

FINAL REPORT

**The Dynamics of Trafficking, Smuggling and Prostitution:
An Analysis of Korean Women in the U.S. Commercial Sex Industry**

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International Sex Trafficking of Korean Women
The United States (Western Region) Module

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Definitions.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Notes on Research and Study Methods	5
The Trafficking and Smuggling of Korean Women in the United States for Sexual Exploitation: Estimates of Magnitude and Scope.....	7
The Korean-based Prostitution and Smuggling Network.....	15
Recruitment.....	19
Background and Experiences of Korean Women in U.S. Sex Industry: A Summary	23
Sex Trafficking, Smuggling and Prostitution: The Often Blurry Line for Korean Women in the United States	25
Push, Pull, and Demand: Domestic Prostitution and Migration from Korea the U.S. Sex Industry	30
Policy Issues and Questions.....	37
Conclusion.....	40
Appendix A.....	42
Appendix B. Major Sex Trafficking Raids in the Western United States Involving Korean Nationals, for 2000-2006.....	59

Definitions

Human Trafficking. *U.S. Federal law* defines trafficking in persons as “sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age”; or “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.”

The United Nations’ *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* defines human trafficking as follows: “‘Trafficking in persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, or abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

Note. For practical reasons, this report generally follows the official U.S. definition of human trafficking. However, we find the UN’s definition, which focuses more strongly on “exploitation” as key element of trafficking, to be a more useful representation of real-world trafficking situations.

Human Smuggling. The *U.S. Department of State* defines human smuggling as “the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person(s) across an international border, in violation of one or more countries laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents. Often, human smuggling is conducted in order to obtain a financial or other material benefit for the smuggler, although financial gain or material benefit are not necessarily elements of the crime. For instance, sometimes people engage in smuggling to reunite their families. Human smuggling is generally with the consent of the person(s) being smuggled, who often pay large sums of money. The vast majority of people who are assisted in illegally entering the United States are smuggled, rather than trafficked.”

While analytically separate, it is important to understand that smuggling may lead to situations of human trafficking. As the Department of State notes, “[s]muggled persons may become victims of other crimes. In addition to being subjected to unsafe conditions on the smuggling journeys, smuggled aliens may be subjected to physical and sexual violence. Frequently, at the end of the journey, smuggled aliens are held hostage until their debt is paid off by family members or others. It is also possible that a person being smuggled may at any point become a trafficking victim.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000. This was the first comprehensive federal law in the United States explicitly designed to “protect victims of trafficking” and to “prosecute their traffickers.” In 2003, the Bush Administration authorized more than \$200 million to combat human trafficking through the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (TVPRA). TVPRA renews the U.S. government’s commitment to identify and assist victims exploited through labor and sex trafficking in the United States.

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Introduction

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is often represented as a problem of the poorest or least developed countries. To be sure, severe poverty puts tremendous pressure on individuals to find alternative ways of earning a living; it also further exacerbates the economic vulnerability of both individuals and of whole communities. This, in turn, creates an undeniable basis for severe forms of exploitation. *Sexual* exploitation is one of the most salient of these forms. But it also a form of exploitation made more serious—and more pervasive—by policies, norms, and relations of power that not only reinforce and reproduce a gendered division of labor, but that also naturalize and reify women as sexual objects. In this view, it is not poverty *per se* that creates “supply”; rather, it is a range of social, cultural, political and broader economic factors that “push” women into highly exploitative situations, including but certainly not limited to, prostitution at both the domestic and international levels. Thus, while very poor countries are almost always the largest sources of trafficked women for sexual exploitation, they are not the only significant sources. Relatively prosperous countries are also part of this process. This is the case for South Korea—the focus of this study and a particularly notable example. We say “notable” because Korea is the world’s 13th largest economy and a member of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). The country also ranks very high in terms of “human development”: South Korea’s HDI value¹ (in 2005) was 0.921,² which ranked it

¹ HDI stands for Human Development Index. According to the United Nation’s Development Programme (UNDP), “The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income).” The HDI value is not without its critics, but it still generally considered a much better indicator of “development” than per capita GDP, the most conventional measurement.

² United Nations Development Programme, “Data by Country: Republic of Korea,” *Human Development Reports*. Available online <http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_KOR.html>

26th out of 177 countries. Despite its relatively high level of “development,” South Korea continues to be a major source of trafficked *and* smuggled women in the commercial sex trade. Needless to say, the vast majority of Korean women working in the commercial sex trade never leave South Korea. At the same time, it is clear that thousands—actually, tens of thousands—of women from South Korea are enmeshed in the international, or transnational, sex trade. A large percentage of these women are smuggled across borders, and many (but not all) likely end up in situations of human trafficking, although the “trafficking” most frequently occurs *in* the country of destination.

The destinations, in the case of Korea, are primarily, if not exclusively, in the developed world, especially the United States, Australia, and Japan. This is no accident. For demand in developed countries is not only “insatiable,” but also highly organized and extremely lucrative.³ It is demand, to be clear, that drives the commercial sex trade, including transnational sex trafficking and smuggling. Accordingly, human trafficking/smuggling for sexual exploitation (and prostitution more generally) cannot be fully, or even adequately, addressed without carefully and systematically considering demand. There is nothing surprising in this assertion. Yet, because so much attention is paid to source countries in studies of human trafficking *and* because so many source countries are poor, “pull factors” are often given short shrift or they are simply taken for granted. It is in this regard that a study of South Korea is particularly useful: since South Korea is a developed country itself, it encourages a clear shift in focus. Poverty may still be an important factor, but not *society-wide* poverty. On the surface, too, the Korean case implies that other macro-level factors associated with national poverty—e.g., severe unemployment, extreme inequality, little inadequate access to education, high levels of social violence and political instability—are similarly insufficient (but certainly *not* irrelevant) to explain the complexities and dynamics of the human trafficking process. This, in turn, suggests that more attention should be given to demand or pull factors. It is important, however, not to treat demand as a purely generic concept. For, in the sex trade, demand is often a very selective phenomenon. This is especially the case for the transnational sex trade in which it is readily apparent that the flow of trafficked and smuggled individuals to specific destination countries or regions is often divided along racial and ethnic lines or on the basis of nationality. Of course, a major reason for these divisions can be attributed to geographic proximity, but geographic proximity does not explain, for example, why Korea remains one of the major sources of trafficked and smuggled women for the U.S. commercial sex trade industry. After all, the countries are separated by the Pacific Ocean and are more than 6,500 miles (10,500 kilometers) apart. In the post-9-11 environment, moreover, is it not at all easy for many Koreans to enter the United States—illegally or legally.

The selective nature of demand raises a fundamental question: what determines *specific* smuggling and trafficking movements in the transnational sex trade—particularly the flow from South Korea to the United States? Addressing this question requires a multi-dimensional approach, one that examines the interaction between macro-level *push* factors and specific

³ It is also worth noting that, in addition to being a major country of origin, South Korea is also a major destination: thousands of women from the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Russia and other countries can be found in Korean commercial sex industry.

patterns of demand and other pull factors. *In addition*, based on our research, we believe that it is absolutely essential to examine the trafficking and smuggling process within specific contexts. For our purposes, this means taking into account a range of cultural, institutional, political and social factors that are characteristic of, albeit not necessarily unique to, South Korea (and by extension, the relationship between the United States and Korea). These include, but are not limited to:

- ❑ Specific public policy choices (e.g., anti-trafficking or anti-prostitution legislation, immigration policies in both the sending and receiving countries);
- ❑ Historical connections between South Korea and the United States, which have led to (among other things) a large and economically active immigrant Korean community within the U.S. composed of both legal and undocumented individuals;
- ❑ Gender-based social and economic inequality/discrimination, along with cultural norms and practices, that subordinate or objectify women; and
- ❑ Economic institutions and practices that increase or fail to reduce an individual's vulnerability to economic problems or crises.

The list above includes both push and pull factors. These are, to underscore our key point, characteristic of South Korea's particular circumstances; at the same time, many also can be found in other countries. For this reason, there are likely to be general lessons that can be drawn from our analysis of the South Korean case.

While it is clearly important to identify and examine the key reasons for the continuing flow of smuggled and trafficked women from South Korea to the United States, this report is equally concerned with developing an on-the-ground understanding of the individuals at the center of the process, namely, trafficked and smuggled women from Korea. Indeed, an understanding of the background, motivations and experiences of trafficked and smuggled women is essential to an analysis and comprehensive explanation of the process as a whole. Even more, developing sound and effective public policies and strategies to combat sexual exploitation (including those implemented by non-governmental organizations) requires us to know more about the individual Korean women who migrate, sometimes under very dangerous conditions, to the United States and other countries. It is partly the lack of this kind of knowledge that fuels or undergirds criticism of anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking efforts. Critics, for example, argue that most current anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking policies—designed and implemented in a top-down fashion by states—are ineffective, and even counterproductive, since they fail to address the “root causes” of human trafficking.⁴ They argue that, at best, state interventions do little more than suppress, or push down, trafficking in one place, while causing it to resurface, or pop up,

⁴ See, for example, Kamala Kempadoo, “From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking,” pp. vii-xxxiv in Kempadoo (ed.), *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work and Human Rights* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2005).

somewhere else: the so-called, “Push down, Pop up” (PDPU) effect,⁵ also known as displacement. Some have argued that this is exactly what happened in South Korea with the enactment of the “Act on the Punishment of Intermediating in the Sex Trade” in September 2004. Included in the Korean law are strict penalties, including large fines and long prison sentences for both the owners of brothels and their patrons. Despite this, many observers in Korea have indicated that sex trafficking within Korea continues to thrive, although it has been displaced from red light districts to more clandestine forms, including barbershops, karaoke parlors, private residences, and even cyberspace. There are also indications that the new anti-prostitution act is linked to transnational spatial displacement, as Korean traffickers/smugglers and prostitutes have looked across beyond Korea’s borders—including to the United States—as a way to circumvent a stricter domestic environment. On this particular issue, there is an obvious need for systematic study. If the critics are right, then a different policy approach is clearly necessary.

This report, in sum, has multiple objectives, which are overlapping and interrelated. To recapitulate:

- First, and most generally, this report is designed to *contribute* to a more comprehensive understanding of human trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation; in particular, it is meant to provide insights into why higher levels of economic and social “development” do not necessarily curtail transnational trafficking/smuggling in the sex industry.
- Second, this report seeks to explain the dynamics of a *specific* smuggling and trafficking movements in the transnational sex trade: the movement of Korean women to the United States.
- Third, primarily through interviews of trafficked and smuggled women, this report is designed to provide a firsthand description of the background, motivations and experiences of trafficked and smuggled Korean women in the U.S. sex industry. This is an initial step toward creating the *first* empirical dataset on this particular community of trafficked/smuggled women.
- Fourth, this report is meant to improve approaches and strategies to deal more effectively with human trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation. We will not, however, make specific policy recommendations.
- Fifth, while not yet mentioned, a basic—and the most immediate—objective of our report is to provide a descriptive analysis of the Korean-based sex industry in the United States. This includes an examination of its magnitude and scope, smuggling routes and strategies, methods of recruitment and control, and other relevant aspects of the industry.

⁵ Phil Marshall and Susu Thatun, “Miles Away: The Trouble with Prevention in the Greater Mekong Sub-region,” in *ibid*. See pp. 44-46. As the authors explain it, the term “Push-down, Pop-up” originally “comes from drug trafficking, although it is more commonly known as the ‘balloon effect’” (p. 62, n1).

To address these issues, the study relied on a variety of research strategies, which we discuss in the following section. Chief among these strategies, however, were a set of targeted interviews conducted with trafficked and smuggled women from Korea to the United States. Each interview was based on a common questionnaire (or survey instrument), which was composed of both closed- and open-ended questions. Analysis of the responses includes summaries of the open-ended questions and descriptive statistics for the close-ended questions. **Appendix A** contains a list with summary responses of questions and responses from the questionnaire. The interviews along with complementary and parallel research strategies, helped to confirm already well-understood aspects of the trafficking and smuggling process (such as the significance of debt bondage and of ethnically-based trafficking/smuggling networks), but they also led to unexpected and potentially important findings. While we examine these findings below, suffice it to say for now that sex trafficking and smuggling from Korea exhibits some unusual characteristics. The educational level of the trafficked and smuggled women, for example, was relatively high (the majority completed at least one year of college) and almost all had jobs before migrating to the United States (some in the Korean sex industry, but most in other sectors of the economy). *We also found extreme disparities among the women: some were clearly “victims of sexual slavery” in the United States, while others were able to exercise a meaningful degree of agency or personal control.* These findings—among others—suggest a complex and not always “neat” relationship among human trafficking, smuggling and prostitution.

In the following section, we return to a discussion of our research methods and some of the unavoidable complications of carrying out this type of study.

Notes on Research and Study Methods

As in almost all studies of human trafficking and smuggling, our investigation was confronted with a range of serious methodological challenges: sampling and sample bias, data reliability, access to sources of information, and ethical considerations (revolving around the clandestine and criminal aspects of trafficking, smuggling and prostitution). In trafficking-related research, as Andrees and van der Linden note, “random sampling is nearly impossible” and sampling bias is difficult to avoid.⁶ Practically speaking, this means that studies of trafficked persons usually cannot be representative of entire populations. One way to mitigate this problem, however, is through a focus on specific subpopulations “such as foreign sex workers in a given country or a specific migrant community.”⁷ This is precisely the approach used in our study. As we noted above, this report is based largely, although not exclusively, on twelve face-to-face interviews (and accompanying surveys) with Korean women in the United States, all of whom migrated from Korea and worked in the U.S. commercial sex industry. The majority arrived after 2000, while three had been in the United States since at least 1995 (the interviews were conducted in 2007.) All of the Korean women interviewed for our project were living in Los Angeles County at the time of the interview, with one exception (a woman who moved from Los Angeles to Las

⁶ Beate Andrees and Mariska N.J. van der Linden, “Designing Trafficking Research from a Labour Market Perspective: The ILO Experience,” *International Migration*, v. 42, no. 1/2 (2005), p. 60.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Vegas). This study, it is important to add, is part of a larger project involving researchers in Australia, Japan, South Korea, and in the eastern part of the United States conducting parallel research with the same basic survey instrument. The results from all researchers will be compiled into a single, comprehensive report.

The small number of interviews for *this* particular study clearly provides an insufficient empirical basis, by themselves, from which to draw hard-and-fast conclusions. To mitigate the “small-n” problem, therefore, our study employed several complementary paths of inquiry. **First**, we systematically reviewed newspaper reports (from both the U.S. and Korean media) looking for trafficking, smuggling, and prostitution cases involving Korean women in the U.S. sex industry. We found hundreds of articles—including several containing extended interviews with trafficked Korean women—and used the data from these articles to cross-check the findings from our interviews. **Second**, using the same strategy, we carefully reviewed all available and relevant documentary sources, including court documents and government reports (e.g., the *Attorney General’s Annual Report to Congress on U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons*); we also examined academic studies, papers, and other secondary sources. We were particularly interested in those sources that focused on or extensively discussed trafficking/smuggling of Korean women in the transnational sex trade. (From our review of newspaper reports and court documents, we were able to partially complete two additional surveys for a total of 14 used for this report.) **Third**, we conducted a range of interviews with law enforcement personnel and service providers/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work or interact with trafficked and smuggled individuals; we also requested assistance from these organizations to help identify trafficked persons whom we could interview for our study. By happenstance, we were able to conduct an extended, two-part interview with a Korean “trafficker” (i.e., an individual who facilitated the smuggling of Korean women into the United States and who also managed clubs and other facilities where prostitution occurred). **Fourth**, we examined Internet sites that advertise for or provide information on Korean-specific prostitution-based enterprises in the United States and specifically in southern California. Using an alias, we responded to several posting and otherwise attempted to glean information, from the “demand-side,” about the operation of the commercial sex industry in the United States and southern California.

Using multiple sources not only allowed us to mitigate the small-n problem, but also gave us greater confidence in the reliability of our primary interview data and provided wider, albeit indirect, access to relevant sources of information. Our study also used a relatively novel, but fairly effective recruitment tool for finding trafficked or smuggled individuals: newspaper advertisements (see **Appendix B**). Recruitment is always a serious obstacle when dealing with hidden populations.⁸ This is particularly the case of trafficked or smuggled persons in the sex trade: as “illegal” aliens engaging in criminal activity, potential subjects usually do not want to be found. And as “victims” of traffickers, brokers, or smugglers, they may be subject to violence

⁸ Guri Tyldum and Anette Brunovskis, “Describing the Unobserved: Methodological Challenges in Empirical Studies on Human Trafficking,” *International Migration*, v. 43, no. 1/2 (2005), pp. 17-34.

or coercion if they make their identities known. As a result, many trafficked individuals can only be identified once they have been arrested and processed through the legal system. At this point, access is generally granted through “gatekeepers,” that is, law enforcement agencies or service providers. But, this presents another methodological problem: reliance on gatekeepers may result in an unrepresentative sample of “victims” who have suffered from a “severe form of trafficking in persons.” This can exacerbate problems of sample bias. Newspaper advertisements, of course, are not a methodological panacea, but they allowed us to access a wider range of trafficked or smuggled persons; *in combination* with law enforcement and NGO referrals, we were able to develop a more representative sample than either technique used by itself. The use of newspaper advertisements as a recruitment tool also allowed us to use a third recruitment strategy, “snowball sampling.” The snowball sampling technique relies on identifying new subjects through personal contacts;⁹ in our study, at the end of our interviews with women who self-identified by responding to our newspaper advertisement, we asked them to contact others who might be interested in participating in our study. Unless their contacts responded positively, their identities were completely hidden to us. Through newspaper recruiting and snowball sampling we were able to address some of the most serious ethical considerations as well: respondents were self-identified and completely voluntary.

The Trafficking and Smuggling of Korean Women in the United States for Sexual Exploitation: Estimates of Magnitude and Scope

General estimates of human trafficking (and smuggling) are notoriously unreliable and imprecise.¹⁰ Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in official estimates of human trafficking *into* the United States. In 2000, for example, initial estimates cited in the TVPA provided a figure of 50,000 individuals annually. Only a few years later, this estimate was drastically reduced in the U.S. Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report*,¹¹ which gave a number of 18,000 to 20,000. Then, in 2005, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons lowered the figure even more to 14,500 to 17,500 trafficked individuals per year.¹² Such estimates, moreover, are further complicated by the fact that situations of trafficking often do not develop until *after* an individual has entered in the United States (on this point is worth noting that the tendency to view “trafficking” as a movement rather than as a condition creates a great deal of methodological confusion). It is not entirely clear, in other words, whether official statistics adequately account for individuals who may have entered the United States voluntarily

⁹ See Patrick Biernacki and Dan Waldorf, “Snowball Sampling,” *Sociological Methods and Research*, v. 10 (1981), pp. 141-163; and Sheldon Zhang and Ko-lin Chin, “The Characteristics of Chinese Human Smugglers—A Cross National Survey,” *Final Report to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice* (October 2002).

¹⁰ Heather J. Clawson, Mary Layne and Kevonne Small, “Estimating Human Trafficking in the United States: Development of a Methodology,” *Final Report to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs* (September 2006).

¹¹ The U.S. Department of State’s annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* for various years is available online <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprtf/>>

¹² Cited in Clawson, et al., *Estimating Human Trafficking*, p. 2. This lower figure has been used in official speeches as well. For example, see John R. Miller (Senior Adviser on Trafficking in Persons), “Human Trafficking and Transnational Organized Crime,” *Remarks to the Organization of American States Special Committee on Transnational Organized Crime*, February 15, 2006. Available online <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/rm/62072.htm>>

—sometimes legally, but usually illegally through a smuggling network—and then find themselves in situations of trafficking for sexual exploitation. On this point, too, we must further emphasize that the statistics on human trafficking cited above do not distinguish between trafficking for sexual exploitation and trafficking for other types of labor.

For specific communities or sub-populations,¹³ such as Korean women trafficked *or* smuggled into the U.S. sex industry, the task of estimating numbers, or magnitude, should be easier, at least in principle. In practice, however, developing a reasonably precise estimate, while probably not impossible, is extremely difficult and well beyond the scope of this report. At best, we can provide an estimate of the *unauthorized* immigrant population (of Korean women in the U.S. sex industry) based on an upper and lower limit approach. To repeat: this is a basically *generic* estimate in that it does not distinguish between, for example, trafficked individuals suffering from severe sexual exploitation and “voluntary” prostitutes who may have been smuggled into the United States or who entered the U.S. legally and then overstayed their visas. This is an unfortunate, but unavoidable limitation. We believe, however, that there is value in estimating the unauthorized immigrant population, as those women without legal resident status (and usually without English language skills) are generally more vulnerable to exploitation, sexual or otherwise, and more susceptible to coercion. Indeed, our research indicates that there is little doubt that it is precisely for these reasons that those who own and operate prostitution-based enterprises favor using unauthorized immigrant women.

To establish an upper limit, it makes sense to begin with official estimates on the unauthorized immigration population in the United States. The U.S. Office of Immigration Statistics provides periodic estimates: The August 2007 report estimated the number of unauthorized Koreans in the U.S. at 250,000 (as of January 2006), which represented a 39 percent cumulative increase from 2000. The average annual change was 11,667.¹⁴ The report did not provide a breakdown by gender, but statistics on legal foreign residents born in Korea indicate a gender breakdown of 57.7 percent female and 42.3 percent male.¹⁵ If we applied the same breakdown to unauthorized immigrants, then of the 250,000 unauthorized Korean immigrants in the U.S. in 2006, about 144,000 were women. Almost certainly, the large majority of unauthorized Korean immigrant women in the U.S. are engaged in activities unconnected to the commercial sex industry, and among those that are, not all are necessarily suffering from sexual exploitation. Despite these important caveats, aggregate statistics at least allow us to set a rough upper limit.

¹³ For a discussion of trafficking research on subpopulations, see Tyldum and Brunovskis, “Describing the Unobserved.”

¹⁴ Michael Hoefer, Nancy Rytina, and Christopher Campbell, “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2006,” Office of Immigration Statistics, Policy Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Available online <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ill_pe_2006.pdf>

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, “Profile of Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics: 2000 [Population universe: people born in Korea]. Available online <<http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/stp-159/STP-159-korea.pdf>>

Establishing a lower limit is more difficult. From a series of high-profile raids conducted over the past decade, however, we know that the numbers of trafficked or smuggled Korean women in the U.S. sex industry is more than a few dozen or few hundred. In perhaps the most widely publicized raid, dubbed Operation Gilded Cage, approximately 150 Korean women identified as prostitutes were detained in coordinator raids that took place in 2005 in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles.¹⁶ Significantly, most or all of the detained women were in the United States as unauthorized immigrants. A year later, another raid in Dallas, Texas resulted in the arrests of 42 South Korean women.¹⁷ All except three were in the United States illegally (five were initially identified as potential victims of trafficking and 34 were “ordered home”). A third major raid also took place in 2006, “Operation Cold Comfort.” The focus of this operation was the northeastern region of the United States. According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the operation, which was initiated in May 2005, “revealed a wide-ranging criminal enterprise that included conspirators in 11 states as well as South Korea.”¹⁸ The organization was responsible for the “smuggling and trafficking of over 100 [Korean] women” many of whom “were forced to work as prostitutes in brothels along the East Coast of the United States.” The network included more than 60 brothels.¹⁹ Just these three law enforcement operations, then, involved almost 300 trafficked or smuggled Korean women working as prostitutes in the United States. Yet, it is fair to say that this number represents only the tip of the iceberg. (See **Appendix B** for a partial list of anti-trafficking law enforcement operations involving Korean women and operators.)

It is clear, for example, that there are hundreds, and more likely, well over one thousand Korean-run prostitution-based enterprises in the United States that operate, more or less, in open fashion. These include “massage parlors,” “spas,” and a host of other fronts for prostitution, such as chiropractic or acupuncture clinics and aromatherapy clinics. Consider, again, the evidence from the raids (and other sources). Operation Cold Comfort identified 60 brothels operated by Koreans. In Dallas, law enforcement officials provided a conservative estimate of Asian-owned “spas” (where prostitution occurs) at over 40. And in San Francisco, according to the online sex site myredbook.com, there are at least 90 “massage parlors” (17 were ordered shut down as a result of Operation Gilded Cage). For the Los Angeles area, another sex-based website (findalay.com) lists about 155 “exotic massage parlors”—i.e., those providing sexual service—although not all are Korean-owned or operated, nor do all have Korean women working there. In just these four areas then (the Northeastern U.S., Dallas, San Francisco and Los Angeles), there were at least 345 prostitution-based enterprises, most of which were owned and operated by Koreans or used Korean women as workers.

¹⁶ Additional information is available in an ICE news release, “29 Charged in Connection with Alien Harboring Conspiracy,” July 1, 2005. Available online <<http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/newsreleases/articles/050701sanfrancisco.htm>>

¹⁷ See Paul Meyer, “Sex Slaves or Capitalists?: Arrest of 42 S. Korean Women in Dallas Brothel Raids Stirs Debate on How Trafficking Laws Used,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 8, 2006.

¹⁸ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), “Human Trafficking Fact Sheet,” November 16, 2007. Available online <<http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/factsheets/humantrafficking.htm>>

¹⁹ Ibid.

Massage parlors and similar establishments, moreover, represent only a small fraction of the total number of prostitution-based enterprises in operation. There are also “dating agencies” (or escort services), nightclubs and “room salons,” which are also prevalent but harder to count. In addition, and particularly since the major law enforcement operations in 2005 and 2006, a portion of the once-openly operated prostitution business has moved underground. According to an article in the Korean language *Sunday Journal*, many Korean “entertainment businesses” have begun operating clandestinely in order to avoid raids by law enforcement. Quoting an identified source, the article noted, “[t]here now seem to be three to four secret salons in the Los Angeles area, five in Northridge, three to four in Irvine and the OC [Orange County] area.”²⁰ We can surmise the same phenomenon is taking places in other parts of the country. There is, we should note, clearly some overlap of the Korean women who work in the massage parlors—where the clientele tends to be primarily and often entirely non-Korean—and of the women who work in the room salons and outcall services, where the clientele is mainly Korean. Still, as evidence from the raids indicates, most and sometimes all of the Korean women working as prostitutes (whether voluntarily or through coercion) in these enterprises were unauthorized immigrants in the United States. In our survey, 13 of the 14 respondents either entered the United States illegally or overstayed their visas. Although not conclusive, this strongly indicates that the vast majority of Korean women working the U.S. sex industry are unauthorized immigrants.

Basic extrapolation, therefore, tells us that there are, minimally, thousands of unauthorized Korean immigrant women in the U.S. sex industry. Given the total number of prostitution-based enterprises that are operated by Koreans or that use Korean women, combined with the relatively large population of unauthorized Korean women in the United States, we would put the absolute *lower limit* at 5,000 (about 3.5% of the upper limit). But the actual figure could be, and likely is, much higher. Indeed, one informant—a former broker and operator of prostitution-based enterprises in Los Angeles’ Koreatown²¹—estimated that there might be a cumulative total of 10,000 Korean women working in the LA area sex industry alone. While the figure is clearly speculative and likely overstated, it should not be completely disregarded: as an insider, our informant had intimate knowledge of the operation of Korean-based sex industry in Los Angeles, including a good understanding of the number and scale of the enterprises. In this regard, he is a better position to provide an estimate than most others, including academic researchers, service-providers and law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember, however, whatever figure we use includes both trafficked women *and* Korean women who are voluntarily engaged in prostitution or other sex-related employment. Given our current available data, there is no way to provide a separate, even generally reliable breakdown.

Estimating the Scope of the Korean-based Sex Industry in the United States. While estimates of magnitude are unavoidably soft, it is much easier to assess the issue of scope. As our discussion above has already indicated, Korean-run (and other Asian-run) prostitution-based enterprises are

²⁰ Richard Yoon, “Secret Salons in LA are Like Poison” [독버섯같은 LA ‘비밀요정’], *Sunday Journal USA*, November 5, 2006.

²¹ Identified as “Lee Hyun,” interview by author and research associate (Los Angeles), August 10, 2007.

spread throughout the United States, or as one web-based “user-reviewer” named Randy Boise bluntly puts it, “[t]hey are everywhere!” While decidedly unconventional, user reviews do provide uncensored and, more likely than not, reasonably good—and empirically valid—assessments of the locations (and working conditions) of prostitution-based businesses. In this particular posting, Mr. Boise also noted:

I've found them in every major North American city I've ever visited and lots of smaller towns have them as well. A stroll through the phone book usually helps. You can usually tell by their name. It often is some Asian sounding name. Some of them use words like Spa, Acupressure, Sauna, Massage, etc in the name. Places that use terms like LMP (Licensed Massage Provider) or your local equivalent typically aren't an AMP [Asian massage parlor]. Though, I have visited a couple that had LMP on the sign. They are usually in somewhat run down buildings in strip malls and such. Typically, all the windows are curtained off and the outside lighting is dim.²²

Tellingly, Mr. Boise also admonishes his readers to “Treat the Ladies Well.” He writes, “Please, please, please, do not treat these girls badly. They are people and have feelings. A lot of them are *illegal aliens* and spend nearly their entire time in America (or where ever) in the parlor. *They sleep there, eat there, and work there.* You will get a much better experience if you are kind to them” (emphasis added). Mr. Boise is describing situations of sexual exploitation involving smuggled and, very likely, trafficked women from Asia. Our surveys indicate, on this point, that the women who “sleep, eat, and work” in their place of employment are typically subject to tight supervision/surveillance and have limited freedom of movement. Such women are far more likely to be in situations of trafficking than women who have their own apartments or other places to live. We will return to this issue below.

The distribution of Korean-run or other Asian-run prostitution-based enterprises is not random. As might be expected, there are major concentrations in large metropolitan areas: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Boston, New York/New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. We have already discussed major anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking raids, which were centered in the aforementioned areas. These areas—especially San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York/New Jersey—serve another important function as well: they function as hubs or transit points for the entire country. That is, when Korean women—those who are smuggled in from Korea—first arrive in the United States, they are typically “routed” through one of the major metropolitan transit points. Because of heavy demand, many will stay in the first major destination, but others will be immediately—or after a few months—be sent to other locations spread throughout the United States. A major indicator of situations of trafficking, in fact, is the inability of a woman to control her location of work. One of the women we interviewed, for example, was forced to move to so many locations that she “lost count.” She was literally sold to brothel owners in different cities and had no control over where she worked.

²² The quote is from a webpage entitled “Randy’s Guide to AMPs [Asian Massage Parlors],” available online at <http://members.lycos.co.uk/ampdude/newpage.html>.

To get a better grasp of the distribution *and* concentration of Korean- and Asian-run prostitution-based enterprises, we examined newspaper articles over a 10-year period that reported on prostitution arrests involving Korean nationals, either as owners or prostitutes. These articles allowed us to identify cities or counties with *Korean-run* prostitution-based enterprises. While such news coverage is admittedly arbitrary and incomplete, the results are still instructive. Arrests, not surprisingly, were concentrated in the Northeast and California, and included both large and small cities—in a variety of states. Some of the cities not already mentioned include (see **Figure 1** for a mapped version):

- Providence (**Rhode Island**)
- Wallingford, Hamden, New Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk (**Connecticut**)
- Nanuet, Norwood, Ramsey, Bogota, Rutherford, Sayerville and North Brunswick (**New Jersey**)
- Philadelphia, Bethlehem, Quakertown, Cumberland, and Westmoreland County (**Pennsylvania**)
- Spotsylvania (**Virginia**)
- Charlotte and Pineville (**North Carolina**)
- Rock Hill (**South Carolina**)
- Atlanta, Royston, Lake City, and Jonesboro (**Georgia**)
- Clarksville, Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Goodlettsville (**Tennessee**)
- Fort Worth, Coppell, Madisonville, and Houston (**Texas**)
- Denver, Aurora, Colorado Springs and El Paso County (**Colorado**)
- Boise (**Idaho**)
- Oakland, Pacifica, Newark, Fremont, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sacramento, Chatsworth, Canago Park, Inglewood, Redondo Beach, Harbor City, El Monte, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Irvine, Riverside, Murrieta, San Diego, and Temecula (**California**)

As comprehensive as this list might appear, it still is very circumscribed. Consider on this point the figures provided by the online sex-site findalay.com (mentioned above).²³ This site conveniently provides a breakdown, by state, of “erotic massage parlors” in the United States (not all the sites are Asian- or specifically Korean-run). The total is 1,861 establishments. The heaviest concentrations are in California (513), New Jersey/New York (209), Texas (155), Arizona (116), Nevada (96), Pennsylvania (90), Florida (78), and Colorado (67). However, most states have at least five listed establishments, with only 12 having four or fewer (see **Figure 2** for

²³ We recognize that newspaper articles and online sex-sites are, at best, imprecise and imperfect proxies for direct research and observation. But, given the illicit nature of the issue trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation and of prostitution more generally, along with the extremely wide scope of these activities in the United States, they are, perhaps, the best available proxies.

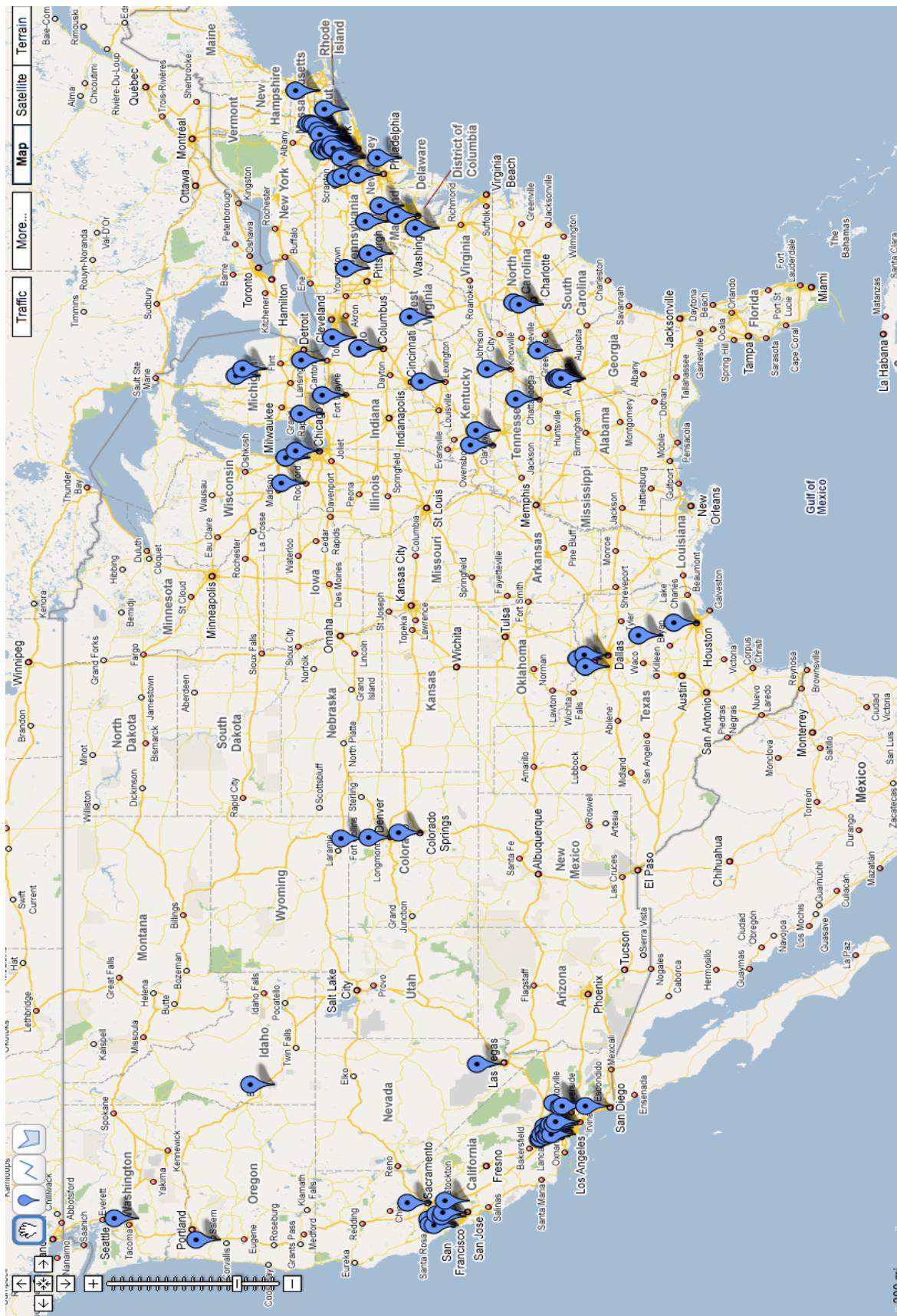


Figure 1. Map Showing Locations of Arrests of Korean Women on Prostitution Charges

the complete list). The site also allows users to look up individual establishments and to provide “reviews,” the majority of which identify, by ethnicity, the women who work there. These reviews also include specific information on the type of services provided, including prostitution. Our random examination of these reviews indicates that Korean women are not only present in most states (including those not listed above, such as Alabama, Utah, and Florida), but are also represented to a *disproportionate degree* in “erotic massage parlors.” This suggests that our lower limit of 5,000 is, most likely, well understated. It also underscores a key question raised at the outset: Why are there so many Korean women—trafficked or smuggled, voluntary or coerced—in the American sex industry? We will return to this question, but first it is useful to take a look at the Korean-based prostitution and smuggling network in the United States.

Figure 2. “Erotic Massage Parlors” in the United States, by State

State	#	State	#
Alabama	15	Montana	7
Alaska	10	Nebraska	1
Arizona	116	Nevada	96
Arkansas	1	New Hampshire	0
California	513	New Jersey	109
Colorado	67	New Mexico	4
Connecticut	43	New York	100
Delaware	1	North Carolina	17
Florida	78	North Dakota	0
Georgia	34	Ohio	12
Hawaii	35	Oklahoma	39
Idaho	9	Oregon	1
Illinois	42	Pennsylvania	90
Indiana	6	Rhode Island	23
Iowa	1	South Carolina	16
Kansas	7	South Dakota	0
Kentucky	7	Tennessee	20
Louisiana	11	Texas	155
Maine	1	Utah	8
Maryland	26	Vermont	2
Massachusetts	23	Virginia	29
Michigan	15	Washington	32
Minnesota	8	West Virginia	1
Mississippi	7	Wisconsin	4
Missouri	6	Wyoming	1
		Washington, D.C.	12
		Total	1861

Source: findalay.com. Accessed July 2008 (various days)

The Korean-based Prostitution and Smuggling Network

The widespread distribution of Korean- and other Asian-run prostitution enterprises—*combined* with heavy reliance on unauthorized immigrant women who, after all, must be transported thousands of miles and directed through multiple borders and checkpoints, then delivered to a prearranged location—suggests a relatively organized international and domestic network(s) of smugglers and transporters. While our research was not specifically designed to uncover the details of such networks, it is fairly evident that they play a central, even essential, role in the Korean-based prostitution industry in the United States. On the smuggling phase of transport, for example, consider these descriptions from several of the women we interviewed:

- In October 2002, “EJ” met with a travel agent in Korea who told her to purchase a travel package to Canada. The travel agent also told her not to carry any contact information for anyone in the U.S. and to take only a small travel bag. When she arrived in Vancouver, Canada, an employee of the travel agent picked her up and gave her a “tour” of the city. EJ was then taken to a hotel, where she waited for 4 days. On the fourth night, her U.S.-based employer called and told her that someone would be coming by to pick her up; from the hotel, she was taken to a house where six other people waiting to be smuggled across the border. EJ had to wait another three days. On the fourth day, two men came by to collect her and the six other people (three men and three women); they drove from Vancouver and after 4 hours arrived at an unpaved road. From there, they were by a guide who took them across the border, to another unpaved road. They waited by the side of the road until a van drove by, moving very slowly. The door was open and they were told to jump into the moving van. They were then driven to Seattle, transferred to another vehicle and driven to Los Angeles. They were all dropped off at the parking lot of California Market, where she and one man from the group stayed. The others were taken to different locations, including Chicago and Atlanta.
- “C” was smuggled to the U.S. (in December 2002) through Mexico via a fairly circuitous route. She flew from Korea to Japan, from Japan to Vancouver, and from Vancouver to Mexico City. After arriving in Mexico she was met by a smuggler, who told her to wait in the city. She stayed in Mexico for two days, and was given another plane ticket to Tijuana. In Tijuana another smuggler met her and brought her to a motel; after three days, a different smuggler came by with valid IDs, but for a different person. The picture and physical description on the ID matched her appearance (there were also a number of other people in her group; all were given IDs). From Tijuana, she and others were driven through the border control area. They had no problems; in fact, because the group was so large, the driver had to make two trips. Once everyone was together, they were driven from San Diego to Los Angeles.
- “J” has been to the United States several times—in 1997 and 2003—entering on a valid student visa each time. In 2006, however, her F-1 visa had expired so she no longer had a route to enter the U.S. legally. Wanting to return to the United States, J contacted a broker through the Internet (www.sunhijjang.com); the broker helped arrange for her to be

smuggled into the country. She met a broker in Korea, who “gave” her a plane ticket to Mexico City and \$1,000. After arriving in Mexico City, she was told to wait in a house until arrangements could be made to get her across the border. She waited for three weeks, and was finally met by a Mexican smuggler who took her to a border city near Texas. She stayed in a hotel for one more day, and then crossed the river into the United States. The river crossing, she recalls, took 20 minutes. Once across the river, she was forced to stay in another “safe” house for 4 days. During this time, she was not allowed to go outside. On the fifth day, she and a few other women (she believes they were Chinese-Koreans) were herded into a refrigerated trailer driven by a white male. They drove for about 2 hours and arrived in Houston. From Houston, she took a flight to Los Angeles and was picked up by her employer, who confiscated her passport.

These descriptions are fairly typical (and match our other sources of information we examined). In general, the basic contours of the smuggling process are the same: it involves a network of U.S.- and Korea-based brokers and other intermediaries such as travel agents, drivers, “guides,” and individuals who procure documents (usually genuine documents as opposed to forgeries). Prior to 9-11, the process was fairly simple and relatively risk free: Canada was a major point of entry into the United States, precisely because women could fly there directly from Seoul (without a visa²⁴), drive from the airport to an unguarded spot, then “jump” across the border. For a time in the late 1990s, in fact, the route was so well traveled that one open stretch of farmland at the foot of the Sumas Mountain, south of Chilliwack, B.C., was dubbed “Little Korea” because of a surge of South Koreans using it as a launching point for illegal entry into the United States.²⁵ As major crossing points became known to authorities, of course, they were shut down; the result was an eastward shift to even more remote areas along the Idaho-British Columbia and Montana-Alberta borders.²⁶ In one arrest of a group of 17 Koreans in northern Idaho, a U.S. border patrol agent noted, “Most of the traffic such as this ... has been over the eastern Washington side, so we do see that it’s somewhat adjusting *If it’s not working in a certain area, they don’t quit. They don’t stop smuggling, they adjust*” (emphasis added).²⁷

Mexico is also a major point of entry. According to our informant, the shift to Mexico was a direct result of more stringent security along the U.S.-Canada border, but also at the airport itself where young Korean women without a visa have been subject to much tougher screening. Crossing through Mexico is not necessarily more complicated, but it generally requires a valid passport and visa: the most common tactic has been to simply to cross at the immigration checkpoint—usually Tijuana. To get valid passports/visas, as we noted above, smugglers usually use documents from legal residents: they match the age, height, age, and general appearance, if

²⁴ The visa waiver agreement between Canada and Korea was established in 1994. Ever since the, there has been a steady rise in smuggling through Canada.

²⁵ Chris Wood, “Patrolling ‘Little Korea,’” *Maclean’s*, vol. 112, no. 47 (November 22, 1999).

²⁶ In July 2004, for example, 16 Koreans (11 women between 20 and 40 years of age) were caught wandering in the woods between Montana and Alberta. Three of those arrested were smugglers and two were residents of Calgary. See *Korea Daily* [in Korean], July 23, 2004.

²⁷ “17 Koreans Caught at U.S. Border: Human Traffickers hit Alberta, B.C.,” *The Calgary Herald* (Alberta), April 7, 2005.

possible, to the women they plan to smuggle across the border. Even if they are unable to make a good match, they may try anyway since according to our informant, “Asians all look alike” to American immigration officers. In our interviews, with one exception, all of the women who “jumped” from Mexico to the U.S. went through border control. In the one exception, the woman had to cross a shallow river on her own. Our informant indicated that non-border crossing are rarely used because of the risk of personal injury: women who are caught at the border are simply sent back to Korea, where they can try again. To the smugglers getting “caught” is not necessarily a significant problem, since they will simply add the cost of a second trip to the debt the woman will owe once she successfully crosses. (The smugglers themselves will often not cross the border with the women; they may hire a driver from outside the “smuggling network.”)

The relative ease of transborder crossings means that the smuggling networks have not had to be tightly organized or disciplined. Indeed, given the post-9-11 security environment, they have had to remain quite flexible, not only in terms of smuggling routes and tactics, but also in terms of personnel. Our source, for example, noted that, since 2001, a large number of brokers and transporters have been arrested, making the smuggling process much more risky and also less lucrative than in the 1990s. It is for this reason, perhaps, that there is little evidence of “organized crime” or criminal gangs playing a key role in the physical transportation of women across borders. But there is another critical—and often overlooked—element of the smuggling network, namely, the “loan shark.” Loan sharks typically provide the upfront money that drives the process in the first place. The upfront money may include smuggling fees (for drivers, guides, bribes, and documents), travel and room expenses, “spending money,” and so forth. Since arrangements are usually made for smuggled individuals to arrive in groups (even if they seem to be traveling alone, especially in the initial flight from Korea to either Canada or Mexico), upfront fees for a coordinated, but single smuggling operation may end up being quite substantial. Almost certainly, the sums are large enough to attract Korean criminal gangs, although there is not enough available evidence to provide any details or conclusions on the level of this activity.²⁸

Whatever the level of organized gang activity, it is useful to distinguish between the smuggling network and the Korean-based prostitution network. While intimately related, they usually are distinct entities operating in concert with, but also independently of each other.²⁹ There seems to be a clear division of labor: the smuggling network is responsible for transporting and delivering women *from* South Korea *to* the United States, while the prostitution network is responsible for providing sexual services to men throughout the country (as we discussed above, there are few places in the United States where one *cannot* find a Korean-based prostitution enterprise). The

²⁸ Our informant indicated that Korean criminal gangs have played almost no role in the Los Angeles sex trade, although he also admitted that gang members forced him out of the business. Our review of news articles and interviews with law enforcement officials hinted at gang involvement, but not on a systematic or large-scale basis. In those cases where gangs are mentioned, moreover, it is unclear whether the “gang” is a specific prostitution ring—e.g., the Jung organization mentioned in regard to Operation Gilded Cage—or an organized criminal enterprise engaging in range of illicit activities.

²⁹ Our analysis here is *preliminary*, as we do not have a solid evidence or data on this issue. Further, it is possible that the prostitution and smuggling rings may operate different in different parts of the United States.

need to provide sexual services throughout the United States, in large part, is what creates the need for a domestic prostitution *network*. On this point, consider this description from Operation Cold Comfort describing the movement of women to various Korean-run brothels: “A transporter acted as the primary point of contact for more than 60 brothels. The various brothel owners and managers would contact the transporter in order to obtain women to work as prostitutes. The transporter worked with at least five other New York area transporters to fill the demands.”³⁰ It is likely that most, if not virtually all, women who travel from South Korea to the United States to work in the U.S. sex industry—whether they are smuggled in or enter legally—have at least an initial contact with this domestic network that “places” women in different brothels. In our interview research with Korean women, most were *not* forced to move to different locations; still, it is clear from news accounts and other interviews that the network is an important part of the Korean-related prostitution business in the United States. The more mundane reason is the demand for “fresh faces.” As our informant put it, “Women normally move from one city or state to another when they are ‘known’ in the LA area and can’t work here anymore … or if they aren’t pretty enough to make good business.” Often, these transactions are voluntary, but in cases of trafficking, women are sold and the cost of the sale is added to their debt. (In other “transactions,” the line between a voluntary and involuntary movement is not clear-cut.) The domestic network is also used a mechanism to evade law enforcement. During Operation Gilded Cage, for instance, brothel owners shuttled dozens of Korean women to Denver to keep them from being detained and questioned by federal authorities.³¹ And, in an anti-trafficking sweep in Dallas, Texas, brothel owners working through a travel agency in San Francisco, arranged for airline tickets for women to travel to and from Oakland (California) to Las Vegas, Dallas, New York and Boston.

On a national scale, Korean-based prostitution network in the United States, we must emphasize, seems to be loosely connected and non-hierarchical. It operates on word-of-mouth and reciprocity. On the one hand, this means the “network” does not operate as a criminal syndicate: its power and reach is limited. It has no ability by itself, for example, to track down trafficked women who flee their workplace and abandon their debt. (“Enforcement,” instead, is left to individual brothel owners or to loan sharks, who have occasionally been able to hire, through bribes, law enforcement personnel to assist them.) On the other hand, the loose, non-hierarchical structure of the Korean-based prostitution network means that it is difficult to “kill.” The series of major law enforcement operations discussed above—plus others—have done little to curtail Korean-based prostitution in the United States. By all accounts, business is as strong as ever. And, as the statistics on unauthorized Korean immigrants show, it is very likely that hundreds, if not thousands of Korean women destined for the U.S. sex industry continue to flow into the country every year. *This raises important public policy issues. For, if top-down law enforcement operations—dramatic as they are, and as important as they can be for individual women*

³⁰ ICE, “Human Trafficking Fact Sheet.”

³¹ Amy Herdy, “The Price of Freedom: A Police Crackdown on Prostitution Reveals Women Held at Asian Massage Parlors Until They Repay Debts for Being Smuggled into the US,” *Asiansexgazette* (October 27, 2005). Available online <<http://asiansexgazette.com/asg/korea/korea02news65.htm>>. The same article notes, however, that many of these women were subsequently caught up in another ICE sweep in Denver.

ensnared in situation of severe trafficking—ultimately do little to diminish transnational trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation, then alternatives and/or parallel approaches must be considered. Even more, as we noted above, precisely because law enforcement efforts have been effective, many establishments are being driven underground. This can actually exacerbate or create situations of trafficking and sexual exploitation by making the entire industry more secretive, more illicit, and more dangerous. (It is also worthwhile pointing out that ICE raids, including major operations, such as Operation Gilded Cage, have begun to alienate--or already have alienated--the Korean American community.³²⁾

Recruitment

Recruitment patterns with regard to the movement of Korean women to the United States have gone through two very different, but *overlapping* stages. The first stage, which was dominant in the 1970s to the early-1990s, relied on marriages between Korean women and American soldiers as the key mechanism of migration between the two countries. A study by Hughes, Chon and Ellerman notes that traffickers and smugglers routinely paid U.S. military personnel to bring Korean women into the U.S. through sham marriages.³³ In other cases, traffickers and pimps targeted Korean women who were abandoned or divorced by U.S. military personnel in legitimate marriages. Hughes et al. suggest that *most* Korean women who ended up working in the U.S. prostitution industry during the 1970s and 1980s had a prior relationship—and usually a marriage—with a U.S. soldier once stationed in Korea. While their evidence is anecdotal, it is persuasive: “I don’t recall ever having interviewed a Korean prostitute in this country”, one INS agent is quoted as saying, “that was not in the country as a result of being married to an American serviceman.”³⁴ Federal officials expressed a similar view in a 1995 interview in *USA Today*; they are quoted as saying that the increasing number of Korean women working in the United States on a “national prostitution circuit” could be traced to one source: sham marriages to U.S. soldiers.³⁵ From this statement, it is clear that marriages between Korean women and American soldiers continued to play a role in the recruitment process until at least the mid-1990s.

On the surface, marriage as a strategy of recruitment for the U.S.-based prostitution industry may seem an odd choice. After all, it is a narrow channel of recruitment subject to official oversight through the military chain of command. Viewed from a wider perspective, though, there is

³² In June 2008, for example, EunSook Lee (Executive Director of the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium or NAKASEC) testified in front of the National Commission ICE Misconduct and Violations of 4th Amendment Rights. Her testimony is available online <<http://nakasec.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/esleicemisconducttestimony.doc>>

³³ Donna M. Hughes, Katherine Y. Chon, and Derek P. Ellerman “Modern Day Comfort Women: The U.S. Military, Transnational Crime, and the Trafficking of Women” (2002). Their article was later published under the same title in *Violence Against Women*, v. 13 (2007), pp. 901-22. Sea Ling Cheng offer a useful commentary on key points made in the published version of the article by Hughes, et al. See “Commentary on Hughes, Chon, and Ellerman,” *Violence Against Women*, v. 14 (2008), pp. 359-63.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁵ Cited in “Police Link Raids, Illegal Immigration; Seven Charged with Prostitution at Massage Parlors in Collinsville,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Missouri), June 6, 1997. We were not able to locate the original quote from *USA Today*.

nothing strange about this strategy. In the 1970s, South Korea was governed by a military authoritarian state that exercised tight control over the population; although emigration and overseas travel was certainly possible, it was subject to restrictions that made it difficult for ordinary citizens to move freely across national borders. In addition, although undergoing rapid industrialization, in the 1970s South Korea was still a relatively poor country: in 1973, for example, per capita GDP in Mexico was about 33 percent higher than in South Korea. Long a patriarchal society, moreover, economic opportunities for poorly or even modestly educated young women in 1970s Korea were extremely limited—in the context of rapid industrialization, most opportunities were in low-paying, backbreaking, and highly regimented factory work. Most significant, perhaps, was the U.S.-South Korean military relationship: since the end of the Korean War, the United States has maintained a very strong military presence in South Korea (which reached its peak in the 1970s). Among the many results of this presence was the construction of major military bases with tens of thousands of soldiers rotating in and out on a constant basis, and the establishment of large “military camp towns,” where prostitution was condoned and even encouraged. Given this larger context, it is not surprising that marriage between Korean women—often involving women working in the camp towns—and American soldiers became the key mechanism of recruitment; equally unsurprising is the “reproduction” of camp town culture, complete with women from Korea, in parts of the United States, especially around military bases outside of major metropolitan areas.

It is important to recognize that the recruitment of Korean women through marriages to work as prostitutes in the United States also entailed the first development of Korean-based prostitution industry. This is an obvious point, but one that is, perhaps, crucial to understanding the disproportionately large representation of Korean women in parts of the U.S. sex industry today. To put it simply, once an industry develops and grows, it creates its own demand. The nature of the prostitution-based industry, moreover, requires a more-or-less constant supply of new “fresh faces.” This helps explain the development of regional and national “prostitution circuits,”³⁶ but it also helps explain, at least partly, the continuing and consistently high demand for new women from Korea. One more point: the creation of an ethnically based prostitution industry has a strong element of “self-reproduction.” By this, we mean that as women move through the industry as prostitutes, they frequently end up owning or operating their own prostitution-based enterprises. This is partly due to a lack of other viable economic opportunities, but also is due to the relatively “low risk, high reward” nature of the business. Although none of the women we interviewed in our research took this route, our review of other sources of

³⁶ “Prostitution circuits” in the United States, it is worth emphasizing, are not unique to the Korean-based prostitution industry. One group of scholars in Florida, for example, described a similar, although much more geographically delimited circuit for trafficked girls and women from Central America. In this case, the traffickers rotated the women among a circuit of four or five brothels all owned by the same crime family, typically keeping the women at a location for about 15 days before moving them again. Significantly, this practice was not only meant to provide “fresh women” for the johns (mostly migrant farm workers), but was also meant to ensure that no lasting relationships could be built between the women and their “clients.” See Florida State University, Center for the Advancement of Human Rights, *Florida Responds to Human Trafficking* (Florida Department of Children and Families, 2003), p. 40.

information—including our interview with a former broker and brothel owner—support this assertion. (Admittedly, though, additional research is necessary.)

As we have already suggested, the recruitment process has changed significantly. Since the late 1990s, and certainly by the early 2000s, marriage as a strategy of recruitment has been replaced—perhaps completely—by more direct methods of recruitment. In our 14 surveys, not a single interview subject was married to an American soldier; in fact, 12 of the 14 were single when they first came to the United States. In addition, in all of the major anti-trafficking operations discussed earlier, there is no evidence that any of the more than 300 Korean women detained as prostitutes—most of whom would have arrived in the United States after 2000—were married to

American soldiers. Instead, the recruitment of Korean women for prostitution in the United States now appears to depend heavily on Internet and print advertising, as well as word of mouth. In our surveys, 7 of 13 respondents (54%) indicated that they first learned of work opportunities in the United States through friends or acquaintances (i.e., word of mouth); three (23%) read a newspaper advertisement, and two (15%) saw an advertisement on the Internet (see **Chart 1**). These responses generally correspond with our other sources. Significantly, the large majority of our respondents (9 of 14 or 64%) stated that they did know about the “possibility of doing sex-related work before coming to the United States” (see **Chart 2**). Newspaper reports on raids in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Denver suggest very similar situations: women who responded to Internet or newspaper ads, or who were talked into meeting brokers by their friends or acquaintances, unknowingly accepted work as prostitutes in the United States. This suggests that new recruitment strategies, while more direct, are also deceptive (in some, but not all cases).

Chart 1. How did you find out about work opportunities in the United States? (N=13)

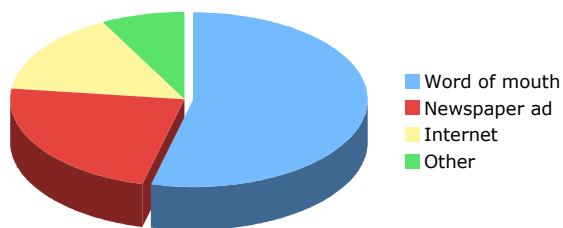
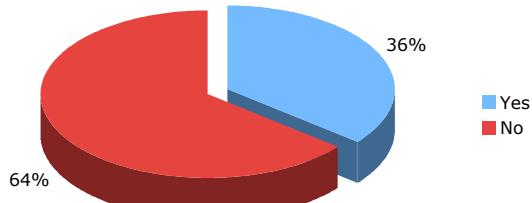


Chart 2. Did you know about the possibility of doing sex-related work before coming to the U.S? (N=14)



Whether through word of mouth or advertising, the offers of work opportunities are generally similar, although there are important differences. One internet advertisement on the cafedaum.net website, for example, reads: “*We know that in Korea these days, unemployment, the recession and the Special Law on Prostitution make it hard to earn even half of what you made before. Try a new W8-10 million a month (US\$8,000-\$10,000) in a bar, W18-24 million (US\$18,000-\$24,000) a month in a massage parlor guaranteed. Advances possible. We take care of visas and bad credit.*” This particular ad is fairly clear about the nature of the job—i.e., work in “massage

parlor” along with reference to the Special Law on Prostitution makes it clear that prostitution is part of the job. Other advertisements are much less clear. Many advertisements, for example, make no mention of massage parlors or other establishments that could be considered obvious code words for prostitution. Instead, they might mention work in bars, clubs, or restaurants; or they might explicitly say that no sex (or *i-cha*) is required. These advertisements, too, offer the promise of large monthly earnings, commonly between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a month.

On first glance, promises of \$10,000 to \$15,000 a month—or more, in some cases—may seem absurd for basically low-skilled jobs. Even for jobs that clearly involved prostitution, annual earnings of between \$150,000 and \$300,000 appear unrealistically high. Significantly, though, a number of women we interviewed earned as much as \$15,000 a month—although, equally significantly, 3 of 9 respondents were never paid. Even more, according to one of our interview subjects, it was possible for women earning huge amounts to work side-by-side with women earning very little or nothing. Those owing large debts, in particular, would not be paid directly until the debt was paid in full; others, in extreme situations of trafficking, received no compensation at all, direct or indirect. The result is very ambiguous situation wherein promises of large earnings are clearly possible, but also quite possible is the chance of severe (sexual) exploitation and human trafficking. Despite the relatively small number of interviews we conducted, we had examples representing each end of the continuum—from one woman who unequivocally suffered from severe human trafficking to one woman who seemed to control most aspects of her working conditions and had extremely high earnings—and everything in between.

The new mode of recruiting reflects a very different set of conditions compared to the first stage. Between the 1970s and 2000, South Korea underwent dramatic social, political, and economic transformation: by the 1990s, Korea had become a much richer country, opportunities, both in employment and education, for women had greatly expanded—although, as we discuss below, gender-based discrimination is still very evident in Korea. Moreover, the ability to travel across borders had become far easier, even routine, particularly after 1987 when the military authoritarian regime collapsed and the country moved toward democracy. A visa waiver agreement (1994) with Canada also made transpacific travel far easier. Another important change was been the growing size and scope of the Korean immigrant population in the United States: in 1970, there were only about 70,000 Korean immigrants in the United States, but by 1990 this figure had grown to 799,000; and by 2000, the population had grown to 1,077,000.³⁷ The growth of the Korean population in the United States—along with the concomitant development of Korean-based commercial and business centers, such as Koreatown in Los Angeles—has meant many things, but for the prostitution industry in particular, it has meant constant and growing demand *from Korean men in the United States for Korean women*. Our survey results bear this out: while clients of massage parlors tend to be overwhelming non-Korean, clients for outcall

³⁷ Eui-Young Yu, “Korean Population in the United States as Reflected in the Year 2000 U.S. Census,” California State University, Los Angeles and the Korean American Coalition-Census Information Center. Unpublished report available online <<http://www.calstatela.edu/centers/ckaks/census/KAPOPUL2000.pdf>>

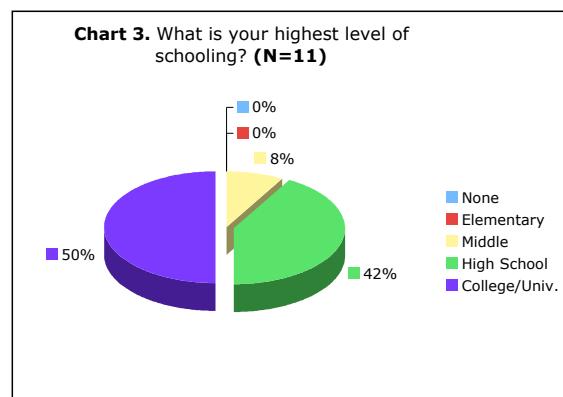
services—a large part of the prostitution industry—are often 99-100 percent Korean. We will return to this issue below.

It is important to underscore a not so obvious, but key point about the new recruiting methods: *they are effective*. The promise of *huge* sums of money—sometimes real and sometimes illusory—has become a very important “pull” factor, one that has often been ignored in other studies of trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation. There are, of course, many other very important elements at play (which we will address shortly), but any analysis that seeks to explain the dynamics of the transnational sex trade between Korea and the United States must take account of the money that Korea women are able to earn in the sex industry.

Background and Experiences of Korean Women in U.S. Sex Industry: A Summary

The effectiveness of the new recruiting strategies, as we just suggested, must be viewed in relation to the “agents” who see and respond to advertisements or to what their friends and acquaintances tell them about opportunities in the United States, whether explicitly for work in the sex industry as prostitutes or in other areas. In this regard, it is essential that we have at least some knowledge of the backgrounds and experiences of the Korean women who migrate to the United States and end up, whether intentionally or not, in the sex industry. Our survey was designed to this gather this information, albeit at a very basic—and in retrospect, probably insufficient—level. We will reproduce some key results in summary fashion below (some results have been mentioned above, and all can be found in Appendix A).

- **Age:** The oldest respondent was born in 1950 (57 at the time of the interview) and the youngest in 1983 (24). The mean age for all respondents (N=13) was 33 years old at the time of the interview in 2007.
- **Age at migration to the United States:** The mean age of the respondents when they first arrived in the United States was 25.3; the median age was 26. The youngest was 11 and the oldest 39.
- **Marriage:** 12 of 14 respondents (85.7%) had never been married.
- **Educational level:** 6 of 11 women in our survey (54.5%) attended at least “some” college or university and 5 others attended high school. Only 1 of the 11 respondents (9%) failed to reach high school. (**Chart 3**)
- **English ability:** 8 of 13 had only a basic (61.5%) or elementary (38.5%) ability to communicate in English; none of our respondents was fluent in English.
- **Employment in Korea*:** Most, 11 of 13, had a job in Korea before migrating to the United States. 6 of 12 (50%) had a job outside the sex or entertainment industry, 3 (25%) worked



in a room salon, 2 (16.6%) worked as “entertainers,” and one (8.3%) worked as a prostitute. (**This response was based on the most recent job before leaving Korea to the United States.*)

- **Previous experience in the sex industry (Korea or third country):** 9 of 14 respondents (64.3%) stated that they had never done sex-related work before coming to the United States. Of the five who had previous experience, 3 had worked as prostitutes and 1 had worked in a room salon and 1 in a massage parlor. 1 of the 5 had worked in the Japanese sex industry before coming to the United States. **(Chart 4)**

- **Financial Situation—Debt:** 7 of 11 respondents (63.6%) had a personal debt in Korea. The size of the debt ranged from about \$5,000 to over \$50,000. 4 of 7 respondents had a debt of \$40,00, and two others had debts of approximately \$10,000. The average for the seven respondents who provided a figure was \$28,570 and the median was \$40,000. **(Chart 5)**

- **Debt as a factor in migration:** Only 3 of 11 respondents (27.2%) indicated that debt was either primary or contributing factor in their decision to migrate to the United States.
- **Domestic violence:** 2 of 11 respondents (18.1%) believed that they suffered from domestic violence in Korea.
- **Decision to leave Korea:** All 14 of the respondents indicated that the decision to leave Korea for the United States were their own; it was product of their own initiative.
- **Entry into the United States/visa status:** in 9 of 15 cases* (60.0%) the women did not have a legitimate visa to enter the United States; all 9 were voluntarily smuggled in the U.S.; 3 entered on a short-term (tourist) visa, 1 entered on a student visa, and 1 entered legally on a different type of visa. (* There are 15 responses since one respondent entered the U.S. twice; **Chart 6**)

Chart 4. Had you even done sex-related work in Korea? (N=14)

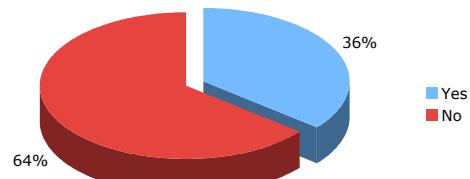


Chart 5. Did you have a debt before coming to the United States? (N=11)

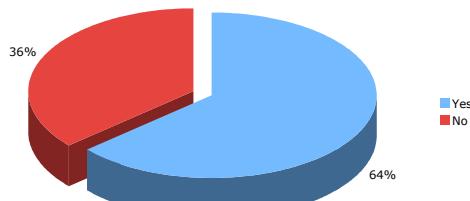
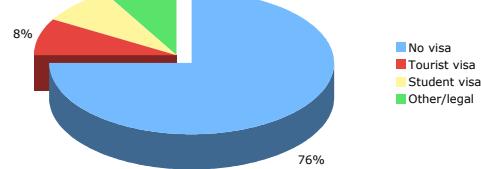


Chart 6. When you arrived in the U.S., what was your visa status? (N=15)



- **Legal status in the United States:** 12 of 14 (85.5%) of the respondents were/are in the United States illegally.

While the information above is fragmentary and hardly adequate to give a full picture of the individual lives of the women we interviewed, some simple conclusions can be drawn. Most saliently, it is clear that the women, in making the decision to come to the United States, were exercising agency—even if some were unable to control important aspects of their lives after they arrived in the United States (a point that we will discuss in the following section). The generally high educational level of the women, their maturity (in terms of age), and their purposeful decisions to come to the United States to find work—under risky conditions for those that were smuggled into the country—all underscore the importance of understanding the myriad of individual-level factors that go into decisions to migrate, whether legally or illegally, whether into the sex industry or another area. Certainly, one of these individual-level factors was the “pull” of the very high earnings that are possible in the U.S. sex industry, which itself is the product of consistently high demand in the United States. *All of this must also be seen within the context of Korean society and the socio-cultural, economic, political and institutional structures that continue to “push” women into (sexual) exploitative, generally demeaning, and sometimes dangerous situations.* In this regard, it is important not to confuse our recognition of agency with an acceptance or tolerance of sexual exploitation and especially of sex trafficking, or even of prostitution per se. Nor does our recognition of agency on the part of individual women imply that we recommend or condone illegal immigration into the United States. At the same, it is critical to understand that forces and structures within the United States, too, are instrumental in driving the process that brings Korean women to the U.S. sex industry.

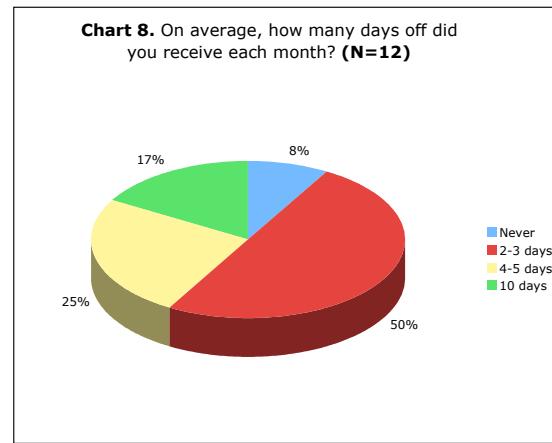
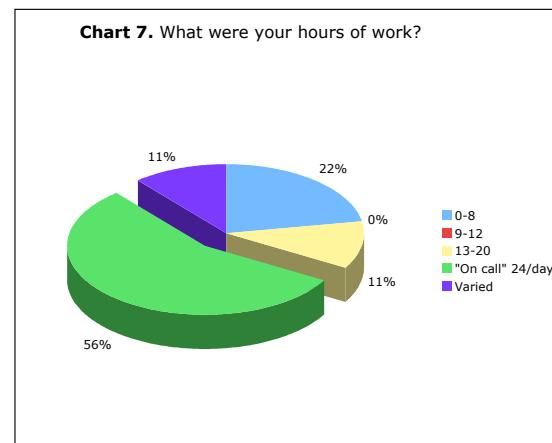
Sex Trafficking, Smuggling and Prostitution: The Often Blurry Line for Korean Women in the United States

There is, in the United States, a critical legal distinction between trafficking for sexual exploitation (i.e., “sex trafficking”) and prostitution. Women who migrate from other countries to the U.S. commercial sex industry, therefore, may be treated as criminals or as “victims”; they may be regarded as illegal or undocumented aliens subject to prosecution and deportation or as victimized individuals subject to legal protection and permanent resident status in the United States. The distinction, quite obviously, is very important. In principle, the distinction should be cut-and-dry. In practice, unfortunately, this is far from the case. In our interviews or analyses of the 14 cases for this report, we had a plurality of clear-cut human trafficking cases (6 of 14, or 43%), but this was a product of (largely unavoidable) selection bias as several interviews were arranged, directly or indirectly, through service providers (4), and two other cases were derived from an investigative news report focusing on a trafficking “victim” and a court case revolving around charges of human trafficking. In the remaining 8 cases, the situation was more ambiguous. For example, from a strictly *legal standpoint*, it is fairly certain that 3 of the women would be classified as criminals themselves. However, 5 of the 8 remaining cases (62.5%) occupied a gray area in that there were seemingly clear elements of human trafficking and sexual

exploitation, but also countervailing elements that would likely result in the women being treated as criminals. This underscores what we feel is a serious flaw in the current conduct toward women involved in the transnational sex trade: specifically, in the practical application of the TVPA (Trafficking Victims Protection Act) in the United States, only a tiny minority of potential trafficking cases are treated as such (see below for further discussion). While some reform of the TVPA is possible and needed, it will likely always be the case that the large majority of potential trafficking cases will go undetected. This means, in part, that broader solutions to human trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation must almost assuredly rely on remedies that lie outside and/or in parallel with the formal criminal justice system.

We will return to this last point in our analysis below, but first it might be helpful to provide a summary of responses to key questions from the survey.

- **Hours of work:** The work hours varied considerably, although 5 of 12 respondents (41.7%) were “on call” 24 hours a day. Several others were on call virtually 24 hours a day, including two respondents who were required to work from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. Other respondents had the following hours: 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. (2), 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. (1), and one with “varied” hours. (**Chart 7**)
- **Work days:** 1 of 13 respondents never received a day off, 6 received 2-3 days a month off during their menstrual cycles, 3 received 4-5 days off a month, and 2 received 10 days off a month. Those who had 10 days off a month, it is worth noting, did not have any debt. (**Chart 8**)
- **Number of “clients”:** 5 of 8 respondents (62.5%) generally had between 1 and 4 clients a day; 2 respondents had between 10 and 14 clients a day and one respondent had more than 20 per day.
- **Monthly earnings:** 3 of 12 respondents were never paid directly. 3 respondents received between \$2,500 and \$5,000 a month, 3 received between \$6,000 and \$8,000 a month, and 2 between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a month. (**Chart 9**)
- **Living Arrangements:** 6 respondents lived, at least for a short time, at their place of work; 8 lived in an apartment, room or house owned by their employer; 4 lived (or live) in their own place. (*Note: some respondents gave more than one answer.*) Of the 14



respondents, however, only 3 (21.4%) had never lived their workplace or a housing unit controlled by their employer.

None of the respondents have lived alone. *At some point*, 10 of 14 (71.4%) lived either with a manager or owner of their workplace and 12 lived with co-workers (85.7%).

- **Personal freedom:** 6 of 12 respondents were not allowed to out freely during their non-working hours, and 6 were. Of the 6 that were free to go out on their own, two indicated that they were subject to restrictions and/or surveillance. The other four had no restrictions.

8 of 12 respondents also indicated that, while it was possible to quit their jobs, they could do so only after they paid off the debt the owed to their employers. In other words, their freedom to walk away from their places of employment was conditional.

The large majority of respondents—10 of 13 (77%)—were allowed to contact their friends and family be telephone, and most of the respondents (6 of 10) had their own cell phone.

- **Deception and coercion:** As we noted earlier, 9 of 14 respondents (64.3%) indicated that they did not know they would engage in sex-related work in the United States before leaving Korea.

6 of 11 (54.5%) respondents indicated that there were forced to engage in sex in the United States (**Chart 10**), but among the 5 were said they were not coerced, 1 respondent said she was forced to engage in sex when working in Japan prior to coming to the United States, and 1 said she was force to do sex-related work in Korea. Thus, 8 of the 11 respondents (72.7%), at some point, were subject to force or coercion.

Physical violence was not typically used to coerce women; instead, brothel owners relied on verbal abuse, threats against the respondents' families, and the "obligation" to pay off debt.

From the summary of responses, it is fairly clear that situation and conditions faced by the women we interviewed were diverse. On one end, were several women who had a good deal of control over their circumstances: they had reasonable work hours and a relatively large number

Chart 9. How much were your monthly earnings? (N=11)

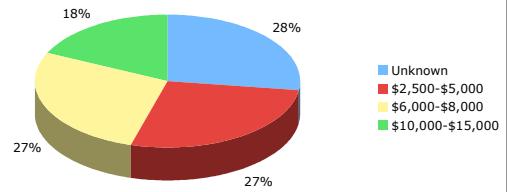
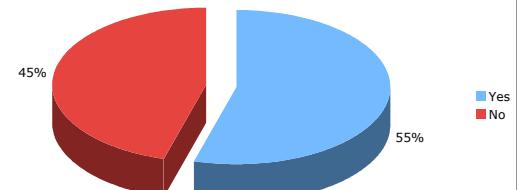


Chart 10. Were you ever forced or coerced to do sex-related work? (N=11)



of off days per month; they were paid as promised, and they received relatively large sums of money. They also were free to live on their own and had personal freedom to go where they pleased during non-work hours, and, quite importantly, to quit their place employment at will. We are *not* suggesting, however, that women who exercise greater control over their work conditions be ignored, or that the problems they face be dismissed. Indeed, all three respondents in this category felt that conditions in the United States were “worse” or “much worse” than they expected, yet all also felt that staying in the United States is preferable to returning to Korea. In addition, all seemed to indicate a desire to find work outside the sex industry. Indeed, based on these reasons, one can argue that there are important similarities between ostensibly voluntary “sex workers” and “severe victims of human trafficking.” This said, there are obviously clear differences as well. Consider the following case:

“*A*” worked as waitress before leaving Korea. A friend convinced her that she could make a lot of money through a “business opportunity” in the United States. Unknown to *A*, the business was a commercial sex establishment, and *A*’s first job was to help manage the business. All the women were required to fulfill a daily quota (\$4,000); if they didn’t, their debt increased. *A* tried to help some of these women, but when she complained to the boss, he almost immediately sold her to a massage parlor in San Francisco. The money paid to “buy” her was added to *A*’s debt. In San Francisco, *A* had to provide sex to 20-30 men a day (and 7 to 10 when she worked “outcall”); she was forced to work in so many places that she lost count. She was also forced to engage in prostitution, not just through debt bondage, but also through rape, forced drug use, and physical threats against her and her family in Korea. She was also required to engage in unprotected sex--and when the men did use a condom, she had to pay for it. *A* was trapped in this situation for 5 years.

As we noted above, too, there are many cases that fall between the two extremes already discussed. In one case, “*TY*” was recruited by a co-worker to come to the United States. She left Korea primarily because of a \$10,000 debt, and she knew she would be working in “outcall” as a prostitute. Her travel to the United States was arranged by a broker, who helped her get her a valid tourist visa and arranged her airline flight. She was charged \$7,000, which became part of her debt in the United States. During her first few months in the United States, however, her debt increased to \$25,000. She understood that she could not stop working until the entire debt was paid off—which she eventually was able to do. While she was working, *TY* was required to be on call 24 hours a day and would only be allowed time off during her menstrual cycle. She was allowed to go out on her own during non-work days, but only with the permission of her employer, who held on to her passport. She was required to live in an apartment owned by her employer (although she later moved) and paid \$1,000 a month for room and board (for a two-bedroom apartment that she shared with 3 to 4 other people). Although she was never “forced” to engage in sex, she understood that her debt could not be paid off unless she engaged in prostitution. Significantly, *TY* was arrested during an undercover investigation; during her time in the legal system, she was never asked about the circumstances of her employment; no one attempted to ascertain if she was victim of human trafficking. Instead, according to *TY*, she was

treated very badly by the police and eventually found guilty of prostitution. She paid a fine of \$1,500.

TY's experience epitomizes the blurry line between human trafficking and prostitution, between "victim" and "criminal." While TY knowingly migrated to the United States to work as a prostitute in the commercial sex industry, once she arrived, she was immediately subject to a degree of "involuntary servitude" through the mechanism of debt. Her debt had to be paid before she could "quit": if not, there was a threat of violence, albeit entirely implicit, against her or her family in Korea. From a legal perspective, however, her case is unproblematic because, to put it bluntly, she "knew what she was doing." Her experience with the legal system makes this clear. In fact, as we saw above in our discussion of major anti-trafficking operation involving Korean-based prostitution enterprises in the United States, the vast majority of Korean women detained as "potential victims" were ultimately deported. In other words, very few were legally considered trafficked individuals. On a more comprehensive level, consider these statistics from the U.S. Attorney General's Office³⁸: in 2006, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Human Trafficking Task Forces identified 955 potential victims of human trafficking, but "Continued Presence"³⁹ (CP) was requested for only 103 of these victims (significantly, South Korea was identified as the country with third highest number of CP requests, behind only Mexico and El Salvador). During the same year, 346 individuals applied for a T nonimmigrant status (T visa), and 182 applications were approved. Given even the conservative estimate by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons of 14,500 to 17,500 trafficked individuals *per year* in the United States, the numbers for CP and the T visa are clearly quite paltry.

Our report is not designed to debate the merits of the TVPA *per se*. Instead, we are concerned with helping to develop a more rational system for assisting women—not only those who are Korean, although Korean women are clearly our focus—enmeshed in the transnational sex trade and suffering from sexual exploitation. Legal and criminal justice approaches *are* certainly one part of this system, but as we suggested above, they cannot be the only or most important part. Criminal justice approaches, in particular, will always be hard put to deal with the type of situation experienced by TY who, from our interview, desires but has not received any assistance. Our research *suggests*, moreover, that TY's experience is not an anomaly, but is instead likely to be representative of much of the migration from Korea to the U.S. sex industry. If this is the case, then it is clear that alternative approaches are required. This is especially important since, even within the NGO and service-provider community, much greater emphasis seems to be put on assisting "victims of trafficking" as defined through the TVPA. Part of the reason for this stems from an emerging funding structure through the federal government (and particularly the Department of Justice) that gives grants primarily to organizations that provide services to designated trafficking victims (either those with CP or pending T visa status).

³⁸ U.S. Attorney General's Office, *Attorney General's Annual Report to Congress on U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons Fiscal Year 2006*, United States Department of Justice (May 2007). Available online <<http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/annualreports/tr2005/agreporthumantrafficking2005.pdf>>

³⁹ "Continued Presence" is a temporary status, applied for by a law enforcement officer, that permits an alien to be legally present in the United States during the pendency of an investigation. It is granted to trafficking victims in accordance with the TVPA. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Accordingly, individuals who fall outside this category may be left out in the cold, so to speak. (We must emphasize that this assertion is impressionistic and not based on a solid foundation of evidence and in-depth analysis. Before we can discuss other approaches, however, it is necessary to examine more closely the “causes” and factors behind the transnational sex trade between South Korea and the United States. Clearly, no solution is likely to be viable unless it addresses the underlying cause of a problem or issue.

Push, Pull, and Demand: Domestic Prostitution and Migration from Korea the U.S. Sex Industry

At the outset, we should make clear that we do not intend to put forth a definitive “causal” account on the forcing driving the transnational sex trade, either at a global or cross-national level, or for South Korea specifically. And, while we agree that there are certainly general factors at play, we also believe that the dynamics of the transnational sex trade can also be highly contingent. In this regard, many of the general factors that have been identified are often too divorced from specific contexts to be of much “practical” help. Consider a very common explanation, and one discussed at the outset of this report, that focuses on extreme conditions of national poverty. Raymond and Hughes—two very prominent researchers—put it this way: “Trafficking is precipitated by economic conditions in sending countries. Depressed, stagnant and collapsed economies, high rates of unemployment, women being driven from jobs once held, as in Russia, and desperation to find a living somewhere push women to leave their countries and make them vulnerable to the recruiters and trafficker.”⁴⁰ Raymond and Hughes, of course, are not alone. Here is a similar argument from *Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy*:

Trafficking in women flourishes in *direct proportion to the growing economic inequity* between the developing countries of the South and the industrialized countries of the North. Traffickers recruit women in *the most impoverished countries* where unemployment is high, women have unequal access to employment opportunities, safety nets are nonexistent, and social networks are disintegrating. Denied access to the formal economy, poor women increasingly migrate alone across international borders to support families. Barred from legal immigration because of limited visas issued by receiving countries, women are easily recruited and deceived into traveling with organized crime members to factory jobs, domestic work, and sex work.⁴¹

Neither of these accounts is necessarily wrong. Indeed, it would be foolish to ignore national poverty, economic inequity between rich and poor countries, and gender inequality—and their

⁴⁰ Janice G. Raymond and Donna M. Hughes, *Sex Trafficking of Women in the United States: International and Domestic Trends* (March 2001), p. 90. Available online <http://action.web.ca/home/catw/attach/sex_traff_us.pdf>

⁴¹ Lora Jo Foo, *Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy* (New York: Ford Foundation, 2002), p. 48.

interrelationship with one another—as factors in the transnational sex trade.⁴² But, we know that South Korea does not fit the mold, particularly with regard to the first two factors. As we have already discussed, South Korea is not only a relatively prosperous country with consistently low levels of unemployment, but it has also, for all intents and purposes, joined the “club” of rich countries. In addition, and perhaps not surprisingly, South Korea is also an increasingly significant *destination* for trafficked and smuggled women in the transnational sex trade. This is a relatively recent phenomenon and one almost directly related to the country’s increasing economic wealth. Gender inequality, on the other hand, is a factor that South Korea *does* seem to share with other major source countries, although, even here the issue is more complicated than it may appear on first glance. (In the course of our research, for example, we found an interesting trend: an increase in the number of Korean *males* migrating to the sex industry in the United States.)

Demand Factors

So, why is South Korea still a major source country in the transnational sex trade for both trafficked and smuggled women? Part of the answer was given above: the specific nature of demand and “pull” owing to the development of the Korean-based sex industry in the United States beginning in the 1970s (and possibly before). In other words, there is clearly a historical basis for the relatively high level of migration, overwhelmingly unauthorized, from Korea to the U.S. sex industry. It is important to remember, however, that the “historical basis” of migration is driven by demand. It is even more important to remember that demand, in the case of Korean migration to the U.S., does not derive solely, or even primarily, from non-Korean men thirsting for “exotic” or “compliant” Asian women; it also derives from two obviously inter-related, but still separate sources: (1) Korean-based prostitution enterprises (often run by women) that specifically want Korean women, and (2) the growing—and increasingly wealthy—population of Korean immigrant men in the United States. Thus, in any discussion of the transnational sex trade between South Korea and the United States, we must recognize that it has a distinctly ethnic basis. This is not unusual. In fact, a very common characteristic of transnational sex trafficking or prostitution rings is the involvement of co-ethnics or co-nationals: Russian women tend to be trafficked or smuggled by Russian individuals and criminal groups, Chinese women by Chinese, Mexican women by Mexicans, and so on.⁴³ Often, but not always, the male clientele are also co-ethnics or co-nationals. This is easily understandable. Communication, obviously, is far easier when there is a common language, as is developing a working relationship between the traffickers/smugglers and their associates in the sending country (often the perpetrators are

⁴² Some scholars suggest, however, that even these factors should not be viewed as “causal”; instead, as Sanghera argues, they “merely exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalized and disadvantaged groups and render them increasingly more susceptible to a variety of harms.” Quoted in Jyoti Sanghera, “Unpacking the Trafficking Discourse,” p. 7; in Kamala Kempadoo (ed.), *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2005).

⁴³ For example, see *International Trafficking in Women to the United States* and “Hidden Slaves.”

naturalized U.S. citizens with close ties to their country of origin).⁴⁴ For “clients” who are not fluent in English, they are generally more comfortable with women who speak “their” language.

The ethnic basis of demand—especially in an examination of the Korean-based prostitution industry—should not be underestimated. In the 14 cases we studied, as well as the dozens of other cases we learned of through news reports, government documents, and other secondary sources, it was almost always the case that Korean nationals or Korean-Americans were the perpetrators: the owners and operators of brothels, the traffickers and smugglers, the loan sharks, and so on. While unrelated to the question of demand, it should also be noted that those who ran prostitution or sex trafficking rings were generally aided and abetted by others in the Korean community, especially ordinary taxi drivers who generally played a key role in transporting women from location to location and, in some cases, helped “keep in an eye” on where the women went during their non-work days or hours. From news reports, as well, we know that travel agents were involved in arranging transportation; it is likely that had reasonably good knowledge of what they were doing.

In the case of clientele, as we suggested earlier, there was more of a mixture in terms of the ethnic composition of demand. Nonetheless, only 2 of 9 respondents (22.2%) had an exclusively or primarily non-Korean clientele. By contrast, 5 of 9 respondents (55.5%) had mostly or exclusively a Korean clientele; and the clientele of the remaining 2 respondents depended heavily on the type of service provided. In one case, outcall clients were entirely Korean, while in-call clients were entirely non-Korean. In the other case, outcall clients were entirely Korean, while in-call clients were split 50/50 between Korean and non-Koreans. To be sure, these examples may not be entirely representative, since the respondents all worked in Los Angeles, which is home to the largest Korean community in the United States. At the same time, it is fairly evident that it is around major metropolitan areas with large Korean immigrant communities that the Korean-based sex industry is most heavily concentrated. Thus, to repeat the key point: these numbers tell us that a major and perhaps the largest part of demand is driven by the male Korean immigrant community in the United States. In this view, it is clear that any solution to the trafficking and smuggling of Korean women into the U.S. sex industry, must take into account the ethnically based “roots” of demand.

We recognize, of course, that the demand is or has been an intractable and perhaps irresolvable problem. And we are not naïve enough to believe that a focus on the ethnic roots of demand in the case of Korean migration to the U.S. sex industry will resolve the larger problem of trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation. Indeed, it could very well result in its own “push-down, pop-up” effect if, say, the demand for Korean women is effectively decreased only to be replaced by a replacement demand for Chinese (including ethnic Koreans from China) or Thai or Vietnamese women—all of whom might be more susceptible to sexual exploitation. Indeed, this is not an unlikely scenario given the global nature of the transnational trade. This is

⁴⁴ Free the Slaves, Washington, D.C, and the Human Rights Center of the University of California, Berkeley, “Hidden Slaves: Forced Labor in the United States,” *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, vol. 23, no. 47 (2005), p. 59.

an important, even critical, caveat. Still, it should not prevent us from endeavoring to better understand and explain the factors that drive the migration of Korean women to the U.S. sex industry. On this point, it is necessary to examine both the push and pull factors that constitute an equally important aspect of Korean case.

Push Factors

It is very clear that is it not abject poverty that pushes Korean women into prostitution generally, and into the transnational sex trade more specifically. In the 14 cases we examined, none of the women were suffering from severe poverty in Korea. Most had jobs or were students shortly before they made the decision to leave Korea. Our small number of cases is also supported by other research. In a broader survey of women working in the sex industry in Korea, for example, researchers at Namseoul University found that the majority of Korean women in the domestic sex industry (N=1,655) were from “middle class” families (54%), 16 percent from “wealthy” families, and 30 percent from “poor” families.⁴⁵ Moreover, only 10 percent of the women in this survey indicated that their primary reason for engaging in prostitution was because they could not find another job. Despite these numbers, economic factors are not unimportant. The same survey, in fact, listed “Paying off debt” (28%) as the most common reason behind a woman’s decision to engage in prostitution, with “Earning money” (27%) following very close behind. In our research, “paying off debt” did not appear to be a significant factor, but as we noted earlier, the majority of respondents (7 of 11 or 27.2%) had an outstanding debt in Korea, and in 4 of 7 cases that debt was over \$40,000. Still, only 3 of 7 respondents indicated that debt was a primary factor in their decision to migrate to the United States (coincidentally, perhaps, this corresponds almost exactly with the figure in the broader survey). Before continuing, an important note: for the remainder of our discussion in this section, we will slide back and forth between a discussion of push factors in South Korea’s domestic sex industry and in the transnational sex trade between Korea and the United States. While analytically separate in certain respects, the push factors underlying the domestic and transnational sex trades are likely very closely aligned.

Although debt by itself cannot be identified as the primary “push” factor, it almost certainly is a relevant factor. Our survey, unfortunately, did not ask respondents to identify other important factors behind their decision to migrate to the United States, but we think it is reasonable to assume—on the basis of the entire interview conducted with each respondent—that the *immediate* or *proximate* cause in almost all cases had an economic basis (which is not to say that “economics” explains everything). There is, of course, nothing at all insightful about this claim. It is little more than common sense. However, we also argue that the “push” of economic factors must be understood within the wider institutional, socio-cultural, and political context of South Korea. Thus, despite the relative wealth of the country as a whole, there are important aspects of Korean social system that not only exacerbate economic and personal insecurity, but that also makes individuals vulnerable to severe situations of exploitation, sexual or otherwise.

⁴⁵ Ju Yeol Lee and Hoon Su Kim, “Survey Analysis of Prostitution after the Enactment of the 2004 Act on the Punishment of Intermediating in the Sex Trade and Associated Acts,” Namseoul University. Accessed from the National Assembly Library of Korea, July 15, 2008 <<http://www.nanet.go.kr/>>

Consider the informal financial sector in Korea, which itself is a reflection of increasing wealth of the country (and, it should be noted, a reflection of neo-liberal reforms imposed on Korea by the International Monetary Fund). In 1997, the industry was relatively small with fewer than 3,000 companies. Ten years later, after a period of almost unfettered and unregulated growth, it had increased to 17,000 registered companies and more than twice as many rogue or unregistered companies, for a total of 52,000 to 62,000. According to one source, “private financing” in Korea reached 180 billion *won* (about \$175.5 million) in outstanding loans in 2007. Even more, an estimated 5 million Koreans, men and women (fully 10 percent of the entire population), had lost their ability to pay back their “private loans.”⁴⁶ This is not at all surprising given usurious interest rates—upwards of 200 percent per annum (in Korea, the legal maximum is 66 percent)—and lending strategies designed to trap borrowers into a vicious debt cycle.⁴⁷ Within Korea, the destructive effects of the private loan industry are well recognized. Yet, to date, little has been done to rein the industry in, and equally important, to provide protection to individuals against loan sharks and loan collectors who use a range of unprincipled, often violent, tactics to collect their outstanding loans. The lack of institutional and legal framework that *effectively* provides personal bankruptcy protection to individuals and that prevents or at least mitigates strong-arm collection practices by loan sharks, quite obviously, exacerbates economic and personal insecurity among Koreans. Indeed, it is more accurate to identify the lack or weakness of such a basic protective framework—and not personal debt per se—as an important factor that increases individual vulnerability and susceptibility to exploitation.

It is fairly clear, moreover, that loan sharks intentionally use debt as an instrument to supply trafficking and prostitution networks both within Korea and abroad with women. This is an effective tactic precisely because, in South Korea, women generally have few other employment choices that pay relatively high wages. In the report mentioned above, it is telling that the average monthly income of Korean women in the domestic sex industry is substantially higher than the average household income per month. According the Namseol University survey, in 2007, the average income for women under 24 years old in the domestic sex industry was \$3,310 compared to \$1,237 for the average household income (this was significantly higher than the average monthly wage for graduates of 4-year universities). For 25-29 years old, the respective figures were \$3,108 and \$1,760, and for 30-34 years old, \$2,841 and \$2,246. These figures are even more telling given the large wage gap between men and women in Korea: in 2006, women’s wages were about 66.5 percent of men’s wages.⁴⁸ While there has been a steady, but marginal improvement over the years—in 1999, the figure was 63.8 percent—the basic point is

⁴⁶ All figures cited in Kyung Eun Kim, “The Sad Victims of the 180 billion won Finance Era” [사금융 18조 시대의 슬픈 희생자 김경은 기자], *Kyung Hyang News*, May 1, 2007.

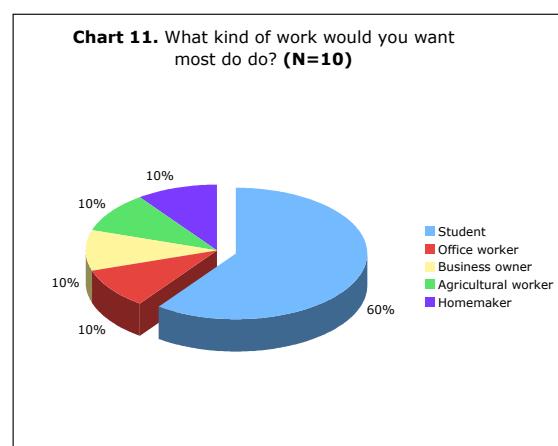
⁴⁷ Private loans typically include a range of upfront fees, including a financing fee, prepayment of interest, introduction fee, guarantor fee and so on. These are deducted directly from the loan amount but are still considered part of the principal. Thus, a borrower may take a loan, say, for \$3,000 but only receive \$1,000 in cash; the borrower, however, would be obligated to pay back \$3,000 plus interest.

⁴⁸ Korea International Labor Foundation, “Wage Gap Based on Sex and Education Narrowed but Widened on the Size of Enterprise,” *Current Labor Statistics* (October 2, 2007). Available online <<http://www.koilaf.org/KFeng/engStatistics/>>

clear: gender discrimination in the domestic employment structure has been and remains very strong in Korea.

From this perspective, Korean women who turn to prostitution, whether at the domestic or transnational level, are often making a purposeful choice, albeit one that is constrained, in part, by a “gendered division of labor” that provides the highest economic rewards to “sex work.” To put it simply, women who turn to prostitution are choosing one of the few types of work that allows them to earn and accumulate surplus capital⁴⁹—an amount of money well beyond their daily living expenses. (In our survey, most of the women earned enough to pay off their smuggling and related debts in 3 to 6 months, and some were able to send money back to Korea.) To be sure, many women who choose prostitution are severely exploited and subject to physical and psychological abuse; they are often trapped into position of forced servitude. Obviously, no one would want to be in this type of situation. But, this only underscores the limited nature of the choices available in Korean society to those who find themselves in serious financial difficulty; this is especially the case for women *without* a 4-year college or university education for whom well-paying job choices are particularly narrow. This is perhaps one reason why many women who turn to prostitution in Korea are older: in the Namseol survey, almost one-third of the respondents (32%) indicated that they were older than 35 when they first entered the sex industry as prostitutes—27.6% were between 30 and 34 years old, 23.9% between 25 and 29 and 20.2% were 24 or younger.

At the same time, it is significant that all of the women we interviewed expressed a clear desire to find alternative employment or forge a different life in the United States. When asked the question, “What kind of work would you most want to do?” 6 of 11 (54.5%) said that want to be a student, 1 an office worker, 1 a farm or agricultural worker, 1 a small business owner, and 1 a homemaker (see **Chart 11**). Most of the women (10 of 13 or 77%) also planned to stay in the United States for “more than five year or permanently” (2 of 13 were “not sure”). These responses tell us that, largely free of the constraints they faced in Korea, the women could at least envision a viable life outside the sex industry. This point, though, brings us back to wider institutional, socio-cultural, and political context of South Korea. We have already identified a couple of important aspects of this wider context—an exploitative, but pervasive informal private lending industry and a gendered division of labor that limits economic opportunities for women. These two aspects of the wider context, it is important to add, are also interrelated with respect to the domestic and transnational sex trade.



⁴⁹ The Namseol University survey showed an average monthly surplus income (gross income minus spending) to be about \$1,755.

Another related element, for which we admittedly have only indirect and impressionistic evidence, is related to the growing strength of consumerism in Korean society. Ironically, the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997—which hit Korea particularly hard—played a key role in opening the spigot for a dramatic increase in consumer spending and debt. As we have already seen, part of this played out in the rapid growth of the informal financial sector, but the same basic trend was evident in the formal sector as well, as bank lending shifted strongly from the corporate to the consumer sector.⁵⁰ Accordingly, mainstream consumer debt has risen significantly over the last 10 years: between 1993 and 1997, for example, household debt as proportion of GDP was 40.5 percent on average; by 2000, this figure had risen to 62 percent, and by 2002 73.6 percent. The country also suffered a “credit card crisis” in 2003, when *per capita* credit card debt reached an astoundingly high \$2,006 (more than twice as high as any country in Asia and almost four times higher than in Japan, a much wealthier country).⁵¹ Since then, credit card debt has been substantially reduced (to \$675 on a per capita basis at the end of 2005⁵²), but credit card use in Korea remains relatively high. The important point, however, is not so much the increasing debt burden in consumer and household debt, although it is important; rather, it is that there has been a broad—even cultural—shift toward consumption especially on unaffordable luxury and prestige goods. By itself, this is necessarily not a problem, but in conjunction with a still poorly regulated consumer financial system, a discriminatory employment system (on the basis of gender and age), increasing economic polarization in Korean society, and so on, it can put many men and, especially women, on very shaky footing. In this regard, it is useful repeating a statistic from above: in the Namseol University survey, 27 percent of the respondents gave as their primary reason for engaging in prostitution, “Earn money.” Of course, this can mean many things, but it is not unreasonable to assume that it is connected growing consumerism in Korea.

There are almost certainly other factors involved as well. One of these is domestic violence, which we know is a serious problem in Korea especially among married women. However, our own research, as we noted above, did not provide support for domestic violence as a key factor. This does not mean that it is unimportant, particularly since our survey was, unfortunately, not designed to capture an adequate understanding of the effects of domestic violence. In sum, then, even this brief and admittedly incomplete causal account makes clear that the forces driving the transnational—and the domestic—sex trade between Korea and the United States and within Korea are not only complex, but also context-dependent. The Korean case certainly forces us to reconsider more generic explanations that focus primarily on society-wide poverty and global inequality. Again, it is not a matter of rejecting such arguments, but is, instead, a matter of recognizing that all countries and societies will likely have specific characteristics that must be

⁵⁰ James Crotty and Kang-Kook Lee, “From East Asian ‘Miracle’ to Neo-Liberal ‘Mediocrity’: The Effects of Liberalization and Financial Opening on the Post-crisis Korean Economy,” *Global Economic Review*, vol. 34, no. 4 (December 2005): 415-434.

⁵¹ Tae Soo Kang and Guonan Ma, “Recent Episodes of Credit Card Stress in Asia,” *BIS Quarterly Review* (June 2007), p. 57. Available online <http://www.bis.org/publ/qtrpdf/r_qt0706g.pdf>

⁵² Ibid.

clear accounted for if one wants to develop a fuller understanding of the “root causes” of the domestic and transnational sex trade, and particularly of sexual exploitation.

Policy Issues and Questions

As we have already made clear, a one dimensional law enforcement approach to trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation (and to prostitution more generally) is, by itself, insufficient, and may even be counter-productive. One reason, to repeat, is simply that enforcement-based approaches, at best, will identify only relative handful of cases. On this point consider that U.S. Attorney General’s Office boasts that over “36,000 law enforcement officers and other persons likely to come into contact with victims of human trafficking have been trained on the identification and trafficking and its victims”⁵³; yet, as we know, only a few dozen or, perhaps, a few hundred “trafficking victims” actually receive concrete assistance each year. In addition, even with more thorough and effective “enforcement,” it is likely that the vast majority of sexually exploited women—whether from Korea, other countries, or the U.S. itself—will not be considered “victims”; instead, they will be identified as illegal aliens or criminals. This is partly because of an avoidable tension between immigration policy and anti-trafficking laws: the former is designed to protect national borders from unauthorized and uncontrolled in-migration, while the latter necessarily creates a very narrowly defined category of “victimization” for which only few can qualify. Even more, in practice, the TVPA has been used much more as a prosecutorial tool than as a victim protection act. As many critics of the TVPA have pointed out, application of the TVPA for “victims of trafficking” (i.e., through the provision of CP status or a T visa) often hinges on their willingness to testify against their traffickers. Failure to cooperate usually means deportation. Yet, deportation simply puts the women back into the same situation they were in before migrating; in many cases, they may be worse off. The result? Women will be encouraged to seek the same work and often through the same process. It is a vicious cycle. In the case of Korean women, we do not have the data to show if and to what extent this may be happening. But, certainly, hundreds of Korean women detained through major and minor “anti-trafficking” operations in the United States have been deported.

In Korea, there has been tremendous debate about the efficacy of the 2004 anti-prostitution legislation. Some suggest that the law is a classic case of the “push-down, pop-up” effect, both domestically and transnationally. Domestically, there is clear evidence that the anti-prostitution law has not “saved” women formerly working as prostitutes, especially in the “brothel towns.” Referring again to the Namseoul University study, only 3.3 percent of women (N=302) found “regular employment.” The large plurality (42%) was unemployed and the remaining 55 percent found work in other parts of the domestic sex industry. Many women, too, found their way to the transnational sex trade from Korea to other countries including, of course, the United States. Even worse, critics of the law suggest that it has made domestic prostitution worse by pushing it underground, making it more clandestine. As we discussed above, there is fairly strong evidence

⁵³ *Attorney General’s Annual Report*, p. 11.

in the United States that the TVPA in general, and major anti-trafficking raids in particular, have accomplished the same thing.

If a strict law enforcement or criminal justice approach is not the answer, what is? Some scholars suggest that the only solution, in essence, is to radically reform immigration policy. Tanja Bastia, for example, puts it this way: “ ... if NGOs and governments are serious about solving human trafficking, they need to understand human trafficking as part of labour migration. What migrant workers require is the ability work abroad legally with proper protection assured under destination labour legislation as well as recognition of their own agency.” This is obviously a tall order, and one not likely to find much active sympathy—even among progressive forces—in the United States. *For, just as we must view the causes of trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation within certain contexts, so too must we view possible “solutions,” even if the solutions are more palliative than curative.* In the United States, immigration policy is an extremely politicized, highly partisan issue, and it likely to stay this way for years, if not decades to come. One reason for this is clear: already, the U.S. is home to an estimated 11.55 million unauthorized immigrants (the bulk of whom—6.57 million—are from Mexico). Under these political conditions, a broad-based legalization of cross-border “economic (or labor) migration” is essentially out of the question.

In this view, it may not be possible or even advisable to cut off or drastically reduce reliance on the criminal justice system, especially within the United States. The reason is clear enough: while direct reform of existing immigration law is unrealistic, “backdoor” reform through the criminal justice system is possible. As it stands, however, the TVPA has significant flaws, most of which we have already discussed. Significantly, this is not just the view of those outside of law enforcement. Consider this statement by Derek Marsh, a Lieutenant in the Westminster Police Department (in Orange County, California) and co-director of the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force:

Severe human trafficking cases, both domestic and transnational, provide compelling narratives ... [but they are] not representative of the commercial sex exploitation cases involving illegal immigrants we have encountered and attempted to develop at the local level. Instead of outright force and physical coercion, we are finding victims who are subjected to more psychological and situational coercion and duress tactics. In one case, we discovered residential brothels using women from Malaysia and Singapore. ... [W]e offered to have the local ICE agents and Assistant United States Attorney take the case, but it was rejected.... This case was considered a pimping and pandering case due to the lack of ‘severe’ elements associated with the prostitution of women.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Derek Marsh, “Issues Impacting Human Trafficking Collaborations: A Local Law Enforcement Perspective,” United States House of Representative, Committee on Homeland Security. Available online <<http://homeland.house.gov/SiteDocuments/20070321101447-62337.pdf>> Lt. Marsh reiterate his views in an interview on August 8, 2007 (Westminster, CA).

The basic problem, in Marsh's view, is that the definition of human trafficking in the TVPA is premised on the most atypical or extreme cases. "In the end," Marsh states, "extreme legal definitions mitigate local and federal enthusiasms from a daily commitment perspective." Translation: everyday cases of "trafficking" and sexual exploitation are largely ignored because the law, as presently written and enforced, makes it too difficult to pursue "ordinary" cases as trafficking cases.⁵⁵ Broadening the TVPA, however, will not be enough: it may cast a wider net, but the net will always be too small if the only ones who "fish" with it are a handful of local and federal law enforcement agencies. A fundamental level, a broadening of the TVPA still does not help those who are made more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in the first place by the very fact of their migration to the United States. In this regard, we agree with Bastia and others on principle that the most basic solution is to decriminalize economic migration; but, as we have already noted, this is simply not a politically viable solution in the context of U.S. immigration and party politics.

This leaves us with a series of "second best" choices, one of which we have already discussed (i.e., reform of the TVPA). It is beyond the scope of this report, however, to make *specific* policy recommendations, as our research was neither designed nor intended to evaluate properly the range of policy choices and programs available. Instead, as we have already done, we hope to raise important questions about current policies and approaches, and offer general suggestions for alternative approaches based on the findings from our research. Although we do not offer anything novel or innovative here, we think there are several areas that warrant further thought and investigation:

- **Public awareness in the Korean American community.** The large number of Korean-based prostitution-based enterprises and heavy demand from the growing Korean immigrant population in the United States tells us that targeted community-based approaches *may* be effective in reducing demand and providing a support system for Korean women who wish to leave the sex industry. Public awareness is an important, even critical first step as knowledge of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in the Korean-based prostitution industry is extremely limited.
- **Community-based outreach.** The nature of the trafficking and smuggling process means that the large majority of Korean women in the U.S. sex industry are unaware of the network of organizations available to provide assistance. While a number of organizations do outreach, it is likely that only the smallest fraction of women in the sex

⁵⁵ There is sharp disagreement, however, on whether it is useful to broaden the definition of what a "trafficking victim" is. Jennifer Podkul, a fellow at Equal Justice Works, for example, argues that an overly broad definition--especially one that equates human trafficking with prostitution (as was proposed by the House of Representatives in the reauthorization of the TVPA)--would harm those who need the most help. The basic problem is that a broader definition would create too many potential "victims" and spread federal law enforcement resources too thin. See Jennifer Podkul, "The Danger in Defining: An Activist Speaks Out on Trafficking," *Feministing.org*. n.d. Available online <<http://www.feministing.com/archives/009338.html>>

industry are contacted, either directly or indirectly. More effective outreach strategies are needed, but this requires people with Korean language skills.

- **Mitigation of push and pull factors in Korea.** The social, political, and economic environment in Korea seriously exacerbates vulnerability to exploitation, especially among women (and even more against women without a university education and against older women). Public policies, social norms and practices, and institutional arrangements must be redesigned with an eye toward creating and maintaining a framework of greater personal security and a fuller range of *viable* options—include job choices—for women and others in vulnerable positions.
- **Recognition of women’s agency.** In the transnational sex trade between Korea and the United States, most women clearly make purposeful choices. Yet, in the anti-trafficking and larger, mainstream communities, there is often an insistence on “victimization”: only those who are innocent and powerless victims are understood to deserve attention; all others are subject to punishment or sanction. In practice, as we have seen, this is a false and unrealistic dichotomy. Governmental and/or community-based policy solutions must seek to understand *why* certain individual choices are made over others, including choices that put women at sometimes very serious risk of sexual exploitation.

Conclusion

The trafficking and smuggling process and the Korean-based prostitution industry in the United States is complex, widespread, and very difficult to decipher. Our research, we believe, has done more than touch the surface, but much more research is needed. The interviews and surveys upon which much of this report is based, for example, have provided some insight into the background, experiences, and motivations of Korean women who are trafficked or smuggled into the U.S. sex industry, and we have learned about the conditions that create the basis for sexual exploitation. However, there were a number of important gaps in the survey instrument and (largely unavoidable or at least difficult-to-avoid) weaknesses in the methodology. For these reasons, it is probably better to view this report as the product of a pilot study. As a pilot study, the results are still very important: we have established—small and imperfect as it is—the first empirical “data set” (we use the term loosely) on trafficked and smuggled women from Korea in the U.S. sex industry. As we noted earlier, Korean women constitute a significant subpopulation, both in numerical and theoretical terms. Numerically, there is evidence, albeit only anecdotal, that Korean women make up a disproportionate share of the transnational sex trade to the United States: in major cities, such as Los Angeles, upwards of 80 percent of all prostitution arrests involve Korean nationals. Theoretically, as we discussed at length, the transnational sex trade between Korea and the U.S. undermines often taken-for-granted claims that abject poverty and global inequity, *in and of themselves*, are responsible for most, if not nearly all, of the trafficking and smuggling for sexual exploitation that takes place between the United States and other countries.

We have intentionally not tried to develop our own “grand theory,” but have instead opted for middle-ground approach. This is partly in recognition of our key audience (non-academic groups and organizations), and partly in recognition of the complexity of the issues involved. If anything, the contingent and context-specific aspects of the transnational sex trade from Korea to the United States make us extremely hesitant to make bold pronouncements—other than insisting that in an analysis of any trafficking and smuggling situation, researchers pay careful attention to the potential impact of a range of domestic- and even community-level factors. “Big” global structures and processes *do* matter, but they are not always determinative. For, just as individual women have agency—i.e., the capacity to control important aspects of their own lives despite significant constraints—so, too, do societies and communities of people. In this view, there is certainly nothing inevitable or inexorable about the smuggling and trafficking of Korean women to the United States; there is nothing fixed about sexual exploitation of Korean women or women of any country. We hope that this study provides at least some understanding of how to better address and, we hope, ultimately resolve this pressing issue.

Appendix A

Summary of Survey Results

Notes. This summary is based on 14 surveys. 12 of the 14 surveys were conducted in face-to-face interviews conducted in Korean (the original surveys were printed in Korean then translated to English for this report). All face-to-face surveys were completed in 2007, most between July and September. The responses for the two additional surveys are based on a careful review of a newspaper article and court documents.

Specifically, one survey is from an extended four-part article on sex trafficking by Meredith May of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In this four-part series, published in October 2006, May conducted in an in-depth interview with one Korean “sex slave,” identified as You Mi. The other is based on detailed court records from a major human trafficking case, *United States of America v. Sung Bum Chang* (No. 06-11229).

Some summary results contain fewer than 14 responses; this is because answers were not available or not applicable for specific questions. Not all of the questions from the original survey are included in this summary; in addition, responses to some questions have been combined.

Not all respondents can be considered, from a legal perspective, “trafficked persons” or “victims of trafficking.” This is both intentional and unavoidable. It is intentional because the researcher project was designed, in part, to discern if elements of human trafficking (as defined by the TVPA) are evident in “normal” situations of prostitution involving Korean nationals in the U.S. commercial sex industry. It was unavoidable because access to “victims of trafficking”—i.e., those they have already or might be qualified to receive a T-visa—is extremely circumscribed for academic researchers. To complete a larger number of surveys, therefore, it was necessary to broaden our scope of potential respondents.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A1. When were you born? (N=13)

- The oldest respondent was born in 1950 (58 years old) and the youngest in 1983 (25 years old).
- The mean age for all respondents (in 2007) was 33 years old.

A2. Have you ever been married? (N=14)

a. Yes:	2	(14.3%)
b. No:	12	(85.7%)

A3. What is your highest level of schooling? (N=11)

a. None	--	(0.0%)
b. Elementary school	--	(0.0%)
c. Middle school	1	(9.0%)
d. High school	5	(45.4%)
e. College or university	6	(54.5%)

A4. How well do you communicate in English? (N=13)

a. Basic	8	(61.5%)
b. Elementary	5	(38.5%)
c. Fluent	0	(0.0%)

A5. Were you employed before coming to the United States? (N=13)

a. Yes	11	(84.6%)
b. No	2	(15.4%)

A6. If employed, what type of work did you do? (N=12)

a. Sales/retail work	2	(16.6%)
b. Office work	1	(8.3%)
c. Waitress	3	(25.0%)
d. Room Salon	3	(25.0%)

e. Entertainment	<u>2</u>	(16.6%)
g. Prostitute	<u>1</u>	(8.3%)

* More than 11 responses, since one respondent had more than one job in Korea.

A7. Did you have a debt before coming to the United States? (N=11)

a. Yes	<u>7</u>	(63.6%)
b. No	<u>4</u>	(36.4%)

A8. [For respondents with debt] How large was your debt in Korea? (N=7)

- The size of the debt ranged from about US\$5,000 to \$50,000
- 4 of the 7 respondents had a debt of over \$40,000, 2 had debts of \$10,000 and one had a debt of \$5,000
- The average debt was \$28,570 and the median was \$40,000

A9. If you had a debt in Korea, was this a factor in your decision to come to the United States? (N=11*)

a. Yes, it was a primary factor	<u>3</u>	(27.2%)
b. Yes, but it was one of several factors	<u>--</u>	(0.0%)
c. No	<u>8</u>	(72.7%)

* Although the question was intended on for the women who answered "yes" to question #A7, we received responses from all 11.

A10. Were you a victim of domestic violence or abuse in Korea? (N=11)

a. Yes	<u>2</u>	(18.1%)
b. No	<u>9</u>	(81.2%)

A11. Had you ever done sex-related work in Korea? (N=14)

a. Yes	<u>5</u>	(35.7%)
b. No	<u>9</u>	(64.3%)

- For the respondents who answered "yes," three worked as prostitutes, one worked in a room salon, and one worked in a massage parlor (the latter two did not indicate if they engaged in prostitution).

B. CIRCUMSTANCES OF MIGRATION

B1. How long have you been in the United States? (N=14)

a. 1 to 3 years	<u>2</u>	(14.3%)
b. 4 to 7 years	<u>7</u>	(50.0%)
c. 8 to 11 years	<u>2</u>	(14.3%)
d. 12 to 14 years	<u>2</u>	(14.3%)
e. 15 years or longer	<u>1</u>	(7.1%)

B2. How old were you when you first arrived in the United States? (N=13)

a. Under 17 years old	<u>1</u>	(%)
b. 18 to 21	<u>2</u>	(%)
c. 22 to 25	<u>3</u>	(%)
d. 26 to 30	<u>5</u>	(%)
e. Over 31	<u>2</u>	(%)

- The mean age of the respondents when they arrived in the United States was 25.3; the median age was 26.
- The youngest was 11 and the oldest 39 years old when they first arrived in the United States.

B3. Did you leave Korea on your own initiative or did someone recruit you? (N=14)	a. On my own initiative	14	(100%)	b. No	9	(64.3%)
	b. Recruited	0	(0.0%)		—	—
B4. How did you find out about work opportunities in the United States? (N=13)	a. Word-of-mouth (friend or acquaintance)	7	(53.8%)	a. Yes, all (see B8.1)	8	(57.1%)
	b. Newspaper ad	3	(23.0%)	b. Yes, but only part (see B8.2)	2	(14.3%)
	c. Internet ad	2	(15.4%)	c. No (see B8.3)	4	(28.6%)
	d. Other*	1	(7.8%)		—	—
* Through customer recommendation						
B5. How many times did you attempt to enter the United States? (N=14)	a. Once	11	(78.6%)	B8.1. How much did you pay? (N=7)		
	b. Twice	2	(14.3%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The amount paid by the respondents ranged from \$1,000 to \$14,000 	
	c. Three or more	1	(7.1%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The average payment was \$7,000; the median payment was \$7,000. 	
B6.1 When you arrived in the U.S. did you come with or meet other women traveling for the same purposes? (N=13)	a. Yes	5	(38.5%)	B8.2. How much did you and the agent (broker/third party) pay respectively? (N=2)		
	b. No	8	(61.5%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One respondent paid \$1,000 of her own money and the other \$5,000; neither respondent knew the amount paid by the agent 	
B6.2 If yes, how many (other) women were in your group? (N=5)	a. Two	3	(60.0%)	B8.3. How much did the agent pay on your behalf? (N=5)		
	b. Three	1	(20.0%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The amount paid for two respondents was \$7,000 and the amount for the other two respondents was \$12,000. 	
	c. Four or more	1	(20.0%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One respondent traveled to the United States twice; the first time, the agent paid \$12,000 and the second time \$7,400. 	
B7. Did you know about the possibility of doing sex-related work before coming to the United States? (N=14)	a. Yes	5	(35.7%)	B10. If you had to pay off the cost from your <i>earnings</i> , how much did you pay each month? (N=7)		
		—	—		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 of the respondents indicated they paid, but did not know the exact amount; one respondent who owed \$7,000 was able to pay off that amount in one month through earnings. 	

- One respondent indicated that relatives helped her pay off her travel debt

B10. When you came to the U.S., did you use your real-name passport? (N=14)

a. Yes	13	(92.8%)
b. No	1	(7.2%)

B11. When you arrived in the U.S., what was your visa status? (N=15*)

a. Tourist/Short-term	4	(26.7%)
b. Work permit	--	(0.0%)
c. Student	1	(6.7%)
d. Not sure	--	(0.0%)
e. Other/legal	1	(6.7%)
f. Did not have a visa; smuggled in	9	(60.0%)

* There are 15 responses since one respondent entered the U.S. twice, the first time without a visa and the second time with a tourist visa.

B12. If you entered the United States legally, did you overstay the period of visa permission? (N=4)

a. Yes	3	(75.0%)
b. No	1	(25.0%)

B13. Through which border points and by what means of transportation did you come to the U.S.?

- Respondents (6) who had a valid visa all took direct flights from Korea to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).
- Following are descriptions provided by respondents who were smuggled into the United States:

[A] In February 2003, "YM" flew from Seoul to Mexico City via Japan and Los Angeles. After arriving in Mexico, she was met at the airport by a Korean man who picked her up along with one other Korean woman. He bought them meals and "gave" each \$500 (which was added to their debts). A second man met the women at the Tijuana airport then drove them to a motel on the border. He took their passports. Four days later, another Korean man came and handed YM a visa with a photo of woman who looked similar to her. She was told to memorize the name and information. The man told them they would be driven through the San Ysidro border checkpoint, each one riding with a different driver. YM was told to stay calm and take only a small handbag, to make it appear she was returning from a short trip. On their way through the checkpoint, the US border patrol agent instructed the driver to stop in the secondary inspection area; the driver, however, proceeded to the exit booth very calmly and was able to enter the United States without difficulty. Once in the U.S., the driver pulled off the freeway to a gas station, where another Korean man waited in a black car. From there YM was driven to Los Angeles.

[B] In late 2004, "HYJ" met with two brokers in Seoul, Yoon and David, who offered to arrange her travel to the United States (along with a friend). At first the broker told her that he would obtain a US visa for travel, but later he told her it would take months to obtain. As an alternative to obtaining a visa, the broker said he could arrange for an illegal entry through Canada. HYJ was given a round trip ticket to Toronto. When she arrived in Canada, she was met by a "travel agency representative," who took possession of her passport. After a few days, she was driven several hours towards the US border, where a guide led them on a walk across the border. Once across the border, another vehicle picked her up. She was then driven to New York City. In New York HYJ was

given a ticket to fly to Los Angeles with two other women. On arrival, her group was met and driven to Club Napoli in Los Angeles. The owner of the club selected one of the women to work for him, and told HYJ and the third women they would have to work elsewhere. After a few days in Los Angeles, the women were driven to Coppell, Texas.

[C] In fall 2004, “W” was instructed by a broker in Korea to buy a plane ticket to Vancouver, Canada. She flew by herself to Canada (although she later discovered that there were four other women on the same flight). Once in Canada, she was picked up by a taxi driver and was dropped off at a hotel. Shortly after she arrived at the hotel, she was met by a Korean man who took her passport. She also met the four other Korean women from her flight. After several hours of waiting, the five women were driven to the U.S.-Canada border, traveling part of the way on an unpaved road. She and the others were told to throw away their belongings and dress completely in black. They were dropped off near a fence and told to cross the border on their own; their smuggler said he would be waiting for them on the other side of the border in an SUV. After successfully crossing the border they were met by the smuggler who loaded them into his SUV. They were instructed to lie down in the back of the car. They drove for several hours, stopping once for a short break. After several more hours of driving, they arrived at another hotel (she did not know where the hotel was located), and picked up by a different driver. They were then driven to Los Angeles and dropped off in supermarket parking lot. From there, W was taken directly to a massage parlor in the San Francisco Bay Area.

[D] “J” has been to the United States several times—in 1997 and 2003—entering on a valid student visa each time. In 2006, however, her F-1 visa had expired so she no longer had a route to enter the U.S. legally. Wanting to return to the United States, J

contacted a broker through the Internet (www.sunhijang.com); the broker helped arrange for her to be smuggled into the country. She met a broker in Korea, who gave her a plane ticket to Mexico City and \$1,000. After arriving in Mexico City, she was told to wait in a house until arrangements could be made to get her across the border. She waited for three weeks, and was finally met by a Mexican smuggler who took her to a border city near Texas. She stayed in a hotel for one more day, and then crossed the river into the United States. The river crossing, she recalls, took 20 minutes. Once across the river, she was forced to stay in another “safe” house for 4 days. During this time, she was not allowed to go outside. On the fifth day, she and a few other women (she believes they were Chinese-Koreans) were herded into a refrigerated trailer driven by a white male. They drove for about 2 hours and arrived in Houston. From Houston, she took a flight to Los Angeles and was picked up by her employer, who confiscated her passport. Her smuggling debt was \$14,000.

[E] In October 2002, “EJ” met with a travel agent in Korea who told her to purchase a travel package to Canada. The travel agent also told her not to carry any contact information for anyone in the U.S. and to take only a small travel bag. When she arrived in Vancouver, Canada, an employee of the travel agent picked her up and gave her a “tour” of the city. EJ was then taken to a hotel, where she waited for 4 days. On the fourth night, her U.S.-based employer called and told her that someone would be coming by to pick her up; from the hotel, she was taken to a house where six other people waiting to be smuggled across the border. EJ had to wait another three days. When it was time to leave, she and the six other people (three men and three women) were picked up by two men; they drove from Vancouver and after 4 hours arrived at an unpaved road. From there, they were by a guide who took them across

the border, to another unpaved road. They waited by the side of the road until a van drove by, moving very slowly. The door was open and they were told to jump into the moving van. They were then driven to Seattle, transferred to another vehicle and driven to Los Angeles. They were all dropped off at the parking lot of California Market, where she and one man from the group stayed. The others were taken to different locations, including Chicago and Atlanta.

[F] “A” does not recall much about her trip to the United States. She does know, though, that she came to the United States (in 2001) through Mexico. She flew to Mexico from Korea, paying about \$4,000. She was only in Mexico for about 12 hours, staying in a motel arranged by her smuggler. Once she was picked up, she was driven straight through the border without any inspection. According to A, her smuggler had already paid off the border patrol agents at a particular checkpoint. Once across the border, she was taken to Los Angeles, where she worked for one year. After the first year, however, she involuntarily moved—“sold”—to another brothel owner in San Francisco.

[G] “B” arrived in the United States in 1997. Among the respondents, she was the only one to enter the U.S. using a fake passport, which she obtained from a broker in Korea. Using her fake passport, she flew from Korea to Toronto, where she stayed for three days. She was then driven, along with 9 other people, from Canada to New York in an RV. From New York she traveled to Atlanta.

[H] “C” was smuggled to the U.S. (in December 2002) through Mexico via a fairly circuitous route. She flew from Korea to Japan, from Japan to Vancouver, and from Vancouver to Mexico City. She stayed in Mexico for two days, and was given another plane ticket to Tijuana. In Tijuana she was met by another smuggler, who

brought her to a motel; after three days, a different smuggler came by with valid IDs, but of different people. The picture and physical description on the ID matched her appearance (there were also a number of other people in her group; all were given IDs). From Tijuana, she and others were driven through the border control area. They had no problems. Because the group was so large, the driver had to make two trips. Once everyone was together, they were driven from San Diego to Los Angeles.

[I] “HYJ” did not provide details; she only states that she was smuggled into the United States through Mexico (year not certain).

C. GENERAL INFORMATION ON CONDITIONS OF WORK

C1. Where did you work (or what type of work did you do)? *Respondent instructed to choose all that apply.* (N=28)

a. Escort service	5	(17.8%)
b. Nightclub	2	(7.1%)
c. Room Salon/Danran <i>Jujeom</i>	6	(21.4%)
d. <i>Noraebang</i>	0	(0.0%)
e. Massage parlor	9	(32.1%)
f. Private Residence	4	(14.3%)
g. Street	0	(0.0%)
h. Call girl	1	(3.6%)
h. Other	1	(3.6%)

C2. Where did you meet your clients? (N=16)

a. At a fixed location	12	(75.0%)
b. No fixed location	4	(25.0%)

C3. Have you had another type of job (outside the commercial sex industry) in the U.S.? If yes, what type? (N=12)

a. Yes	8	(66.7%)
b. No	4	(33.3%)

- Several respondents have had more than one job outside the commercial sex industry: sales assistant (1), student (2), waitress (4), receptionist (1), cook (1), cashier (1), and bartender (1).

C4. Did you make a work agreement (signed or verbal/unsigned) with your employer? (N=14)

a. Yes (see C4.1-4.6)	9	(64.3%)
b. No	5	(34.7%)

C4.1. If you signed a work agreement, how much earnings were you *promised*? (N=9)

- 4 respondents were promised \$10,000 a month; one was promised between \$13,000 and \$15,000 a month, and another was promised between \$25,000 and \$30,000 a month for engaging in “*i-cha*” (prostitution).
- Others were promised \$3-\$4,000 a month, \$7,000 a month, and \$120 a day.

C4.2 Once you started working, did you make the same amount of money (or more) than was promised? (N=9)

a. Yes	3	(33.3%)
b. No	6	(66.7%)

C4.3 When did you make your agreement? (N=7)

a. Before leaving Korea	1	(14.3%)
b. After arriving in the United States	6	(85.7%)

C4.4 Was there a time period specified in the agreement? If yes, how long? (N=9)

a. Yes	6	(66.7%)
b. No	3	(33.3%)

- The time period ranged from 3 months (1) to 6 months (2). Other specified time periods were 2 months (1) and 4 months (1). For one respondent, no time period was specified; instead, the agreement stipulated that she would only be allowed to leave when her “debt was paid off.”

C4.5 Were you allowed to leave before the agreement period was over? *Note: There are more than 9 responses for this question; respondents who did not have a work agreement may have answered this question based on their understanding of their ability (or inability) to walk away from their employment situation.* (N=12)

a. Yes	8	(66.7%)
b. No	4	(33.3%)

C4.6 If you were allowed to leave, how much did you owe your employer? (N=8)

a. Known (see below)	5	(62.5%)
b. Did not know	3	(37.5%)

- Respondents did not indicate specific amounts owed; instead, they indicated how their pay-off amounts would be calculated, as follows (N=5):

- “Principle plus 30% interest.”
- “200% of the original debt.”
- “[Original] debt plus \$1,000.”
- “A fine plus airfare.”
- “A [monetary] fine.”

D. WORK-RELATED QUESTIONS

D1. Please provide information about the nationality or ethnicity of the following persons ... (N=varies)

	Korean	Non-Korean
a. Owner of workplace	12 (85.7%)	2 (14.3%)
b. Manager	10 (80.0%)	2 (20.0%)
c. Broker	12 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)
e. Smuggler(s)	7 (70.0%)	3 (30.0%)

- Two of the respondents worked for the same “owners” in a private residence-cum-brothel; one owner was a Vietnamese woman, neither respondent knew the nationality/ethnicity of the second, male owner. In the same case, the “manager” of the brothel was Chinese. In all other cases, the owner and managers were Korean.
- In all cases, the smuggling operation involved Koreans, but in three cases the Korean smugglers were assisted by Mexican nationals and, in one case, by a white American.

D2. What were your hours of work? (N=12)

- The work hours varied, although 5 of the 12 (41.7%) respondents were “on call” 24 hours a day. Several others were on call virtually 24 hours a day, including 2 respondents (16.7%) who worked from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. and one (8.3%) who worked from 10 a.m. to 7 a.m.
- Other respondents had the following hours: 8:30 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. (2), 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., and one who had “varied” hours.

D3. On average, how many days off did you receive each month? (N=13)

a. No off days	<u>1</u>	(7.6%)
b. 1-2 days	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
c. 2-3 days (during menstrual period)	<u>6</u>	(46.0%)
d. 4-5 days	<u>3</u>	(23.0%)
e. 10 days	<u>2</u>	(15.4%)
f. Do not know	<u>1</u>	(7.6%)

- One respondent who had 10 days off per month emphasized that she did not have any debt, which meant that she could “get any time off I wanted off.” She also noted, though, that women with debt were in a very different situation: “If you have debt, you have to live with other girls and could only get Sunday off.”
- The other respondent with 10 days per month had been in the United States for 10 years and also did not have any debt.
- The respondent who answered, “I do not know,” was arrested by ICE officers after only a short time in the United States.

D4. Were you free to go out (on your own) during non-working hours and days? (N=12)

a. Yes	<u>6</u>	(50.0%)
b. No	<u>6</u>	(50.0%)

- Two of the respondents who answered “yes” indicated that, while free to go out, they were still subject to restrictions. One stated, “I had to get authorization from the manager and notify her where I was going.” The other respondent emphasized that the manager would “constantly ask me where I was going and get upset if I

went out. When we went out, we would get in an argument ... and so girls didn't go out." In addition, the respondent noted that the employer would "watch" them and, if they took a cab, ask the cab driver where they dropped us off.

D5. Were you free to contact your family and friends? (N=13)

a. Yes (see D5.1)	<u>10</u>	(77.0%)
b. No	<u>3</u>	(23.0%)

D5.1. How did you make contact? (N=9)

a. Personal cell phone	<u>6</u>	(66.7%)
b. Phone in workplace	<u>2</u>	(22.2%)
c. Other (borrowed cell phone)	<u>1</u>	(11.1%)

D6. What was the make up of your customers by nationality or ethnicity? Please give approximate estimates by percentage. (N=9)

	Non-Korean (%)	Korean (%)
Respondent 1	0	100
Respondent 2	80	20
Respondent 3a	100	0
<i>Respondent 3b</i>	50	50
Respondent 4	99	1
Respondent 5	99	1
Respondent 6a	100	0
<i>Respondent 6b</i>	0	100
Respondent 7a	0	100
<i>Respondent 7b</i>	10	90
Respondent 8	95	5
Respondent 9	70	30

- Several respondents provided different breakdowns depending on the type of service. "Outcall" service (3a and 6a) involve 100% Korean clients, while

"in-call" service involve can involve both Korean and non-Korean clients (3b) or all non-Korean clients (6b). Prostitution in massage parlors (7b) typically involves a larger percentage of non-Korean (this was confirmed by several other respondents as well). In 7a, the respondent indicated that the clients came through a "date agency."

D7. How many clients did you generally have each day? (N=8)

a. 1 to 2	<u>1</u>	(12.5%)
b. 3 to 5	<u>4</u>	(50.0%)
c. 6 to 9	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
d. 10 to 14	<u>2</u>	(25.0%)
e. 14 to 20	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
f. 20 or more	<u>1</u>	(12.5%)

- The data here may be unreliable: several of the respondents gave different figures depending on the type of service provided (e.g., outcall and in-call); others indicated how many "tables" they served and the number of customers at each table.

D8. Among the women in your workplace, how many did sex-related work? (N=9*)

a. 1 to 3	<u>4</u>	(44.4%)
b. 4 to 6	<u>3</u>	(33.3%)
c. 7 to 9	<u>1</u>	(11.1%)
d. 10 to 19	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
e. 20 or more	<u>1</u>	(11.1%)

* Some respondents gave answers for more than one workplace

D9. Among your co-workers who engaged in sex-related work, what were their nationalities? (N=10)

a. All Korean	<u>9</u>	(90.0%)
b. Koreans and Americans	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
c. Koreans and other nationalities (including American)	<u>1</u>	(10.0%)
d. Do not know	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)

- In 9 out of 10 cases, all the women engaged in sex-related work were Korean; in the one exception, 80% of women were Korean and 20% other nationalities: Mexican, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, and American

D10. How much were you monthly earnings? (N=9)

Monthly Payment	Comment
1	Never paid
2	\$2,500~\$3,000
3a	\$7,000~\$8,000
3b	\$10,000~\$15,000
4	Never directly paid
5	\$13,000~\$14,000
6a	\$3,000
6b	\$5,000
7	Never paid
8	\$6,000
9	\$7,000

D11. How often did you get paid? (N=7)

a. Monthly	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
b. Weekly	<u>1</u>	(14.2%)
c. Daily	<u>3</u>	(42.9%)
d. Irregularly	<u>3</u>	(42.9%)

D12. How many sex-related workplaces did you work in while in the United States? (N=13)

a. 1	<u>4</u>	(30.8%)
b. 2 to 3	<u>3</u>	(23.0%)
c. 4 to 5	<u>2</u>	(15.4%)
d. 6 to 7	<u>1</u>	(7.7%)
e. 8 or more	<u>2</u>	(15.4%)
f. Do not remember	<u>1</u>	(7.7%)

D13. Were you ever forced or coerced to do sex-related work? (N=11)

a. Yes (see D13.1)	<u>6</u>	(54.5%)
b. No	<u>5</u>	(45.5%)

- Among those who responded “no,” one indicated that she had been forced to engage in sex when she was in a similar situation in Japan; and another indicated that she was forced to have sex in Korea. Thus, 8 of the 11 respondents (72.7%) were subject to force or coercion.

D13.1 If you were forced to do sex-related work, what method was used? (Respondents asked to mark all that apply; thus total number of responses is greater than 6).

a. Physical violence	<u>1</u>
b. Verbal abuse	<u>3</u>
c. Sexual assault	<u>1</u>
d. Verbal threats, including death threats	<u>2</u>
e. Use of weapons	<u>1</u>
f. Encouraged or force to use drugs	<u>1</u>
g. Imposition of fine or penalty	<u>1</u>
h. Threats against family	<u>3</u>
i. Other	<u>3</u>

- In the “Other” category, two respondents indicated that they were required to pay off their debt; they did specify what the consequences of not paying off the debt would have been.
- The other respondent stated that she was “pressured” to have sex with certain clients because they were “important”; it is not clear what would have happened if she refused.

D14. Compared with what you heard before you left Korea, were your working conditions and life in the United States ... (N=11)

a. better than I expected	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
b. slightly better than I expected	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
c. as I expected	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
d. worse than I expected	<u>1</u>	(9.1%)
e. much worse than I expected	<u>8</u>	(72.7%)
f. Other	<u>2</u>	(18.2%)

- Of the two who responded “Other,” one said that the working conditions and life were “better than Japan” (where she had previously worked in the commercial sex industry), and the other stated, “I did not expect to work as a prostitute.”

D15. Please describe what you were told about your job (e.g., wages, work conditions, type of work) before leaving Korea or before beginning work in the United States?

- Descriptions provided by respondents:

[A] “YM” was told that she would be working in a room salon, in which no sexual service would be required. (However, YM was forced to have sex

with an average of 12 men a day, and never paid directly.)

[B] “HYJ” was told that she would be working as waitress or hostess in a nightclub, serving and pouring drinks, similar to what a hostess in a tea house does. (HYJ was also forced to have sex and not allowed to leave her place of work.)

[C] “MJK” was informed of her work hours and told to listen the manager. (MJK had no debt, and, in general, had much greater control of her work conditions than the other respondents.)

[D] “A” thought she was coming to the United States to work a new business unrelated to the commercial sex industry. She only found out after she arrived that the “business” was a brothel run by her friend’s boyfriend and three other Korean men.

[E] “TY” knew she would be engaging in prostitution. She was told that she would receive \$200 from each client, and would split that with the employer. She would be on call 24 hours a day and live in a designated apartment, controlled by her employer. (Her actual work conditions were what she was told, except that she was exposed to serious drug use among customers.)

[F] “HY” was told that she would not be required to engage in prostitution, but that she would have the “choice” to do so. She was also told that she would not have to drink with customers, but if she chose not to, she would not be given a room to work (which is necessary to earn money). (HY ultimately engaged in prostitution, as it was the only way to pay off her debt.)

[G] “SY” was aware that she would be engaging in prostitution. She was told

that she would be paid approximately \$13,000 to \$14,000 a month, with the amount of each \$200 “trick” to split 50/50 with the employer. (*While paying off her debt SY was not paid directly, but once the debt was paid in full, she was able to earn the amount promised.*)

[H] “MJB” thought she would be working as a bartender, earning three to four times what she then earning as a waitress in a bar. (*She ended up working in room salon.*)

[I] “A2” was told that she would be doing sports massage in the United States, earning as much as \$10,000 a month. (*She ended up being forced to engage in prostitution and was not paid on a regular basis.*)

D16. If you were sick or injured when working, what type of medical service did you use? (N=10)

a. Hospital or clinic	<u>7</u>	(70.0%)
b. Drug store	<u>1</u>	(10.0%)
c. Traditional medicine clinic	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
d. Employer	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
e. Not able to use medical services	<u>2</u>	(20.0%)

D17. Did you receive any information about “safe sex”? (N=6)

a. Yes	<u>4</u>	(66.7%)
b. No	<u>2</u>	(33.3%)

D18. When you had sex with your clients, did they use condoms? (N=8)

a. Always	<u>6</u>	(75.0%)
b. Frequently	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
c. Often	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)

d. Sometimes	<u>2</u>	(25.0%)
e. Never	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)

D19. Who paid for the condom? (N=9)

a. Myself	<u>3</u>	(33.3%)
b. Employer	<u>2</u>	(22.2%)
c. Client	<u>4</u>	(44.4%)

D20. Were you required to work in different locations? (Different business places within the same city/town, different cities, and/or different states.) (N=8)

a. Yes	<u>2</u>	(25.0%)
b. No	<u>6</u>	(75.0%)

D21. Have you experienced any of the following situations? (N=varies) The percentage figure is based on the number of responses for each **individual question**; only “yes” responses are indicated in the table.

a. I was not paid	<u>10</u>	(83.0%)
b. I was forced to buy clothe and cosmetics supplied by the employer	<u>5</u>	(41.7%)
c. I was required to pay room and board	<u>12</u>	(85.7%)
d. I was required to purchase a cell phone	<u>3</u>	(27.3%)
e. I was required to purchase medicine	<u>5</u>	(45.5%)
f. I was required to pay for transportation	<u>9</u>	(75.0%)
g. I was required to pay for condoms and lubricants	<u>5</u>	(50.0%)
h. Other (required expenditure)	<u>5</u>	--

E. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

E1. Where did you live? (N=18*)

a. In my workplace	6
b. Apartment, room or house owned by employer	8
c. Apartment, room or house NOT owned by employer	4
d. Other	--

* Some respondents had multiple living arrangements during their stay in the U.S.

- Only 3 of the 14 (21.4%) respondents had never lived in their workplace or a housing unit controlled by their employer.
- 3 of the 14 (21.4%) respondents had never lived outside of their workplace; in at least one case, on the respondent was forced to sleep on the same table where she “serviced clients.”

E2. Who were you living with (the person or people sharing the same room, apartment or house)? Mark all that apply. (N=27)

a. Manager or “uncle”	5
b. Owner of my workplace	5
c. Co-worker from the United States	0
d. Co-worker from other foreign country(s)	1
e. Co-worker from Korea	12
f. Recruiting agent or broker	4
e. Other	--

- In the “other” category, the respondents listed the following: (1) wife of my boss; (2) friend and my child; (3) friend; and (4) relative

E3. How many persons did you live with? (N=11)

a. Lived by myself	0	(0.0%)
b. 1 other person	0	(0.0%)
c. 2 or 3 people	4	(36.4%)
d. 4 or 5 people	2	(18.2%)
e. 6 to 9 people	4	(36.4%)
f. 10 or more people	1	(9.0%)

F. FUTURE PLANS

F1. If the situation permits, how long do you want to stay in the United States? (N=13)

a. Leave as soon as possible	0	(0.0%)
b. Up to six months	0	(0.0%)
c. Up to one year	0	(0.0%)
d. Up to two years	0	(0.0%)
e. Three to five years	1	(7.7%)
f. More than five years or permanently	10	(77.0%)
g. Not sure	2	(15.3%)

F2. In case you want to stay in the United States, what is your mail reason? Mark all that apply.

a. I need to earn more money	1
b. I cannot earn enough money in Korea compared to the United States	1
c. I cannot find a decent job in Korea	6
d. The living conditions in the United States are much better than in Korea	5
e. Other	5

- In the “other” category, the following reasons were listed: (1) “I want a new life”; (2) “I need to pay off my debt first”; (3) “I need

to wait until my son graduates from junior high school”; (4) “In Korea, there is no guarantee of human rights”; (5) “There are more job opportunities in the United States.”

G. LAW ENFORCEMENT/LEGAL SYSTEM

G1. Have you ever had to deal with law enforcement agencies or the police in the U.S.? (N=14)

a. Yes (see G2)	13	(92.8%)
b. No	1	(7.2%)

G2. If yes, how did you come to have contact with law enforcement? (N=14*)

a. Arrested or detained in a law enforcement raid	11	(78.6%)
b. Sought assistance myself or with the aid of a service provider	1	(7.1%)
c. Other	2	(14.3%)

* One respondent provided had two separate experiences

- In “other” category, one respondent was arrested for a DUI (driving under the influence) violation, and the other received assistance from the police after her boss was arrested on bribery charges.

G3. If you have ever been arrested or detained, please describe your experience.* (N=7)

[A] I was arrested during an undercover investigation. They asked why I was here and if I had anywhere to go. I ended up being jailed, but my employer bailed me out. The bail was set at \$2,000 and I was provided a public defender. I was found guilty of prostitution and was given a

choice to pay a fine, serve time in jail, or do community service. My employer paid the fine, which was \$1,500. Of course, I had to pay my employer back for both the bail amount and fine. Before I was bailed out of jail, I was treated very badly by the police since I was a prostitute. They never asked about my employer, but I didn’t know anything because I had just started working.

[B] I was arrested with five other women. There was no interpretation service provided, but the cops did not put handcuffs on me. I told them that it was my first day. Some employers will bail us out, but some don’t. In outcall, the employers always provide bail because it’s too risky for them: the girls might talk to the police Normally, bail ranges from \$500 to \$2,300, but may sometimes be as much as \$30,000 or \$40,000. Of course, that amount is left as debt for the women to pay off.

[C] I was in the same car as a drug dealer when the cops arrested her. I had just bought a pack of drugs, so I was arrested for possession. I jailed for one month.

[D] I was arrested during a raid and had to stay in jail from 12 hours. I was released after I paid \$10,000 for bail. I answered all the questions that the translator asked me.

[E] Someone scheduled an appointment with my employer a month ahead of time. My employer was having a hard time hiring employees, so I was asked to come to work. I met the client and gave him a massage. After that, we negotiated to have sex, but I found out it was an undercover operation. Two cops, one Korean and one non-Korean, arrested me (and my boss), and then took us to the police station. My bail was set at \$2,000; my employer’s bail was \$5,000. The manager paid the bail; later, I received 15 days of community service; I was also required to have a health exam and placed on 2-years probation. The police promised that I would be released if I testified against

my employer; but I was never asked to testify.

[F] When I was working in massage parlor (in San Diego), an undercover cop came in for a massage and hid a recorder under the mattress. I found the recorder, but the cop acted as if he didn't know what it was. Since I had only given him a massage, I was just given a warning and fined. In San Diego, massage parlors need a license to operate, so the fine was for not having a license.

[G] I was arrested in an undercover raid when I was working in Connecticut (in 2004). After I was arrested, I was put in jail. Since I was an illegal alien, my case was transferred to immigration. The immigration officers asked me when and how I came to the U.S., but did not ask me anything about my circumstances, like whether I was in debt bondage. I was told I would be deported. Bail was set at \$5,000, but I wasn't able to contact anyone at the time, so I ended up staying in jail for one month before I managed to bail myself out. I asked the Korean consul for help—to contact my friend—but no one returned my calls. (Later, I saw him as a customer at one of the room salons I worked in on the East Coast.) While in jail, I was assigned a public defender. After I got out, he told me that I would be deported if I showed up (the next day) in court for my case; so I didn't go. I was overwhelmed by the system. The interpreters were not helpful, and I felt they were judging me.

* The narratives are paraphrased; they are not verbatim quotes from the respondents.

G4. Have you been granted a T-visa?
(N=14)

a. Yes	3	(21.4%)
b. No	8	(57.2%)
c. In process	3	(21.4%)

- 2 of 8 respondents who answered "no" already have legal status in the United States. One respondent is married to a U.S. citizen.
- One respondent was not aware of what a T-visa is.

H. OPINION, NEEDS AND EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICE-PROVIDERS

H1. Do you currently need or want assistance for the following? Mark all that apply.

a. Returning to Korea	0
b. Leaving prostitution and sex-related work	0
c. Improving working conditions	1
d. Receiving unpaid salary	0
e. Visa status	5
f. Medical care	2
g. Finances	3
h. Other	1

- In the "other" category, the respondent wanted assistance in finding employment.

H2. Have you received assistance from any organization or service-provider?

a. Yes (see H2.1)	6	(42.8%)
b. No	4	(28.6%)
c. No response or other	4	(28.6%)

- 2 respondents (in the "no response or other" category) have received government food stamps.

H2.1 What organizations have provided you assistance in the past or are currently providing assistance?

a. Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach (San Francisco)	<u>1</u>
b. Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)	<u>2</u>
c. Salvation Army (southern California)	<u>2</u>
d. University of Nevada, Las Vegas	<u>1</u>

H3. Whom do you consider a good resource for help? Mark all that apply.

a. Police/immigration officer	<u>1</u>
b. Social workers	<u>1</u>
c. Local (non-Korean) NGOs	<u>1</u>
d. Non-Korean religious institutions (e.g., churches)	<u>0</u>
e. Korean religious institutions	<u>0</u>
f. Broker (person who arranged travel to U.S.)	<u>0</u>
g. Employer/manager	<u>2</u>
h. Friends	<u>2</u>
i. Clients	<u>1</u>
j. Family/relatives in U.S.	<u>1</u>
k. Family/relatives in Korea	<u>1</u>
l. Other	<u>3</u>

■ In the “other” category, the respondents all said, “none” or “nobody will help.”

H4. If you are aware of organizations or individual who provide assistance, how did you get this information?

a. Friends	<u>1</u>
b. Clients	<u>1</u>
c. Television/radio/other media	<u>2</u>
d. Internet	<u>0</u>
e. Flyers/brochures from NGOs	<u>0</u>
f. Law enforcement	<u>0</u>
g. Other	<u>4</u>

H5. What is your preferred method and/or location of consultation? (N=11)

a. Telephone or online consultation	<u>5</u>	(45.5%)
b. Visit to organization's or individual's office	<u>6</u>	(54.5%)
c. My home or neighborhood (someone comes to see me)	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
d. Other	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)

H6. What factors would encourage you to return to Korea? Mark all that apply.

a. Opportunity to earn a good income	<u>0</u>
b. No visa/permit to remain in U.S.	<u>0</u>
c. Work in the U.S. is too difficult and tough	<u>2</u>
d. Disease or health problem	<u>0</u>
e. Be with family and relatives in Korea	<u>6</u>
f. Other	<u>3</u>

■ In the “other” category, 2 respondents stated that they “don’t want to return to Korea”; 1 respondent said, “I can’t live here [the U.S.] anymore.”

H7. If you return to Korea, what kinds of help would you need? Mark all that apply.

a. Job training	<u>3</u>
b. Medical care	<u>1</u>
c. Counseling (trauma, psychiatric)	<u>4</u>
d. Shelter/residence	<u>2</u>
e. Other	<u>1</u>

H8. If you return to Korea, would you visit a women's organization, NGO, or counseling center that provides services to prostitutes or to victims of sex trafficking? (N=10)

a. Yes	<u>4</u>	(40.0%)
b. No (see H8.1)	<u>6</u>	(60.0%)

H8.1 If you answer no, please provide a reason why you would not visit a service-provider in Korea. (N=6)

a. I do not know about any organization	<u>1</u>	(16.7%)
b. There is no organization where I live	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
c. I heard these organizations do not provide practical help	<u>3</u>	(50.0%)
d. I do not need additional counseling or assistance	<u>1</u>	(16.7%)
e. Other	<u>1</u>	(16.7%)

H9. What kind of work would you most want to do? Choose only one. (N=11)

a. Business person	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
b. Nurse	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
c. Self-employed	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
d. Sales assistant	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
e. Government employee	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
f. Student	<u>5</u>	(45.5%)
g. Office worker or "white collar"	<u>1</u>	(9.0%)
h. Waitress	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
i. Teacher	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
j. Dancer or entertainer	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
k. Housekeeper	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
l. Hairdresser or stylist	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)
m. Prostitute	<u>0</u>	(0.0%)

n. Farm worker	<u>1</u>	(9.0%)
o. Other	<u>4</u>	(36.4%)

- In the "other" category, respondents provided the following responses:

"I want to learn English."

"Just want to live a normal life; get married."

"Dry cleaning or a pet shop."

"Homemaker."

Appendix B. Major Sex Trafficking Raids in the Western United States Involving Korean Nationals, for 2000-2006

Date	City/Area	Case	#	Description
August 2006	Northeastern U.S.	Operation "Cold Comfort"	100+	This case was opened in 2005 when a Korean couple who owned a operated a chain of Korean brothels in Queens, NY, attempted to bribe an undercover NYPD detective. Between May 2005 and March 2006, the couple paid the undercover detective \$126,500 in cash bribes. According to ICE, the investigation revealed a wide-ranging criminal enterprise that included conspirators in 11 states as well as in South Korea. The organization was responsible for the smuggling and trafficking of over 100 women, who were forced to work as prostitutes in 60 different brothels along the East Coast of the U.S. 39 individuals were criminally arrested and 83 arrested on administrative charges.
August 2005	Dallas (Texas)	--	42	Large-scale federal raid of 8 Korean "spas" in the Dallas area. Of the 42 women arrested in the August raid, some worked in the sex trade in Seoul and knew they would work as prostitutes in the U.S. Others said they thought they were coming to restaurants and bars, only to be thrown into bathhouses. Most were in their late 20s and early 30s. All paid broker fees of up to \$15,000 and were required to repay the debt in full before being allowed to leave (passports were often confiscated). 34 of the 42 women were deported.
July 2005	San Francisco and Los Angeles	Operation "Gilded Cage" (simultaneous raids conducted in both cities)	150 (104 in SF and 46 in LA)	A force of 400 federal and local law officers raided 11 suspected brothels and arrested 27 suspects in the San Francisco Bay Area; over \$2 million in cash was recovered. In the Los Angeles area, 18 suspects were arrested and over \$1 million in assets were seized. Most of the Korean women detained for prostitution were between 20 and 27 years old.
Nov. 2005	Denver (CO)	Operation "Rising Sun" (not clear if this operation tied to earlier case in 2003)	16	Local police raided 18 Asian massage parlors and arrested 35 people over a six-month period. The women incurred smuggling debts of between \$10,000 and \$30,000 and were not allowed to leave until the debts were paid off; the women were also purportedly taken gambling in order to encourage them to accrue larger debts.

2003	Denver (CO)	--	n.a.	A years-long investigation that targeted more than 40 massage parlors in Colorado that were said to be part of a complex, multi-state network of brothels that fed illicit funds to a criminal organization in South Korea.
Nov. 2000	Seattle (WA)	Operation "Pacific Breeze"	100+	A year long investigation culminated in the arrest and indictment of a man thought to be the ringleader of a scheme that trafficked as many as 40 Korean immigrants per month across the border between the US and Canada. According to authorities, each of the immigrants were expected to front \$3000 and many of them were known to be in prostitution.

* This list is a partial list.