8-2021

Impacts of Arrests for Sexual Crimes on Child Sexual Exploitation

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IMPACTS OF ARRESTS FOR SEXUAL CRIMES ON

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

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A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

_____

by

Jennifer Headland

August 2021

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August 2021

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the use of teen pornography and the increase of sexual exploitation of children in San Bernardino County. This study sought to explain and answer the following question regarding sexual exploitation of children: 1) What is growth of child sexual exploitation in San Bernardino County? Secondary data utilizing the city of San Bernardino's arrest records for sexual offenses from the years 2015 to 2019 was analyzed to look at trends of crime against minors. What was found was that virtually all crimes found were committed by women and a very insignificant amount of crimes committed against minors were reported. There was a lack of reporting on sexual crimes against children, although these crimes are known to be prevalent in this area from information from local task forces. Implications of this disconnect between the study's findings and information from local task forces is discussed, and implications of the arrests that do occur are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

In October of 2016, the CEO of Backpage.com was arrested on charges

for the sexual exploitation and trafficking of minors. Backpage considers itself

the second largest online classified advertising service in the country, next to

Craigslist. In the affidavit for the warrant it is clearly stated that the "defendants

have known that their website is the United States hub for the illegal sex trade

and that many of the people advertised for commercial sex on Backpage are

victims of sex trafficking, including children" (Mele, 2016). Backpage and

websites like it, have become the number one trafficking place for minors,

dedicating entire sections of their websites to classified advertisements for sexual

acts.

It is estimated that one in five pornographic images online is of a child

(The Connections Between Pornography and Sex Trafficking, 2011). The FBI

reported that child pornography is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United

States right now, with a huge increase in arrests for this crime over the last ten

years. That is only the statistics on those being caught. The National Center for

Missing and Exploited Children reports that, at least 100,000 American children a

year fall victim to sexual exploitation (Real Stats & Results- The Demand Project,

n.d.). They also report that there has been an 800% increase over the past five

years in reports of suspected child sex trafficking, with much of it being online.

Shared Hope International's report on the demand for sex trafficking, depicts that pornography is the primary gateway to the purchase of humans for commercial sex (The Connections Between Pornography and Sex Trafficking, 2011). A professor, Catherine Mackinnon, at Harvard Law School states that, "consuming pornography is an experience of bought sex and thus it creates a hunger to continue to purchase and objectify, and act out what is seen" (Mackinnon, "Pornography as Trafficking. p.34). Pornography is used as an advertisement for trafficking by using images of victims to exploit them as products that may be purchased for consumption.

Pornography has become one of societies leading money making industries, bringing in an estimated thirteen billion each year in the United States alone (Covenant Eyes, 2015). When entering the word "pornography" into Google, there are 104,000,000 hits (Lamade, 2016). History has shown that the United States is the number one country viewing pornography world wide. In Pornhub's 2015 Year in Review study, teen porn was the number two most popular searched term worldwide and the number four in the United States. This means that people are knowingly and actively seeking out explicit photos and videos of underage girls and boys. The study further reports that they receive 6,700 visits per second, with over 87 billion videos and 4.3 billion hours of pornography viewed in 2015 (Pornhub's 2015 Year in Review, 2016).

Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, the studies are few and far between. Society in general both likes to close its eyes to the prevalence of child

sex trafficking being in their own backyard, and does not want to further traumatize the surviving victims by studying what has happened. This often leads to not addressing the issue and leaving society uneducated on a quickly growing problem. Many people in today's society do not realize that they are surrounded by sexually exploited children, whether they are searching "teen porn" on their favorite "society approved" pornography cite, or if they are searching the personal ads on Craigslist or Backpage.

Purpose of the Study

I proposed a research study that examines the relationship between the use of pornography and the sexual exploitation of children. Using these key concepts, I intended to examine the correlation between the use of child or teen pornography and rates of sexual exploitation. As this study focuses more on the prevalence of criminal acts, I will focus on the numbers and statistics of criminal acts. In regards to the child exploitation, I will focus on the sexual exploitation of children from the ages twelve to seventeen by reviewing the crime logs of San Bernardino, as that is the largest growing problem.

I am using a quantitative design for the purposes of describing and looking at the correlation between the two phenomena. In this study, I will look at trends from the year 2015 through 2019. In order to measure these variables, I must first define my target groups. I will be focusing on children, any gender or ethnicity, ages 12 to 17 who have been sexually exploited through the Internet in San Bernardino.

As this is a very sensitive population and topic, it is hard to get information and data. Therefore, it will be necessary to use Snowball Sampling in order to get as much data as possible so that it is representative of the problem across the county. I am proposing a quantitative approach, as I am just looking for trends and correlations in numbers as influence. The general purpose of the study is to describe and examine the relationship between the increase in child exploitation and how pornography is driving the demand for that market.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

In 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was passed, which creates the ability to fight the trafficking of persons worldwide and domestically. Throughout our community, there are several coalitions, such as C.A.S.E. (The Coalition Against Sexual Trafficking), who work with individuals, as well as C.S.E.C. (The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children), which is nation wide. Due to this crime growing world wide, as well as being addressed on a smaller scale, this project aids both micro and macro social work.

On a macro scale, children are being exploited both nationally and world wide, making policy and advocating for these victims exponential. This problem affects the micro aspects of social work in our society and our youth. Social Workers in Children and Family Services, forensics, and medical Social Work will see these victims first and it is imperative that they are educated and know how to identify them and how to provide them services.

The TVPA Act authorizes the establishment of the State Department's Office to assist in anti-trafficking combating and coordination (U.S. Dept. of State, Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), 2000). Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, sex trafficking is defined as the "recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act." This is not the first act or law to come into affect addressing human trafficking, meaning that the problem is being addressed at a macro scale. In 1996 the Child Pornography Prevention Act was passed. Although it has not been very successful, these Acts, as well as the new law SB1322 which decriminalizes child prostitution, are addressing a very real and growing crime in today's society. Our law enforcement and government are seeing the problem as an immediate threat to our children and young adults and it certainly will not be the last law or acts passed to try and rid our society of this heinous crime.

Both current and future laws and acts should address preventing the exploitation of children, and if banning teen and child pornography will help reduce the number of victims being exploited. The causes of this trend must be identified. In order to look at potential driving problems, this study is analyzing the effects of child and teen pornography on the growing rate of child sexual exploitation.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will address the past and most current research relevant to

this study about child sexual exploitation. The literature will examine both local

and nation wide programs and research which attempt to correlate the

prevalence of teen and child pornography with the sexual exploitation of children

in today's society.

<u>Terms</u>

In order to fully understand the study, some concepts must be defined. In

June 2014, California passed a law creating and developing a state-funded

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Program, also known as CSEC. This

program funds the prevention, intervention, training, and services for children

who are victims or at risk of trafficking (CSEC). Literature encompasses the wide

range of CSEC crimes to include the victimization of juveniles through

prostitution, the production and distribution of child pornography, and the

trafficking of children for sexual purposes (Mitchell, et. al., 2011). Further, CSEC

clarifies that any minor under the age of 18 who engages in any form of

commercialized sex, regardless if there in no presence of force, fraud, or

coercion, is considered a victim of human trafficking (Mitchell, et. al., 2011). As

the average age for entrance into sex trafficking is between twelve and thirteen,

commercially sexually exploited youth (CSEY) will mostly refer to those between

the ages of 12 and 17, but on a broader scale does refer to children much younger.

<u>Internet Pornography</u>

There is evidentiary support that the Internet has expanded the market for sexual images of children, by creating quick access to potential customers through pornography sites, Craigslist, Backpage, and e-mail (Mitchell, et. al.,2011). Peer-to-peer networks appear to be the most common source at the present time (Temporini, 2012). Since the advent of the Internet, mass amounts of child pornography have been made instantly available to consumers creating opportunity for all Internet users (Wortly & Smallbone, 2012). Such access has been coined the "Triple-A Engine" creating accessibility, affordability, and anonymity to efficiently serve as a venue for all (Lamade, 2016). This notion creates the idea that not all perpetrators are in fact pedophiles, but that the internet and pornography are creating new offenders and a growing population. "Debates regarding motivations to see Internet child pornography and attributing exclusively to pedophilia oversimplifies a complicated issue" (Teeter-Witt, 2016). In the Journal of Sexual Aggression, a published review suggests that child pornography users fall into one of four categories (Seto, et. al., 2010). These categories are: those who fuel existing child sex interests, contact sexual offenders with a pattern of offending, impulsive and curious people, and those who work with child pornography for non-sexual explanations (Seto, et. al., 2010). It is a very likely possibility therefore that, "Internet sex in

some way facilitates or engenders a sexual interest in children, and does not just reveal existing sexual interests, but actually contributes to the crystallization or emergence of such interests (Wood, 2013).

A study in 2011, became the first effort to systematically collect data depicting the internet being used to facilitate CSEC crimes (Mitchell, et. al., 2011). In this study, data from the National Juvenile Online Victimization (N-JOV) Study was used to gather evidence of the growth of child Internet sex crimes and the response of law enforcement. The N-JOV Study was conducted in a manner to represent these cases as they occur nationally. There are four reasons that they use to explain why CSEC offenders may be fleeing to technology and the Internet to conduct their business. First, the growing online adult pornography market makes the Internet an ideal environment to promote prostitution through the advertisement of personal ads, escort services and massage parlors (Mitchell, et. al., 2011). Offenders are utilizing this avenue by intertwining minors with adults, making it harder to identify the underage victims. Second, the Internet is an efficient and affective means of attaining large and diverse audiences (Mitchell, et. al., 2011). Groups such as immigrants, pedophiles, people with extreme sexual tastes, and those interested in child pornography are being targeted in order to drive the child trafficking market. Third, CSEC offenders believe that they can use the Internet to hide their criminal activities, for example, by encrypting communications and picture files and using wireless technologies that can be difficult to trace to specific

locations and users (Mitchell, et. al., 2011). Bitcoin is often the form of payment used on sites such as Backpage and Craigslist to exchange money for sexual favors. Bitcoin is non traceable and therefore offenders feel they are safely able to traffic victims without fear of being tied to the crime. Fourth, the Internet provides an easier avenue for CSEC offenders to connect and create networking among pimps or CP rings (Mitchell, et. al., 2011).

Over the years, as child sexual exploitation has grown, government has created different barriers and laws to help monitor the problem commercially. Due to the Internet being global though, it is imperative that there are a wide variety of levels of regulation and enforcement that address the issue on multiple platforms. Under the Title X (Sec. 604) of the Act, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are required to report any knowledge in which a violation of specified offenses involving child victimization or child pornography is apparent to authorities (McCabe, 2008). ISPs play a huge role in combating child victimization, however they are, three times more likely to report child pornography on the Internet to law enforcement than children being prostituted over the Internet by local pimps (McCabe, 2008). This leaves out a huge portion of child exploitation as one of the number one places children are trafficked by pimps is through websites such as Craigslist or Backpage. Another front on battling child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) is technical blocking through web-based search engines (Steel, 2015). Web-based search engines, such as Google and Bing, are being identified as the gateway to looking up CSEM for the

first time ranging from webmail to live chat rooms (Steel, 2015). "Underlying each of the images, and increasingly videos, is a victim who suffers revictimization with each viewing" (Steel, 2015).

<u>Limitations</u>

Although there are other limitations to previous studies, it appears that there is one centralized common problem. There is no data currently available on the total number of CSEC cases nationally. This has to do with underreporting of law enforcement. Currently, it is estimated that, 75% of law enforcement jurisdictions do not report a single case of child victimization via the internet (McCabe, 2008). It is expected that the problem will only get worse with the new law going into effect as of January 1, 2017. A new law, SB1322, will go into effect the beginning of the new year which decriminalizes prostitution in the case of a minor. This means that police will no longer be able to arrest a child for intent to prostitute which may lead more victims being unidentified and underserved. These restrictions create difficulty not only in seeing the full prevalence of the problem, but it makes it almost impossible to identify how big of a role the Internet is also playing in these heinous crimes. Further, most studies and outreach programs for the sexual trafficking of youth focus on females, as they form the majority of victims. By doing this, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer male youth who are also at high risk of victimization are left out and go unidentified and under represented (Ijadi-Maghsoodi, et. al., 2014).

There are numerous studies which look at pornography, but very few examine the growth of pornography directly influencing the demand of child pornography and that it is at its most basic form, the sexual exploitation of minors. Many of the studies try to explain child pornography and pedophilia, but lack the acknowledgement that child pornography is a form of child sexual exploitation and that the internet is only creating a massive market to sell these victims. It is necessary to do more research on the effects of the overwhelming prevalence and normalization of pornography and how it is driving the market to sexually exploit children, whether it be through child pornography, online sexual advertisements, or child prostitution on the streets. This study is being conducted in order to build on previous research and examine more closely the market for commercial child exploitation.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

When people think of child pornography or child prostitution, most will grimace and call offenders pedophiles. What people do not realize though, is that the acceptance of pornography in society is creating gray areas and blurred lines to what is considered socially acceptable still. Social Learning Theory on moral development describes the phenomenon of what people actually do when they face temptations and opportunity to act prosocially. Theorists argue that moral behaviors and social behaviors are learned through observational learning, accompanied by either reinforcement or punishment (Sigelman & Rider, 2009, p. 385). With so much emphasis on sexual freedom in society, morality is being

compromised to fit into people's sexual fantasies. In a sense the question

becomes that in freedom, will most people find sin or immorality? And if they do,

will society justify it?

"Pornography viewing can normalize sexual behaviors, decreasing the

capacity to shock, leading to satiation or the possible need for more

extreme/varied forms of pornography" (Lamade, 2016). Due to the anonymity of

the internet, social inhibitions may be lowered creating a disinhibit effect where

people may experiment with sexual activities and fantasies that they may not

otherwise try (Lamade, 2016). As pornography becomes more accepted and

naturalized in society, the age of usage begins to lower. A current study

investigated the effects of early age onset for viewing pornography and if it had

an impact on the type of pornography use as they got older (Seigfried-Spellar,

2016). The results indicated that users using deviant pornography reported a

significantly younger age of onset usage of pornography than their adult-only

pornography counterparts (Seigfried-Spellar, 2016). With pornography being so

overwhelmingly accepted and encouraged, it almost justifies teens consuming

pornography as exploring their sexuality.

One type of virtual child pornography involves the act of portraying legal

adults (over the age of eighteen) as teenagers and children performing sexual

acts (Paul & Linz, 2008). The genre of "barely legal" pornography has the

potential to build up an association between youth and sexuality (Paul & Linz,

2008). A study on barely legal pornography explains that exposure to this genre

of pornography may build up an associative network of nodes connecting sexual

arousal with youth even if the depictions are not necessarily overtly sexual (Paul

& Linz, 2008). When the Child Pornography Prevention Act was passed in 1996,

the U.S. government offered the explanation that, "exposure to virtual child

pornographic content can result in the sexual abuse or exploitation of minors

becoming acceptable to and even preferred by the viewer" (Paul & Linz,

2008). Pornhub's study on usage proves this dynamic with the number four most

watched and searched porn being "teen porn".

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODS

Introduction

This study sought to address the relationship between the increase usage of pornography and the increasing problem of child sexual exploitation in society. In this chapter I will describe the detailed method of how the study will be executed. The chapter will address the following sections: study design, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the use of teen pornography and the increase of sexual exploitation of children in San Bernardino County. This is a descriptive research study, where I will be drawing archival data from multiple databases and sources. Due to the sensitivity of studying this population, this will exclusively be a quantitative study that focuses on the statistics and increasing numbers of victims in San Bernardino County.

Using a descriptive, cross-sectional, quantitative study enables the ability to sort out the existence and magnitude of the causal effects of the increase of teen pornography usage upon the increase of sexually exploited children. This is a strong point, as it can assess the risks and prevalences on this sensitive population. By using multiple data bases to address sexual exploitation of

children, the design of the study will attempt to bridge the gaps that exist in reporting this crime.

Limitations of using archival data includes being restricted only to information which has already been collected, preventing further inquiry, and preventing deeper interpretation of the numbers. This may cause gaps in the information, whether there is limited reporting of CSEC crimes, non specificity to what the crime entailed, and the ability to inquire which phenomena came first in each incident; usage of teen pornography or the sexual exploitation of the victim.

This study seeks to explain and answer one question regarding sexual exploitation of children:1) What is growth of child sexual exploitation in San Bernardino County?

Sampling

For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the years 2015 through 2019, that will be utilized in order to gain as much data as possible to be accurately representative of the problem across San Bernardino. The sampling includes extracting data from the databases of the Police and/or Sheriffs Department for San Bernardino County. The sample data has been extracted from these sources, as they will best represent the crimes, including the sexual exploitation of children.

Data Collection and Instruments

For the purposes of this study, multiple organizations were utilized in order to extract data from their archives. This study searched for relevant data pertaining to the usage of underage or teen pornography and records showing the sexual exploitation of children, whether it be records of perpetrators or victims.

San Bernardino County arrest logs and crime records were used to collect data of individuals charged with a sex crime. Specifically, Penal Codes that will be searched for in the databases include: PC 311.11 Child Pornography, PC 261.5 Statutory Rape, PC 266 H and PC 266 I Pimping and Pandering, PC 288 (.5) Sexual Abuse of a Child, PC 647 B Prostitution, PC 653.22 Loitering with the Intent to commit Prostitution, and PC 236.1 Human Trafficking.

Procedures

In order to collect the data, the researcher extracted data addressing the research questions as defined per each source from the databases. Since this is a purely quantitative study, extracting numbers alone, with specific guidelines for what was being looked for, is sufficient for this study. The research is analyzing the numbers of prevalence and growth and not the specific client, other than age.

Protection of Human Subjects

Due to this being a sensitive population, data was gathered anonymously, extracting the numbers of prevalence specifically, age of the victim, and usage of

pornography. No information regarding identification was gathered or used in this study.

Data Analysis

The data was gathered through a multitude of database sources and analysis using quantitative techniques. Data numbers from the sources depicting the number of cases of sexual exploitation were sorted according to year to analyze growth.

The researcher entered the data into an excel document according to their assigned codes. From there, a correlational analysis will be performed looking for and analyzing frequencies, trends, and relationships between the variables.

Summary

This study will address the increasing prevalence of child sexual exploitation. The intent is to determine if there are changes in child exploitation by looking at trends in arrest records between 2015-2019.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the general findings of the study. There was a total of 1,043 penal code records extracted from the San Bernardino City public arrest records between the years 2015 and 2019 for this study.   San Bernardino County arrest logs and crime records were used to pull the following Penal Codes analyzed in this study including: PC 311.11 Child Pornography, PC 261.5 Statutory Rape, PC 266 H and PC 266 I Pimping and Pandering, PC 288 (.5) Sexual Abuse of a Child, PC 647 B Prostitution, PC 653.22 Loitering with the Intent to commit Prostitution, and PC 236.1 Human Trafficking.

The first thing that will be reviewed in this chapter are the descriptive statistics of the study. Next, the data analyzed will be reviewed. Finally, the researcher will discuss the results of this study.

Demographics

In the study, there were a total of 1,043 arrest records extracted that matched the relevant penal codes. Table 1 shows the demographics of all the extracted records in the study. From 1,043 records, 13.7% identified as male and 86.3% identified as female. From the sample collected 66.3% identified as African American, 18.9% identified as Latino or Hispanic, 11.4% identified as Caucasian, and 3.5% identified as Other. The data sample collected showed

that .1% were arrested for PC 311.11, 1.2% were arrested for PC 261.5, .5%

were arrested for PC 266H, 1.5% were arrested for PC 266I, .5% were arrested

for PC 288(.5), 12.5% were arrested for PC 647B, 2.1% were arrested for PC

236.1, and 81.7% were arrested for PC 653.22. From the data collected, out of

1,043 arrest records, 12.5% were arrested in 2015, 15.3% were arrested in 2016,

36% were arrested in 2017, 20.9% were arrested in 2018, and 15.3% were

arrested in 2019.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	900	86.3
Male	143	13.7
Race		
African American	691	66.3
Latino or Hispanic	197	18.9
Caucasian	119	11.4
Other	36	3.5
Arrest Year		
2015	130	12.5
2016	160	15.3
2017	375	36
2018	218	20.9
2019	160	15.3
Penal Code Number		
PC 311.11	1	.1
PC 261.5	12	1.2
PC 266H	5	.5
PC 266I	16	1.5
PC 288(.5)	5	.5
PC 647B	130	12.5
PC 236.1	22	2.1
PC 653.22	852	81.7

Presentation of the Findings

A chi-square test of independence showed that there was a significant association between the year of arrest and Penal Code, χ^2 (28, N=1043)=200.6, p<.0005. The year 2017 is an anomaly.
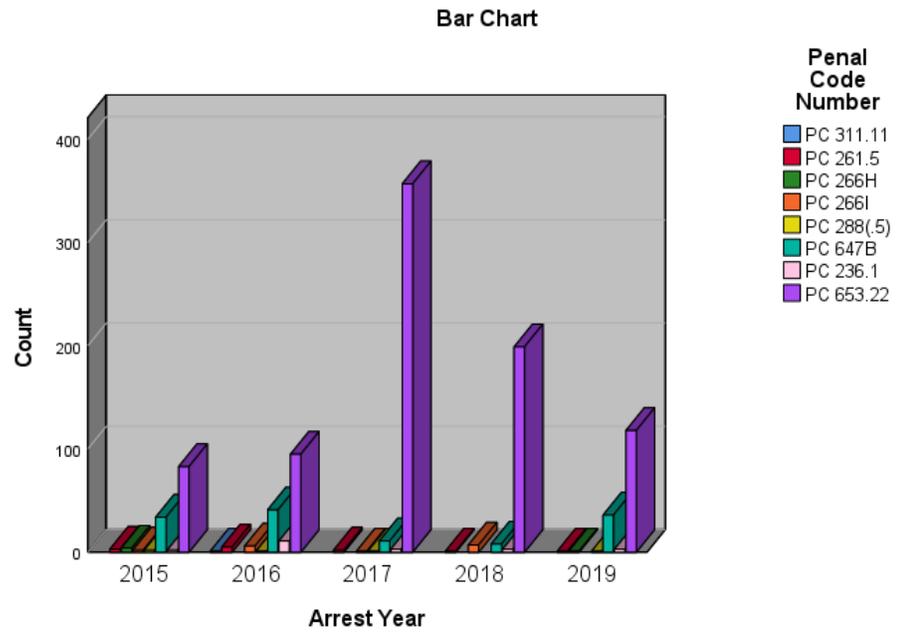

Figure 1: Year of Arrest and Penal Code

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between Gender and the Penal Code they were arrested for. The relation between these variables was significant, 2 (7, N=1043) = 250.468, p<.0005.
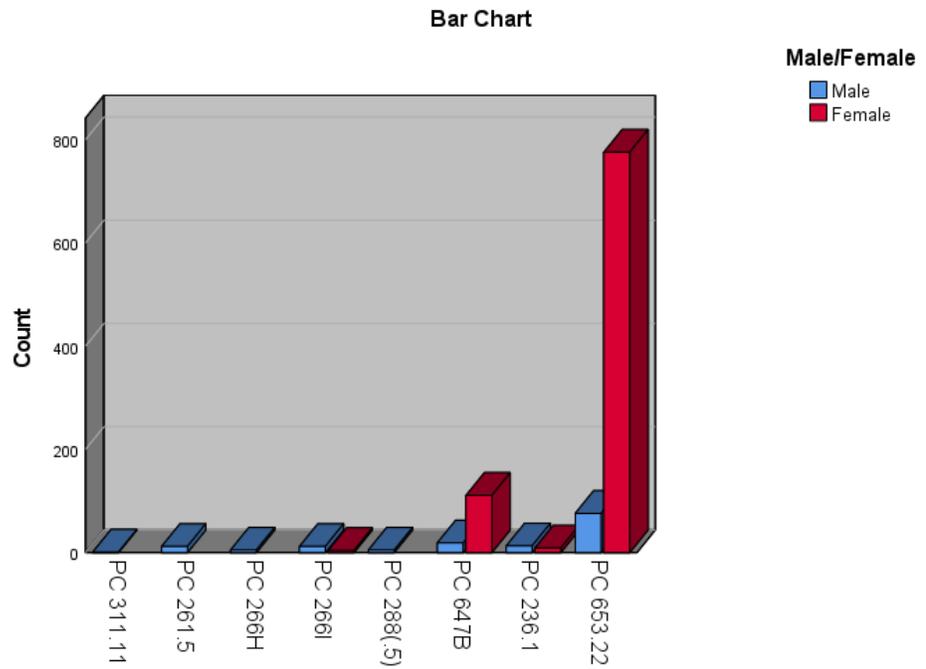

Figure 2: Gender and Penal Code

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between ethnicity and the Penal Code they were arrested for. The relation between these variables was significant, 2 (21, N=1043)=75.9, p<.0005.

Bar Chart
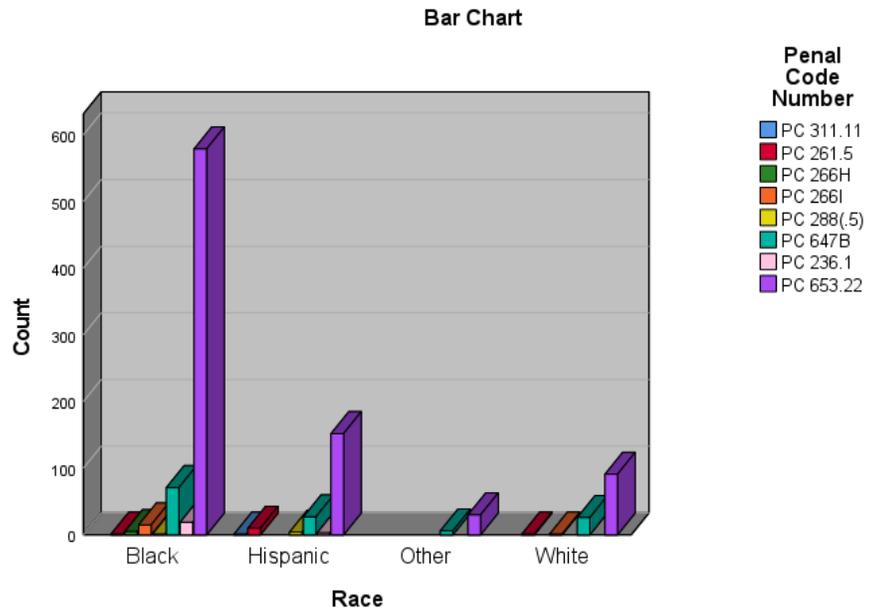

Figure 3: Ethnicity and Penal Code

The data showed that there is a difference in age of arrest based on gender, t(151.2)=-12.0, p<.0005. Men who were arrested between the years 2015 and 2019 were significantly older than the women who were arrested. Out of the total arrest records extracted (1,043), 143 men that were arrested averaged higher   (M=1981, SD=11.7)than their 900 counterparts (M=1993, SD=5.3).
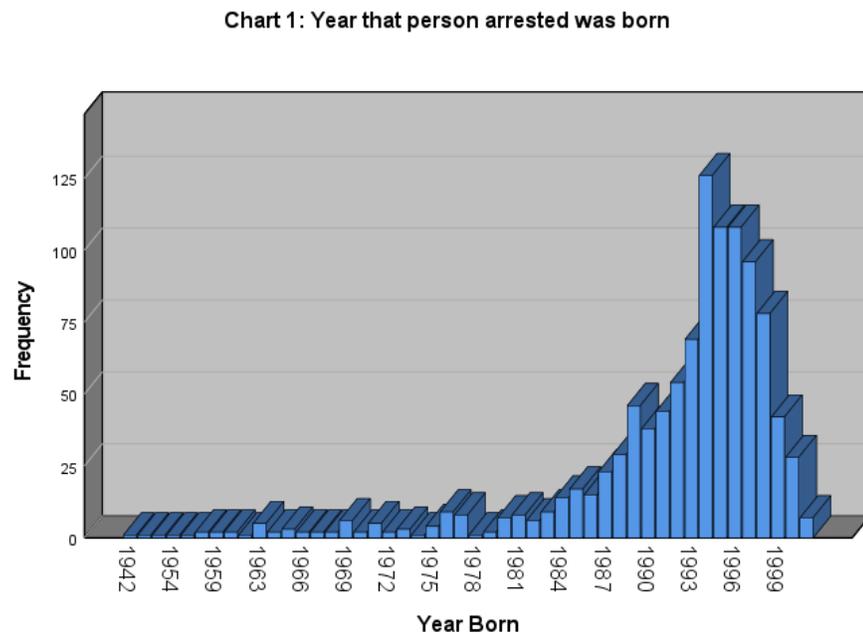
Chart 1: Year that person arrested was born
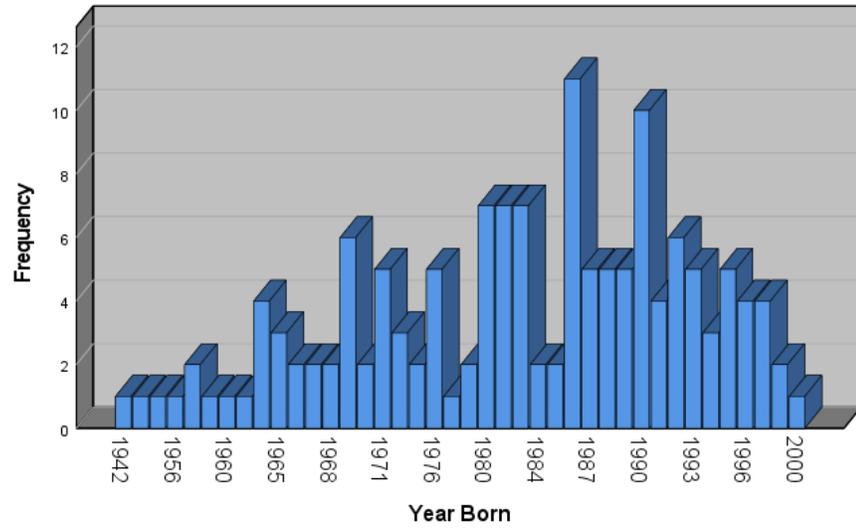

Figure 4: Year Born

Chart 2: Year Born
Male
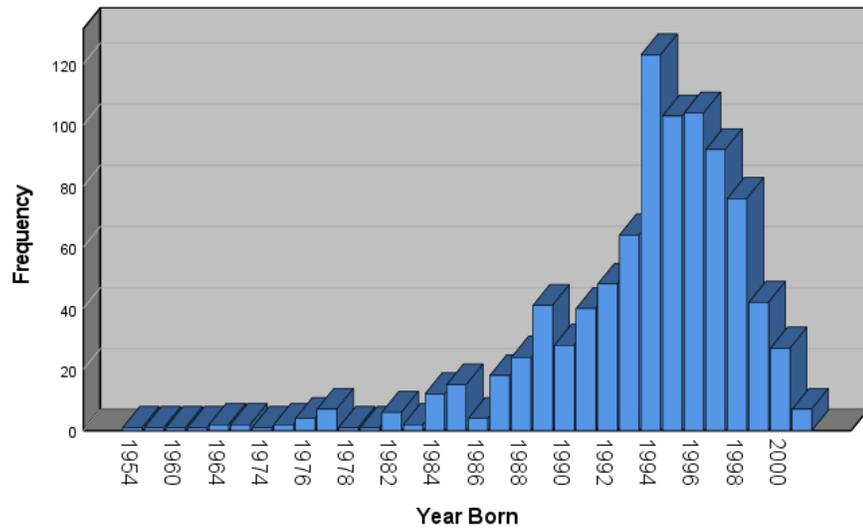
Figure 5: Year Born-Male

Chart 3: Year Born
Female

Figure 6: Year Born-Female

Conclusion

This chapter reported the demographics of the collected public arrest logs and the significant findings from the data collection. The findings show, from 1,043 records, 13.7% identified as male and 86.3% identified as female. The majority of the sample collected, 66.3%, identified as African American, followed by 18.9% who identified as Latino or Hispanic. The data sample collected showed that the two most frequent charges were for PC 647B and PC 653.22.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will present an overview of the data collected from the San Bernardino City Police Department's database and its implications to the social work profession. Further, this chapter will discuss the study's findings and how they relate to existing literature and the limitations of this study. This section also discusses how these findings can be utilized to improve social work policies and practices, as well as recommendations for further studies and research.

Discussion

This study extracted 1,043 arrest records between the years 2015 and 2019, with the overwhelming majority of arrests being women. 900 women were arrested for almost solely two penal codes: PC 647B and PC 653.22. These penal codes represent the crimes of the act of prostitution and loitering with the intent to commit prostitution. Only 143 men were arrested within those five years, with their arrests varying and evenly dispersed between the sex related crimes penal codes. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) authorizes the establishment of the State Department's Office to assist in anti-trafficking combating and coordination (U.S. Dept. of State, Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), 2000). This act was implemented in order to decriminalize victims of sexual exploitation and offer them services. The data analyzed in this study

shows a lack of arrests due to child exploitation crimes, with the focus on the

arrests of women. There appears to be a disparity between the data collected

from San Bernardino's arrest logs and what policies such as the TVPA were

intended to do.

The data collected also shows that 66% of those arrested between 2015

and 2019 for sex related crimes were of African American decent. Further, men

who were arrested between the years 2015 and 2019 were significantly older

than the women who were arrested. Out of the total arrest records extracted,

143 men that were arrested averaged higher(M=1981, SD=11.7)than their 900

counterparts (M=1993, SD=5.3). Not only is there a 12 year difference in the

average year born, but the women are heavily clustered into the young adult or

bordering adolescent age range. These statistics show that the most frequently

arrested profile for sex related crimes between the years 2015 and 2019 fit the

description of young, African American, and female.

Limitations

There are many limitations to studies that involve sexual exploitation and

minors. One of these has to do with underreporting of law enforcement.

Currently, it is estimated that 75% of law enforcement jurisdictions do not report a

single case of child victimization via the internet (McCabe, 2008). The data

collected in this study showed very few arrests for these crimes. Further, Internet

Search Providers (ISPs) are tasked with reporting child pornography to law

enforcement. ISPs play a huge role in combating child victimization, however

they are, three times more likely to report child pornography on the Internet to law enforcement than children being prostituted over the Internet by local pimps (McCabe, 2008). With neither law enforcement nor ISPs fully reporting and communicating, many child exploitation crimes are slipping through the cracks.

Another limitation of the study is the reliance on self reported age and identity. One study found that "nearly half (45 percent) of the clients were arrested for prostitution when they were under the age of 18. Traffickers often instruct the people they exploit into sex work to lie about their age to the police" (Dank, Yahner, & Yu., 2020) . Many of the women were interviewed in this study and they described that their traffickers often threatened them to not reveal that they were underage to the authorities (Dank, et al., 2020). Almost all the clients from the study stated that they had lied about their age to the police and used different aliases including different name, different age, birthday, social, etc (Dank, et al., 2020). The study goes on to reveal that even though there were often warrants and missing persons reports for these minors, and their fingerprints could have revealed their true identity and age, police officers often did not investigate (Dank, et al., 2020). "One sentiment was made very clear in the interviews: no matter the client's age at the time of arrest, almost none claimed to have been treated as a victim by the police or the courts. It was always made clear to them, whether explicitly or implicitly, that they were criminals breaking the law"(Dank, et al., 2020). Furthermore, due to the use of adult aliases, accompanied by some potential victims being exposed as minors, it

created a barrier to accessing accurate data on the true ages and the exponential problem that is growing in our community.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Policy

This study provides great insight for social workers in San Bernardino, as well as local task forces such as the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (C.A.S.E.). It is apparent from the findings that minors and victims are slipping through the cracks, and therefore social workers need to be aware of the reality of the arrests in order to advocate accordingly. Further, it is imperative that social work education includes these realities in order to better prepare social work practitioners. For example, child welfare social workers should be aware and educated on these disparities, as many of these young women will be or are already involved in the child welfare system.

The targeted victimization of young African American women is also an especially troubling finding from this study and one that requires further discussion and research to enhance law enforcement's understanding of its practical implications. Perhaps most disturbing is the fact that the women who are being exploited are being treated as the perpetrator, while the individuals (John's, Pimps, etc) who are seeking out these women are receiving little to no backlash for their crimes. Targeted training for law enforcement and prosecutors that addresses the roles of the victims and the perpetrators in the sex trafficking crimes is particularly important as a future focus. Utilizing current and implementing new policies and acts that protect exploited victims is

crucial. Victims should never be treated as the perpetrator, and without proper training, these young women will continue to be stigmatized and targeted. Law enforcement, political leaders, health workers, teachers, etc. must recognize that minors and women are being sold for sex and that community members are the first responders to working with these victims and providing the resources and support to help them get free.

Conclusion

The intended purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the use of child or teen pornography and rates of sexual exploitation. The study included data from arrest records in San Bernardino where penal codes related to sexual exploitation crimes were extracted. The results of the study found that demographic information did have a major influence on the types of crimes people were arrested for. The results of the study align with the literature in regards to it being very difficult to obtain accurate data on how prevalent child sexual exploitation is in our society. The results of the study were not able to draw any conclusions between the use of child or teen pornography and child sexual exploitation rates in San Bernardino. Researchers suggest further studies be conducted with this population in order to expand the limited body of knowledge around children and victims of sexual exploitation.

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