in 2018 she has two new books in press: one co-edited on *Sex Trafficking* and one co-authored with her husband, David Shapiro, on *Forensic Practice for the Mental Health Clinician: Getting Started, Gaining Experience & Avoiding Pitfalls*. A master clinician and trainer, she has joined together with Dr. Rachel Needle to present the new trauma program for *Innovative Professional CEs*. To learn more about Dr. Walker and all her activities, please visit her website, www.drlenoreewalker.com.



Yvonne G. Williams has been working in the anti-trafficking field since 2004 and is the screenwriter and Second Unit Director for the first feature film produced about human trafficking in the USA, *A Dance for Bethany*. She is the co-founder of Trafficking in America Task Force, Inc. founded in 2011 and currently is a member of the Advisory Board with Jerome Elam, sex trafficking survivor; she served as co-host of the weekly television program, *Trafficking in America Now*, in 2011–2012. She served as the Coordinator for National Educators to Stop Trafficking (NEST) from 2013 to 2016. Yvonne has spoken at universities, conferences, churches, schools, and other organizations

across the USA bringing education and awareness about human trafficking in America. She is the recipient of the Middle TN and the State of Tennessee’s Professional Advocate of the Year Award of 2011 presented by the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare, and the Visionary Award presented by TIATF in 2014.