

Continuum of Exploitation: The Role of Inclusive Sexual Health Education in Preventing Human Trafficking of Minors

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Overview

As part of the 2022 Global Meeting on Law and Society in Lisbon, key points of this paper, “Continuum of Exploitation: the Role of Inclusive Sexual Health Education in Preventing Human Trafficking of Minors”, which was published in the 2021 Charleston Law Review, will be discussed in the context of this panel:

Vulnerable Gender:

Protection Against Legal Inequality, Social Exclusion, and Sexual Exploitation

My connection to this issue

Professional

- Working in the anti-trafficking movement as an advocate and researcher; the injustice of seeing my colleagues and community members simultaneously be infantilized and ignored by researchers and advocates who do not understand the complexities of trafficking prevention and services for survivors
- Wanting to see the anti-trafficking movement broaden their view from two things: the bifurcated argument of “sex trafficking vs. labor trafficking” and seeing exploitation as a continuum rather than trafficking as a destination

Personal

- Intersectional identities of growing up as a multiracial queer transgender person with multi-generational family connection to sex work, sexual abuse, violence, addiction, housing/food instability and poverty, stemming from gender disparities and lack of social services
- Personal experiences with labor exploitation

Social Exclusion in Sexual Health Education



Female Inequity

- Gendered Double Standards

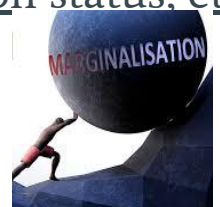
LGBTQ+ Youth

- Omission/active silence
- Legal Prohibition

Abstinence-Only Until Marriage Education

- Religion and morality
- Cultural Prohibition

Intersectional Marginalization: class, race, ability, documentation status, etc.



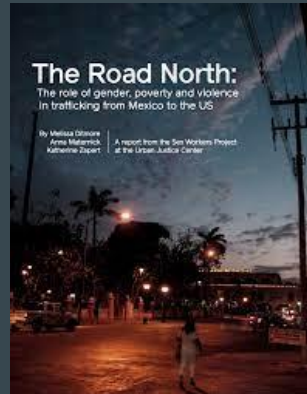
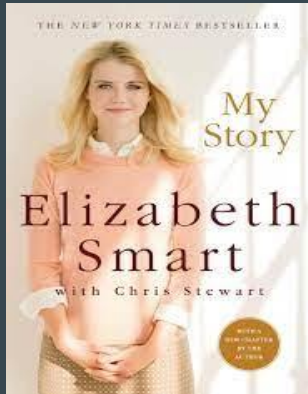
Legal Inequity for marginalized identities



Criminalization and Profiling of:

1. Queer sex or queer people
2. Transgender individuals
3. Cis gender women
4. People of color
5. Migrants
6. Sex Workers
7. Survivors of Exploitation

Case Studies in Sexual Exploitation



1. **Elizabeth Smart**
 - Chewing gum metaphor

 1. **“The Road North” Migrants**
 - Anti-Sexuality contributed to their trafficking experiences
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Takeaways

- Myriad factors impact the well-being of Minors. **Exploitation is a spectrum**, with human trafficking being at an extreme end. Like a snowball falling down a mountain, exploitation gains traction, power, and velocity from compounded layers of systemic and interpersonal abuses.
- Because of larger socio-political structures, girls of color, LGBTQ youth, and children living in poverty are at a much higher risk of trafficking, but in order to robustly address this issue, we must **evolve to identify vulnerable groups as actually holistic individuals who have been locked out of affirmation and autonomy, rather than simply “risks”**.
- **“Good sexual citizenship”** can only be attained when those consenting citizens actually want and enjoy the sex they are having.
- Trafficking prevention repeatedly points back to robust **sexual education, de-stigmatization, and inclusive messaging**.
- **The exploitation continuum faced by Minors requires systemic social and legal changes rooted in bodily autonomy** in order to address safety on a “macro sexual education level”. Reforms like destigmatization of LGBTQ+ identities (and experiences), decriminalization of prostitution, related crimes, and increased social service support for survivors of exploitation are needed in order to truly engage with the nuanced and complex issue of minor trafficking.