



Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Beyond Victims and Villains

By Alexandra Lutnick



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The domestic sex trafficking of minors is a problem of growing concern yet little critical attention. This book analyzes the forces the industry in the United States and provides a much-needed reference for practitioners. It adopts a holistic approach to the issue, pursuing a nuanced exploration of these young people's experiences and takes both their treatment and efforts to combat sex traffick that feeding in productive new directions. The book features interviews with service providers and experts, and incorporates recent research, thereby mapping the complex factors associated with young people's involvement in trading sex and the social connections that facilitate their behavior. It considers the experiences of both those who "choose" sex work and those who are forced into it by circumstances or third parties, and it discusses the networks of friends and close acquaintances who introduce newcomers to the trade. In addition, it takes a hard look at how local and federal responses to trafficking increase young people's vulnerability to trading sex. Urging policymakers and practitioners to move beyond the simple framework of "rescuing" victims and "punishing" villains, this book calls for policies and programs that focus on the failure of social and cultural systems and respond better to the young people caught in this web.



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Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Beyond Victims and Villains By Alexandra Lutnick Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #953495 in eBooks
- Published on: 2016-01-19
- Released on: 2016-01-19
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

Lutnick's is a much-needed scholarly voice in a research field that is dominated by condemnatory prurience, earnest exposé, and salacious melodrama. Her book has the potential to shake up the various anti-trafficking groups?several of which base their proposed solutions and fundraising on ideas that Lutnick will challenge?and therefore change the way that we all talk about and respond to trafficking.

(Zoe Trodd, University of Nottingham)

Alexandra Lutnick's *Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking* is the most comprehensive and sophisticated book on this topic on the market. Conventional depictions portray minors involved in prostitution monolithically and stereotypically, but this volume points to important complexities and variations at every stage?from entry to exit. Drawing on life-course theory, the book documents diversity in pathways into prostitution, relations between minors and third parties, work experiences, access to needed services, and state laws and enforcement patterns. It is a major contribution to our understanding of this world.

(Ronald Weitzer, George Washington University)

This book is a must for anyone interested in youth involved in the sex trades or sex-trafficking issues. The research and discussions offer a glimpse into the nuanced and complicated realities that facilitate youth involvement in sex trades. Lutnick's scholarship helps us to think beyond the victim/villain binary by exposing the various ways in which family, friends, policy, and the state are accountable to their circumstances. The book offers timely and useful strength-based strategies that also attend to issues of oppression and justice.

(Stephanie Wahab, Portland State University School of Social Work)

Lutnick's book brings a welcome dose of scholarship, reason, and credibility to a topic clouded by inaccuracy, jargon, and ideology. Her message is clear: criminalization is doing more harm than good, and the focus should be on prevention, support, and respect for civil and human rights.

(Megan McLemore, senior researcher, Human Rights Watch)

Readers interested in the sex trade and sex trafficking issues will find this book a valuable resource.

(*Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Books*)

About the Author

Alexandra Lutnick is a senior research scientist for the San Francisco-based Behavioral and Urban Health Program at RTI International. Her research interests include the sex industry, trafficking, human rights, criminalization, and substance abuse.

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