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## **White savior projects: An examination of the Antitrafficking Social Movement**

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White savior projects: An examination of the Antitrafficking Social Movement

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Submitted to the Faculty of

Mississippi State University

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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

in the Department of Sociology

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For this dissertation, I conduct an ethnography of three antitrafficking programs; interview 38 activists and survivors of trafficking; and analyze organizational texts, websites, and social media. I examine the history of the antitrafficking movement. Among the three organizations, activists provide housing; food, clothing, and hygiene items; medical services; mental health services and counseling; mentorship; education for survivors; a 24-hour hotline; outreach; case management and referrals; training for law enforcement; a drop-in center; and education and awareness events. I examine activists' diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing of sex trafficking, and other framing tactics, such as frame alignment, frame diffusion, frame resonance, and cycles of protest. Activists within the three organizations connect sex trafficking to the Atlantic Slave Trade, referring to human trafficking as "modern-day slavery." Activists also frame trafficking as happening in "our own backyards;" happening primarily to girls and women; and conflate sex work and sex trafficking. Activists believe that sex trafficking is caused by childhood sexual abuse, pornography and pornography addiction, and systems of oppression. I find that evangelical Christianity influences the organizations through services for survivors, training for staff and the public, the recruitment of staff and volunteers at church, and the practice of Christianity in front of and with survivors. I also find that evangelical activists

employ language and strategies that cast them as white saviors seeking to ‘rescue’ survivors. There are several factors that have contributed to the success of the antitrafficking movement, such as increased political opportunities, resource mobilization, effective leadership, strategic use of grievances, and cultural context. Activists face several challenges in their work, namely lack of funding and resources, like housing. For the future, activists would like to see increased punishment of clients and traffickers; reductions in pornography and pornography addiction; increased education and awareness about trafficking; installation of survivors in leadership; and increased funding. I conclude by recommending that sex work and sex trafficking be distinguished in research, legislation, policies, and practice; rehabilitation of traffickers and clients; and make systematic changes to lessen the factors which contribute to trafficking.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to survivors of human trafficking, intimate partner violence and sexual violence, and to all those who work in their healing.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Antitrafficking activists claim that human trafficking is an increasingly urgent human rights issue. Depending on the study or report, governments, nonprofits, and researchers estimate the total number of victims worldwide is between 4 million to 27 million annually (Mace, Venneberg, and Amell 2012). Estimates of trafficking into and within the United States suggest that there are up to 50,000 victims annually (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2009). However, the data and methodologies estimating trafficked persons are highly contested in academic, government, and non-profit studies, and estimates vary significantly by study and over time. Human trafficking is typically defined as a criminal act in which a person is tricked, deceived, coerced, threatened, or forced into sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, traffic in organs, or forced marriage (Gallagher 2010; Kempadoo 2005; Federal Bureau of Investigation 2016a). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) distinguishes between different types of trafficking, two of which are thought to be most common: forced labor and sex trafficking (FBI 2016a; Polaris Project 2022a). Forced labor occurs when a person compels another to do work by force, threat of violence, or coercion. Sex trafficking is any act in which an individual is engaged in commercial sex work by force, threats, or coercion. Sex trafficking is the focus of this research.

The United States Department of Justice (U.S. DOJ 2011) concludes that approximately one-third of all suspected human trafficking cases are eventually confirmed. Out of the 527

confirmed human trafficking victims between 2008 and 2010, 87.3% were sex trafficking cases and 12.0% labor trafficking (U.S. DOJ 2011). Women comprise 94% of sex trafficking victims. Of sex trafficking victims, 35% of victims reported their race/ethnicity as black, 22% as white, and 21% as non-white Hispanic. Human trafficking suspects tend to be men (75%), adults (74%), black (46%) and brown persons (25%), and U.S. residents (57%; U.S. DOJ 2011). Similarly, sex trafficking suspects tend to be men (77%), adults (77%), black (54%) and brown (22%), and U.S. citizens (66%; U.S. DOJ 2011). However, these numbers rely on official reports and may not be generalizable.

The consequences of human trafficking for victims include physical, sexual, economic, and emotional/psychological problems (Heil and Nichols 2015). Trafficking victims may be separated from their family, friends, home, and community, who might have been able to help them escape trafficking (Project REACH 2007). However, consequences of trafficking for the victim vary widely depending on the form(s) of abuse suffered. Traffickers use a wide array of methods to control victims, including: deception, fraud, and intimidation; illegal contracts and debt bondage; withholding documents (like passports or immigration documents) or withholding pay or information (about the community, language or culture); isolation; dependence on trafficker for sustenance; withholding of basic needs like adequate food, shelter, clothing, and medical care; threats to commit violent acts against the victim and/or victims' families or friends; threats to report victims to immigration officials; threats of imprisonment; emotional and psychological abuse; physical abuse and violence; sexual assault and rape; and torture (Project REACH 2007).

Consequences of human trafficking can be seen at the macro-level as well, as trafficking rings become larger and more powerful, fueling organized crime, and undermining the safety and

security of all nations (United States Department of the State 2004). Rizer and Glaser (2011) argue that one specific incident of human trafficking does not threaten national security interests, but that crimes such as human trafficking breach national security. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2022), human trafficking threatens our borders, immigration systems, custom systems, national security, personal safety, public safety, and prosperity. For instance, human trafficking leads to passport fraud; corruption of border officials and political officials; allows gangs to flourish; is a source of funding for terrorists' organizations; and generally, breeds more crime (Pati 2014). Lobasz (2009) argues that national security is a top priority of federal law enforcement instead of victims' needs and desires. Furthermore, the United States is among the top destination countries in the world for trafficking victims, second only to Italy (Mace, Venneberg, and Amell 2012).

Although trafficking is often thought of as an international crime, it can also occur within regions and within nations as well (Nichols 2016). Factors that contribute to human trafficking include structural problems such as weak social institutions, weak safety nets and social welfare programs, poor education, failure to provide a livable wage, lack of affordable healthcare, limited substance abuse and mental health services, misguided criminal justice policies, and lack of services for those fleeing prostitution and family conflict (Heil and Nichols 2015).

As a result, antitrafficking organizations have been established in the United States to meet the need for social, physical, and psychological rehabilitation of human trafficking victims and their re-entry into their communities, yet there is limited academic research critical of antitrafficking organizations and the services they provide. Existing research conducted on antitrafficking organizations has taken place overseas in Nepal, India, Albania, Japan, Vietnam, Nigeria, Cyprus, Cambodia, Canada, Germany, and Southeast Europe (Crawford and Kaufman



2008; Van Hook, Gjermeni, and Haxhiymeri 2006; Otsu 2013; Brunovskis and Surtees 2008; Vijayarasa 2010; Leach 2020; Mukherjee 2020; Chakraborty 2020; Welch,2020; Aborisade and Aderinto 2008; Cox 2018; Tsai et al. 2021); and is often conducted by asking antitrafficking service providers about the services they offer and to evaluate their own programs (Heil and Nichols 2015; Gibbs et al., 2015; Baker and Grover 2013; Twigg 2017; Wirsing 2012; Williamson et al. 2020; Diaz et al. 2020; Leach 2020; Mukherjee 2020; Ma 2020; Whaling et al. 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; Johnson 2020; Miller et al. 2020; Welch 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Kappel et al. 2020; Kim, Park, Quiring, and Barrett 2018). Programs do seek survivor feedback, but very few studies report survivors' experiences in recovery programs and instead focus on survivor outcomes (Mukherjee 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Cox 2018; Potocky 2011). The research that does report survivors' experiences suggests that survivors feel oppressed in recovery homes because their movements are restricted (Tsai et al. 2021).

In this dissertation, I examine three antitrafficking organizations in a large Midwestern city, which is considered a trafficking hub by several watchdog groups (Polaris Project 2016) due, in part, to its large population, two international airports, and several interstate highways. First, I examine the history of the antitrafficking movement generally, before examining local antitrafficking activists and organizations. I describe these three antitrafficking organizations in detail, including the structure, size, culture, and services offered. I examine the criminal justice system in the area. Organizations, survivors, and activists evaluate the criminal justice system's response to trafficking as mixed. The focus of my research examines how antitrafficking activists frame the problem of trafficking and how religion influences this framing. I find that activists frame trafficking as something occurring within the United States (as opposed to other nations)

and happening to children and women. Furthermore, most activists conflate sex work and sex trafficking. I find that activists focus on the frequency, severity, and cruelty of sex trafficking.

Activists connect trafficking to the Atlantic Slave Trade, childhood abuse, pornography, drugs and blame larger systemic issue like poverty, sexism, racism, and cultural issues, such as the sexualization of women and children, violent culture, and pimp culture. They focus on the symptoms of survivors, and do not discuss how trafficking affects families, communities, and societies. Activists believe that trafficking will never be completely eradicated, but activists' goal is to reduce the incidence of trafficking. They motivate other potential activists by focusing on the severity of the problem; that trafficking is happening "in our own backyards;" the urgency of trafficking; and the efficacy of their respective antitrafficking programs.

Activists' strategies focus on the Three P's Approach: Prosecution, Protection and Prevention. Prosecution entails working with law enforcement in preparing survivors for court. Activists spend the least time on prosecution efforts. Protection entails survivor services including housing, counseling, medical services, a drop-in center, mentorship, transportation, referrals to other services, food, hygiene items and other tangible items. Activists spend the most time on protection efforts. Prevention is the focus on education and awareness campaigns, which includes educational events, a prevention video, and spreading awareness through social media and blogging. Activists spend more time on prevention than prosecution, but less than protection.

I examine how activists' religious ideology, beliefs, and attitudes influence victim services. I find that there is an over representation of evangelical antitrafficking activists and organizations in the field, given their population. Two of the three organizations have a secondary goal to evangelize survivors. Religion is ingrained into the fabric of Hope and Church Ladies structurally and culturally. The religious nature of Break the Cycle was much less

apparent, although the program is affiliated with a religious non-profit. All three organizations utilize church networks to recruit more staff, volunteers, and resources. Both Church Ladies and Hope require church affiliations and statements of faith as part of the application process to volunteer for the organization. They restrict non-Christians to indirect services. For Hope and Church Ladies, the activists encourage victims to attend church services and other religious behaviors. Hope and Church Ladies activists practice Christianity in front of survivors and religious language, customs, and symbols are used in the spaces. For activists associated with Hope and Church Ladies, Christianity is believed to be helpful in the healing process for survivors. Finally, activists' Christian ideology influences their views on gender and sexuality. Christian activists were more likely to report conservative views of sexuality, abortion, pregnancy, and same-sex relationship. Many pointed to their Christian belief as the reason for their view. Their conservative views on gender and sexuality lead to constraining survivors' behavior. I argue that the antitrafficking industry is a white savior project, whereby white evangelical activists seek to individually save their racially and economically marginalized sisters. Their work upholds the racial hierarchy, whereby activists know what is best for trafficking survivors. The goal is to remove victims from trafficking situations, educate them, and socialize them into white evangelical culture and norms regarding gender, sexuality, marriage, and family. In doing so, activists believe that victims will be able to effectively prevent future abuse and trafficking and go on to lead successful lives by working hard on their education and work. Although antitrafficking efforts are focused on an individual level, trafficking is caused by systemic problems like racism, classism, and sexism. Thus, without reducing racism, sexism and classism, victims will continue to be vulnerable, which fuels the sex trafficking industry.

I examine the degree of independence and autonomy that victims exercise, specifically analyzing victims' freedom of movement, freedom to communicate with significant others, and right to participate in developing their own treatment plans. For example, survivors in the Church Ladies and Break the Cycle have a greater amount of autonomy, in part because they are not in a residential placement. Hope survivors in Care House are restricted from coming and going as they would like, having visitors, calling anyone they would like and from utilizing the internet unsupervised. The degree of freedom survivors experience shapes their perceptions of antitrafficking services and is in turn shaped by activists' perceptions of survivor needs.

My findings demonstrate that evangelical antitrafficking activists have created a sex panic over sex trafficking, and their solution is to 'rescue' individual girls and women. Many activists conflate sex work and sex trafficking and push for all pornography and sex work to be banned, which further harms sex workers and survivors of trafficking. Part of this rescue effort also entails converting survivors to Christianity. This research contributes to the sociological literature of evangelical women within the antitrafficking social movement, who created organizations to 'rescue' survivors. The antitrafficking movement is successful in convincing most people that sex trafficking is occurring in large numbers and often occurs in a *Taken*-esque kind of way. This has created fear for many parents – many who join the movement due to this fear and horror. This research also adds to the criminological literature on antitrafficking victim services, which I argue have been convoluted by evangelical narratives of sex and sex work.

### **Overview of Study**

In Chapter II, I examine literature on victimology and feminist criminology, human trafficking and gendered violence, antitrafficking services, and the antitrafficking social movement. I demonstrate throughout this literature that the discourses surrounding trafficking

have focused primarily on sex trafficking of women and children, despite methodological challenges in estimating human trafficking around the world. I draw upon research on shelters for victims of intimate partner violence to fill in some of the gaps in antitrafficking shelters for three reasons: 1) there is limited research on trafficking organizations from survivors' perspectives; 2) services for victims of intimate partner violence and trafficking overlap; and 3) some victims of trafficking may seek services at shelters for victims of intimate partner violence due to the limited availability of trafficking-specific services. Furthermore, research demonstrates that shelters for victims of intimate partner violence and antitrafficking organizations may face some of the same challenges, including lack of space and funding, and the need for individualized, yet comprehensive services.

I discuss the research on religious charity services, including poverty, food insecurity, antiabortion services, and the implications of faith-based research on antitrafficking work to provide context. I draw from literature on the rescue industry and white saviorism portrayed in the media to argue that antitrafficking tactics are white savior projects. I discuss how conservative notions of gender and sexuality influence religious organizations. Then I examine previous research on the antitrafficking social movement, how activists frame the problem of trafficking, and the strategies and tactics utilized to pass legislation, secure funding, create services, and educate the public. I then consider the relevant literature in social movements and framing, with an emphasis on diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frame, as well as frame alignment, frame diffusion, frame resonance, cycles of protests. Finally, I conclude with the research questions guiding my own study.

In Chapter III, I describe the methodological details of the institutional ethnography I conducted between 2017 to mid-2019 (Sprague 2016; Campbell and Gregor 2004). As a feminist

researcher, my goal was to provide the organizations with volunteer work as a way of giving back to the organization, while also collecting data. This is an important aspect of social justice that feminists engage in as part of their research. Most importantly, this allowed organizations to gain something from participating in this research. Volunteering also allowed participants to spend more time with me, hopefully allowing them to feel more comfortable with me, and I with them. I collected observational data from three antitrafficking organizations in a large city in the Midwest region, conducted interviews with activists and survivors, and analyzed primary organizational texts. Once a rapport was developed, I interviewed activists and victims about the services, and the types of experiences each have. Throughout my time collecting ethnographic data, I collected data from and examined organizational documents and websites. I analyzed the data by utilizing flexible coding (Deterding and Waters 2021), which allows researchers to develop conceptual categories directly from the data.

Chapter IV examines the history of the antitrafficking movement. The antitrafficking movement has seen several iterations throughout history, beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These iterations ebb and flow throughout history. Early Victorian-era activists became increasingly concerned about women's 'purity' and focused on women selling sex, leading to the burning of brothels and the creation of houses of refuge. Activists' goals were to reform women who sold sex by teaching them new job skills, like sewing. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, legislators and activists were primarily concerned with white women forced into sexual slavery (which was often conflated with sex work). However, the more current movement has seen significant growth in large part because of the Trafficking and Victims Protection Act of 2000, and subsequent reauthorizations. This federal legislation provides funding and guidelines for services, education, and prosecution. As a result, antitrafficking organizations were created, and

a national hotline established. This has also led to the establishment of state-level legislation, increased penalties for traffickers, and increased reporting of crimes to law enforcement. I also examine the local antitrafficking movement including the legislation passed and activists' work in prevention, prosecution, and protection.

Chapter V examines the three evangelical antitrafficking organizations in this study and the local criminal justice system. The three organizations differ in their size, structure, evangelical culture, funding, and services. Only one organization, Hope, operates a long-term safe house, which was the only one in the state for some of my time in the field. The safe home is for minor girls and offers many different services, including education, vocational training, therapies, food, clothing and toiletries, and supervision. In 2020, they opened a transitional home for adult survivors of trafficking. Other services offered across organizations include a 24-hour hotline, mentorship, transportation, counseling, food, toiletries, clothing, and referrals for other services and resources, such as housing vouchers and legal services. Most victim services are geared towards girls and women who have been trafficked for sexual services and not for labor.

Most of the activists are evangelical, white women who report that the reason they are engaged in antitrafficking work is that they see it as their duty to serve Christ and/or feel compelled to activism because of the issue of sex trafficking. The three organizations do not force survivors to convert to Christianity, but strongly encourage it. Christianity is institutionalized within many of the social norms of the organizations. The organizations also recruit activists from the churches in the area to varying degrees. The trainings and awareness events are professional and provide introductory information on human trafficking, primarily sex trafficking, but this varies based on the organization. I find that activists and survivors are mostly satisfied with the services offered. These organizations often work alongside law enforcement in

the area. I examine law enforcement responses to trafficking and prostitution, finding that local city police focus on arresting those who sell sex and less on traffickers and buyers. Whereas, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and County Sheriff's officers focus on arresting traffickers and buyers, and less on arresting those who sell sex. Survivors report harassment and sexual abuse by law enforcement, which has led to a distrust of law enforcement in general. I also examine the Trafficking and Prostitution Intervention Court, finding that survivors report satisfaction.

In Chapter VI, I examine how the antitrafficking activists frame the problem of trafficking, including who and what is to blame, and the proposed solutions. I also examine how evangelical Christianity shapes their diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostically, activists frame sex trafficking as slavery and connect the issues to the Atlantic slave trade; as occurring to only girls and women; and often conflate sex work and sex trafficking. Prognostically, activists frame trafficking as a systemic issue that will never be eliminated. But their goal is to reduce the incidence. Activists' tactics are focused on the three P's approach: prevention, protection, and prosecution. Prevention focuses on educating the public on human trafficking, to recognize red flags in relationships and identify survivors. Protection efforts are focused on survivor services, such as housing, food, clothing, transportation, mental health and counseling services, medical services, education, and job training, and more. Prosecution efforts are focused on working with law enforcement during 'rescue' operations and assisting the survivors to prepare for court. I then examine the discourses around the severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety which motivates potential activists to the cause.



In Chapter VII, I consider how evangelical ideologies shape the antitrafficking movement. In my analysis of how evangelicals shape the movement, I mostly consider the Hope and Church Ladies organizations, as Break the Cycle is less overtly religious. I also examine how evangelical social norms lead to conservative understandings around gender and sexuality. Activists' conservative ideology of gender and sexuality leads them to discourage gender and sexual deviance in survivors. I demonstrate how the organizations utilize stereotypical frames of trafficking to gain support and attention from prospective activists. In doing so, I argue that antitrafficking activists create a moral panic around the issue of human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking. I also argue that antitrafficking tactics amount to white savior projects, where activists focus on saving individual girls and women from sex trafficking and then socializing them into a white evangelical culture, with specific ideologies about gender, sexuality, marriage, family, and race.

In Chapter VIII, I examine the success and challenges of the antitrafficking movement, activists' goals for the organization, and the future of the antitrafficking movement. The antitrafficking social movement organizations (ASMOs) are successful in the work they do for several reasons, including political opportunities (Rojas and King 2018), resources allocation (Edwards, McCarthy, and Mataic 2018), effective leadership (Ganz and McKenna 2018), resonant framing, and the cultural context (Jasper and Polletta 2018). The ASMOs political opportunities grew with the signing of the TVPA 2000, and subsequent reauthorizations. This law provides for funding and guidance for antitrafficking services, education, and prosecution. The organizations in my sample primarily focus on providing victim services and education, which allow them to disperse their messages of injustice and reforms needed. This law also provides funding to one of the organizations in my sample. However, Hope and the Church

Ladies obtain resources from their church partners, including material, human, and cultural resources. The organizations are also successful because of effective leaders who build relationships, strategize, tell stories, structure their work and their actions successfully. The antitrafficking movement also became more successful by extending the frames of who is considered a victim, when framing shifted from foreign brown and black girls to white suburban girls. Finally, the three ASMOs are successful because of the cultural context, bridging the frames of the anti-slavery and anti-violence movements; the focus on working within evangelical contexts (which allows for the acceptance and transferring of beliefs and norms between); and the sexual harassment and violence movements #MeToo and #TimesUp. I then examine the challenges in antitrafficking work, which center on funding and lack of resources, difficulty of measuring and defining success, and difficulty in rehabilitation and reentry of trafficking survivors. I then discuss the future work of the antitrafficking movement. Activists would like to see increased emotional and social training for boys and men, which would lead to a cultural shift in how boys and men see girls and women; increased penalties and rehabilitation for traffickers and buyers; more prevention efforts to reduce misconceptions surrounding trafficking; survivor involvement and leadership; more resources for antitrafficking organizations; and each of the antitrafficking organizations had specific organizational goals.

In concluding, I critique the individualistic approach antitrafficking organizations and activists take in their white savior projects, as significant structural changes are the only way to prevent trafficking from occurring in the first place. Individualistic approaches do relieve some of the pain and suffering survivors experience, but these efforts need to occur alongside structural changes. These structural changes include economic, racial and gender equity and justice, and focusing on moving towards a more equitable society. When there is less racial,

gender, and economic inequality, people are less likely to commit crimes, less vulnerable to victimization, more likely to be happy, healthy, and trust their neighbors and community members. Furthermore, I critique the dominance of evangelical antitrafficking services because this limits survivors' choices, who may not want Christian services. Further, the dominance in white evangelical services leads to the maintaining of the racial and economic status quo. I also recommend that questions on trafficking are added to victimization surveys to obtain better estimates of trafficking incidence, including the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). I recommend future research to focus on evaluations of victim services, which include survivors' perspectives; the extent to which evangelical services are dominating the field and are coercive or forced upon survivors; and the implications of decriminalizing or legalizing sex work. I argue that researchers, policy makers and legislators consider decriminalization or legalization, in consultation with sex workers, to allow sex workers autonomy over their own lives and to improve sex trafficking research, services, and policies.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Although human trafficking is a relatively new crime legally, there is a long history of similar violence and abuses. In this chapter, I discuss the history and development of victimology and feminist criminology, victim services, human trafficking, antitrafficking efforts, and gendered violence, which is intended to help frame the discussion of antitrafficking organizations, services for trafficked persons, and the antitrafficking movement. The victimology and victim services literature provides a brief history of the focus on victims. I ground the discussion of human trafficking in the victimology and gendered violence literature so that parallels can be drawn. For example, victimology and human trafficking scholars' critique official statistics, the treatment of victims in the U.S. justice system, and victim services. However, progress is ongoing as we come to learn more about victims' needs. I also utilize the literature on evangelical charities to discuss how evangelical Christianity influences antitrafficking work and services. I utilize the social movement literature to explain how activists frame sex trafficking and connect the framings to the strategies they utilize in their antitrafficking work. Furthermore, I discuss why religious activists engage in activism, specifically antitrafficking work, how evangelical activists see their work, and how their work is influenced by their religious ideology. I examine the history of the antitrafficking social movement, which has pushed for the criminalization of traffickers and clients; created and

expanded victim services; and educated the public about trafficking crimes and abuses. Finally, I connect antitrafficking to white saviorism.

Research on antitrafficking services has focused on programs abroad (Crawford and Kaufman 2008; Van Hook et al. 2006; Otsu 2013; Brunovskis and Surtees 2008; Vijeyarasa 2010; Leach 2020; Mukherjee 2020; Chakraborty 2020; Welch 2020; Aborisade and Aderinto 2008; Cox 2018; Tsai et al. 2021). Much of the research draws from evaluations of service providers (Heil and Nichols 2015; Gibbs et al. 2015; Baker and Grover 2013; Twigg 2017; Wirsing 2012; Williamson et al. 2020; Diaz et al. 2020; Leach 2020; Mukherjee 2020; Ma 2020; Whaling et al. 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; Johnson 2020; Miller et al. 2020; Welch 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Kappel et al. 2020; Kim et al. 2018). Some programs do seek survivor feedback, but very few studies report survivors' experiences in recovery programs from their own perspective and instead focus on survivor outcomes (Mukherjee 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Cox 2018; Potocky 2011). The research that does report survivors' experiences suggests that survivors feel restricted in recovery homes because of strict in-house rules, such as prohibitions in leaving the house, even for school or work (Tsai et al. 2021). Other research does not evaluate a specific program, but services in general (O'Brien et al. 2020; Judge 2018). There are very few pieces of research which examine antitrafficking work as a social movement (Houston 2015; Clark 2019; Bernstein 2010, 2012; Jackson 2016; Agustín 2007).

In this paper, I use the terms 'survivor,' 'trafficked persons,' and 'victim' interchangeably. However, some academics, activists, trafficked persons, and government officials debate these terms (Kempadoo 2005; Heil and Nichols 2015). For some the term 'survivor' represents agency, strength, and resistance of the trafficked person, while 'victim' denotes passivity (Heil and Nichols 2015). Others argue that the term 'survivor' minimizes the

experience of abuse and coercive control of the trafficked person. Some argue that the term ‘victim’ calls attention to the serious nature of the abuse experienced (Heil and Nichols 2015). All these arguments are valid, and I use these terms interchangeably in recognition that there is not one universally accepted term. Next, I turn to a discussion and development of two related but separate subfields of criminology, victimology and feminist criminology, and how these have influenced policies and practices, such as victim services.

### **Victimology and Feminist Criminology**

Early criminologists focused on male delinquency and crime, from a positivist approach, to determine the causes of delinquency and crime (Chesney-Lind and Morash 2013). Early criminologists focused on controlling and punishing crime and reducing recidivism (Cook 2016). For instance, in Cohen’s (1955) classic work, *Delinquent Boys*, he focuses on delinquency in boys, but he does not consider how gender contributes to delinquency and crime yet does consider race and class (from an ethnocentric position). Criminological theories were androcentric and based on a colonialist, white middle-class framework. Early criminologists ignored how their own perspective was influenced by gender, how that influenced their research, and the meanings and realities of individuals (Chesney-Lind and Morash 2013).

Victimology and feminist criminology are different subdisciplines of criminology but overlap. Due to this overlap, I examine the contributions of victimology and feminist criminology to the discipline of criminology; the influence of feminism on criminology; the influence of intersectionality on the field of criminology; before concluding with a section examining research on victim services. Each of these sections will focus on research on gender and/or women. First, I define the terms victimology and feminist criminology, then I dive into a brief history of these two fields.

The term *victima* was first used to describe humans or animals who were sacrificed to a deity (Ferguson and Turvey 2009; Wemmers 2010). However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term victim began to be associated with harm or loss in general. Today, the term victim is meant to describe any person who experienced loss, injury, or hardship due to the criminal actions of an individual, group, or organization (Ferguson and Turvey 2009). Victimology as a discipline developed first and later feminist criminology. Feminist criminology is a subfield of criminology which focuses on a feminist analysis of crime, deviance, and victims (Chesney-Lind and Morash 2013; Cook 2016). A feminist analysis of criminology centers gender as an organizing feature of social life, including criminal behavior. Next, I discuss how both victimology and feminist criminology developed as subdisciplines.

### **History of Victimology and Feminist Criminology**

Jerin and Moriarty (1998) argue that there are three historical periods which define the victim's role in justice systems: the golden age, the dark age, and the reemergence of the victim. The golden age occurred when tribal law prevailed, and victims were able to directly influence punishments for the harm caused. At this time, there was not a criminal justice institution and victims sought retribution or compensation directly from those who harmed them. This became more problematic as populations grew. Furthermore, one criminal act can lead to harming several people, such as an entire family. If the offender could not be punished, sometimes the kin of the offender would be punished in their place. This means that a crime could shape the actions of many individuals, for many generations (i.e., vendettas and feuds between families). This led to cycles of violence and victimization. Eventually, many realized this type of justice did not resolve the conflict. Furthermore, this type of discretionary justice favored the privileged over more marginalized persons.

The dark ages of victimology occurred as local governments and laws were built in a period of urbanization and industrial revolution. Criminals were viewed as violating the king's laws or the government's laws, not just the victim. Thus, there was a shift from victims' rights to rights of the criminal. As the criminal justice system spread, victim involvement diminished to serving the state as a witness during trial. Doerner and Lab (2002) write that the criminal justice system forgot about victims and their best interests. The purpose of the criminal justice system is not to help the victim, instead laws are created by those in power to protect cultures, societies, and institutions (Ferguson and Turvey 2009). The third era is the reemergence of the victim which occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, which is discussed in more depth below.

Between these two victimology eras, 19th century criminologists ignored or minimized women's crime and victimization (Chesney-Lind and Morash 2013). Historical concern for girls' deviant and criminal behavior led to a social movement to 'save' children and established the juvenile justice system. Concern for girls' deviant and criminal behavior, particularly sexual behavior, led to their increased incarceration and criminalization. However, their race determined how they were socially controlled and in what institution. White girls and women were often portrayed as 'redeemable' and sent to reformatories where they learned domestic work. However, girls and women of color were treated much more harshly and imprisoned, often working alongside men in chain gangs, and whipped.

First emerging in the early 1900s, victimology, as a sub-discipline of criminology, shifted the focus from studying those thought to be criminals and deviants to studying those harmed by crime and deviance (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). Victimology is "the scientific study of victims and victimizations attributable to the violation of human rights, including crimes and the reaction to crimes and victimizations (Wemmers 2010: 9). One of the



first studies to examine victims was Hans von Hentig's *The Criminal and His Victim* (1948), Von Hentig developed a scale of victimization, with 13 categories, which varied based on the victim's contribution to the criminal act (Ferguson and Turvey 2009). This scale listed the characteristics of victims, which increase the vulnerabilities of victims and expose them to danger. This was later critiqued as victim blaming (Doerner and Lab, 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019).

Forensic Psychiatrist Fredric Wertham first used the term victimology in his 1949 book about murderers, which was used to describe the study of persons harmed by criminals (Ferguson and Turvey 2009). In a 1956 article, Mendelsohn was the first in the criminal justice field, a lawyer, to use the word victimology, while laying the groundwork for a new social scientific discipline, which he saw as separate from criminology (Wemmers 2010). His main interest was in understanding the relationship between offender and victims but argues that victims should be studied just as crime and criminals are. He too created a typology, six categories, based on situational factors which increase vulnerabilities and risk of victimization. This was also later critiqued. Both Hans von Hentig's and Mendelsohn's main goal was to prevent crime. Dr. Stephen Schafer also created a typology, which was a variation of Von Hentig's version, which was also criticized for being incomplete and not inclusive (Ferguson and Turvey 2009). Another key figure in victimology is Marvin Wolfgang, a criminologist, who found that over 25% of homicide victims in his study contributed or participated in their own victimization. His conception of victim-precipitation has since been used but is not valid for other types of crimes.

When victimology emerged in the 1940s, many researchers were trying to understand how victims' behavior purportedly led to their own victimization (Daigle and Muftic 2019).

Victimologists refer to this as victim precipitation, which has led to the creation of several victim typologies (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muffic 2019). However, later scholars argued that there are four problematic assumptions of victim precipitation (Doerner and Lab 2012). First, victim precipitation assumes the victim's behavior can fully explain the criminal's behavior. Second, there are assumptions that the victims' behavior signaled to the criminal to act. Third, the victims' behavior was the only necessary cause of a criminal act. Finally, that the victim's intent is reflected in the incident, suggesting the victim wanted to be victimized. Other scholars' critiques of early victimology research include: 1) relying on police accounts and the attendant methodological errors inherent in official statistics; 2) ignoring the damage and harm inflicted upon victims; and 3) ignoring rehabilitation and justice for victims, among other concerns (Doerner and Lab 2012).

In 1950 a police officer in Washington D.C. Rhoda Milliken wrote about the suffering of victims of sexual violence (Wemmers 2010). In 1952, a Belgium public prosecutor, R. Tahone, argued that initial consent and compliance did not take away from the criminal act and harm, or limit prosecution. In 1954, Ellenberger examined the relationship between offenders and victims from a psychological perspective. In 1956, Mendelsohn suggested that victimology needed its own academic journals and institutions. The first conference on victimology was organized by Professor Paul Cornil in 1958 for the Dutch-Flemish society of criminology. After the emergence of victimology as a discipline, the third era of victimology began to take hold, the reemergence of the victim.

During the 1950s and 1960s, a small number of people began to recognize that those most harmed by criminal behavior had little say in the processes and outcomes of the criminal justice system (Ferguson and Turvey 2009). Activists began spreading awareness of victims'

rights and needs. Criminal justice actors, journalists, and social scientists agree that “victims were forgotten figures in the criminal justice process whose needs and wants had been systematically overlooked but merited attention” (Karmen 2007: 27). They were also being overlooked as a source of information about crime and criminals. Victimologists began examining the victims’ role in the crime; the relationship between victims and offenders; and culpability (Doerner and Lab 2012).

The second wave feminist movement greatly shaped victimology and feminist criminology. In the 1960s, the second wave of feminism began due to several factors (Renzetti 2013). First, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, which gave voice to middle-class and upper-class white women who were isolated and put the needs of their families above their own. She presented the issue as a social problem, not as an individual problem. This developed into an analysis of sexual politics in intimate relationships and institutional spaces. At the same time a more militant branch of feminism was forming, which grew out of the left in response to social injustice, colonialism, racism, and the Vietnam war. Women were active in movements but not treated as equals by male leaders of the movements. Women were critical of men’s radical ideology of equality and freedom, while persisting in their sexist treatment of women. By the late 1960s, women formed their own feminist organizations that were less structured and more radical. They focused on developing a theoretical analysis of women’s subordination and political activism to end gender oppression. The more radical feminist organizations were more diverse, but still dominated by economically privileged white women. Unchecked privilege led to the fracturing of the movement; lesbians and women of color did not feel represented and led to the third wave feminism.

A core of feminist theory is the understanding that gender is a basic organizing part of social life and social structure (Renzetti 2013). Gender is embedded in all social interactions and processes of everyday life, and in social institutions. Gender refers to the socially constructed expectations, attitudes, and norms which are placed on people based on the sex category they are given at birth, which are learned through the socialization process. Feminists begin with the understanding that gender is socially created and reproduced, not deterministic and immutable. We are taught norms of gender through socialization. These become fundamental components of our personalities. Feminists argue that the learning itself and the context of the social structure are gendered as well. All societies label traits, behaviors, and patterns in a gendered way, based on perceived sex categories. The gendered structure is stratified, meaning that behaviors associated with men and women are not equally valued. This inequality is sexism a manifest as gender discrimination. Sexism occurs on the macro level (institutional) and micro level (interpersonal). Most societies are patriarchal, meaning men dominate women. What is masculine is more highly valued. Academic disciplines exist within the patriarchal structure, resulting in women being systematically excluded from conducting research and the subject of research. It is assumed that what women do, think, or say is unimportant, uninteresting, or irrelevant. A core principle of feminism is to include the experiences and perspectives of women in theories and research.

Starting in the 1970s, feminist critiqued the gender biases in criminological theories, the fact that women were not studied, and the discrimination against women in the justice system as offenders and victims, as criminal justice and legal professionals, and academics (Renzetti 2013). The fixes for this were in two steps: 1) to add women to existing theories, research designs, and ‘masculine’ topics; various professions, such as police, attorneys, corrections, and to academic

disciplines; and 2) to showcase ‘exceptional’ women who succeeded according to male standards. But it became clear these steps were necessary but not sufficient. Criminology needed new theoretical approaches, which compares men’s and women’s behavior, attitudes, and experiences; and a critique of gendered social institutions, including the legal system and academy.

Girls and women were first included in criminological research due to the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Chesney-Lind and Morash 2013). Feminist criminology focuses on patriarchy, feminine and masculine identities; intersectionality; agency, even of the oppressed; and feminist epistemology and research methods. Feminist criminology has contributed to the field of criminology in several ways. Feminist criminology focuses on how gender shapes crime and social control, utilizing research methods that recognized power differences between researchers and the researched, giving voice to the powerless, and acting to reveal and promote social justice (Chesney-Lind and Morash 2013). Feminist criminologists recognize the different ways women have been treated based on race, gender, and other differences. Feminist criminologists were also the first to recognize that girls were criminalized for running away from sexually abusive families and engaging in survival crimes. This led to scholars working to understand the different pathways to illegal activity and social control by institutions (Daly 1992). Feminist pathways perspective demonstrates how gendered expectations, inequalities, and victimization influences an individuals’ experiences and standpoint, which in turn impacts their involvement in the criminal justice system.

Other scholars utilize an intersectional lens to explain patterns of crime. For instance, Crenshaw (1991) challenges the idea that all women experience violence similarly, “systems of race, gender, and class domination converge, as they do in the experiences of battered women of

color, intervention strategies based solely on the experiences of women who do not share the same class or race background will be of limited help to women who because of race and class face different obstacles” (Crenshaw, 1991: 1246). Amanda Burgess-Proctor (2006) argues that feminist criminology’s future lies in the ability to utilize an intersectional lens to understand inequality. She argues that feminist criminology has benefited from intersectionality and will continue to do so. Potter (2006) incorporates feminist theory and critical race theory to produce Black Feminist Criminology, which “extends beyond traditional feminist criminology so as to view African American women (and conceivably, other women of color) from their multiple marginalized and dominated position in society, culture, community, and families” (P 107). She examined black women who have experienced intimate partner violence and the structural inequalities which affect their ability to access safety and security. This should be central to criminology, not marginalized.

Despite feminist criminologists and victimologists using an intersection lens more frequently to understand victims, transgender individuals are still not often included in research on human trafficking, despite being more at risk for trafficking (Fehrenbacher et al. 2020). In one of the few studies on transgender trafficking victims, Fehrenbacher et al. (2020) finds that transgender individuals often do not self-identify as trafficking victims (except in the most extreme cases) and are often not identified by law enforcement or social services but do report high levels of exploitation. They described exploitation by their lovers or friends, in which the relationship fluctuated from a loving relationship to exploitative. Many transgender trafficked migrants in this study rejected the label of victim and had normalized the violence they experience. Transgender trafficking victims also report discriminatory law enforcement practices, including increased criminalization for transgender migrants and other people of color,

who are profiled due to their gender, race, ethnicity, and/or immigration status. Additionally, five transgender trafficking victims reported being assaulted by an officer. Many transgender trafficking survivors continued to sell sex due to workplace discriminations. Furthermore, despite legal protections many transgender migrant trafficking survivors are deported and not offered services.

Today, victimologists are also involved in a more diverse discourse about victims and their experiences. In addition to the physical harm, emotional harm, and personal loss that occurs with victimization, victimologists are also concerned with how the criminal justice system handles the cases of victims and assists them in achieving justice (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). Scholars argue that there have been several changes in society which led to a shift in thinking about victimology, such as the women's movement, efforts to expand the rights of children, concern over the increasing crime 'problem,' victim advocacy, legal reforms, and other factors (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). For instance, women rights activists in the 1960s and 1970s critiqued arguments that blamed victims and greatly expanded services for rape and domestic violence survivors, such as domestic violence shelters and rape crisis hotlines (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019).

Victimologists also contributed to the study of victims in changing the way we think about victims, and how theories and evidence are collected, analyzed, and reported (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). For instance, victimologists critique studies relying solely on official statistics, such as police reports, due to the low rates of reporting crime, particularly for sex crimes. Furthermore, crimes reported to the most widely used measure of crime in the United States, the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), only reports the most serious offense a criminal is charged with. If other offenses are committed at the same time, they are left out of the official

statistics. For example, if a victim is sexually assaulted and murdered, only the murder is reported in the statistics. Finally, the UCR offers limited information regarding the victim and the offender. Thus, official statistics underrepresent the true extent and nature of crime (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). The United States has since moved to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS; FBI 2021) in 2021, but this system relies on individual police departments to report, and police reporting is much lower than the UCR (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2022). Due to the limitations of official police reports, scholars turned to victimization surveys to better contextualize the experiences of victims in the 1960s and continue to refine these instruments (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019).

Victimologists have also developed theories of personal victimization; detailed costs and harms to victims in the initial criminal act (such as physical harm, monetary damage, etc.); the costs of participating in the criminal justice system (such as long waits, frustrating bureaucracy, loss of wages, transportation costs and revictimization); and victim and witness services (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). Today, many states require prosecutors to provide services to victims and witnesses (Doerner and Lab 2012). According to the U.S. Justice Department's (2022) website, victims have the right to be protected from the offender; to be notified of court proceedings; to participate in the court proceeding; to confer with the prosecuting attorney; the right to restitution in a timely manner; the right to court proceedings without 'unreasonable' delay; and the right to be treated with fairness, and with respect for privacy and dignity. Some of the services offered to victims of crimes include information and referrals for victim services and other services; criminal justice support; follow-ups; crisis counseling; personal advocacy; assistance in filing compensation claims; shelter or safe housing; group treatment; emergency legal advocacy; therapy; emergency financial aid; and other services



(Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). From 2005 to 2006, 1,180,696 individuals sought shelter or a safe house, which is estimated to be 17% of all victims (Doerner and Lab, 2012). Furthermore, trends have shown that there is a rise in people seeking victim services.

For the rest of this section on victims, I focus on victim services broadly before moving onto research on human trafficking, trafficking victims, services for victims of trafficking, and the antitrafficking social movement. I will start my discussion of victim services with domestic violence and sexual assault. While other forms of victimization certainly are important, my discussion focuses on domestic violence and sexual assault because of the similarities to trafficking and victim services, the advocacy that arose as a part of the feminist movement, and the gendered nature of violence in the home. Today, religious groups, the government, nonprofits, academics, and feminists take part in the work and advocacy around domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, such as education, prevention, and assisting victims.

### **Victim Services**

Victim services are a relatively recent phenomena, created by feminist activists after the women's rights, children rights, and anti-violence movements in the 1970s (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). Researchers have demonstrated that victim services are often alienating. Within the criminal justice process, the central goal of victims' involvement is to serve as witnesses for the state, as opposed to offering any aid or restitution to victims. Many efforts are underway to improve services for victims, including the ability to provide counseling; transportation; prompt notification of court proceedings; assistance in recovering property; assistance in preparing for court proceedings; and notification of case disposition (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). At present time, however, many victims are reluctant to

participate. Doerner and Lab (2012) argue that victims should be offered economic incentives to encourage their participation. Some victims can recover monetary losses through restitution, civil court proceedings, insurance, and victim compensation, although these approaches are slow-moving and uneven (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019).

According to the U.S Department of Justice (DOJ; 2014), domestic violence is the physical abuse, rape, sexual assault, and theft committed by intimate partners, family members, or other relatives. Domestic violence accounts for 21% of all reported violent crimes (U.S. DOJ 2014). Victims of domestic violence, particularly ones who lack resources, often seek services at shelters. Domestic violence shelters offer a wide array of services for victims, including housing, food, clothing, social services, and services for children. These services are particularly important because victims may have left everything to escape from their abuser. However, one of the greatest challenges in providing services to domestic violence victims is the disproportionate need relative to available resources (Westbrook 2012). Westbrook (2012) suggests that about one in three persons seeking domestic violence services are denied due to lack of space/services. In this section, I examine domestic violence services that are offered to victims of domestic violence, drawing on antitrafficking research for comparison when possible.

Because racial inequality is structural and institutionalized (Bonilla-Silva 2014), we would expect to see evidence of racial inequality in domestic violence shelters. Blitz and Illidge (2006) argue that while domestic violence shelters have good intentions, many programs do not adequately address issues of racism and racial inequality. Blitz and Illidge (2006) find that the practitioners may minimize or misunderstand the racial realities of many of the victims, which is guided by “white-centric” logic, which is the absence of understandings of power, racial inequality, and gender inequality inside the domestic shelter. For example, staff may oppose

racism, but may see themselves as colorblind, and believe that to notice or discuss race is racist (Blitz and Illidge 2006).

The racialized, classed, and gendered nature of domestic violence shelters creates a space of conflict. Domestic violence shelters are often designed for white, non-immigrant, English-speaking women, yet most women seeking their services are marginalized women, disproportionately those who are poor and often women of color. Furthermore, evidence suggests that trafficking, particularly sex trafficking, happens disproportionately to poor, marginalized women of color (Heil and Nichols 2015). We might expect similar racial, class, and gender dynamics, particularly at Christian antitrafficking organizations. Christian antitrafficking organizations are predominately run by white, middle-class, heterosexual women, while those seeking services tend to be poor women of color.

Another issue within domestic violence shelters is the issue of funding challenges, resulting in prioritized services. Due to lack of funding, housing, clothing, and food are prioritized, but given the traumatic nature of domestic violence, social services such as counseling should also be offered (Macy et al. 2011). For example, Blitz and Illidge (2006) suggest that victims of domestic violence often experience changes to their neurobiological functioning because of the experienced trauma, leading to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); the greater the trauma, the more severe symptoms of PTSD found in the victim. Victims with PTSD will need mental health services and counseling in their recovery. Research does suggest that a common challenge in antitrafficking services is limited funding as well (Heil and Nichols 2015).

Research suggests that the actual structure of the domestic violence shelter is important to maximize a victim's recovery effort and mental health (Grieder and Chanmugam 2013). In one

study, 5 out of 14 participants described their shelter as a prison, due to the high security fences, buttons to open entrances, curfews, and signing-in procedures that make victims feel crowded, stressed, lacking privacy, and controlled (Grieder and Chanmugam 2013). Research suggests that survivors report feeling controlled in antitrafficking services as well (Heil and Nichols 2015; Brunovskis and Surtees 2008; Vijayarasa 2010)

Although reactions to abuse vary, many victims of domestic abuse report feeling angry, ashamed, and frightened (Blitz and Illidge 2006; Doerner and Lab 2012). Even when women leave abusive partners, the abuse does not always end. Many women also experience harassment or stalking after leaving an abusive partner, and women are at a greater risk of being killed by an abusive partner if they leave (Blitz and Illidge 2006; Doerner and Lab 2012). Some abusive partners also try to sabotage any way for victims to be self-sufficient, such as working or going to school (Doerner and Lab 2012). Once a victim leaves an abuser, it is important to provide emotional support, which is also linked to improved mental and physical health (Poole, Beran, and Thurston 2008). However, Poole et al. (2008) argue that other critical services, such as referrals to community services and self-care strategies, are not practiced as widely despite their positive impacts (Poole et al. 2008). Their study finds other services vary in ranking and services vary depending on location. Due to the variability in services offered, little evidence is available to determine the effectiveness of domestic violence shelters on a large scale.

More recently, internet services have been considered for victims of domestic violence to assist in self-efficiency by doing their own research (Westbrook 2012). While many have internet access, some domestic violence shelters are challenged with providing up-to-date computer equipment, support, and software. Many residents of shelters without reliable internet must travel to the nearest public library or other social service agency with internet access.

Offering internet services may provide victims with information and advice on divorce, finances, social services, and other daily issues via forums on abuse (Westbrook 2012). Although internet and other telecommunications capabilities provide access to important services, information and social support, abusers may use this to contact or stalk a victim (Westbrook 2012). Furthermore, there are concerns of cyber-safety issues more generally, cyber-stalking, accessing false or incorrect information, and lack of reading skills. Specifically, shelter administration is particularly concerned with victims of abuse being “insufficiently prepared for internet risks” (Westbrook 2012: 44). Antitrafficking service providers also report concerns of safety and re-trafficking with communication methods (Heil and Nichols 2015).

Research indicates that other services may be needed, depending on the needs of individual survivors. For instance, services for substance abuse (Schumacher and Holt 2011) and for the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), such as HIV and AIDS are needed (Rountree, Pomeroy, and Marsiglia 2008). Furthermore, Rountree et al. (2008) argue that offering education on sexually transmitted infections allows women, who are at risk of being physically or sexually abused, to make informed choices, which empowers them. Another critical problem is the lack of services for alcohol and drug abuse despite previous literature demonstrating the clear association between domestic violence and alcohol and drug use or abuse (Schumacher and Holt 2011). This will also be critical for antitrafficking shelters because of the increased risk of STDs and substance abuse for trafficking survivors (Nichols 2016).

Another common problem is that often these services are not synced or bundled together within any one organization, making them more difficult to access. However, preliminary evidence suggests that it may benefit victims to access substance abuse and domestic violence services concurrently (Schumacher and Holt 2011). Like domestic violence shelters,

antitrafficking organizations may also experience challenges and barriers in providing services to a wide variety of different people with different needs, for instance alcohol or substance abuse treatment, HIV or AIDs treatment, which may be needed for victims of trafficking, particularly those who have worked in the sex industry (Heil and Nichols 2015).

Human trafficking is considered one part of a larger umbrella of gendered violence, along with domestic violence and sexual violence. Heil and Nichols (2015) find that one of the most common types of sex trafficking, is by an older ‘boyfriend’ (pimp) and is akin to intimate partner violence in some ways, which often includes emotional, sexual, economic, and physical abuse. In this section, I examined services for survivors of domestic violence in more detail for three reasons. First, domestic violence, like human trafficking, is a pattern of coercive behavior, which is used to establish and maintain power over the victim (Blitz and Illidge 2006). Second, many of the services for victims of trafficking and domestic violence overlap. Domestic violence shelters, like human trafficking organizations, attempt to help victims create space between themselves and an abuser to recover from any physical or psychological trauma. Third, it also might be the case that victims of human trafficking will seek out services in a domestic violence shelter. Finally, survivors may think of their trafficker as “boyfriends,” and so there is overlap between intimate partner violence and trafficking. There are many challenges to providing services to victims of domestic violence, which are like challenges in antitrafficking services. Above, I examined the services offered by domestic violence shelters, their challenges, and expected similarities to antitrafficking shelters, Next, I turn to research focused on human trafficking, victims of human trafficking, and antitrafficking services.

## **Human Trafficking**

Human trafficking is a crime and an abuse of human rights, which is caused by and exacerbates: 1) breakdown of families and communities; 2) growth in organized crime and corruption of government officials; 3) depriving communities of human potential; 4) weakening public health efforts; and 5) imposing economic costs to communities and individual victims (National Institute of Justice 2016). In this section, I examine research on human trafficking, human trafficking laws, and services for trafficking victims. First, I would like to turn to the definitions and terminology utilized within this study.

Human trafficking is an all-encompassing term defined as exploitation of persons, mostly for the purpose of sex or labor (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2022). The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 differentiated between sex trafficking and labor trafficking. The TVPA defined trafficking as:

a) 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 b) 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 (TVPA 2000, Sec 103, Part 8).

The TVPA defines sex and labor trafficking separately, privileges sex trafficking, and leads law enforcement to prioritize sex trafficking over labor trafficking (Peters 2014). The TVPA goes on to describe sex trafficking first and at greater length throughout the statute. For instance,

persons are trafficked into the international sex trade, often by force, fraud, or coercion. The sex industry has rapidly expanded over the past several decades. It involves sexual exploitation of persons, predominantly women and girls, involving activities related to prostitution, pornography, sex tourism, and other commercial sexual services. The low status of women in many parts of the world has contributed to a burgeoning of the trafficking industry (TVPA 2000, Sec 102)

Furthermore, the statute does not distinguish between sex trafficking and sex work but conflates the two by implying that people who engage in consensual sex work are also trafficked.

Conflating sex work and sex trafficking leads to misunderstandings about exploitation and to anti-migrant and anti-sex work policies (Fehrenbacher et al. 2020). However, many feminists, activists, and sex workers believe that sex work is a form of legitimate labor (Kempadoo 2005; Peters 2014; Jackson 2016). In both sex and labor trafficking, traffickers use violence, manipulation, or false promises to exploit their victims. Furthermore, some sex trafficking victims are forced into other forms of exploitative labor and labor trafficking victims are sexually abused (Peters 2014).

Legal definitions determine which acts are defined as criminal and allow U.S. officials to charge persons engaged in criminal activity (Heil and Nichols 2015). However, the federal legal definition of trafficking often differs from state legal definitions, which vary (Heil and Nichols 2015). There are two areas of dispute in understanding the nature and scope of trafficking: the definition of human trafficking and the scope of the problem (Heil and Nichols 2015). Human trafficking is sometimes conflated with sex trafficking (which is one form of human trafficking) and sex work; or migration or human smuggling (particularly for labor trafficking), due to similarities in the cross-border transportation of victims. However, the distinction between these definitions is important for legal, cultural, and social understanding of the problem of human trafficking (Sanghera 2005; Kempadoo 2005; Heil and Nichols 2015).

Sex trafficking and sex work are distinct from one another legally in that sex trafficking involves a lack of consent (through coercion, force, deception, etc.) in sex work or an inability to consent due to being under 18 (child sex trafficking), while sex work involves willingly engaging in sex work (albeit often in less-than-ideal circumstances) by persons over the age of



18. Conflating sex trafficking and sex work results in targeting all sex workers and does not result in improving the human rights of those most marginalized (Kempadoo 2005).

Furthermore, those choosing to sell sex are less likely to want services and those services will be less effective in achieving desired outcomes. Consensual sex workers can make considerably more money than low-wage work and they have more autonomy and flexibility in their work. Furthermore, Sanghera (2005) argues that trying to eradicate sex work all together may be an unrealistic goal and increases the harm to those selling sex, subjecting them to police harassment, arrest, and greater vulnerability to violence at the hands of clients and pimps or traffickers. For example, consenting sex workers are less likely to report to the police when a buyer is physically, sexually, or emotionally abusive because of the illegality of their work. Next, I examine the misconceptions around migration and trafficking.

Migration, whether legal or illegal, is the movement of a person across a border. Migration can occur between communities, states, or nations. Migration is different from human trafficking because trafficking victims are often unable to decide where they go, where they live or under what conditions they live (Heil and Nichols 2015). Undocumented migrants have fewer options on where they live, but they still have some choices, as they are not necessarily forced to follow the demands of another. Trafficking survivors often do not know or have any choices where they live. Foreign trafficking survivors may also be undocumented or have fraudulent documentation. As a result, law enforcement may interact with a trafficking victim, who may be poor and non-English speaking, and believe they are interacting with an undocumented migrant and respond according to their undocumented status, instead of considering the fact they may be trafficked for labor or sex. As a result, when human trafficking is conflated with migration or sex work, then the numbers of presumed victims may be inflated (Sanghera 2005).

It is important to understand that the conditions of trafficking vary to a large degree. Furthermore, different forms of trafficking may overlap. For example, a victim may be forced into commercial sex trafficking, while also being forced to engage in labor trafficking. Labor trafficking victims may also experience a wide variety of abuses, including psychological/emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual assault, rape, and loss of freedom; others may experience lack of choice regarding location and type of work performed, but may also have a certain degree of freedom of movement (Kempadoo 2005). Although human trafficking is becoming more widely known, misconceptions still exist. In the next section, I discuss gendered violence and domestic violence. I draw upon research on domestic violence because trafficking victims and domestic violence victims have similar issues, processes, consequences, and resources. I draw upon research on domestic violence shelters to fill in some of the gaps in anti-trafficking shelters for three reasons: 1) services for domestic violence victims and trafficking victims overlap; and 2) some victims of trafficking may seek services at domestic violence shelters. Furthermore, research on domestic violence shelters and antitrafficking organizations may face some of the same challenges, including lack of space and funding, and the need for individualized, yet bundled services.

### **Gendered Violence**

Violent behavior occurs at much higher rates in men than women (Kimmel 2011; Thomsen and Messerschmidt 2020). Of all those arrested for violent crime, men account for 99% of all rape arrests, 90% of all murder arrests, 88% of all robbery arrests, 79% of all arrests for aggregated assaults, 75% of all other assault arrests, and 75% of all arrests for family violence (Kimmel 2011). Rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence are all crimes which women experience disproportionately higher rates (Doerner and Lab 2012). Rape is forced sexual

intercourse, meaning penetration by the offender (regardless of the gender of the offender) and includes heterosexual or same-sex persons (United States Department of Justice 2011). Sexual assault is the unwanted sexual contact, which may or may not involve force, and include acts such as grabbing (United States Department of Justice 2011). The Department of Justice (n.d.) defines domestic violence as a pattern of abusive behavior in an intimate relationship, which is used to gain and maintain power and control over a partner. Often domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or physical abuse or threats.

Thomsen and Messerschmidt (2020) argue that violence against women often occurs when men's power is challenged, and control is undermined. The point is to deploy violence as a particular type of dominant hegemonic masculine image. Men's peer groups may be especially important in encouraging the objectification and exploitation of women, that nonconsensual sex with women (via intoxication) is acceptable, and that sexual entitlement is crucial to masculinity (DeKeseredy 2017). Men turn to their peer groups for support and guidance on how to respond to challenges, and peers may encourage and justify sexual violence. Other researchers show that childhood victimization also predicts later intimate partner violence, more than attitudes of gender roles and gendered violence (Nabors and Jasinski 2009). Instead, attitudes justifying violence often occurred after the perpetration of that violence. Haglund et al. (2019) find Mexican boys expect to have more control in intimate relationships, reflecting a traditional machismo and version of masculinity.

Social scientists find men's violence associated with the need to successfully prove their masculinity, norms of being constrained to express only aggression, and gender inequality (Kimmel 2011). Furthermore, research has shown that criminal behavior also varies by race/ethnicity class, age, time, and place. Again, these factors do not necessarily point to *just*

biological differences between groups, but differences in the circumstances of those in different social categories matter. For example, research by Pease (2010) shows that there are higher levels of violence against women in Australian rural areas because of the decline in rural jobs, which threatens men's masculinity. This is exacerbated in intimate relationships where there is a traditional division of labor by gender. In South Africa, Swarr (2012) finds that there has been an increase in rape against butch lesbians, who report their rapist used the sexual violence as an attempt to correct their sexuality. The victims challenge men's exclusive claim to masculinity and sexual access to women. Thus, rapists are attempting to enforce gender norms through punishment. Discourses of violence have centered females as the victim and males as the offender, with female victims becoming violent mostly in self-defense (Kimmel 2011; Haglund et al. 2019).

Historically, the United States has been linked to higher rates of violence due to prevailing cultural norms of brawling, dueling, fighting, hunting, and drinking as masculine norms (Kimmel 2011). For example, men residing in the United States have referred to this as 'honor,' 'reputation,' or 'respect' depending on the generation/era. The degree to which masculinity and violence are linked should not be understated, as Kimmel (2011) states that,

Male socialization is a socialization to the legitimacy of violence – from infantile circumcision to violence from parents and siblings to routine fights with other boys to the socially approved forms of violence in the military, sports, and prison ... to epigrams that remind us that we should get even, not mad, and that the world is the Hobbesian war of each against all, a jungle where dogs eat dogs (P 395).

Mathiason (2019) also makes the argument that violence in the United States is cultural, and perpetrators of societal violence are often white men. The mass shootings of today often mirror white violence against people of color of past generations and are a backlash against the liberation movements. However, the history violence in the United States has also been enacted

as a state act against its own citizens, either intentionally or neglectfully (i.e., slavery/Jim Crow, and the acceptance of violence against women), and those abroad (i.e., war). Before discussing violence against women, I want to depart for a moment to discuss how masculine norms of violence are also institutionalized in international policy. A discussion on masculine norms of violence will be important to understand how international policies, including aid, are affected.

Violence in the United States is also institutional and visible in the international arena, as political leaders negotiate between masculine restraint and belligerence (Kimmel 2011). Those who are seen as being anti-war have their masculinity attacked in past political contexts. Past Presidents of the United States, who have hesitated to intervene, have had their masculinity attacked (Kimmel 2011). For instance, Jimmy Carter was specifically criticized for not intervening in Iran and said to put the United States in a position of “spreading its legs for the Soviet Union,” leading to the election of Ronald Reagan whose platform was more pro-war (Kimmel 2011: 392). Most Presidents since have similarly engaged in a pro-war discourse and action. The history of violence in the United States has included state violence directly against its own citizens, particularly African Americans and Native Americans (Takaki, 2008). Furthermore, the United States, along with many other societies, have tolerated and accepted violence against women, in part due to the popular discourses that domestic violence was seen as family issue and the acceptance of male physical discipline (Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). The women’s movement in the 1960’s contributed to victim advocacy in the creation of rape crises centers, domestic violence shelters, counseling for women and children of family abuse, and other forms of assistance (Doerner and Lab 2012).

Although there have been many feminist gains in victim assistance to violence, current rates of violence are still high, with 1 in 5 victims of violence who sought treatment in a hospital

emergency room being injured by a current or former partner (Kimmel 2011). In comparing the United States to other industrialized nations, the United States has one of the highest rates of crimes thought to occur mostly to women: rape, domestic violence, and spousal murder.

Domestic violence rates in the United States are so high that it is the leading cause of injury for women (Kimmel 2011). Although much research has focused on the individual factors (i.e., psychiatric or psychological conditions) that lead people to violence, such as psychosis or last resort strategies for inadequate men, these explanations do not address the contextual factors leading to violence, such as cultural norms. For example, research suggests that murder-suicides committed by men were linked to men's self-perceptions of failing to provide financially, pay back against individuals at school, and being marginalized at work (Oliffe et al 2015)

Of course, violence against men occurs in the context of intimate relationships as well (Kimmel 2011; Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). However, males are taught to be able to defend oneself and take violence 'like a man,' and consequently the reporting of violent victimization by a female is much less common. Researchers have coined the term 'battered husband syndrome' to explain this phenomenon (Kimmel 2011). Additionally, some have pointed out that assistance is provided for women who experience domestic violence, but not to men. However, empirical evidence suggests that of all domestic violence victims, approximately three to four percent of incidents are committed by women (Kimmel 2011). Men and women also use violence in the context of a relationship differently (Kimmel 2011; Doerner and Lab 2012; Daigle and Muftic 2019). Men tend to use violence instrumentally, to control their partners, ensuring compliance, obedience, and passivity. Women, on the other hand, tend to use violence expressively (when frustrated or angry) or defensively (to prevent further injury). In fact, Polk (1994) finds that men use provocation as a defense in murdering their partners, which

suggest a correlation with masculine violence and respect from the criminal justice system and culture. Yet, these defenses are unavailable for women. Researchers have also found that circumstances influence violence rates within the home (Kimmel 2011). For instance, those experiencing unemployment or loss of power or control in their lives have higher rates of violence. Researchers have also found varying levels of violence in the home based on demographic characteristics, such as race/ethnicity and class.

In summary, sociological, and criminological research on gendered violence suggest that men commit most violence and that it is based on control and threats to masculinity. Because research has demonstrated the association between domestic violence and human trafficking (Heil and Nichols 2015; Nichols 2016), I turn to a closer examination of the characteristics of trafficking victims specifically. I continue to draw from the literature on domestic violence and sexual assault when relevant.

### **Characteristics of Trafficking Victims**

Past research has estimated that there are up to 35.8 million victims of human trafficking globally in any given year (Sanghera 2005; Miller and Wasileski 2011; Potocky 2011; Bravo 2007; Jones 2010; Mace et al. 2012). Mace et al. (2012) argue that in the early 2000s the extent of trafficking was largely unknown to the public, but now human trafficking is one of the largest growing criminal industries, third to the drug and gun trades, and attracting increased attention from the public. Furthermore, academics, the media, and the government has increased their attention and focus on human trafficking in the past two decades (Heil and Nichols 2015; Kempadoo 2005). At the same time, many believe that human trafficking has increased in frequency due to the ease in evading penalty and lower startup costs than the illegal trade in arms and drugs. Often traffickers can evade penalty because it is more difficult to identify and

prosecute than drug or gun trafficking (Mace et al. 2012). For example, when someone is caught in the drug trade, there is physical evidence of drugs left behind. However, in human trafficking cases, the evidence is much harder to piece together for a variety of different reasons, including victims' fear of police, threats of violent repercussions from the trafficker, and language barriers (Heil and Nichols 2015; Kempadoo 2005; Sanghera 2005).

Additionally, victims are more vulnerable to trafficking when they are more economically and socially marginalized (Heil and Nichols 2015; Kempadoo 2005; Sanghera 2005). Poverty is one way in which victims of trafficking may be marginalized, however, victims may also be marginalized socially due to race/ethnicity, religion, and gender (Heil and Nichols 2015; Kempadoo 2005; Sanghera 2005). Specifically, Heil and Nichols (2015) find that individual vulnerabilities to trafficking include poverty, runaway or “throw away” status (a term used for youth who are kicked out of their parents' home) particularly for LGBT youth, those with disabilities and those experiencing homelessness. Severe poverty is one of the most important risk factors for becoming a victim of trafficking because it forces people in vulnerable situations to take any work that they can, including work that requires them to cross borders and be put in a position of extreme dependence upon employers or traffickers (Mace et al. 2012; Sanghera 2005). Traffickers know the vulnerability of those in absolute poverty and take advantage of the situation by lying about well-paid employment, and then imprisoning victims using coercion, verbal threats, physical threats, and/or sexual and physical violence (Mace et al. 2012; Sanghera 2005). Some trafficking victims, particularly in poorer nations, may be sold to traffickers by their own family members because of few survival options. Furthermore, when trafficking victims are trafficked into a different country, it is more difficult to report victimization (Mace et al. 2012; Sanghera 2005). Victims may not speak the language, nor



understand the laws, the land, and customs of the country they are in, which also creates a barrier for the possibilities for escape.

To combat the vulnerability of those experiencing poverty, many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments focus on eradicating extreme poverty, achieving universal primary education, and promoting gender equality as part of the effort to eradicate human trafficking (Mace et al. 2012). While some researchers suggest that most of those trafficked are women and children (Mace et al. 2012), other researchers criticize this framing of victimization (Jones 2010; Sanghera 2005; Re 2011). The United States government statistics suggest that women are more likely to be victims of trafficking, and sex trafficking is the most common form of trafficking (U.S. Department of Justice 2011). However, men are least likely to report their victimization, particularly if it is sexual in nature (McLean 2013). Jones (2010) and Re (2011) argue that because men do not report their victimization that they are left out of the discussion, resulting in lack of services and support for male trafficking victims. This is not to suggest that trafficking happens to men and women equally, instead, I caution researchers, activists and public officials from framing trafficking as only happening to women.

Some research does suggest that women and children do have a greater likelihood of being trafficked (Polaris Project 2015b; U.S. Department of Justice 2011). The Polaris Project (2015b) finds that more than 85% of sex trafficking cases involve girls and women. This gendered distinction defines women and children who are trafficked as victims and men as offenders (Kempadoo 2005). Some researchers argue that trafficked persons are collapsed into a single category of women or child in the research, which has implications for policy (Jones 2010; Kempadoo 2005; Sanghera 2005; Gallagher 2010). For instance, because the trafficking discourse focuses on women and children as victims, men are often not thought of as potential

victims, which leads to a lack of services for male trafficking victims (Jones 2010). Likewise, when women and children victims are collapsed into one category, methods of locating survivors and/or services for survivors may address some groups but not others. Furthermore, evidence suggests that women may be more involved as traffickers than previously thought, comprising approximately 24% of all those convicted of trafficking (Albonetti 2014). Research suggests that previously victims of trafficking may go on to traffic others (Heil and Nichols 2015), leading to a cycle of violence like other patterns of gendered violence.

Antitrafficking services mostly focus on serving girls and women who are sex trafficked (Ma 2020), most of whom are girls and women of color (Gibbs et al. 2015; Williamson et al. 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Kappel et al. 2020; Hickle and Roe-Sepowitz 2018; Potocky 2011). Many survivors tend to be young, often in their mid-teens to late teens (Gibbs et al. 2015; Williamson et al. 2020; Diaz et al. 2020; Ma 2020; Whaling et al. 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020). Researchers find that survivors began selling sex before the age of majority, which meets the legal definition of trafficking (Hickle and Roe-Sepowitz 2018). Many survivors had been trafficked by an intimate partner, run away from home due to abuse and/or neglect, and engaged in survival sex (Gibbs et al. 2015). Other survivors were thrown out of their parents' home because of perceived misbehavior, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Gibbs et al. (2015) finds that most survivors reported that someone else arranged the sexual encounter and profited from it. However, some arranged their own 'dates,' or their peers did. During these encounters, survivors reported being physically harmed, restrained, and/or threatened with harm.

Williamson et al. (2020) finds that survivors also report high rates of mental illness (65%), suicidal ideation (48%), self-injurious behaviors (45%), and prior victimizations, such as sexual abuse prior to sexual exploitation (70%), physical neglect (43%), emotional neglect

(36%), physical abuse (32%), violence in the home (29%), involvement in child pornography (20%), psychological abuse (18%), and dating violence (16%). Hickle and Roe-Sepowitz (2018) finds similar rates of mental health issues and previous victimization of trafficked and exploited girls. Furthermore, survivors tend to come from families with problems, such as family instability (56%), familial substance abuse (39%), mental illness and/or suicidal family member(s) (26%), and/or having an incarcerated family member (12%). These experiences are best summarized as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs; Ma 2020). Ma (2020) argues that these negative early experiences lead to children's brains and development being compromised, which results in children lacking the skills needed for success. Williamson et al. (2020) finds that these consequences include 82% of survivors running away, 67% used substances themselves, 11% were involved with a gang, and 7% were pregnant or parenting.

In this section, I examined the characteristics of trafficking survivors. Often survivors tend to come from marginalized communities and have experienced previous trauma and abuse. For instance, survivors most at risk for trafficking are likely to be racial and ethnic minorities, women, poor, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Yet, those who advocate for them, tend to come from much more privileged backgrounds. In the next section, I examine the criminal justice response before discussing the types of services that antitrafficking activists provide.

### **The Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking**

The criminal justice system is highly gendered and male-dominated (Jones and Kingshott 2016). Men disproportionately serve as lawmakers, judges, police, correctional offenders, and rehabilitators. Such a male-dominated institution informs the ideology which favors men's perspectives and approaches, which disadvantages women. The U.S. approach to crime focus on a security threat (Lobasz 2009) or 'law and order' approach which reflect a male bias in

problem-solving, including human trafficking (Jones and Kingshott 2016). The TVPA was created in a male dominated U.S. Congress system and implemented through a male dominated criminal justice system, resulting in a male centered (perspectives, interests, and approaches) response to human trafficking. Men have defined human trafficking, focusing on sex trafficking, narrowly constructed victims of trafficking and prioritized the criminal justice systems needs and goals over victim's needs. There is also a lack of concern for trafficking victims' lived realities. This is contradictory to the intent of the TVPA, and undermines the effectiveness of antitrafficking efforts, and leads to victims suffering negative consequences. In this section, I examine the criminal justice system's response to trafficking and feminist critiques of these efforts.

Governments argue that trafficking is a threat to the state (Lobasz 2009). One of the goals of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is to disrupt trafficking operations, which aligns with the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) goal to assess the vulnerabilities and mitigating threats to the security of the U.S. Traditional security approaches call for an analysis of trafficking as a threat to the state and borders. Traditional security approaches focus on border security, controlling (illegal) migration, and cooperation of law enforcement internationally. Lobasz (2009) argues that law enforcement officials are concerned more with mafia and organized crime networks. Antitrafficking policies emphasize organized crime and punishing traffickers harshly. Trafficking is believed to complement existing criminal networks, which allows them to achieve social, economic, and political power. Trafficking is also seen as a security threat because many are undocumented migrants. Antitrafficking efforts serves the purpose of increasing the securing of national borders and fighting illegal migration. Feminist

analysis challenges this framework and instead prioritizes trafficking persons and recognizing the harm from traffickers and the state.

The criminal justice response to trafficking includes identifying sex traffickers and victims, investigating, reporting, and prosecuting sex trafficking related crimes (Nichols 2016). The benefits of a criminal justice response are that victims may get legal recourse, justice, and prevent traffickers from further harming others. Yet, there are significant challenges in identifying, prosecuting, implementing policies, and the re-victimization of survivors in the criminal justice system (Jones and Kingshott 2016; Nichols 2016). Re-victimization occurs when victims are criminalized, when there are conditions on services, and when victims are exposed to the offender during court procedures.

The TVPA utilizes a four P's approach: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership (Stickle et al. 2020; Nichols 2016). Prevention efforts focus on identifying survivors, spreading awareness, and referrals for services (Nichols 2016). The goal of prevention is to prevent trafficking from beginning and prevent trafficking victims from being re-trafficked. The TVPA provides for funding for task forces around the country, who work to educate stakeholders and community members, and for the national hotline, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center so that victims can report trafficking and seek services. However, prevention efforts in indigenous, black, and Latino communities, to homeless youth, and to LGBTQ+ communities has been limited (Nichols 2016).

Protection involves assistance and reintegration to survivors, which includes housing, medical, psychological services, assistance in accessing educational and employment opportunities, and assistance with legal proceedings (Stickle et al. 2020; Nichols 2016). The TVPA is supposed to protect and assist trafficking survivors, but services are limited, and the

focus has been on identification (Nichols 2016). Trafficking-specific programs are limited for girls and women and often exclude boys, men, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Specifically, transgender persons are often excluded from services (Fehrenbacher et al. 2020). But, without these spaces, victims may experience further harm by their trafficker or pimp. The TVPA also provides funding to undocumented trafficking victims based on whether the victim is in the U.S. (or its territories), helps prosecute the trafficker, and if they would experience severe hardship if deported, such as being re-trafficked.

Once authorized, a T-visa holder (a T-visa is a specific visa for trafficking survivors) is permitted to work in the U.S., receive housing, mental health and medical care, and other financial benefits (Nichols 2016). After 3 years, victims may apply for permanent residency and citizenship. A U-visa is sometimes given to those who suffered abuse that does not meet the trafficking definition. T-visas are capped at 5,000 and U-visas at 10,000 annually. These visas are conditional in that they require victims over 18 to testify and assist in the prosecution of their trafficker. Those who do not engage in this assistance may be denied protection and/or services. Children and adults who meet certain conditions, such as extensive physical or psychological trauma, are not required to assist in the prosecution of their trafficker

Prosecution is the criminalization and enforcement of trafficking laws, which often require special investigative techniques (Stickle et al. 2020; Nichols 2016). Cases are often first identified at the local level but investigated and prosecuted at the federal level (Nichols 2016). Most cases are identified reactively through self-reporting, tips or cases that involve other criminal activity. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) handles these cases, unless the traffickers or victims are foreign, in which case ICE, DHS, or the Department of State's Human Trafficking Unit may become involved. The FBI may coordinate with local law enforcement too.

But law enforcement officers are typically reactive, not proactive, due to lack of resources and time constraints. Proactively searching for sex-for-sale, setting up sting operations, and searching advertisements occur also, but this results in willing adults in the sex trade getting arrested. Juveniles may also be arrested and sent to detention centers or foster care because of limited services. Some scholars and activists argue that sting operations re-victimize survivors, particularly when trauma-informed services are not available or offered.

There are several barriers to victims self-reporting their trafficking situation, which includes the fact that many victims have distrust of law enforcement, fear of criminalization for prostitution or being an undocumented migrant, love for the trafficker, and fear of the trafficker (Nichols 2016; Sabon 2018). Survivors also report being assaulted by police officers (Fahrenbacher et al 2020). Other barriers include definitional issues, misreporting as another crime, officers' attitudes, and lack of education and training among law enforcement personnel (Nichols 2016). The more physical harm in a case, the more likely it is to be identified as sex trafficking, while cases involving psychological manipulation are likely to be identified and prosecuted as other crimes. Sometimes trafficking victims are criminalized and deported as illegal immigrants. For foreign victims, limited English also poses a challenge to identification with law enforcement. Intimate partner violence also sometimes masks trafficking. In some cases, trafficking is an extension of intimate partner violence. Some front-line police officers believe trafficking is not a problem in their area, is unimportant, low priority, or just the trend of the moment. Many law enforcement officers also feel it is a federal issue and should be dealt with at that level. Others within the law enforcement community feel trafficking victims are at least partly responsible for their own victimization. This, of course, leads to more arrests for prostitution. When victims are arrested, it confirms their worst fears and the trafficker's promise

that the police would not help. When police are adequately trained on trafficking, survivors are more likely to be identified and cooperate with law enforcement.

Some victims may not want to cooperate to avoid the re-traumatization that occurs during the prosecution process or out of fear of retaliation from the trafficker (Nichols 2016). Many victims may need services to recover and heal before cooperating with officials. Trauma poses challenges to victims due to fragmenting memories, confusing chronological events, and the risk of providing inconsistent statements. Victims may not tell their story accurately for fear of trafficker retribution, fear of criminalization, lack of survival options, and emotional attachment to the trafficker. Victim-centered techniques in the courtroom include allowing victims to testify via closed-circuit television. Despite this option being less traumatic for survivors, it is rarely used. Survivor presence is preferable because jurors are more likely to identify with the victim if they are present, and there is precedence in *Crawford vs. Washington* (2004), in which testimony is not allowed unless the defense can cross examine the witness. Plea-bargaining helps to avoid re-victimization and so some prosecutors may prefer this tactic.

The court process has the chance to be empowering for victims if conducted with therapeutic treatment appropriate for the victim. Repeated questioning may cause people to shift their story. Children who are repeatedly questioned may change their answer, believing they are being re-questioned because they answered wrong. Victim-centered interviewing, child interviewing, and trauma care are important for those trafficked persons, but most law enforcement agencies are not trained or able to do this.

A significant issue in trafficking cases is that many traffickers and victims are deported, making prosecution impossible (Nichols 2016). T-visas and U-visas should assist with this problem but there needs to be more support for undocumented migrants. Victims may not want



to prosecute their trafficker and supporting the victim's needs and goals are important in re-establishing their agency. Yet, prosecution is rarely successful without victims' testimony, thus using a survivor-centered approach helps with prosecution and testimony in court. It is in prosecutors' best interest to offer resources and build trust with victims so they may assist in prosecuting the trafficker.

The TVPA increased mandatory minimum sentencing for sex trafficking, particularly for those who abuse victims under 14 (Nichols 2016). The maximum sentence for trafficking is life without parole and offenders may be expected to pay restitution to victims for damages and losses. Deterrence theory suggests that increasing the penalties will prevent potential offenders from trafficking, but for this to be effective the punishment must be swift and must outweigh benefits and profits from trafficking. Given the difficulties in identification of trafficking situations and limited convictions, deterrence effects are limited.

Finally, partnership is the last P of the legislation '4 P's' approach to trafficking and focuses on the cooperation of international, national, and local organizations, health care providers, activists, lawmakers, law enforcement, researchers, and services providers (Stickle et al. 2020). Partnership also includes the extradition of offenders to the U.S. Partnership is a recent addition to this approach. The TVPA approach gets evaluated and modified every couple of years with the signing of the reauthorizations. Despite all the reauthorizations, the TVPA is still the subject of critique. In the next section, I examine feminist critiques of the criminal justice system's response to trafficking.

### ***A Feminist Critique of the Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking***

Men have dominated the legal system throughout U.S. history, which has favored men's perspectives and interests (Jones and Kingshott 2016; Cook 2016). Historically, women have

been denied equal access to law and granted limited rights. Gender-based laws have allowed men to maintain their dominant status and authority over women and have often failed to address violence against women. Law was used mostly to maintain women's second-class status in society where gender was concerned. The criminal justice system protects women victims only when they cooperate with actors and are deemed 'worthy' of protection. Trafficking victims have usually received the same treatment. The criminal justice system is dominated by men who construct its perspective, interests, and best approaches to enforcing federal laws. In this section, I review feminist critiques of the criminal justice system's response to trafficking, which focus on the law-and-order and a traditional security approach, the prioritization of the criminal justice system's needs over the victims, the construction of trafficking and trafficking victims, which focuses on sex trafficking of girls and women and the re-victimization of the victim in the criminal justice system

Feminists challenge the traditional security approach in international trafficking (Lobasz 2009). Focusing on trafficking as a security threat to the state neglects the voices of trafficked persons, whose human rights governments are required to protect. Feminists argue that the traditional security approach contributes to the problem. First, border control makes migration more difficult, dangerous and increases migrants' vulnerability for trafficking. When trafficking victims are deported, they are prone to re-trafficking. For feminists, traditional approaches to trafficking are morally and practically flawed because 1) they discount women's agency 2) establish a standard of who is a victim, which most trafficking victims cannot meet and 3) it prioritizes the sex trafficking of white women over the trafficking of men and women of color and for other purposes.

Feminists have been challenging the traditional security approach to fighting trafficking due to ethics and efficacy (Lobasz 2009). The ethical reasons are 1) It's a violation of victims' human rights 2) States are required to prevent human rights abuses under international law and 3) Government efforts to prevent abuse are unsatisfactory and may end up abusing and violating the rights of victims. Feminists emphasize the victim's status, instead of seeing them as undocumented migrants or 'undesirable' threats. Feminists emphasize the abuse of victims to increase support. This stems from a feminist tradition of valuing women's voices and incorporating those voices into theory.

The needs of victims are often secondary to the needs of the state (Lobasz 2009; Jones and Kingshott 2016). Feminists criticize the requirement of victims to work with law enforcement to get social services which is flawed from a human-rights perspective. The TVPA is designed to assist law enforcement with eliminating trafficking networks. Thus, trafficking policies which are meant to protect the human rights of trafficked persons still prioritize the state's wishes. Feminists argue that this approach is wrong and counterproductive. Policing borders for illegal migrants makes it more likely that migrants will hire a smuggler, which increases their vulnerability. Further, those who are deported risk being re-trafficked.

Although the TVPA is supposed to address all forms of trafficking, it has been criticized for focusing on sex trafficking (Jones and Kingshott 2016). Between 2001 and 2005, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has filed twice as many complaints for sex trafficking as labor trafficking and prosecuted three times the number of sex traffickers than labor traffickers. Scholars argue this is because of how human trafficking is framed as affecting sexually exploited girls and women, which are held out as the 'standard' to garner public and political support for antitrafficking efforts. This mirrors past issues (Agustín 2007; Bernstein 2007; Jones and

Kingshott 2016). The criminal justice system has historically focused on the morality and sexuality of girls and women as offenders and victims. Early criminal justice punishment and treatment focused on ensuring women's conformity to white, middle-class standards of morality, sexuality, and gender. Women of color, poor, and (sexually or gender) deviant women were punished harshly, while white women who adhered to feminine norms received leniency and protection.

Historically, girls and women have been constructed as 'true victims' (Jones and Kingshott 2016; Fehrenbacher et al. 2020). Still today, the status of victims is not extended to girls and women whose behavior or lifestyle is thought to have contributed to their victimization. Transgender women are less likely to be construed as a victim of trafficking, instead law enforcement tends to believe they are engaged in the sex industry willingly (Fehrenbacher et al. 2020). The criminal justice system usually only offers protection and rehabilitation to girls and women who conform to gender norms and who are willing to accept the paternalistic protection of the state. The TVPA construction of victims is based on common, but inaccurate, stereotypes about trafficking. The discourse focuses on young girls and women who are naïve and tricked into violent sex trafficking. Trafficking victims are depicted as not having any agency and are blameless while traffickers are depicted as criminals and strangers who dominate and control victims. Yet research finds that this is not typical of trafficking victims' reality.

Research challenges the dominant narratives of trafficking (Jones and Kingshott 2016; Kempadoo 2005; Nichols 2016). Many trafficking victims enter trafficking without force or being tricked. Trafficking relationships are complex and multifaceted, encompassing a range of behaviors, power dynamics, and compromises. Of course, oppressive trafficking situations exist, but research shows that they are rare enough to question the dominant narratives of trafficking

which perpetuate the ideal victim and offender construction. Because the TVPA's definition is based on these dominant trafficking narratives, it reinforces dominant constructions of victims held by criminal justice actors, impacting their ability to identify trafficking situations, and their willingness to extend victim status to some. For example, to get relief, victims must prove they have been the subject of severe forms of trafficking as defined by the TVPA (Nichols 2016; Sabon 2018; Jones and Kingshott 2016). While force, fraud and coercion are important in the definition, it excludes people who cannot prove their situation was involuntary. Many trafficking victims cannot meet this strict legal standard due to their entry into the trafficking situation. Many victims are initially seeking new opportunities, employment and willingly leave their homes, but do not consent to the slave-life conditions present in trafficking situations (Sabon 2018; Nichols 2016; Jones and Kingshott 2016). As such, they are not identified as victims. If they cannot prove force, fraud or coercion, they are seen by criminal justice actors as guilty in their victimization and labeled a prostitute, labor law violator or illegal migrant. This creates a victim hierarchy, whereby 'true' victims are deserving of legal rights, protection and social service support (Jones and Kingshott 2016). Victims who are girls and women, and kidnapped, sold and sexually exploited are prioritized despite it being the least likely trafficking scenario. Scholars argue that this is the real reason for low identification of victims. For those victims who are identified, they learn that the goals are to meet the criminal justice system's needs, not the victims, as it purports.

Finally, the criminal justice system fails to address the needs of trafficking victims and responds in ways that re-traumatize victims (Jones and Kingshott 2016). The criminal justice system's response to trafficking is criticized for not understanding trafficking victims' lived reality and failing to consider the complex factors which push and pull victims into trafficking

(Sabon 2018; Jones and Kingshott 2016). Trafficking victims tend to be vulnerable because they are poor, systematically oppressed and marginalized and face structural inequalities. Trafficking victims are likely to have significant histories of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect as children, exposed to intimate partner violence, exposed to parental substance abuse and addiction and family dysfunction, which often has led to intervention by social services. Trafficking victims are vulnerable due to being runaways, throwaways (parents kicked them out of the home), homeless, educational challenges, social challenges, alcohol and drug addiction, mental illness, child welfare involvement, juvenile justice system involvement and economic marginalization. They are vulnerable due to political, social and economic disadvantage, life experiences and risk factors. Thus, the most disadvantaged individuals, who are seeking to improve their lives by exercising their agency and pursuing opportunities, are often at increased risk of trafficking. Trying to secure employment with assistance is reasonable.

Scholars argue that the criminal justice system's approach to trafficking is also disconnected from the political, social, and economic dynamics, which structure it and disconnected from trafficking victims' reality (Jones and Kingshott 2016; Sabon 2018). For example, victims must prove force, fraud, and coercion, and that they didn't consent to being trafficked. Using consent to determine who is a victim of trafficking ignores the larger economic, political, and social conditions which shape choice and consent, and that these factors are coercive as well in shaping people's decisions. Oftentimes, this is the least-bad option for individuals to support themselves, which is considered consent and outside the purview of the TVPA.

In this section, I have examined the criminal justice system's response to trafficking, which follows the four P's approach: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership.

However, antitrafficking efforts are not without critique. Specifically, feminist scholars critique the criminal justice system's response to trafficking, which focuses on a law-and-order approach and traditional security approach, the prioritization of the criminal justice system's needs over the victims, the construction of trafficking and trafficking victims, which focuses on sex trafficking of girls and women and the re-victimization of the victim in the criminal justice system. In the next section, I review antitrafficking services.

### **Type of Services**

In this section, I examine the research on antitrafficking services. There is no research on trafficking survivors' experiences in the courtroom process and little research on victim services from the survivor's perspective. There is some research on program evaluations of antitrafficking services from a programmatic perspective (Heil and Nichols 2015; Gibbs et al. 2015; Baker and Grover 2013; Twigg 2017; Wirsing 2012; Williamson et al. 2020; Diaz et al. 2020; Leach 2020; Mukherjee 2020; Ma 2020; Whaling et al. 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; Johnson 2020; Miller et al. 2020; Welch 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Kappel et al. 2020; Kim et al. 2018). Few antitrafficking programs seek survivor feedback and instead focus on survivor outcomes (Mukherjee 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Cox 2018; Potocky 2011). Not evaluating programs from survivors' perspectives may exclude important information to improve services. Victims of sex trafficking are going into the programs having experienced abuse and control, so giving survivors control over their lives is important and increases their agency. Other research does not evaluate a specific program, but services in a general area (O'Brien et al. 2020; Judge 2018). The research that does report survivors' experiences suggests that survivors feel restricted in recovery homes because of prohibitions on leaving the house, even for school or work (Heil and Nichols

2015; Tsai et al. 2021). Thus, research on victim services in the United States lacks survivors' voices and perspectives.

Antitrafficking services may include emotional support/social services, legal advocacy, emergency housing, transportation, individual and group counseling, clothing, food, healthcare services, education and employment services, child-related assistance and other government benefits (Polaris Project 2015a). Victims of human trafficking often need emergency housing, food, clothing, hygiene items, social services, social support, financial support and healthcare once they escape the trafficker. Shelters specifically designed for trafficking victims are not common outside of larger cities, but when available they offer a safe place for the victim to escape physical and psychological trauma, which hopefully allows victims to develop a permanent plan to remove the trafficker from their lives. Other service providers offer free legal services only, some offer legal and employment services, or legal services and housing and social services (Polaris Project 2015a). However, in smaller cities, trafficking victims might seek services at domestic violence shelters, or homeless shelters.

Research on the number of beds for survivors of trafficking vary depending on the study. Reichert and Sylwestrzak (2013<sup>1</sup>) report that there were 33 residential programs with 682 beds for the entire United States, most of which are for minor victims of sex trafficking. Many programs had plans of opening a residential facility, adding another 354 beds. Polaris Project (2012) reports that there are 50 organizations providing 1644 beds for trafficking survivors, 529 of which are exclusive for survivors of trafficking. Thus, 1,115 beds can be used for trafficking survivors but are sometimes used for other populations. Twenty-two of the organizations provide beds to sex and labor trafficking survivors, while 28 organizations provide beds only to sex trafficking survivors (n = 348 beds, 66%). 412 beds are exclusively for women, 115 beds are



available to both men and women, and two beds are exclusively held for men. One hundred eighteen beds are designated for U.S. citizens, 14 for foreign nationals and 397 for both. Two hundred and two beds are for adults, 222 for minors and 105 for both. Furthermore, 28 states did not have any beds exclusively for human trafficking survivors. In short, demand far exceeds supply.

### **Antitrafficking Organizations**

Of studies that examine antitrafficking organizations, many have been conducted outside the United States in Canada, Germany, India, Cambodia, Cyprus, Nigeria, Nepal, Albania, Japan, Vietnam and Southeast Europe (Leach 2020; Mukherjee 2020; Chakraborty 2020; Welch 2020; Cox 2018; Tsai et al. 2021; Crawford and Kaufman 2008; Aborisade and Aderinto 2008; Van Hook et al. 2006; Otsu 2013; Brunovskis and Surtees 2008; Vijayarasa 2010). Many have not explicitly discussed how they collected their data (Van Hook et al. 2006; Otsu 2013; Brunovskis and Surtees 2008; Vijayarasa 2010). Some provide a review of the literature (Shigekane 2007; Hounmenou and O’Grady 2019; Macy et al. 2011; Muraya and Fry 2015), while other research only offers a staff perspective, meaning there is no evaluation from survivors’ perspectives (Twigg 2017; Wirsing 2012; Williamson et al. 2020; Diaz et al. 2020; Leach 2020; Ma 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; Johnson 2020; Chakraborty 2020; Welch 2020; O’Brien et al. 2020; Kappel et al. 2020; Hickle and Roe-Sepowitz 2018; Aborisade and Aderinto 2008; Cox 2018; Potocky 2011).

Of the research of antitrafficking programs in the United States, many offer comprehensive services such as case management, crisis intervention, safety planning, educational support, mental health support, employment services, medical, citizenship assistance, group therapy, legal assistance, short-term and long-term housing, nutrition, relocation,

substance abuse services, supplies, referrals, clinical assessment, advocacy, living skills, prevention, finance training, interpretation, yoga and other exercise opportunities (Gibbs et al. 2015; Baker and Grover 2013; Twigg 2017; Wirsing 2012; Williamson et al. 2020; Diaz et al. 2020; Ma 2020; Whaling et al. 2020; Kinnish et al. 2020; Johnson 2020). Some services are only for minor girls (Ma 2020; Johnson 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020). Health care providers have also created specialized programs in Los Angeles, New York City, Minneapolis and Washington D.C. focused on trafficking survivors, offering health/physical exams, placement in a group or foster home (for children), mental health assessment and treatment, reproductive health services (including birth control), STI testing, nutrition, dentistry, optical services, health education, substance abuse treatment, educational assistance, case management, legal services, support in family relationships and school/community engagement and connections to community resources (Miller et al. 2020; O'Brien et al. 2020; Kappel et al. 2020; Diaz et al. 2020). But these services vary widely by location and generally are closer to larger cities. In the next two sections, I discuss the strengths and challenges of these programs.

### ***Strengths of Antitrafficking Programming***

Research finds that best practices for programs include fostering an atmosphere of trust and respect, respecting survivors' boundaries by allowing survivors time to share their stories, providing services that clients want, and maintaining an open-door policy, so survivors could disengage and re-engage as needed (Gibbs et al. 2015). One program can provide continuity of care, even if a survivor moves somewhere else in the state (Williamson et al. 2020). Programs are also beginning to improve their intake process to be less intrusive, while coordinating their approach, so that victims do not have to retell their stories of victimization to different staff persons, to prevent re-traumatization (Ma 2020; Leach 2020). Many programs also create

individualized plans to focus on the strengths of the survivors (Wirsing 2012) by “emphasizing and modeling empowerment, healthy communication, and positive self-regard among participants and their families” (Whaling et al. 2020: 2). Other programs focus on evidence-based practices, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

The health-focused services for trafficking survivors have several strengths including having access to immediate care and assessment; building relationships with youth and parents; reframing ‘bad’ behaviors as trauma symptoms; using a case management approach to working with parents, schools, juvenile justice, and other healthcare and social service agencies; optional therapeutical empowerment groups guided by a mental health therapist; assistance with problem solving, family and peer conflict, and addressing stigma and trauma; and using cognitive behavioral therapy to address trauma (O’Brien et al. 2020). Diaz et al. (2020) finds that effective services include those that are youth friendly, comprehensive and in one location to minimize barriers to care and engagement. Care is also provided regardless of residence status because trafficking survivors often change residence. Services are confidential and free from judgment. Staff work with family, schools, child welfare, juvenile justice systems and others. Finally, staff are trained to meet survivors where they are and determine the services they need and are interested in.

### ***Challenges of Antitrafficking Programming***

Interview research of services providers in the United States have shown that one of the most pressing issues of antitrafficking services is lack of space and housing (Heil and Nichols 2015; Baker and Grover 2013; Gibbs et al. 2015). Specifically, there is a lack of services for adult women (particularly women who have been criminalized with a felony charge of prostitution and those with children), men/boys, and transgender men and women. For instance,

transwomen are not accepted into sex trafficking shelters for women by law in some states (Heil and Nichols 2015). When LGBTQ+ victims are accepted into a shelter, they may experience discrimination and lack of sensitivity to specific LGBTQ+ issues or experiences.

Another important challenge to these shelters is that victims want independence and not to feel as if they are being held captive (Heil and Nichols 2015), but some shelters restrict victims from using their cell phones or communicating with others outside the shelter (Brunovskis and Surtees 2008; Vijayarasa 2010). Services need to be individualized so that victims can get the best care based on their needs. For example, social support from families may be important for most victims, yet some victims, who were previously rejected (for being LGBTQ+) or trafficked by their family, may not want to establish a connection to family members (and it may not be recommended from a treatment standpoint). Antitrafficking organizations often develop and implement policies and procedures, such as limiting freedom of movement and communication with outsiders for the victims' 'protection,' mostly to keep perpetrators (traffickers) from finding victims (Vijayarasa 2010; Brunovskis and Surtees 2008). However, for the trafficking victim, not being able to contact close family and friends can often mean the difference between successfully completing treatment or not. For instance, if a victim disobeys the rules of the organization, particularly in more restrictive settings, they may be expelled. However, victims who do not feel accepted or welcomed, particularly for LGBTQ+ individuals, may also attempt to leave and be at a greater risk of returning to a trafficking situation (Heil and Nichols 2015).

Many of these trafficking shelters are presented with cultural challenges. For instance, some research suggests that many trafficking shelters are unable to meet the challenge of integrating victims into the community due to the stigma attached to being labeled a sex worker

(Crawford and Kaufman 2008; Van Hook et al. 2006; Vijayarasa 2010) or a deportee, particularly in communities overseas (Heil and Nichols 2015). One study found Nepalese shelters were able to overcome this challenge by having a few scheduled family visits before the victim returned home. Of the 17 victims that returned home in the study, only one was rejected by her family (Crawford and Kaufman 2008).

In *Working with Survivors of Human Trafficking: A Brief Manual for Social Service Providers*, Project REACH (2007) argues that one of the most important goals of rehabilitation is to not re-traumatize the victim. To avoid re-traumatizing victims, Project REACH (2007) suggests that service providers be aware of power dynamics and avoid repeating patterns of control and coercion. Instead, service providers are guided how to 1) re-establish safety, including physical and psychological safety; 2) rebuild a sense of control and empowerment; and 3) establish trust, which typically occurs slowly. Furthermore, Project REACH (2007) discusses how cultural variations affect how symptoms are expressed, the meanings of trauma, and the methods of coping. For example, victims' symptoms may vary; some victims may express more emotional distress (feeling anxious), while others may experience more somatic distress (stomach pains). Furthermore, Project REACH (2007) argues that there are cultural differences in the perceptions of responsibility for victims (i.e., entering the sex trade willing prior to trafficking) and taboos (i.e., discussing sex), and how to respond to distress (for example, healing rituals, religious/spiritual guidance, and seeking medical treatment).

Antitrafficking programs are significantly challenged with funding (Diaz et al. 2020), and retention and engagement (Whaling et al. 2020). Survivors may disengage for several reasons, including incarceration. Many professionals, including therapists, do not specialize in trafficking trauma, which makes finding adequate services difficult (Kinnish et al. 2020). Other challenges

include making antitrafficking organizations sustainable and adaptable, therapist burnout and turnover, organizational support, and lack of services outside of large urban areas (Kinnish et al. 2020).

Antitrafficking organizations have a very difficult goal to rehabilitate and reintegrate trafficking victims into a safe community. Antitrafficking organizations also vary in the type of services they offer, depending on location. Their jobs are made more difficult because of the lack of services and funding to meet the needs of survivors. Thus, some antitrafficking organizations may have to turn down trafficking victims or refer victims to other organizations. Often, the process of receiving antitrafficking services is also further complicated by the religious ideologies of antitrafficking organizations and workers. Next, I discuss religious activism within the context of antitrafficking organizations.

### **Evangelical Organizations**

Religious organizations are often involved in charity work as a part of their religious mandate (Smith et al. 1998). Religious organizations, like The Salvation Army and Catholic Charities are national and well-known, provide meals for the homeless and offer education programs, drug rehabilitation, jobs training, and more recently, rehabilitation of trafficking victims. I focus on a discussion of evangelical Christianity due to their disproportionate activism within the antitrafficking movement. Moreover, evangelicals, at least in the United States, are politically prominent and socially active. In this section, I focus on what motivates evangelical Christian organizations, what services evangelical organizations offer, and how this is tied to specific beliefs, which affect how they interact with clients.

Politically, and in terms of social activism, evangelical Christianity is the most influential Christian tradition in the United States (Smith et al. 1998). Smith et al. (1998) find that

evangelicals have higher rates of participation and activism, report higher levels of importance of faith, a higher degree of confidence in their faith and beliefs, a higher degree of adherence to a traditional Christian orthodoxy, and they tend to prefer religious authority and oppose secularly grounded authority. In the 1970s, evangelical activists united with the Republican Party to “enforce a new era of moral righteousness” (Smith et al. 1998: 6). In other words, evangelicals believe that the nation’s laws should reflect Christian standards, although what standards are considered Christian vary even among Christians. Evangelicals also seek to evangelize the population, believing that one must be “saved” to go to heaven, and that God has given them a holy obligation to try to bring others into the fold (Ingersoll 2003).

Not all evangelicals follow widely held conservative Christian beliefs and some even support issues like LGBTQ+ rights, marriage equality and women’s rights (Smith et. al 1998; Ingersoll 2003). For example, Ingersoll (2003) argues that Christians believe in varying levels of gender equality, with more conservative Christians using gender issues as a litmus test. However, despite variation in beliefs and behavior, many evangelicals are criticized as being intolerant and offering one-dimensional responses to multi-dimensional complex problems (Emerson and Smith 2000; Kelly 2014; Kelly and Gochanour 2018). Smith (2000) argues that evangelicals tend to be individualistic and do not understand how social structures and institutions affect people’s lives (positively or negatively). From a conservative evangelical perspective, social problems would be eradicated if individuals led a Christian lifestyle (Smith, et. al 1998; Emerson and Smith 2000). The public believes that evangelicals often push religion onto others, particularly in schools and charitable services. In sum, evangelicals may be seen as uncompromising and imposing their own Christian beliefs on others (Smith, et al. 1998).

For evangelicals, however, their Christian identity and beliefs are a master status and at the center of who they are. Avishai (2008) describes those individuals who perform their religious identity as “doing religion.” “Doing religion is a mode of conduct and being, a performance of identity” (Avishai 2008: 413). This occurs when individuals practice their faith, such as traditions and rituals, but also allow religion to influence their decision-making and charity work. Avishai’s (2008) concept of “doing religion” is important for understanding how and why evangelicals engage in charity work and specifically antitrafficking work.

Christian organizations engage in faith-based social action in several different areas such as pro-life activism (Munson 2009), including crisis pregnancy centers (Kelly 2012), anti-gay activism (Schreiber 2008), homelessness relief (Allahyari 2000), hunger relief (Bender 2003; Unruh and Sider 2005) and immigration reform (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008). Religion has also been instrumental in democratic organizing (Shields 2009; Wood 2002). Research on faith-based social action suggests that becoming a social activist is a process that often reaffirms the individuals’ religious commitment (Munson 2009; Allahyari 2000). Munson (2009) argues faith-based social action (in this example pro-life activism) is both a religious practice and a social movement practice. Religion is discussed often in faith-based organizations and organizational practices are expected to explicitly reflect Christian principles (Kelly 2012), while religious volunteers involved in secular social action spoke about religion occasionally and engaged in religious behavior outside of religious settings; they did not expect their beliefs to be prioritized within the organization (Bender 2003).

Previous research examining religious charity organizations have compared evangelical and Catholic charities (Allahyari, 2000). Rebecca Allahyari’s (2000) findings indicate that evangelical charity organizations, specifically The Salvation Army, were much more structured



and rehabilitation efforts focused on discipline while the focus within Catholic charities was on dignity and choice. Allahyari (2000) also finds volunteers incorporated organizational rhetoric as a guide in both evangelical and Catholic organizations. Thus, this study will seek to understand how volunteers and service providers are influenced by antitrafficking organizational rhetoric.

Religious social action is not without critique. Kelly (2014) provides evidence that evangelical beliefs act as a barrier for service providers to understand client needs, rather they often understand situations in terms of evangelical priorities. Other research critiques faith-based social action because of the lack of work to change policies and laws by these groups (Unruh and Sider 2005). Previous research on evangelicals has demonstrated that they tend to carry a cultural toolkit that guides their approach consisting of three principles: 1) commitment to free will individualism 2) relationism, by extending one's relationship with God to include family, friends, and Church and 3) anti-structuralism, which rejects the idea of social structures influencing individuals' thoughts and actions (Emerson and Smith 2000). Emerson and Smith (2000) demonstrate that an evangelical toolkit leads to reproducing racial inequality while at the same time denying negative feelings about minorities. The cultural toolkit limits the range of explanations that are offered to understand behavior. Evangelicals are often blind to institutional racism and sexism.

Zimmerman (2010) offers a historical analysis of how religious ideology, specifically traditional gendered norms and sexual behavior, came to influence antitrafficking efforts. In the analysis, Zimmerman argues that religious antitrafficking efforts present unique challenges. For example, in some religious antitrafficking organizations, God is identified as the "most effective weapon against the slave trade" (Zimmerman 2010: 90). However, Zimmerman (2010) argues that worshipping God is not among the known best practices of decreasing human trafficking.

Some analysts and anti-trafficking experts have raised the concern that an unintended consequence of the availability of the faith-based funds was to place undue emphasis on organizations' religious credentials at the expense of their actual technical competency in anti-trafficking work... The inspector general cited concern with 'the credentials of the organizations ... that the Trafficking Office funded' and called for 'rigorous peer review and greater oversight of the funding process.'

(Zimmerman, 2010: 91)

Zimmerman (2010) argues that antitrafficking work is extremely difficult and often victim rehabilitation efforts can re-traumatize victims (for instance, an LGBT victim seeking services in an anti-gay environment; see Heil and Nichols 2015). Thus, grounding the work in religious beliefs *might* assist some survivors in rehabilitation but should not substitute for delivering high-quality care that is inclusive to all people.

A second challenge for religious antitrafficking efforts are the requirements to receive federal funding. In 2003, the reauthorization of the TVPA added in a Prostitution Loyalty Oath, which states that no organization that receives federal funds should promote, support or advocate for prostitution (Zimmerman 2010). This could mean that victims of trafficking may be mistaken as prostitutes and denied services. Some critics argue that the criminalization of prostitution drives the exchange underground and puts sex workers at greater risk of harm (Sanghera 2005). The George W. Bush administration offered sexual abstinence as a solution to human trafficking, prostitution and HIV/AIDS (Zimmerman 2010) as if trafficking was the result of victims' sexual immorality and not a complex set of structural conditions. According to the Bush administration's implementation of policy trafficking is a consequence of non-marital sex and according to this belief, having non-marital or same-sex sex means that the individual is separate from the divine (Zimmerman 2010).

Zimmerman (2010) finds that those antitrafficking organizations that did not already have a policy like the Prostitution Loyalty Oath had to adopt the policy to continue receiving federal funds. Later, President Obama's administration took a more centered approach by focusing on sexual exploitation, not treating victims as criminals and allowing funding to be competitively awarded to secular nonprofits and religious organizations (The White House 2016a, 2016b). The Supreme Court overturned the Prostitution Loyalty Oath in 2013 due to free speech violations (Devi 2013). The Supreme Court ruled in this way by arguing that the U.S. government could not tie funding of programs to a particular perspective. However, this rule likely had lasting effects of prioritizing and funding activists and organizations that were anti-prostitution.

Because of the socially conservative nature of many evangelicals, faith-based social activism in response to human trafficking will be influenced by government, religion, race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and citizenship status. These factors influence how successful the antitrafficking organization is, and the services offered to victims. In the front part of this chapter, I reviewed the literature on victimology, victim services, domestic violence, domestic violence services, human trafficking, antitrafficking work, and religious charity because this literature shapes the antitrafficking field. In the next section I turn to a discussion of the social movement literature, before specifically discussing the antitrafficking social movement. The social movement literature is important to understand how human trafficking has developed into a social problem. I discuss how activists frame social problems diagnostically, prognostically, and in motivating potential activists. Activists utilize several methods of framing to increase support of antitrafficking work, such as frame alignment, frame bridging, frame extension, frame resonance, and more. I also discuss the factors which lead to a successful social movement, including political opportunity, cultural contexts, grievances,

resources mobilization. I discuss strategies activists utilize to build movements, such as social networking. Finally, I examine the limited antitrafficking movement literature specifically, with a focus on evangelical activism within the movement.

### **Social Movements**

Antitrafficking organizations are one sector within the antitrafficking movement, located alongside lawmakers, law enforcement, scholars, other activists (such as sex worker rights' organizations), and journalists, among others. In this section, I review the general social movement literature relevant to this dissertation. First, I discuss social movements and their characteristics, followed by social movement organizations. I utilize the social movement literature to describe how antitrafficking activists engage in diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Activists also utilize several framing strategies to increase support, including frame bridging, frame diffusion, frame alignment, frame amplification, frame extension, frame resonance, frame transformation, and cycles of protests. I then move to a discussion of the factors in creating a successful movement, including political opportunities, grievances, resource mobilization, strategies, and social networks and fields. Finally, I examine the literature on antitrafficking social movement organizations, specifically focusing on evangelical activism.

According to Snow et al. (2018) social movements are “collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part” (P 10). Social movements evolve in three stages: emergence, coalescence, and routinization (Conley 2019). Routinization occurs when a formal structure and bureaucracy are created to routinize and

institutionalize the functions of the movement. The organization may hire an executive director to run the organization and set up a headquarters to organize its activities and coordinate its efforts. The antitrafficking movement is in the routinization stage, with multiple organizations working towards reducing trafficking incidence, and working to strengthen existing trafficking laws and policies.

A social movement organization (SMO) is a “complex, or formal organization which identifies its preferences with a social movement or a counter-movement and attempts to implement those goals” (Walker and Martin 2018: 167). SMOs features vary but include identifying the problem and the source of the problem, degree of resonance, scope and influence, flexibility and rigidity, and inclusivity and exclusivity (Benford and Snow 2002: 618). The goal of social movement organizations is to create social change on a broader level also. Activists are strategic actors working to change laws and policies, winning political representation, and modifying institutional practices (Jasper and Polletta 2018). But what they think is strategic, legitimate, and appropriate are cultural. Activists modify their strategies as they interact with opponents, authorities, allies, and each other. Online mobilization has made it easier to recruit participants, stage demonstrations, and communicate with the authorities, among other necessary tasks.

## **Framing**

ASMOs need to communicate to their audience about the problem they seek to address if they are going to be successful. In doing so, they are framing the social problem, thereby creating and maintaining meanings and ideas, and developing solutions and strategies to solve the problem. A frame is a schema, or way that we organize our lives and see the world. Core framing tasks (Benford and Snow 2002; Snow and Benford 1988) are constructed in three parts:

diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing are the ways in which activists identify and describe the problem, who or what is to blame, and the consequences. Antitrafficking social movement organizations (ASMOs) differ in how they frame the problem of trafficking and who/what is to blame, as I demonstrate in later chapters. For instance, some ASMOs frame all sex work as sex trafficking and violence against cisgender women (Fehrenbacher et al. 2020). Some ASMOs identify childhood sexual abuse and pornography as key causes of trafficking, while others focus more on the demand from clients. ASMOs tend to agree on the consequences of trafficking, which highlight the harms and injustices that victims face. Prognostic framing are the solutions and predicted future of the problem. Prognostic framing is a solution-oriented approach and analysis of the problem of trafficking. For example, the prognostic framing of trafficking are the ways in which activists are working to reduce trafficking, such as the effectiveness of trafficking services and educating the public. Each of the ASMOs in my sample have similar prognostic framing strategies, which follow the four P's approach as outlined in the 2000 TVPA. The four P's approach focuses on prevention of trafficking via education and awareness campaigns, protection of survivors, prosecution of traffickers and clients, and partnership between agencies and organizations. Motivational framing are the ways that activists inspire and encourage current and potential activists to become involved in the movement. For example, activists motivate potential activists by highlighting the abuse and injustice that trafficking survivors experience, which leads to outrage and anger from potential activists about these injustices.

Activists utilize other framing strategies to connect their work to potential activists. Snow et al. (1986) coined the term frame alignment, which is the connection between individual values, beliefs and interests and social movement ideologies, goals and activities. There are four

types of frame alignment processes: 1) frame bridging 2) frame amplification 3) frame extension and 4) frame transformation (Snow et al. 1986). As activists engage in frame alignment, they are creating connections between the social movement and the audience to activate future members. Each alignment corresponds to different micromobilization tasks and processes.

Frame bridging allows social movements to connect two or more ideologically similar, but structurally unconnected frames (Snow et al. 1986). Frame bridging tends to be the primary form of alignment in many social movements. In antitrafficking work, activists engage in frame bridging when they connect trafficking to slavery. This bridging is affected by organizational outreach and information diffusion through networks, media, the telephone and mail. One of the first micromobilization tasks is to create a list of probable adherents and then contact them.

Frame amplification is the intensifying of an interpretive frame on an issue or social problem (Snow et al. 1986). Support for and participating in social movements often require this clarification and reinvigoration of an interpretive frame. In antitrafficking work, activists often clarify trafficking as a problem happening in the United States. There are two types of frame amplification: value amplification and belief amplification. Value amplification is the identification, idealization and elevation of one or more values considered basic to the movement, which has not inspired collective action. Mobilization toward antitrafficking goals is more likely when beliefs about the phenomena and the nature of the action are communicated. Beliefs are not always transparent, or unambiguous and often the relationship between beliefs and action are antithetical or contradictory. So, mobilization is contingent on the amplification or transformation of a set of beliefs. There are five kinds of beliefs that are relevant to mobilization: 1) beliefs about the seriousness of the problem 2) the cause of the problem 3) beliefs about

antagonists or targets 4) beliefs about the probability of change and 5) beliefs about the necessity of ‘standing up.’

In frame extension (Snow et al. 1986), ASMOs sometimes must amplify ideational elements to clarify the linkage between personal and group interests, so that potential constituents support the ASMOs. If the values and programs are not built off of existing sentiments, then the ASMOs may have to extend the boundaries of its framework. The ASMOs are trying to enlarge their participation by extending their values to the values that individuals care about. For example, antitrafficking activists connect the problem of trafficking to pornography and drugs. A challenge is that people have different reasons for joining and their reasons may change over time. Frame extension is the first step in a “hooking” process (Lofland 1977) and the longer process of frame transformation.

ASMOs must also engage in frame transformation (Snow et al. 1986), which is building connection to the movements’ work when participants’ values are different. To do so, they reframe their message to gain more support. There are two transformation processes that are important for recruitment and participation: transformations of domain-specific and global interpretive frames. They are similar in that both involve reframing some set of conditions. Two distinct aspects comprise these changes: 1) what was seen as an unfortunate situation is now defined as inexcusable and 2) the scope of a frame is broadened into a master frame, which reinterprets events and experiences in a new way. Antitrafficking activists engage in frame transformation when they conflate sex work and sex trafficking, thereby connecting activists with different, if related, concerns. Sex work was previously seen as an unfortunate situation but has shifted such that activists believe all sex workers are victims.



Frame diffusion is how social movement ideas spread (Benford and Snow 2002). As ASMOs frame the problem, some audience members will connect to their message. A common frame within antitrafficking work is an injustice frame (Snow and Owens 2015), which means that activists frame the problem of trafficking as an injustice to victims and survivors. The ASMOs use injustice frames concurrently with other frames, allowing them to successfully motivate activists through frame alignment.

Frame resonance varies due to the credibility of the frame and its salience (Benford and Snow 2002). Credibility occurs because of three factors, namely frame consistency, empirical credibility and credibility of the frame articulators. There are three interrelated, but distinct phenomenological constraints: 1) empirical credibility, which is the fit between the framing and events in the world 2) experiential commensurability, when one frame is more credible than another and 3) narrative fidelity, which is the degree to which the framing resonates with cultural narrations, the stories, myths and folk talks that are apart of one's cultural heritage (Snow and Benford 1988). When this exists, this is called "narrative fidelity" (Fisher 1984). Snow and Benford (1988) argue that at least one constraint is a necessary condition for mobilization.

Cycles of protest is a framing strategy, but a constraining one. Cycles of protest occur when activists generate frames that align with the structural and material conditions and transform old meanings or create new ones for the populations affected by them (Snow and Benford 1988). The point in which a movement emerges in a cycle of protests affects framing efforts. Those that occur early in cycle protests create master frames, which later movements may utilize to anchor their new work. Movements that emerge later will see their framing efforts constrained by the previously elaborated master frame. By connecting their work to previous

anti-slavery movements, ASMOs frames constrain their work by creating misunderstandings about the nature of trafficking.

In this section, I examined the research on how ASMOs frame social problems, namely diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing. I provided specific examples of how ASMOs utilize these framing strategies. I discuss other framing strategies utilized, such as frame alignment, frame diffusion, frame resonance and cycles of protest. Next, I discuss several factors which can influence a movement's success.

### **Factors Leading to a Successful Movement**

There are several factors that influence whether a social movement is successful or not, including leadership, political opportunities, resource mobilization, grievances and cultural context. Ganz and McKenna (2018) argue that leadership matters and that leadership dynamics are critical in understanding social movements. They argue that scholars should move beyond thinking about leadership in categories of charismatic, prophetic or enthusiastic and look for more nuanced leadership forms. There is a need for research to distinguish among leaders, the practice of leadership and the structures through which leadership is exercised. This would allow social movement scholars to examine the dynamics of ASMOs, the differences in leadership and the reasons why some social movements are successful while others are not. Contrary to classic definitions of leadership, alternatives would include leadership which helps achieve a shared purpose, provide insight during uncertainty and respond with constructive purpose. Leadership with constructive purpose is rooted in five important leadership practices: 1) relationship building 2) storytelling 3) strategizing 4) structuring and 5) action. Ganz and McKenna (2018) argue that strong leaders build strong and weak ties. Strong ties lead to trust, motivation and commitment, whereas weak ties lead to access to information, skills and learning. Leaders

building these relationships are important for information and resource sharing, but it is also the medium that activists use in building the movement. Also, leaders must be skilled at storytelling, specifically being able to turn a threat into a challenge to be engaged. Leaders who utilize creative and adaptive strategizing are particularly important because social movements challenge traditional resources. Leaders must adapt with greater resourcefulness to turn resources into a movement's needs and wants. Successful leadership requires ongoing organizational structuring as the movement evolves. SMOs must do three things to ensure success: 1) define shared purpose 2) establish norms on decision-making, accountability and time management and 3) decide on roles. SMOs must also be bounded, stable and diverse to operate interdependently. Finally, leadership is dependent on action. Successful movements must obtain and deepen commitments over time. I now turn to a discussion on how political opportunities are another important factor for movement success.

### *Political Opportunity Process Model*

I utilize the political opportunity process model to explain the growth in the contemporary antitrafficking movement. The first attempt to understand how movements and organizations interact to create institutional changes is a "political process" model (Rojas and King 2018). The political process model views social movements as one of many actors in a regulatory environment. Social movement activists typically innovate, which may be adopted by organizations and ultimately institutionalized. This institutionalization can begin at one level and spread to others. Movements and organizations create institutional environments and are constrained when systems change or emerge. For example, many activists within the antitrafficking movement desire to purchase fair-trade products. Activists push for more accountability and transparency in the supply chain. Movement actors are seen as the agitators

which shift the institutional environment in which organizations operate. Yet, political process theorists argue that SMOs must also satisfy the demands of activists to retain their legitimacy.

Political opportunities do not produce a social movement but do offer a structural potential for collective political action (McAdam and Tarrow 2018). In other words, a social movement is more likely to be formed and to be successful when they experience specific political opportunities. More current iterations of political process theory argue that political opportunities must be recognized as such (Jasper and Poletta 2018). For example, increased political opportunities for antitrafficking work increased after the passage of the TVPA in 2000. Had activists not recognized this opportunity, the political landscape of trafficking might have been drastically different, such as lack of funding, education/awareness and support for the antitrafficking movement. This model examines internal social movement and external social environment variables. But opportunities and threats are socially constructed. They must be visible to activists and perceived as an opportunity. Factors that contribute to opportunities and threats include the strength of the state (and degree of centralization versus dispersion), the state's strategies for dealing with challenges, including opportunities within the system, and the choice of contentious performances. Furthermore, the context is ever-changing. There are two factors in causing opportunities and threats to expand or contract, changes in composition or alignment of institutional actors and the force of destabilizing events and political contexts. Social movements can change the systems in which they are embedded. Most significant criticisms of the political opportunity model are structural bias, indifference to non-state targets, overemphasis on opportunity over threat and "movement-centric bias." Outside of political opportunities and threats, cultural contexts are another factor which can influence the success of a social movement and SMOs.

### *Cultural Context*

Cultural context also influences the success of social movements (Jasper and Polletta 2018). Cultural context of movements are the beliefs, language, images, artifacts and emotion rules and norms to mobilize support. Cultural constructionism examines how individuals create and spread cultural meanings and products. Historically, cultural scholars believed that culture evolves slowly; currently, scholars now understand culture to be reproduced in an active way. Culture constantly changes, sometimes rapidly, and it can be imposed on others. Cultural context includes shared beliefs, assumptions and practical knowledge, cultural materials, activists shared beliefs and feelings about the strategies, tactics and targets they adopt, meanings of other players and the cultural infrastructure of new challenges. This approach examines the types of organizations and institutions from which mobilizing begins, which can occur in formal non-political organizations. In this research, I analyze the cultural context of evangelical antitrafficking efforts to evaluate their success. All organizations are evangelical in my research, and Hope and Church Ladies utilize evangelical beliefs, languages, images, artifacts, rules and norms in their respective organizations. For example, Hope and Church Ladies activists pray before and/or after meetings, wear jewelry with religious iconography, pray with survivors and encourage survivors to convert to Christianity. The cultural context of the ASMOs in this sample increases their success as they can connect to and utilize church resources more successfully. Next, I examine the literature on grievances and how grievances influence the success of SMOs.

### *Grievances*

Grievances are the “everyday problems subjectively experienced by communities and social groups” (Almeida 2018: 44) and “troublesome matters or conditions, and the feelings associated with them – such as dissatisfaction, fear, indignation, resentment, and moral shock”

(Snow and Soule 2010: 23). These grievances must be felt by the community and not just on an individual level. Research neglects that grievances are subject to interpretation (Snow et al. 1986). Turner (1969) argues that there must be a change in the way people see conditions as problematic and an injustice before mobilization. Piven and Cloward (1977) argue that conditions must be seen as an injustice and changeable. Opportunities signal to communities that social movement-type action can address such grievances, while threats increase the intensity of past grievances and/or create new ones. Threats may be more powerful in moving people to collective action, in comparison to a comparable number of opportunities. Opportunities offer gains if collective action is successful. Yet, threats motivate people to collective action in fear that conditions will worsen if defensive action is not taken. Opportunities and threats are then socially constructed to encourage participation. Tilly (1978) argues that threats generate more collective action in comparison to opportunities, given the same amount of opportunity. Snow et al. (1998) agree with this, arguing that groups facing losses are more motivated than those groups facing gains. Structural threats are when negative conditions intensify grievances and create new ones. For example, antitrafficking activists perceived the delay in the signing of the TVPRA in 2011 as a threat to their work and organized activists to push their representatives to action. Next, I examine the literature on resource mobilization and how access to resources leads to successes.

### ***Resource Mobilization***

I utilize resource mobilization (RM) to explain the increase of evangelical antitrafficking organizations since the TVPA 2000. There are five resource types: material, human, social-organizational, cultural and moral (Edwards et al. 2018). Social movement organizations exchange resources but there are constraints. Recent research has also compared the strength of

political opportunity, cultural framing and resource mobilization, finding that resource mobilization is a stronger and more reliable predictor of collective action than the other two. Recent work in RM also suggests that success depends on a leader's ability to mobilize emotions that elicit support for a movement. McCarthy and Zald (1977) use resource mobilization theory to argue for a focus on organizations in collective action, suggesting that organizations allow movements to amass resources. These resources can then be used towards specific strategies of the organizations. For example, the antitrafficking organizations utilize their church networks to mobilize capital and human resources. Next, I discuss strategies utilized by social movement activists.

### *Strategies*

Social movements must use several strategies including mass media, social networks and fields to be successful. Today, activists have more technology at their disposal to spread their message. Activists can use media, music, books, op-eds, blogs, websites and social media to educate the public about their cause and proposed solutions (Rohlinger and Corrigan-Brown 2018). Activists use media to target audiences and spread information, shape political debates and outcomes and mobilize the public. Media coverage allows activists to challenge movement actors and change political debates. Activists use the media to mobilize individuals to act. Even if the media coverage of activist efforts is negative, it can grow support and membership (Rohlinger and Corrigan-Brown 2018). Using media comes with obstacles and risks: activists must have time, skills and connections to use it effectively and even then, the media is never fully under activists' control. Activists in ASMOs have access to several media platforms and choices on which to use are dependent on the target. But, even in these open systems, activists do not always reach their goals using media to target external audiences.

Activists also create websites, social media accounts and alternate outlets to communicate to their audience (Rohlinger and Corrigan-Brown 2018). These platforms allow activists more control of the message. These messages may also be picked up by mainstream media. In open systems, activists may face media bias, with several aspects including the issue, the size of event, the timing of the event, where the event is staged, presence of opponents and the outbreak of violence which affects whether it is included in the news. When events are covered, the news media often covers the most emotive, violent and extreme events, which can marginalize some activists and their causes. However, activists within the antitrafficking movement typically do not experience marginalization in this way because they are privileged, they often do not engage in disruptive forms of protest and instead use legitimate means of change. Next, I examine the impact social networks have on SMOs.

### *Social Networks and Fields*

Part of the success of the antitrafficking movement is the church social connections that are made by evangelical antitrafficking activists. Tilly (1978) argues that minority groups are likely to mobilize where they form dense networks and share a common identity. Activist mobilization requires coordination, communication, connection and involves the exchange of resources. Many social networks have a common identity and purpose. Tilly (1978) suggests that a networks' role is also to generate incentive structures for collective action. In dense networks, action and inaction can be observed, putting pressure on potential activists to act. Coleman (1988, 1990) argues social capital develops in dense networks, which encourages cooperation, support and is dependable and trustworthy. The evangelical antitrafficking organizations in this study utilize their church networks to recruit volunteers and donors and access space and



resources, often at no cost. Next, I turn to a discussion of the antitrafficking social movement specifically.

### **The Antitrafficking Social Movement**

There is some research examining antitrafficking efforts using small samples which cannot be generalized to the larger population of antitrafficking activists or organizations in the United States (Clark 2019; Houston 2015; Bernstein 2010, 2012; Jackson 2016; Agustín 2007). Their work is rich in details, which elaborate the ways antitrafficking activists utilize frames and tactics to increase public awareness, get legislation passed and provide services to trafficking survivors. In this section, I examine this research. I focus my review on evangelical activists because much of the research focuses on how evangelical ideologies have shaped the antitrafficking movement.

### **The National Antitrafficking Movement**

The contemporary antitrafficking social movement significantly expanded due to the signing of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) in 2000, which federally criminalized human trafficking (Clark 2019). Subsequent reauthorizations were signed after a reassessment and changes to the law occurred. The TVPA created the 3Ps approach for protection, prevention, and prosecution (Clark 2019). Protection focuses on efforts to protect survivors from trafficking, which includes victim services and the T-visa. Prevention requires the United States to support education and awareness campaigns and evaluate and financially support other countries' efforts to respond to trafficking. Prosecution requires that new legislation be passed against human trafficking. Later a fourth P was added to this approach by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, for partnership (Stickle et al 2020). Partnership is the efforts of agencies, organizations,

activists and law enforcement to work together in their antitrafficking efforts. Clark (2019) finds that the activists focus on protecting survivors. Between 2008 and 2010, activists focused more on state level legislation than federal, which Clark (2019) suggests is due to the routinization of the TVPA 2008. Activists became focused on state-level legislation due to the ease at which the reauthorizations of the TVPA had been passed. In this section, I examine the contemporary national antitrafficking movement but draw on research findings from local contexts where appropriate.

Sex trafficking has been privileged in the antitrafficking movement because it is classified in the TVPA as ‘severe’ and sex work is often conflated with all trafficking generally, making the issue appear more widespread than it is (Clark 2019). In the sample utilized in this research, abolitionists argue that sex workers are trafficked because women began selling sex as teenagers and/or were abused beforehand, even if there is no one coercing or forcing them to engage in sex work. In 2008 the TVPRA expanded the definition of severe trafficking to labor trafficking victims, which allows labor trafficking survivors to be considered for T-visas. Soule (2009) argues there are two tactics utilized by activists: contentious politics, where activists target the state and private politics, where activists target private businesses. Clark (2019) finds that antitrafficking activists participate in both contentious and private politics. Antitrafficking activists have targeted the state for anti-sex trafficking efforts due to its privileged status while anti-labor trafficking activists focus on private businesses. Anti-sex trafficking activists focus on the state to create and enforce sex trafficking laws while anti-labor trafficking activists focus more on private businesses to be transparent in their supply chain (which includes international labor and supplies) and create policies which prevent labor trafficking and labor abuses. But businesses must be aware of both due to consumers’ increased activism.

Clark (2019) argues that the political environment, including political opportunities, is suitable for coalition building because human trafficking policy was on the rise and activists were ensuring their message was not getting lost. In other words, activists identified political opportunities and took advantage of them. For instance, one ASMO, the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) coalition utilized several strategies to mobilize for policy, demonstrating organizational learning through diffusion. ATEST is an antitrafficking coalition organization whose work focuses on bringing together several antitrafficking organizations to work together to fight trafficking. ATEST established their expertise in trafficking policy between 2008 and 2010, along with many successes such as the 2008 TVPRA, which increased funding, increased attention to state level policy and saw growth in membership. ATEST saw a 12% increase in funding, during a time when other programs were being cut, and 90% of recommendations from ATEST were put into law in the 2008 TVPRA (Clark 2019). Given the economic hardships during and after the 2008 recession, the antitrafficking movement made significant progress. In 2010 a major victory occurred with the passage of the California Supply Chains Act, which required companies with over \$100 million in global revenue to publicly disclose their efforts to eliminate trafficking and slavery in the supply chain (Clark 2019). Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton rolled out a self-assessment of U.S. policies, prevention and intervention in the 2010 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. Another national ASMO, Polaris Project, also began assessing each state's efforts to combat trafficking.

Activists' strategies focused on explaining and promoting the services they provide, including victim services, projects, special reports, investigations and training (Clark 2019). Activists were involved in public awareness campaigns, direct advocacy, creating mobile apps and web-based activism so consumers are informed on whether the products they purchase are

made by ‘slaves.’ Activists pushed for the Department of Labor to publish a list of ‘slave-made’ goods as required by the TVPRA 2005. Activists also directly advocated to government officials, attended and presented at conferences, fundraised, participated in humanitarian relief projects and protested. Protest activists were least used by sex trafficking activists (Clark 2019). Anti-sex trafficking activists tend to use less confrontational tactics to support their message. By comparison, anti-labor trafficking organizations, like Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), tend to use more protests, marches and pickets.

Clark (2019) finds that ATEST, which is a coalition of several membership organizations, created a shared identity based on bipartisan cooperation, as a non-ideological group focused on eradicating trafficking. Yet each organization adhered to their own mission and ideology, many of which are religious based. The shared identity does not constrain individual members’ identities, brands and missions. The two most common identities were a service-oriented identity and a religious identity. These coalitions are called brokers or bridge builders, which serve as a bridge between the organizations.

Clark (2019) argues that the U.S. focus shifted to domestic trafficking because of Polaris Project’s work on the National Hotline, their rating of the state laws and efforts and their membership to Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). Activists did not focus on the causes of trafficking much, prompting Clark (2019) to conclude activists were still involved in diagnostic framing. Activists were still discussing who the victims were. Boys and men were rarely mentioned by activists because activists understood that funding follows the public narrative which centered around the sex trafficking of girls and women. Activists were hesitant to include boys and men in the trafficking discourses.

Educating the public is a major goal of antitrafficking activists. One way they do this is by discussing who victims and offenders are likely to be. Houston (2015) finds that activists within the U.S. state of Georgia engaged in frame transformation by challenging the child prostitute narrative, utilizing a universal child victim frame which moves away from victim-blaming ideology inherent in the child prostitute narrative. One respondent in the study stated that she explains the problem to the public as if it was ‘their own children’ for the specific goal of mobilizing them. The goal is to personalize the victim and create an emotional attachment. This framing implicitly utilizes a color-blind approach suggesting that trafficking could happen to anyone, no matter their situation or identities, which minimizes race, class and gender issues (Houston 2015). Yet this contradicts the data on who victims are. Houston (2015) argues these seemingly inclusive frames are problematic because they can reinforce inequality, mask injustices and undermine objectives of the movement.

Activists also educate the public about who the offenders are. Houston (2015) finds that activists frame buyers as “normal guys,” which has unintended consequences. This is intended to challenge the notion that buyers are “scary sexual predators” or pedophiles but suggest, rather, that buyers are everywhere and like “normal guys”, simply capitalizing on their privilege. Thus, activists differentiate buyers from pedophiles and frame them as upholding hegemonic masculine norms at the cost of trafficking victims. When law enforcement draws on this frame, it is used to justify why buyers should not be punished. Law enforcement reports that they do not want to drag the buyers’ family through the mud, which privileges some offenders and disadvantages others (Houston 2015). Buyers are often married, with families, and framed as “normal guys” who committed a ‘mistake,’ and whose lives could be ruined with this charge. Framing buyers as ‘normal guys’ leads to buyers being overlooked and not prioritized during investigations. Thus,

police interpret the normalcy of the buyers as a reason to not arrest, although the intent of the activists was to highlight the pervasiveness of the issue and encourage more arrests (Houston 2015).

Antitrafficking activists also face challenges in advocating for policy and legislative changes. For instance, the 2011 reauthorization of the TVPA was not passed before the expiration date, which gave rise to new problems and concerns for activists who depend upon the resources provided by the act to continue their work (Clark 2019). Activists responded to this delay utilizing motivational framing to galvanize supporters by having activists call their representatives, attend rallies, and contribute financially for victim services. At the same time activists launched a large public awareness campaign scolding politicians to not let the United States lose its leadership or moral authority in combating trafficking. During this time, Clark (2019) finds that activists were discussing both sex trafficking and labor trafficking more and continued to connect trafficking to the anti-slavery movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Activists argued that both were wrong and unacceptable, and that there are more trafficked people today than there were enslaved people during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Activists framing trafficking in this way increases the urgency and severity of the problem. At the same time, activists framed corporations as part of the solution, by asking businesses to deal with their supply chain. One ASMO, End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT) created a Code of Conduct for companies in tourism to recognize signs of human trafficking and to report it to the authorities. Delta was the first company to sign the code in 2011. Furthermore, activists pushed for more victim services, safe harbor laws, and new laws which allowed victims criminal records to be vacated or expunged.

Between 2013 and 2014, the antitrafficking movement enjoyed a more positive political environment, where organizations had more political opportunities (Clark 2019). Yet, activists' strategies were informed by the politicization of the TVPA in 2011. ATEST utilized the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation abolishing slavery to call for the reauthorization of the TVPA, arguing that the U.S. is a beacon of freedom and cannot ignore its leadership role in the fight against slavery. ATEST was able to push for the reauthorization of both the TVPA and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). At the same time, Clark (2019) found that the discourse in labor trafficking increased with continued discussions advocating for businesses to be transparent in their supply chain. ATEST grew in membership during this period and made recommendations to other areas of policy, such as the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and the Trafficking Prevention Act of 2014 (Clark 2019). They continue to make recommendations in support of services for human trafficking survivors. Part of the reason ATEST is so successful in its coalition building is that they speak with one voice against trafficking, but honor individual organizations' work and missions, despite ideological and tactical differences (Clark 2019). ATEST's structure also plays an important role in their success by having monthly face-to-face meetings and follow up phone meetings for increased collaboration. This is possible because ATEST funds member organizations travel; whereas other coalitions are not able to provide this kind of financial incentive. This allows social movement ideas to be diffused throughout the organizations and movement. Furthermore, ATEST is recognized as an expert organization in the field, and even when member organizations leave, they remain supportive of the coalition. Their success is also based on their ability to utilize contentious and private politics, increased use of technology, in-depth training, services to survivors, and partnerships (Clark 2019).

In this section, I examine how antitrafficking activists have worked to secure federal antitrafficking legislation, built a coalition despite ideological and strategic differences, and met the economic and political challenges in the early quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the next section, I examine evangelical activists within the antitrafficking movement and how evangelicalism has shaped the antitrafficking movement.

### **Evangelical Christianity in the Movement**

Religion is the center of public life in the United States for many, particularly around issues around sex, such as human trafficking (Zimmerman 2010). Religion also shapes public policy to a significant degree particularly around issues of sexual morality (Zimmerman 2010). In this section, I examine previous research on how evangelicals have shaped the antitrafficking movement. I begin with a brief history on how contemporary evangelicals have come to dominate the antitrafficking field, primarily through Bush-era policies and funding.

Prior to the 1990s, faith-based programs were distinct and separate from government (Bartkowski and Regis 2003). However, critics argued that faith-based programs offered several benefits that secular programs lacked, including “superior” moral values, which led to a reevaluation of public social services in the 1990s (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013; Bartkowski and Regis 2003) This reevaluation led to an increase in policies to include faith-based organizations in service provision. In 1996, then-President Bill Clinton signed the Charitable Choice provision in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act “making it illegal for state governments to discriminate against social services providers whose organizations have a religious mandate” (Bartkowski and Regis 2003: 01). Faith-based organizations could then compete with secular nonprofits and for-profits for limited government funding. Former President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13199 to establish the White



House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives on January 29, 2001, with the purpose of expanding opportunities for faith-based organizations (The American Presidency Project, 2019; Bernstein 2007; Bernstein 2010). As of 2001, faith-based organizations comprised approximately 14% of social services providers, spending between \$15 to \$20 billion annually (United States Department of Housing and Community Development 2001).

Former President George W. Bush also created the Anti-Prostitution Loyalty Oath, requiring antitrafficking service organizations to oppose prostitution in the 2003 addition to the TVPA (Zimmerman 2010). Bush stated that by creating the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives he wanted to welcome religious organizations in meeting social objectives (Zimmerman 2010). Bush felt that religious organizations were being discriminated against and expanded religious organizations' ability to spend federal dollars. The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives from 2002 to 2008 used the religious affiliation of applicants as a deciding factor in who received federal funding (Zimmerman 2010).

Consequently, government officials discriminated against secular groups because they were seen as "fringe" groups. The Deputy Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community from 2001 to 2003, David Kuo, admitted that money was given at more favorable rates to Christian organizations. In 2009, under the former President Barack Obama's administration, the office became the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, expanding partnerships to secular nonprofits to meet the needs of Americans and practice in ways consistent with the U.S. Constitution (The White House 2016b). In 2013, the Anti-Prostitution Loyalty Oath was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court as unconstitutional based on the first amendment's protections of speech (Devi 2013).

In sum, federal antitrafficking legislation and policies structurally prioritized conservative Christians in the fight against trafficking. Next, I discuss the dominant evangelical frames and strategies utilized to combat trafficking and prostitution, namely rescue strategies.

### ***Rescue Industry***

In this section, I discuss how antitrafficking efforts have led to a rescue industry of mostly privileged white women seeking to ‘save’ or ‘rescue’ their racially and economically marginalized sisters. I begin with a brief history of antitrafficking and anti-prostitution activism, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continuing today. I also connect the literature on the antitrafficking rescue industry to the literature on the white savior complex, as the antitrafficking rescue industry is racialized.

Prior to the 1840s, there were few penitentiaries for ‘fallen’ women. The first Anglican sisterhood was founded in 1845, and the number of new facilities grew quickly – from 400 in 1840 to 7,000 in 1893 (Agustín 2007). These institutions grew for two reasons: the number of former prostitutes needing institutional care, and Anglican sisters needing justification for the vulnerable institutions. Furthermore, Anglicans began embracing the concept of prevention, which increased the number of projects, workers, and diversification of homes, some of which were specialized. For example, the Female Mission to the Fallen sent out missionaries to approach sex workers, but also assisted those who attempted suicide and unmarried mothers and their babies.

English and French responses to prostitution included surveillance and incarceration of women in brothels (where sex was sold), hospitals (where venereal diseases were treated), ‘home’ (where women were rehabilitated) and prison (where wrongdoers were kept) so women could be provided a structure, which they were purportedly lacking (Agustín 2007). In 1822, a

Female Factory opened in Australia, which functioned as a workplace and prison. Women were divided into three classes according to their moral and immigration status. The incarceration of the women was meant to spare them from forced prostitution, yet the Female Factory operated a brothel and marriage market. Most women did not want to be there, and successfully escaped. Activists had difficulty keeping women locked up when they did not want to be there (Agustín 2007). The women were heavily controlled through strict rules, were prevented from communicating with some family and friends, and approved communication was supervised.

The justification for this treatment rested on the belief that incarceration would improve and transform working-class women into docile domestic servants and wives – not the independent, educated women activists were trying to become (Agustín 2007). Often their philanthropic work was opposed to the emancipation of women in lower social classes. Ironically, the jobs of middle-class women were to eliminate the jobs of working-class women's means of support. They felt that they could do a better job than police or judges due to their class, education, and gender. But, like the judges and police, activists assumed the women were wrongdoing, mistaken, misled, and deviant. Activists ignored and refused to accept social science research which found that women who sold sex welcomed the work and preferred the pay. Activists had incentive to refuse to believe the evidence, as they would be out of a job if they did not have people to rescue. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, activists had given sex workers a negative identity and failed on several fronts - to end sex work, end poverty, make women domestic, and preventing women from entering 'unfeminine' jobs (Agustín 2007). In the end, what activists purported to do was not the same as what they were accomplishing. Activists were successful at replacing the image of the prostitute as vile and disgusting with the image of them being a victim, in need of rescue.

Contemporary social justice has become a priority of contemporary evangelicals, who are influenced by their theology (Shih 2016). She argues that rescue vigilantism is entrepreneurial, where a market-based enterprise sells experience of abolitionism, such as purchasing “slave-free goods,” human trafficking reality tours, purchasing digital sex work surveillance technologies, and through antitrafficking work generally. Research finds that antitrafficking activists also focus on rescue strategies, which are connected to Bush-era conservative sexual politics (Soderland 2005). White evangelical women can engage in a sex-filled culture without losing their status as “good” women (Bernstein 2007). Bernstein (2007) goes on to argue that it provides an opportunity

to enter the world of the postmodern brothel while enduring no significant threat to one’s own moral status or social position. To listen to the repeated stories of bad men, big guns, and bolted chains that are deemed responsible for prostitutes’ captivity is to participate in an experience that is viscerally stirring and that seems utterly life threatening and consequential while never veering far from a seat of safety (P 140).

In doing so, activists contrast their own lived experiences with the marginalized women they aid and are reminded of their privilege.

Activists also frame rescue tactics as a character who fills in the gaps of law enforcement, pursuing justice outside the law (Shih 2016). These tactics have expanded across the globe and within the U.S. under the carceral feminism model (Bernstein 2012), where non-state actors serve the interests of the state (Shih 2016). Consequently, sex workers are criminalized, and resources are drawn away from labor trafficking, sex workers rights organizations, migrant labor organizations, housing, and other social service agencies (Shih 2016). When citizens engage in rescue projects, they utilize trafficking to justify civilian vigilantism and surveillance of working-class communities and immigrants. These practices are referred to as “Not in My

Backyard” syndrome, which describes activists’ abhorrence of ‘undesirable’ elements, such as immigration, low wage, informal work, and delinquent sexuality. Vigilante abolitionism is a prominent feature of neoliberal governance for several reasons: 1) it prioritizes policing objectives as social welfare engagements, which amount to regulation of the poor; and 2) human trafficking shelters have become sites of “prisonfare” and “workfare (Shih 2016; Wacquant 2012), in which vigilante rescuers are empowered citizen agents of police state order.

After the post-1970s era showcasing police corruption and brutality, community policing was introduced as a more democratic way of policing. Community policing utilized residents to problem solve community issues to reduce fear and crime prevention. However, research shows that these efforts were co-opted by state actors to serve carceral state objectives (Crawford 1997; Garland 2001). Early models of community policing intended to dissuade civilian vigilantism. However, activists perceive police as not able to effectively respond to trafficking, which has led to vigilante authority. Thus, the rise of vigilantism over the past decade has been due to framing social problems as outside law enforcement’s control. Another prime example of this is the post 9/11 Bush anti-terrorism campaign, “If you see something, say something,” which has led to increases in racial profiling of nonwhites, civilian patrol of undocumented migrants at the southern border, and formal search and seizure laws in several states.

Vigilante authority was further increased by the 2003 TVPRA introduction of the Campaign to Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking to identify trafficking victims, which focused on raising awareness of trafficking and encouraged citizens to identify trafficking (Shih 2016). Posters and pamphlets compel viewers to “Look Beneath the Surface,” and featured pictures of men and women of color, presumably immigrants, engaged in agricultural work and dishwashing. The state antitrafficking effort is matched by non-state actors, like antitrafficking

organizations (Shih 2016). For instance, Not for Sale launched a campaign advocating “backyard abolitionism,” offering a paid course to train citizens to be able to identify victims of trafficking. This course was available in six cities, and consisted of five courses: Strategic Investigation, Just Market Supply Chains, Active Faith Communities, Innovative Aftercare, and Effective Healthcare. The organization claims that these empower community members to engage in antitrafficking activism. Although they espouse humanitarian goals, they are also financially lucrative. Mengjun Li’s (2009) study of the academy found that they brought in \$20,000 in a two-day workshop, which comprised workshop fees, donations, and merchandise. This method of identification is inspired by trafficking cases who were identified by “good Samaritans.”

Although efforts started off as ‘good Samaritans’ happening to identify trafficking, they have shifted to actively seeking and finding trafficking (Shih 2016). Faith-based organizations have stepped into civilian rescue, engaging in new forms of social activism outside of the state, made possible by the networks of social and material capital which facilitate the organization of these activities. For instance, Shih (2016) finds in her participant-observation that one organization gathered young men for outreach sweeps twice a month for two years, during the evenings. Activists were required to attend a two-hour training, and half an hour debriefing before each sweep. The Directors told activists not to take outreach efforts lightly and to mention threats to safety, and criminal networks associated with trafficking. The two-hour training consists of going over safety issues and going over the partnership with law enforcement, which reinforces the seriousness of the issue. Activists were directed to take notes on suspicious activities outlined by the HHS toolkit, which were then turned over to law enforcement. Furthermore, the two Executive Directors would search sex ads to determine where they would conduct the sweep each week. In one case, one of the Executive Directors determined that a

massage parlor is a possible site of trafficking. He went into a massage parlor to determine if there is trafficking, where he meets and talks with a young woman, who tells him that she is 18. However, he does not believe the young woman. He reports that they have trouble communicating because she is of Asian descent and does not speak English well. So, he marks it as a site of potential trafficking. For him, her race, age, and industry are all indicators of trafficking.

On another occasion, Shih (2016) and a group of eight male college students surveilled a massage parlor, which was in a predominately white upper middle-class neighborhood in West Los Angeles. They recorded how many people entered the building, their race/ethnicity, gender, age and how long they stayed in the building. Another group observed the back of the building. The Directors went over the list of suspicious behaviors outlined in the U.S. Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking Toolkit for Identify Victims of Trafficking and explained that they are looking for women who may show signs of coercion as they are coming and going. Other activists reminded the group to look for underage girls as well. Outreach efforts were held for an hour, between 8p and 10pm when the sun had set so the surveillance was less obvious. But this made it harder to pick up on details about activities that were witnessed. For instance, they had a difficult time discerning demographic characteristics of people who came in and left. The white male activists modeled their behavior after those who accessed the field as potential consumers, so they did not arouse suspicion. After each shift activists would submit their notes, which were compiled into a report which identified over 400 different locations of potential sexual services in Los Angeles, which was presented to the LAPD in 2012. The report included a map of the suspected “brothels,” which was publicly available on the groups’ Facebook page. Shih (2016) was never able to verify the partnerships with police or Homeland Security. But

these partnerships did not matter for activists. The organization ended their operations because of collective fatigue – the leader stated that LAPD and Homeland Security never rescued a woman from their information because they said there was not enough evidence.

Shih (2016) also observed another organization as they attempted to engage in direct outreach in Korean and Latinx working-class immigrant communities. Every Thursday at 8pm, 15 to 20 women met at a coffee shop to map out outreach routes. The women then prayed before breaking up into smaller groups and setting out for an hour on civilian patrol on the streets. The outreach operation was called “Tread,” which the director stated meant “that whenever you step foot somewhere, you claim the land.” Smaller groups of 4 to 5 covered a 10-by-10 block radius “to claim justice and shine a light on these supposed places of darkness and human trafficking” (Shih 2016: 79). The activists did not speak Korean or Spanish. But they trained outreach volunteers to look for suspicious activity, which included homeless individuals or an attractive Asian or Latina woman walking alone. Afterwards, the group was responsible for filling out a form which documents 1) the route 2) unusual behaviors 3) suspicious establishments to keep an eye on in the future 4) individuals encountered and 5) where, to whom and how many pamphlets were given.

One night while an Asian woman was standing alone near a club, volunteers speculated that she was a victim of trafficking, based on her dress and appearance (Shih 2016). She was dressed in a tight fitting mini-skirt, high heels and a tight tank top. The activists discussed what to do next and decided to approach her to hand her pamphlets from the Department of Health and Human Services. Before they could hand her a brochure, a car pulled up and she got in. They were shocked and stimulated by the fact they had just witnessed an instance of what they perceived to be street prostitution. They did not notice that the back seat was filled with college-



aged men and women and the license plate and parking tag was from UCLA (Shih 2016). To others not engaged in antitrafficking activism this might have seemed like a normal event of college students celebrating the end of finals week. Shih (2016) suggested that it might be students and the director stated that she would “pray that was the case”, but that it was hard to know because of the “dark spirits that rule over this area” (P 80). Another activist added that she could still be a victim of exploitation. Details which did not suggest trafficking were ignored or discarded. Koreatown has already been painted as a site of trafficking in the group’s mandatory training. Notes were completed after each outing and given to LAPD every few months in the name of assisting law enforcement. She was unable to verify any collaborations with law enforcement or if LAPD used the materials. Shih (2016) further suggested that the group should work with local area social services and immigrant rights organizations. The director refuted the suggestion by stating that they did not have enough resources, did not know who to reach out to and that they did reach out to the police after each rescue opportunity, so the community knew what was happening. They did partner with one Korean church on a sermon focused on trafficking but failed to partner with larger, well-established, community-based organizations. The organization justified their response through LAPD, demonstrating that carceral institutions and approaches were favored over social services.

There are methodological challenges in researching trafficking, which has been defined as “hidden beneath the surface” so researchers can arrive at desired conclusions (Shih 2016). Researchers, activists and journalists can often imagine the most horrific possibilities related to trafficking. Trafficking is framed as being pervasive, but we cannot see it because of its illicit nature. Vigilante abolitionists are told to look for proxies - poverty, immigrant status, sexualized femininity and racial and ethnic differences. These then become the symptoms of trafficking

that allow activists to target an already-marginalized group in the name of victim identification. Throughout the two years of her research as participant-observer, Shih (2016) never encountered an actionable trafficking situation. For activists, failing to witness trafficking meant that they needed to conduct outreach more frequently and look deeper to uncover the realities which had been suggested through political and moral scripts.

In this section I have examined evangelical activism in the antitrafficking movement, arguing that Bush-era legislation and policies led to the explosion of evangelicals in the antitrafficking field. Antitrafficking activists have focused on “Not in My Backyard” projects, which surveil working-class and immigrant communities and carceral and rescue strategies. In the next section, I examine how these projects are connected to white savior complexes and ideologies.

### *White Savior Complex*

The antitrafficking rescue industry is one faction of a larger project referred to by scholars as white savior projects. According to Vera and Gordon (2003) a white savior is “the redeemer of the weak, the great leader who saves blacks from slavery or oppression, rescues people of color from poverty and disease, or leads Indians in battle for their dignity and survival” (P 3). They are characterized as charismatic leaders of a non-white or foreign population, with grandiose dreams. Murphy (2021) argues that this may be conscious or unconscious but is characterized as whites believing that they know what is best for other races or that they have the skills that people of color do not possess. Neela-Stock (2021) argues that white saviors are “good” whites who have authority and a duty to ‘save’ the world, particularly people of color, rather than following the lead of people of color. Vera and Gordon (2003) argue that white saviorism and ideology, along with negative images of people of color, are routinely spread

through film, such as television and movies. Messages about the racial divide are false and lead to Americans maintaining an apartheid mind-set and leads to all people believing that white people are superior.

White saviors also are characterized as providing individualistic solutions and seeing themselves as experts within their field (Neela-Stock 2021). Part of the problem with white saviors is the focus on individualistic solutions which attempt to meet the immediate needs of those they seek to save but do nothing to address the root causes (social, economic and political factors) and long-term consequences. Due to the individualistic approach, the solutions merely put a ‘band aid’ on the problem and do nothing to resolve the barriers that still exist. Daniella Taana Smith argues that “it’s essentially a form of blindness. It’s not going to allow you to perceive what is in front of you accurately. And if you can’t see if accurately, then you can’t be of really profound use in solving the problem” (quoted in Murphy 2021: 4). White saviors do not intend to be harmful, yet they also perpetuate white supremacy. Melina Abdullah, a co-founder of the Los Angeles Black Lives Matter organization, states “they’re often thrill-seekers who escalate things in ways that can be dangerous for Black people especially” (quoted in Murphy 2021: 4). White saviors center themselves in the struggle and do not recognize that people of color have their own solutions and plans to disrupt white supremacy. In doing so, white saviors are contrasting their own experience with someone more marginalized and reminding themselves of their own privilege. White saviorism occurs in several fields, such as the Peace Corp, religious mission trips and other humanitarian efforts and social justice causes, and white saviors are centered in television, film and media stories. Most research on white saviorism has focused on the representation within media, particularly film, and less so the actual practice of white saviorism.

White saviors have been represented in films as teachers, lawyers and within the sports industry (Schultz 2014). White saviors are present in *The Air up There* (1994), *Sunset Park* (1996), *Hardball* (2001), *The Blind Side* (2009), *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950), *Jim Thorpe, All American* (1951), *Cool Runnings* (1993), *The Hurricane* (1999), *Remember the Titans* (2000), *Radio* (2003), *Glory Road* (2006), *The Express* (2008), *42* (2013), *The Help* (2011), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) and many more. In film, the white savior is the primary antagonist, characterized as “the ideal white American self, which is constructed as powerful, brave, cordial, kind, firm, and generous: a natural born leader” (Schultz 2014: 15-16). Sports films incorporate racial differences but are strongly bound by conventions which privilege whites. For instance, *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950) suggests that Jackie’s success is dependent on whites, in this case the white boys who gave him his first baseball glove. White savior films advance utopian messages of patriotism and individuals, which, in turn, suggests that anyone can succeed. Schultz (2014) finds that white savior films were rarely produced in the 1960s and 1970s, films largely ignored black people in sport films in the 1980s and 1990s and white savior films in the 2000s convey the sins of the past, while absolving the sins of the present by ignoring present-day racism.

Schultz (2014) argues that while many in their audience believe that these films are accurate, they are actually fictions which ignore the enduring legacy of white supremacy and racial prejudice and discrimination in America. She finds that in historical sports films, such as *Glory Road* (2006), there are omissions and fabrications of historical events. For instance, *Glory Road* (2006) suggests that Haskins made racial changes to accept and start five black basketball players, but the college began accepting black athletes earlier than the period depicted in the film. Furthermore, other colleges and coaches had been accepting black players prior to the

events in the film. These historical inaccuracies lead the audience to believe Haskins is at the forefront of integrating basketball. Throughout the film, Haskins is compared to other ‘bad’ whites and racists in the film, which boasts his image of the white savior in the narrative. There are other historical inaccuracies in the film and racism is presented as individualized, isolated and surmountable, “rather than a larger systemic, ideological, and persistent problem” (Schultz 2014: 209).

In an analysis of white savior-type films in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, Hughey (2014) finds that there are seven key dimensions in white savior films: 1) white protagonists cross the color and culture line 2) white saviors are portrayed as morally or religiously righteous as they fight against injustice and save people of color 3) white saviors experience pain and suffering, which mimics the pain of Jesus 4) the white savior is juxtaposed against the bad white people and natives to make the white savior a more bearable character 5) meritocracy and hard work is associated with whiteness 6) whiteness is associated with civility and blackness with savagery, violence and emotionality and 7) many films claim they are based on a true story, which may cause the audience to forgo a critical examination of these stories. According to Hughey (2014) these stories reflect the current racial ideology during a time of tension where film producers attempt to create films which resonate with a racially diverse audience.

To avoid intervening as white saviors, Dr. Danielle Taana Smith, a professor in the department of African American studies at Syracuse, says that white people need to take a back seat and follow the lead of people of color (Murphy 2021). Whites, who want to engage in social justice activism, should not center themselves in the work and, instead, should follow the advice, expertise and requests of people who are affected by the problem. Whites should address the structural issues that feed many other social problems, like human trafficking. Finally, activists

should call white people out for their savior complex, but then also “call them back in” (Murphy 2021: 6).

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have reviewed research on victims, human trafficking, antitrafficking efforts and services, the relevant social movement literature, the rescue industry and white saviorism. I also discussed how evangelical Christianity influences antitrafficking work and services. In the next chapter, I discuss how I collect and analyze my data on three antitrafficking organizations in a large Midwestern city. I examine antitrafficking organizations by systematically collecting observational data, interview data and analyzing organizational texts.

This research adds to the literature on victim services for trafficking survivors, the antitrafficking social movement, the rescue industry and white saviorism. I argue that antitrafficking efforts are white savior projects. First, this research adds to the literature on victim services for trafficking survivors by utilizing systematic methodologies, an ‘outsider’s’ perspective and focused on understanding what services were like for survivors. Much of the research focuses on descriptions of services and evaluation from an organizational perspective, which neglects survivors completely. Understanding this major gap in the research may be the key to understanding why survivors leave antitrafficking services. Finally, if an organization is serving a specific population, such as trafficking survivors, it is imperative (and a social justice issue) that their perspective is included.

This research adds to the literature on the antitrafficking social movement broadly, as there is little research currently. Much of the research is focused on specific U.S. contexts, like Los Angeles (Shih 2016) and Georgia (Houston 2015). By conducting this research in a new context, researchers can begin to understand the similarities and differences of the antitrafficking

social movement across the country. Overtime researchers may be able to speak more broadly about the U.S. antitrafficking movement with more samples.

Finally, this research adds to the literature on the rescue industry and white saviorism. Research documents how the antitrafficking movement participates in a rescue industry to save their racially and economically marginalized sisters from sex trafficking but does not connect this theoretically to white saviorism. This omission prevents our understanding of how the antitrafficking movement is a racialized project, *why* activists are engaged in the movement, *how* they participate in antitrafficking work and the racialized and economic consequences of antitrafficking work. This work aims to connect these two theories and offer a more complete understanding of the antitrafficking social movement.

My research questions are as follows:

#### *Research Questions*

1. How do evangelical antitrafficking organizations frame the problem of trafficking, including the causes, who is to blame, and its consequences?
2. How do evangelical antitrafficking activists frame proposed solutions? And what strategies are utilized?
3. How do evangelical antitrafficking activists motivate potential activists to action?
4. How does evangelical Christianity influence services within the context of antitrafficking organizations?
5. What factors influence the success of evangelical antitrafficking organizations?
6. What are the future goals of the evangelical antitrafficking organizations?
7. What might the future of the antitrafficking social movement look like as a whole?

These questions are timely, and given the topic, in urgent need of further exploration. In the next chapter, I describe my research plan and methodology.



### CHAPTER III

#### DATA AND METHODS

Although research to date on the antitrafficking social movement in the United States is limited, the urgency of the problem of human trafficking indicates it is critical to examine the rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficking survivors into American society (or their own societies of origin). I use a multi-faceted analytical strategy, referred to as institutional ethnography (Campbell and Gregor 2004; Sprague 2016), utilizing observational and interview data, alongside content analysis, of three antitrafficking organizations. In this section, I will explain why an institutional ethnography is best suited to answer the research questions posed in the previous chapter. I will also discuss how the research sites were chosen, how I gained access and a step-by-step process of how I collected and analyzed the data.

Institutional ethnography is a methodological and analytical approach in which a researcher is embedded in an organization, or context, to systematically collect data, often using several techniques at once (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004; Sprague 2016). To address researcher bias, institutional ethnography attempts to explicitly state the researcher's position and potential biases so the reader can examine the credibility of the analysis from the presented data (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004; Sprague 2016). Institutional ethnography also attempts to critically examine and problematize conflicts that emerge within the relevant contexts.

Institutional ethnography is built upon standpoint theory, which argues that all knowledge is shaped by the position of the knower (Smith 2005; Sprague 2016). Standpoint epistemology

argues that knowledge is grounded in specific social and historical contexts, and there are four elements that create a standpoint: 1) social position 2) interests regarding social positions 3) access to diverse perspectives to make sense of that location and 4) social position in knowledge production (Sprague 2016). Standpoint theory sees race, class, and gender as intersecting social locations, which privilege some perspectives and disadvantage others. Standpoint attempts to address how power shapes our own research biases using four guidelines: 1) work from the standpoint of the marginalized 2) ground interpretations in interests and experiences 3) maintaining diverse sources of information and 4) produce knowledge that empowers the marginalized (Sprague 2016). Researchers should adopt self-critical lenses as they cross boundaries into others' lives. Sprague (2016) argues that the key to crossing boundaries and bridging differences is to be empathetic, while also retaining one's identity and priorities as a researcher.

Standpoint theorists argue that scholars should begin by understanding the experiences of the marginalized as a way of seeing the cultural assumptions embedded in dominant or scholarly perspectives. Domination and social power play out in the daily practices, struggles and constraints of the marginalized. Of course, researchers are not to assume a marginalized perspective; instead, researchers are responsible for analyzing the processes that create marginalized circumstances. It is important to note that those who experience marginalization may have much less interest in continuing those forms of social organization that place them at disadvantage (Sprague 2016). In sum, the perspective of marginalized persons will serve to constructively critique these institutions and find ways to dismantle systems which marginalize some and privilege others.

Positivist approaches aim to eliminate scientists' biases and uncover the 'objective' truth. In contrast to positivism and more traditional research approaches, standpoint epistemology argues the partiality of all knowledge (Sprague 2016). For standpoint theorists, potential biases are common in research, which may appear in the questions researchers ask and value, the analytical frames they utilize, and the way results are communicated. Thus, in using standpoint theory, researchers address biases by explicitly reflecting and discussing their positionality and potential biases for the reader to evaluate. Standpoint theorists aim to understand the issue from all perspectives, including the inconsistencies between hegemonic, scholarly and mainstream perspectives versus the perspectives of people living within the context under study. Gaining multiple perspectives allows a researcher to gain the most knowledge (Sprague 2016).

Institutional ethnographers are interested in the conditions in which people are living but use the institution as its focus (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004). This research will examine organizations as a sample of the institution of the antitrafficking field. Data collection, however, is more than just individual perspectives. Outside forces affect people, events, and the forms in which people organize, and it is the goal of institutional ethnography to understand these outside forces. For instance, institutional ethnographers would need to examine how religion influences victim services. To capture these outside forces, data collection will have two levels of data: entry-level data and second-level data (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004). Entry-level data is about the setting, such as the individuals in interaction and their experiences. For example, entry-level data would consist of the interactions between service providers and victims at a trafficking shelter. In institutional ethnography, the participants are thought of as the experts that researchers are learning from (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004). Second-level data is data beyond people's local experiences. Further research must be done to

extrapolate this second-level data, organizational details of how the setting works and field research on the broader setting, including the organizational documents. For instance, second-level data will reveal how religion and government policies influence antitrafficking organizations. The goal is to reveal how everyday life is organized for people it is intended to serve at an antitrafficking organization (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004).

### **Data**

In conducting an institutional ethnography on three antitrafficking organizations, I collected observational data, semi-structured interviews with antitrafficking activists and survivors, and organizational documents, including brochures, training manuals, and self-presented information on the Internet, such as organizational websites and social media accounts. I studied three antitrafficking evangelical organizations in a large Midwestern city. In 2017, there were 5,238,541 residents in the county; 51.5% are women; 56.6% white, 25.1% Hispanic (of any race), 23.7% black, 9.9% ‘other’ race, 7% Asian, 2.5% two or more races, and 0.3% indigenous (United States Census Bureau 2022a). Out of all residents, 80% are 16 years and over; 65.3% of whom are employed. There is an unemployment rate of 7.4%, 88.9% have health insurance, and \$59,426 is the median household income (United States Census Bureau 2022b). Of the 1,956,561 households, 43.2% make less than \$50,000. Of the 1,956,561 households, 60.5% are living in families, 26.3% of whom have children under 18 in the house income; 41.7% are married couples, 17.3% have children under 18; 4.9% are men, 2.0% have children; 14.5% are women, 7% with children (United States Census Bureau 2022c). Of the 1,956,561 households, 39.5% are not living with families, 32.6% live alone. Of the total population, 3,578,782 are 25 years old or over, 7% have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, 6.8% have some high school but did not graduate; 23.5% have high school diploma (or equivalent); 19% have some college; 6.5% have an

associate degree; 22.3% have a bachelor's degree; and 14.9% have a graduate or professional degree. There are a total of 5,334,847 housing units in the county, with a median cost of \$179,700; 90.3% of which are occupied; and 66.1% are owner occupied (United States Census Bureau 2022d). Median rent in the county is \$952. This city is considered a trafficking 'hub', which suggests that there will be a high number of trafficking victims and corresponding services (Polaris Project 2016; Goh 2014<sup>1</sup>). The city has two international airports and several interstates.

In 2016, there were a total of eight total antitrafficking organizations in the area listed on the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC), and I initially selected five organizations as potential research sites from (NHTRC 2014). NHTRC is the organization referred by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for victims seeking assistance escaping a trafficking situation (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2016b). I chose these five organizations because they offered a more holistic list of services, such as housing and counseling because I specifically wanted to examine access to trafficking services for the most marginalized, who have little to no financial, family, or social support. Furthermore, antitrafficking organizations that offer 24-hour services typically have more variety in the types of services they offer and will have several spaces for victims to receive these services. However, one organization was not big enough to accept a volunteer and a second would not accept a non-Christian volunteer. I did attempt to overcome this resistance by stating that I grew up in a Christian environment. However, to be a member of the organization, volunteers had to be active members of a church. The remaining three organizations, all evangelical, met my selection criteria and were open to non-Christian volunteers. All three organizations are registered 501(c)(3) charitable organizations (Internal Revenue Service 2022). 501(c)(3) are tax-exempt organizations which are prevented from making a profit for any individual or shareholder, participating in campaign

activity for political candidates, and lobbying activities. Below I describe the selected organizations in detail, the names of the organizations, activists, programs, and places have been changed to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

### **Break the Cycle**

Break the Cycle is a program run by Freedom Ministry, a large organization accepting millions of dollars in contributions, donations, grants, sales to the public, and earnings on investments to support a larger vision, mission, and goals. According to their website, the Freedom Ministry is a religious organization whose mission is

To feed, to clothe, to comfort, to care. To rebuild broken homes and broken lives. By walking with the addicted, we can lead them to recovery. In fighting hunger and poverty, we can feed and nurture the spirit. And, in living and sharing the Christian Gospel by meeting tangible needs, we give the world a lasting display of the love behind our beliefs.

Overall, Freedom Ministry's message is self-described as an evangelical Christian message, operating in 7,546 centers across the United States offering food distribution, disaster relief, rehabilitation centers, services for trafficking victims, and programs for children. One of Freedom Ministry's programs is Break the Cycle.

Break the Cycle works directly with trafficked persons leaving exploitative situations, regardless of their age, race, gender, citizenship status or sexual orientation. Break the Cycle works with victims to identify their needs and obtain access to resources, which may include housing, clothing, toiletries, identifying documentation, food, legal assistance, medical care, psychological care, education, and assistance in seeking employment. Furthermore, Break the Cycle works with law enforcement, prosecutors, immigration attorneys, medical providers, family members, government officials, and social service providers if victims want and accept assistance. According to their website, Break the Cycle offers services by engaging in outreach

and building relationships with suspected trafficking victims; operating a 24-hour hotline for crises; ongoing case management and support, service referrals, training community service providers, and raising community awareness on trafficking. Break the Cycle values are stated as being based on human rights, in which all people deserve to be free from exploitation; committed to fighting against social injustice; build trusting and safe relationships; motivated by compassion; and training the community in identification.

## **Hope**

Hope is a local and relatively new organization, created in 2012, with the goal of educating the public on trafficking. They are an overtly Christian organization, with the goal to ‘reclaim’ the lives of children who have been sexually exploited. According to their website, sexual exploitation is a cycle of abuse, and their solution is to provide healing to girls and young women. They offer a group home that serves trafficking survivors, girls between the ages of 10 and 17. For a significant portion of my time in the field, it was the only home in the state that offered trafficking specific services to minor girls. They opened an adult transitional house for adult women, aged 18 to 25, in 2020 soon after I left the field. Both programs state that they are trauma-informed and provide therapeutic environments to address the special needs of sex trafficking survivors. They provide a wide range of services including housing, food, clothing, education, medical care, mental health care, training in life skills, mentorship, transportation, exercise and emotional support. They also offer education and awareness antitrafficking programming to community members, including students in elementary school through college. They have several fundraising events each year, including a Gala, an art show, a 5k race, a dance lesson and a ‘party with a purpose.’ This party is a newer fundraiser and asks potential members to host a party and use the hosts’ network to share information about Hope.

## **The Church Ladies**

The Church Ladies is a faith-based non-profit with no paid staff, only volunteers. The Church Ladies does not fundraise but relies on donations from individuals and church partners. They also operate a Bridal Boutique, which helps fund the organization. The Bridal Boutique collects used wedding dresses and accessories, which are then sold at a discounted rate to the public. The Church Ladies also conducts training and awareness events on sex trafficking and sexual exploitation with churches, non-profits, law enforcement and law makers. They operate a call center where volunteers call women who advertise online for prostitution offering prayer, resources and a “listening ear.” They reach out to women in strip clubs and Asian-themed massage parlors with the goal of building relationships with women and giving them options to leave the sex industry. They also provide resources to women who are transitioning out of the industry, such as groceries, transportation, counseling, legal advocacy and job readiness training.

## **Privilege in the Field**

Activist leaders are more privileged economically; many are able to rely on their husbands for the majority of the household income and volunteer or take a small income (in comparison to what they would be paid in the private industry for their skills). They are racially and economically privileged enough to make these choices. Activist leadership also have a higher degree of education. Leadership is 100% women, 86% white, an average age of 48, 83% are married, 100% are Christian and 29% with a bachelor’s degree and 71% with completed graduate work. Hope and Church Ladies leadership also have deep relationships within the church, where they are perceived to be experts in antitrafficking, which gives them privileges and access to additional resources and allows them to recruit potential antitrafficking activists. Although Hope and Church Ladies leadership encourage feedback and suggestions to improve



their organization, they ultimately make decisions about new projects and organizational practices. Break the Cycle is less able to do this due to the structure of the program operating under Freedom Ministry. Leaders have a reputation as being experts in the field of trafficking, and are able to get access to politicians, law enforcement and others for meetings and organizing in their antitrafficking efforts. As such, they also have a considerable amount of power within their church community as respected antitrafficking experts. There are no survivors of trafficking in leadership although some leaders may have experienced other forms of trauma and abuse. Break the Cycle is governed by a national organization and the program manager has less power in overseeing the program.

Programmatic leadership wins when there are arguments with survivors and other activists over issues. For instance, when survivors complain about the rules being too strict, whether they can or cannot go on certain outings, take pictures with their friends, communicate with others, etc., their perspectives are not integrated into organizational policy. Leadership has strict policies and procedures which they do not budge from when survivors complain. Another example: Christian services are offered to survivors, but other religious services are not – thus, they are able to determine what options survivors have to choose from. Program participants are also not believed if they state that they are not a victim of trafficking and sold sex on their own.

Evangelical activists benefit from antitrafficking by continuing to encourage the traditional family structure, which allows evangelical women to depend on their husbands economically. In this family structure, women are experts in the home domain, which includes cooking, cleaning and childcare. This reaffirms their belief that women are innately more nurturing than men and supports their Christian understanding of gender and the gendered hierarchy.

Volunteers and paid activists, who are not leadership, tend to also be privileged economically and racially. They tend to be part of the middle-class, although some are working-class. Activists are 80% women, 75% white, an average age of 41, 50% married, 80% Christian, and 10% have high school degrees, 5% have associates degrees, 25% have earned bachelor's degrees, and 60% have completed some graduate-level work or earned a graduate degree. They do make day-to-day decisions with survivors, such as whether an outing is appropriate for survivors, but organizational decisions are left up to leadership. Activists have the power and privilege to utilize the state to enforce trafficking laws. Activists will call the police to report sex trafficking of minors and violence against women. They also oversee survivors and try to guide them in living a Christian life. There is one survivor of trafficking who is a member of the activist team.

Survivors are racially and economically disadvantaged. Survivors are 100% women, 33% white, an average age of 30, 8% married, 92% Christian, and 25% have not finished high school or earned a GED, 17% have finished their GED, and 58% have some college experience. Many of the survivors work in the service industry in fast food, housekeeping, home health, security, and several do not work. Survivors are voluntarily in these programs and may leave if they choose. All three programs incentivize survivors by requiring they attend/utilize services for treats/privileges of those services. There are also rules in which a survivor may be dismissed from the program such as violent behavior and for Church Ladies participants who sell sex. In Hope's housing program, the minor girls are not allowed to leave, have restrictions on who they can contact and when, have restricted internet usage, and have restricted outings. Survivors are also discouraged from wearing revealing clothing and expressing their sexuality. There are no survivors in leadership, and they often do not 'win' arguments about issues. Activists believe

survivors are developmentally delayed and ‘like teenagers.’ Thus, they do not have a reputation of power; instead, activists regard them as individuals who do not know what is best for themselves.

Regarding my own power and privilege, I am white woman, pansexual, atheist, single, 40 years old, working-class and pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology. Due to my own privilege, namely my education, I was able to help survivors with their resumes, look for jobs and apply for jobs. I also worked in the service industry throughout my education and was able to work with (some) survivors and teach them cooking skills. My education also allowed me to have privilege among activists, who regard education as important and were aware that I was a Ph.D. student. Regarding religion, I did not have the same power among other activists, who privilege Christian knowledge and understandings. There were several times during conversations when my own understanding of situations was noticed by activists and noted as different. For instance, during a conversation I noted an incident as a coincidence, in which an activist responded that it was not a coincidence, but God’s work. Although activists prayed, spoke and used Christian symbols throughout my time in the field, I did not, which prompted activists to see me as an outsider. I did match activists in power in relation to race, education, age, and gender.

Although my income and wealth are lower than many activists, I was able to pass without notice on most occasions. One exception was Hope’s 2018 Gala, in which activists wore gowns to the banquet and I did not and felt a bit underdressed. One activist spent several hundred dollars to rent her gown, something I was not able to afford. However, throughout most of my time in the field, there were commonalities and friendships developed between activists and myself. I was not in a position to make any decisions within the organizations and when I made suggestions, the suggestions were not accepted. For instance, Sandy (the Director of Hope),

asked for suggestions on musical talent for the Gala. I suggested a famous musician from the city who is a young, black, Christian rapper, well-regarded with young people and heavily involved in giving back to the community. Activists, however, decided to have another Christian musician for the Gala. Most of my interactions with staff were friendly and I focused on interacting with them in ways in order to get to know them, the work they do and what drives them to the work.

### **Research Plan**

I applied to volunteer positions in each of the organizations at the end of 2016. During my interviews with leadership, I explained I was interested in collecting data, explained the study and confidentiality and gained consent to conduct research. I also sent organizational leaders the consent form and information about the study. I began collecting ethnographic data in January of 2017. For the first couple of months, I developed a rapport with activists and leaders, taking observational notes at individual and group meetings, training, educational events, fundraisers, informal conversations with activists and phone conversations. For many of the fundraisers I volunteered my time, working alongside volunteer activists, which I utilized to develop a rapport with other activists. To develop a rapport with activists I often would strike up a conversation at meetings or when I would work alongside them asking them questions about themselves, like what kind of work they did and how long they had worked for the organization. I also began collecting organizational documents. During educational events, I was able to take notes. During several staff meetings I volunteered to be the note-taker and was permitted to keep copies of those notes for this study. Otherwise, I typed up more general field notes after each research site visit. Notes about my external experiences were written in chronological order, separate from my internal experiences (my thoughts, perceptions, and reactions) in order to keep track of my own potential biases. Site visits varied based upon the organization, events planned and other

situational factors. I visited Break the Cycle once every other week for approximately a year and Hope approximately once a month. I visited with the Church Ladies leadership approximately once every month initially, but there were a few educational events (and other types of events) that I attended also. I often spoke to them on the phone and completed work for them from home. After 5 months in June 2017, I then began to ask activists for interviews, followed by survivors. Within a month, I also asked the leaders to distribute an interview recruitment letter to volunteers. In September 2018, I asked leaders to recruit survivors for interviews, and I would pay the survivors \$50 per interview. Survivors who were interested then could contact me. During these phone interviews with survivors, I went over consent and confidentiality. I feel that weaknesses of the interviews with survivors was because I was not able to develop as much of a rapport with them, which I believe led them to give shorter responses. One of the biggest challenges in this study was access. I was not able to collect data in the drop-in center and was unable to work with survivors in the other two organizations; this severely limited the amount of data I was able to collect. The lack of rapport with survivors impacted my interviews. I maintain that if I could have developed a rapport with survivors before I conducted interviews with them, I may have received more information. I interviewed 38 participants in total, 26 activists and 12 survivors. As I was nearing the end of my data collection period, approximately two and half years into being in the field, I began tapering off my volunteer shifts to minimize any abrupt changes. Table 1 provides an overview of the data collected.

Table 1 Summary of data by data type

	In-depth Interviews*			Observation	Documents	Inbox	Website	Social Media
	Paid Staff	Volunteers	Survivors	(hrs)	(in pages)	Emails		
HOPE	6	10	1	55.5	50	1304	Yes	FB, Twitter, Instagram
Ladies	0	7	10	15.3	6.35	162	Yes	FB; FB and Instagram for Bridal Boutique
Break the Cycle	2	1	1	263.75**	233	269	Yes	FB, Instagram, Twitter ran by parent org
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>334.55</b>	<b>289.35</b>	<b>1735</b>		

\* Some interview participants worked with more than one organization

\* 80.5 hrs agreed not to take notes, 151.5 hr on hotline (not consistently recording data)

The Church Ladies: 7 volunteers, 88% women; 88% Christian; 88% white; avg age is 37.5;

HOPE: 16 staff & volunteers: 94% women, 94% Christian; 75% white, and avg age is 44

Break the Cycle: 3 staff and volunteers: 100% women; 66% Christian; 66% white, avg age is 28.5

During my fieldwork, I conducted face-to-face qualitative interviews with eight staff members and 18 volunteers, including two over video chat. Phone interviews were conducted with all 12 survivors and two volunteers. I interviewed 38 participants in total, including staff, volunteers and survivors. A few of the participants worked for more than one organization. In these interviews, I asked participants differences between the organizations, their duties and perceptions of the organizations. Participants were chosen selectively to represent differing positions, levels, and roles. To diversify my sample, I also attempted to select men and racial/ethnic minorities. Qualitative interviews allowed me to develop a detailed description of the setting and people, learn how events are interpreted and integrate multiple perspectives (Weiss 1994). With antitrafficking staff and volunteers, I interviewed people at different levels within the work structure to gain multiple perspectives on how the organization works on a day-to-day basis and to understand how activists see their role in providing services to trafficking victims. I asked activists to describe how they came to learn about trafficking and became involved in antitrafficking efforts, describing important moments along the way (Weiss 1994). I asked about their perspectives of trafficking and law enforcement, their beliefs on gender, sexuality, religion, abortion, sex education, social inequality and other contentious topics that are

related to trafficking. Other topics discussed with the participants occurred while conducting observations and interviews, such as parental concern of children being trafficked, marriage, sexual assault, sexual harassment and sex work.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim so that I could access direct quotations and to ensure accurate data analysis (Weiss 1994). During the interviews, I took notes on general impressions and nonverbal cues, placed into separate columns but edited into the same document with respondents' comments. On average interviews lasted one hour and seven minutes. The longest interview was two hours and 29 minutes, and the shortest was 26 minutes. Interviews with survivors tended to be shorter than interviews with volunteers and staff. My goal of the interviews was to learn about antitrafficking efforts, how volunteers and staff came to the movement, how survivors experience the volunteers, staff, and organizations and examine the services offered. I asked questions to extend the details of their experience, fill in missing details, identify actors in their stories and discuss their perceptions of their experiences within the organization (Weiss 1994). After the interviews, I would ask the respondent to answer demographic information, such as race, education/occupation and gender. See Table 2.

Table 2 Interviews of staff, volunteers, and survivor

Pseudonym	Organization	Role	Occupation	Gender	Race/ ethnicity	Age	Marital Status	Religion	Education
Michelle	The Church Ladies	Volunteer	Director	W	White	50	Married	Christian	Bachelors in Engineering
Nyla	The Church Ladies	Volunteer	Chapter Leader, Awareness Leader, Safe House Director	W	White	37	Married	Christian	Masters in Education
Ivy	The Church Ladies	Volunteer	Co-founder, Wednesday Prayer Team Leader, Writing a novel	W	White	32	Married	Christian	H.S.
Lisa	The Church Ladies	Volunteer	Addictions & Trauma therapist	W	White	57	Married	Christian	Grad work
Kevin	The Church Ladies	Volunteer	Med student	M	Indian American	27	Dating	Hindu	Med Student
Stacy	The Church Ladies & Hope	Volunteer	Therapist	W	White	35	Divorced	Christian	PhD. in Health psychology
Stella	The Church Ladies & Safe Space	Volunteer	Landscape architect, owns business	W	White	62	Married	Christian	Bachelors
									88% W 88% White 37.5 75% Married 88% Christian 85% Bachelors or Above
Pretty	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Security guard, cook/clean	W	White	25	Cohabiting	Not religious; believes in higher power	Some college
Roxy	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Home health, UPS	W	Black	25	Single	Christian	Some college
Mandy	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Housekeeping, construction, house remodeling	W	White	32	Single	Christian	11th grade
Peyton	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Warehouse work	W	Hispanic	35	Single	Christian	Some college
Suzy	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Pizza, serving, factories	W	Mixed, Black & White	26	Single	Christian, Baptist	Some college
Nory	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Past: CNA, retail	W	White	30	Single	Christian	College student
Tazz	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Cashier at a grocery store; soon to be promoted to manager	W	Hispanic	46	Married	Christian	GED
TJ	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Past: dog care & fast food	W	White	37	Engaged	Christian	GED
Shay	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Fast food FT	W	African American	30	Dating	Christian	College student, major business management
Stacee	The Church Ladies	Survivor	Insurance	W	Black	28	Engaged	Christian	Some college
									100% W 40% White 31.4 10% Married 90% Christian 0% Bachelors or Above



Table 2 (continued)

Sandy	Hope	Paid Staff	Director	W	Chinese American	47	Married	Christian	Psy.D
Mary	Hope	Paid Staff	FT Director of Development	W	White	51	Married	Christian	Grad work
Kerry	Hope	Paid Staff	CPA	W	White	55	Divorced	Christian	Bachelors, Working on Master's in Theology and Social Justice
Betty	Hope	Paid Staff	Director of Community Engagement	W	White	45	Married	Christian	Bachelors in Business
Varita	Hope	Paid Staff	House counselor	W	African American	32	Single	Christian	Masters in Public Policy & Admin; Bachelors in Radio & TV
Lucee	Hope & Break the Cycle	PT Paid staff	Special Ed Coordinator, Part-time Program Assistant	W	White	29	In a Relationship	Christian	Bachelors in Sociology
Bruce	Hope	Volunteer	Security Guard for home	M	Asian	40	Single	Christian, practices some Catholicism	Associates
Dana	Hope & The Church Ladies	Volunteer	Volunteer	W	White	46	Married	Christian, Catholic	Bachelors
Mimi	Hope	Volunteer	Volunteer	W	White	46	Married	Christian	M.B.A.
Rachel	Hope & The Church Ladies	Volunteer	Writer	W	White	51	Married	Christian	Masters in Education
Maria	Hope	Volunteer	Grocery industry	W	White	58	Divorced	Christian	High School, and Real Estate school
Chris	Hope	Volunteer	Stock Trader	M	White	51	Married	Christian	Bachelors
John	Hope	Volunteer	Industrial Sales	M	White	48	Married	Christian	Masters in Education
Chatche	Hope	Volunteer	Middle school math teacher; Zumba teacher	W	White	46	Married	Christian	Some grad school
Arna	Hope	Volunteer	Medical Device Sales	W	White	36	In a relationship	Christian	Bachelors in Business
Layla	Hope	Volunteer	Medical Student	W	Chinese American	25	Single	None	Med Student
				94% W	75% White	44	56% Married	94% Christian	88% Bachelors or Above
Cupcake	Hope	Survivor	None	W	American	22	Relationship	Christian	finishing H.S. Diploma
				100% W	0% White	22	0% Married	100% Christian	0% Bachelors or Above
Lucy	Break the Cycle	Paid staff	Manager	W	White	28	Cohabiting	Agnostic, raised Catholic	M.S.W
Molly	Break the Cycle	Paid Staff	Anti-trafficking Specialist	W	White	.	Married	Christian	M.S.W.
Leslie	Break the Cycle	Volunteer	Mental Health Research at a University	W	Mexican	29	Cohabiting	Catholic, non-practicing	M.A. in Sociology
				100% W	66% White	28.5	33% Married	66% Christian	100% Bachelors or Above
Alexandria	Break the Cycle	Survivor	None	W	Hispanic	24	Single	Christian, non-practicing	10th grade
				100% W	0% White	24	0% Married	100% Christian	0% Bachelors or Above
Staff and Volunteer Percentages				85% W	77% White	42.5	65% Married	88% Christian	88% Bachelors or Above
Survivor Percentages				100% W	33% White	30	8% Married	92% Christian	0% Bachelors or Above

Institutional ethnographers also study texts, as texts shape and organize participants' activities (Sprague 2016). Organizational texts are analyzed for the way they instruct people's behavior. For example, policies and procedures are often written in organizational documents, such as employee handbooks. I analyzed organizational websites, social media, brochures, fundraising materials, employee handbooks, and other organizational materials. Interviews were transcribed verbatim into a password-protected computer with identifying markers removed. Recordings were stored in a different location on the password-protected computer.

### **Analysis**

My analysis plan focused on looking for ways to explain the way the setting worked. To do this, investigators are to immerse themselves into a context, theoretically without preconceptions. After significant time in the field, researchers will conduct interviews and read and reread transcripts (Sprague 2016). After a period of intense observation, patterns begin to emerge in the data. I began analyzing the data utilizing an issue-focused approach (Weiss 1994). Issue-focused approaches to data analysis concern itself with issues, events, and processes. I focused mostly on issues and processes in trafficking services. In utilizing standpoint theory (Sprague 2016), I focused on issues which problematize the context, and selected diverse research participants to maximize diverse perspectives within the context. Furthermore, to minimize my own research biases, I attempted to work from the standpoint of the marginalized (Sprague 2016). For example, I often found myself imagining the experiences and perspectives of non-Christians, racial/ethnic minorities, the poor, and LGBTQ + survivors within these organizations. As an atheist, working class, pansexual, white woman, imagining the experiences of the poor, LGBTQ+ and non-Christians were likely more accurate than imagining the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities. To compensate, I interviewed many survivors who

are racial minorities. I grounded my interpretation in interests and experiences (Sprague 2016) by ensuring that I interview those at multiple levels and positions within the antitrafficking field. I maintained diverse sources of information (Sprague 2016) by including diverse literature regarding antitrafficking work and including the perspectives of those at multiple levels and positions within the antitrafficking field. Finally, my aim was to produce knowledge that empowers the marginalized (Sprague 2016) by taking a more critical position of antitrafficking work, with the hopes of creating better spaces for survivors and recommending survivor-led services.

In utilizing institutional ethnography methods, I examined the conditions in which people are living, focusing on the institution of antitrafficking organizations (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004). I also consider larger societal forces which affect people, events, and the forms of organization. As described above, to capture these outside forces I collected two levels of data, entry-level and second level (Smith 2005; Campbell and Gregor 2004). For example, I consider how government funding and legislation affects the organizations.

I began by coding the data into broad topics based on index codes (Deterding and Waters 2021). For example, I developed index code headings for interview questions, religion, race, gender, and pornography. Once index codes were developed, my reading was more focused, and index codes would become more specific, such as religious perspectives of gender. I then compiled a list of concepts and relationships between them that appear in multiple cases and described the relationships in thematic memos. I began a list of analytic codes and their definitions as ideas develop during indexing. I then apply analytic codes. Finally, I utilize a flexible coding process to ensure that the concepts and relationships have a strong basis in the data.

I utilized MAXQDA, a qualitative analysis program for coding and organization. I began by integrating what I have learned in a coherent and organized fashion, summarizing what the data says, and my interpretations (Weiss 1994). I also discussed any exceptions in my analysis. Finally, I organized the findings into an overarching narrative, including all relevant analysis, making general conclusions at the very end of the study.

In this chapter, I described the research process in selecting my sample, the research methods and analysis plan I utilize. This research resulted in deep, rich data, which cannot be generalized to the general population of antitrafficking organizations or activists. In the next chapter, I examine the history of the antitrafficking social movement in the United States, with a specific focus on the movement within the local context.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HISTORY OF THE ANTITRAFFICKING MOVEMENT

With an estimated 28 million victims of trafficking worldwide (Polaris Project 2022c), antitrafficking organizations are needed to provide services for survivors. Needs for survivors of trafficking include crisis intervention; safety planning; sexual education and contraception; food, hygiene, and clothing; education; mental health services; emergency, long term, and transitional housing; employment and vocational training; assistance with applying for welfare benefits; assistance with other governmental bureaucracies and processes; family reunification; family counseling; legal advocacy; alcohol and substance abuse treatment; interpretation for non-English language speakers; and medical, dental and vision services (Gibbs et al. 2015). Although not all antitrafficking organizations are religious entities, many are. National numbers of secular versus religious antitrafficking organizations are unavailable.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide context and document the development of the antitrafficking movement, both nationally and locally. The three organizations included in this research are faith-based. There were two important developments in the United States which led to the creation of contemporary faith-based, antitrafficking organizations: The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, and the creation of two faith-based initiatives which expanded national funding opportunities. For example, President George W. Bush created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the Anti-Prostitution Loyalty Oath (Zimmerman 2010) These two developments led to the creation of faith-based

antitrafficking organizations. This chapter will examine the history of antitrafficking legislation and activism at the federal and local level.

### **Data**

Most of this chapter contains research documenting the antitrafficking social movement. However, I do utilize ethnographic notes, interview data and organizational documents. I primarily utilize ethnographic notes from a conference on human trafficking in which all three organizations were represented. I also analyze organizational documents, primarily the social media accounts of Hope and Church Ladies.

### **Emergence, Growth and History of the Antitrafficking Movement**

Miller and Wasileski (2011) argue that human trafficking is not a new crime or phenomenon. Antitrafficking activism began to take shape in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Antitrafficking concern and activism has grown and waned since its inception. How activists have thought about and framed trafficking has been influenced by cultural factors, including conservative Christian ideology. In this section I discuss the history on antitrafficking activism nationally and locally.

During the colonial period, sex work was legal, and the public viewed sex work as essential for European colonizers, when there were very few women in society (Comerford 2022). In other words, the public saw sex work as essential to meet the sexual needs of early European colonizers. As more women and children migrated to the Americas, sex work thrived as a source of economic mobility, particularly for poor women, indentured servants, and immigrants

Religious and social reformers began making efforts to address the issue of neglected, abandoned and delinquent youth (Bates and Swan 2019). In the 1820s, almshouses (poor farms),

asylums, farm schools, labor schools and houses of refuge were created. Houses of refuge housed poor and delinquent children to steer them away from pursuing crime. They were treated the same and focused on teaching a work ethic and individual responsibility. Often parents were characterized as lazy, incompetent, or otherwise deficient. Often parents were unable to have their children removed from these institutions, due to the legal justification of *parens patrias*, in which the state should serve as a substitute parent in cases where children are neglected, abused, or cannot control their behavior. They were required to attend moral and religious training, along with work. Some boys would often make goods to be sold to help run the institution, and others were sent to work outside the institution. The only work that was acceptable for girls was a maid. Often, children were abused, and there was a lack of adequate food and water. Discrimination and unfair treatment were common for children of color, as they were seen as inferior. Girls were not as frequently sent to houses of refuge, but when they did, they were sent for engaging in sex and other behaviors that are ignored in boys. Working-class, poor, and immigrant girls were thought to be more delinquent. Girls were segregated within houses of refuge, until ones opened that were just for girls.

In the late 1800s the conception of adolescence began to take hold, as an extended period of childhood (Bates and Swan 2019). People began to see children as people needing protection. Yet, women and children were considered property of men, and physical punishment was thought to be appropriate for perceived disobedience (Diagle and Muftic 2019). The first society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Children was formed after an 1875 case of child abuse. The progressive movement considered how best to address the needs of children, and other issues using science (Bates and Swan 2019). They campaigned for mandatory, age-graded public schooling, which was adopted in the North and Midwest by 1900, and age requirements and

restrictions for work. This forced parents from allowing their children to participate in work. Children of color were still seen and treated differently. Ideas about adolescence reinforced ideas of youth and criminality. The first juvenile court was established in 1899 in Chicago and was influenced by rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is the philosophical justification for punishment, which sees people as being capable of being taught prosocial behaviors (Bates and Swan 2019). By 1925, most states had established juvenile courts. Different language was used for juveniles than adult offenders. Overall, the goal was to protect vulnerable young girls and women. They were given education, taught job skills, but many complained of the control and abuse. This was the beginning of the child savers movement, which developed alongside the antitrafficking movement.

Beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, colonist came to view sex work as a nuisance, along with drinking and gambling. Vigilantes took the first steps against sex work in the Whorehouse Riots in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, where residents attacked and destroyed brothels in lower-class communities (Comerford 2022; Smolak 2013). In two instances, vigilantes burned down brothels in New York City in 1793 and 1799 (Smolak 2013). Jane Addams (1912) wrote *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*, in which she argued that the most common reason women sold sex was because of low wages. She also attributed sex work to the lack of parental guidance for young women, who moved from rural to urban centers. She opened Hull House in 1889 to assist young women in finding alternatives to sex work, along with other social programming.

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, city and local ordinances utilized a more progressive approach to regulate sex, such as requiring testing for sexually transmitted infections (Comerford 2022). Sex work also was limited to urban cities in ‘red light districts.’ However, Victorian American culture began to view sex work in terms or morality, in a context where the



sexual ‘purity’ of women was prioritized. Women’s activist groups blamed men for seducing and trapping women in sex work (Smolak 2013). Activists blamed poverty, alcoholism, and immigrant status as causes of sex work, which they campaigned against. However, sex workers at the time chose to sell sex because it was preferable to the awful working conditions found in factories. After the Civil War, a coalition of activists joined forces to create a ‘purity’ crusade, which sought to end prostitution (Smolak 2013).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, social panic increased about sex trafficking during the first wave of industrialization (Kempadoo 2005). In 1900, the New York City Chamber of Commerce organized the New York City Committee of Fifteen, which was influenced by the purity crusade (Smolak 2013). The committee investigated vice and focused on prostitution. In response to fears that white women were being sold into slavery, the U.S. signed the 1904 International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade (Bravo 2007). This first antitrafficking law sought to suppress traffic in women and girls for “immoral purposes.” Scholars today agree that white slavery was a moral panic, existing to a greater degree in moral perceptions than in reality. In 1905, physicians formed the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, focused on prostitution as a source of venereal disease. Education on prostitution also focused on abstinence. However, these organizations soon realized that there was a lack of understanding of the barriers that prostitutes and clients faced. This realization led to the commission of research in 1913 by the Bureau of Social Hygiene. The definition of prostitution in this research included any sexual behavior which did not adhere to moral ideals, including cohabitation with a partner, which was derived from Protestant moral ideals. Faith-based organizations were involved in anti-prostitution activism to a large extent, and activists were guided by their religion. Women’s organizations and suffrage movements were also active in the anti-prostitution movement. For

example, the Woman Suffrage Party of New York's agenda included the abolition of the White Slave traffic, not regulation. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was also heavily involved with the fight against 'white slavery' in Wisconsin and Michigan (Smolak 2013). Activists' approaches focused on women's roles as mothers, sexual piety, and morality.

Trafficking practices and discourses have changed over time because of technological advances, globalization, and inequality. Before human trafficking became a hot topic in news and media, authorities relied upon anti-slavery statutes to punish forced labor and servitude (Miller and Wasileski 2011). While examining the history of trafficking, many have drawn comparisons between trafficking and the Atlantic Slave trade and use the term 'modern-day slavery' to describe trafficking (Heil and Nichols 2015). I do not use that language. The way slavery was practiced in the U.S. is very different than the way human trafficking is practiced. Most notably, slavery was race-based and state-supported, and trafficking is punishable by the state and gendered-based. However, slavery and slavery-like practices have occurred for hundreds of years. Furthermore, trafficking is conflated with sex work, which is disingenuous.

The framing of sex work as slavery is not new – researchers have noticed the similarities between the moral panic of white slavery and modern-day slavery, including similarities in the activists (Bernstein 2010). Prior to the progressive era, U.S. religious leaders were more concerned about adultery and fornication than prostitution. However, by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, narratives of women's enslavement drew on race-based, chattel slavery. The narrative in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was that girls and women who were traveling to urban centers for legitimate work, would be seduced, deceived, or forced into prostitution, typically by foreign men. The term human trafficking first came into use in the 1900s in connection with slavery, and at the time meant forced prostitution (Gallagher 2010; Comerford 2022).

However, this was captivating for many, conjuring up racial anxieties, immigration politics, issues of public morality, and colonial debates (Bravo 2007). Historians agree that the fight against white slavery was an acceptable way for privileged women to channel their frustrations with the sexual double standard and the increase in sex work (Bernstein 2010). For both feminist and evangelical women fighting white slavery was a useful surrogate for other causes, such as social purity, moral reform, temperance, and suffrage. However, evidence suggested that the narrative was without factual base that most of those in prostitution were not forced but driven there by economic factors. The 1904 law proved ineffective and in 1910 the International Convention for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic was adopted. The two instruments, along with treaties addressing trafficking of women and children of all races, were consolidated into the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. In the same year, 1910, activists were successful in getting the United States to pass the White Slave Traffic Act, also known as the Mann Act, which imposed felony punishments for the transportation of women for prostitution or any other purpose deemed immoral (Bravo 2007; Bernstein 2010). Critics observed that the same tropes from the white slavery moral panic are being recycled in the modern-day-slavery campaigns – such as violated femininity, shattered innocence, and the victimization of women and children (Bernstein 2010).

In 1927, activists' abandoned references to white slavery because it did not accurately reflect the nature of the problem. The International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, passed in 1933, was concerned with the transportation of coerced women into prostitution. These agreements were limited to banning recruitment, so the detention of the women in a brothel was outside this law. Fears of (what we now call) sex trafficking of

white women subsided due to both World Wars, the Spanish flu killing millions, and the collapse of the American economy during the Great Depression. During the World Wars propaganda spread about soldiers sleeping with foreign sex workers, who were portrayed as diseased, and abandoning their duty (Comerford 2022). In 1949, the United Nations adopted the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949 Convention) but did not define trafficking (Kempadoo 2005). The 1949 Convention does reference the punishment of trafficking for prostitution. Additionally, countries were required to punish those who managed brothels or supervised prostitutes.

By the 1960s, the rise of germ theory and modern understandings of sexually transmitted infections led to the demonization of sex work, and sex workers were portrayed as unclean and disease carrying (Comerford 2022). After the Vietnam War, attention was again turned to sex trafficking (Kempadoo 2005). During the 1970s, American feminists were concerned about militarized prostitution, sex tourism, and mail-order bride arrangements in Vietnam (Kempadoo 2005). Activists at the time argued that sex trafficking and sexual exploitation were the most harmful form of oppression of women yet were unable to gain much traction for their cause on the national or international stage. By 1985, the United Nations Forum on Women was discussing the issue of trafficking with various feminist networks around the world. But it was not until the 1990s that the issue of trafficking emerged again as an area of interest to the international and national communities (Gallagher 2010). Due to a report by the United Nations in the 1990s, human trafficking increased in perceived importance again (Kempadoo 2005). The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 1997) differentiated between sex work and trafficking, identified globalized capitalism and local patriarchal practices

and beliefs as major factors contributing to trafficking, and identified lack of reliable data as a major challenge (Bravo 2007; Kempadoo 2005). Bravo (2007) argues that human trafficking re-emerged as an important social problem during the 1990s due to globalization, increasing populations, and the circumstances surrounding trafficking survivors. Globalization sparked a significant increase in the legal and illegal movement of people across local, national, and international borders, which consequently sparked a panic to strengthen border control and immigration laws (Kapur 2005). The development of stronger border control resulted in the casting of immigrants as “other” and a threat to security in mainstream media. Migrants are often limited in their choices due to circumstances of poverty, which leaves them more vulnerable to trafficking (Mace et al. 2012; Sanghera 2005).

Another important change was the image of who was a victim (Gallagher 2010). Historically, trafficking legislation was focused on white women being forced into prostitution, but in the 1990s trafficking discourse began to focus on women of color from poor nations being trafficked across borders. In 1997, the discourse expanded to migration control and organized crime (Gallagher, 2010). Consequently, a theoretical link emerged between trafficking and migration. This discussion reaffirmed the traditional notion that trafficking happens to women and children.

In 2000, the United States enacted the first federal, modern law prohibiting human trafficking, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA 2000; United States Department of the State 2000). The goal of the TVPA 2000 was to: 1) collect data on the nature and extent of human trafficking in the U.S. and other countries; 2) to evaluate antitrafficking efforts of all countries, although evaluations of U.S. antitrafficking efforts was not included until 2010 (when former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pushed for its inclusion);

and 3) to provide victims with protection and assistance in rehabilitation, prosecuting their trafficker, and regaining entry into their community. However, because human trafficking is so difficult to prove, many cases get charged as rape, pimping, or sexual assault (Heil and Nichols 2015). The TVPA uses a ‘three Ps Approach,’ to *protect* victims, to *prosecute* human traffickers, and to *prevent* human trafficking worldwide (Mace et al. 2012). A fourth P was later included for *partnership* (Stickle et al. 2020).

Gallagher (2010) argues that the passage of the TVPA greatly influenced the United Nations (UN) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Protocol), which was signed 45 days after the TVPA. Both laws are purposefully gender neutral, which acknowledges that trafficking occurs to men and boys, and for other purposes (such as labor), but the focus still lies with women and children who are trafficked for sex. As such, victim services are primarily focused on women and children (Reichert and Sylwestrzak 2013<sup>1</sup>). Over the past two decades, lawmakers have reauthorized the TVPA several times, which allows for law makers and activists to reassess and change the law, such as including provisions to increase collaborations between law enforcement and antitrafficking organizations, increased penalties for traffickers and clients, preventing child marriage, and increased funding for education as well as antitrafficking organizations, and services.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2003 addresses the need for better data on trafficking (Clark 2019). This led to the creation of the President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking (PITF), which is made up of several agencies who meet annually to work together to combat trafficking; and the Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG), who meet quarterly and represents members of PITF. SPOG has five

specific committees to focus their work: Research and Data, Grantmaking, Public Awareness and Outreach, Victim Services, and Procurement and Supply Chain. The 2003 TVPRA also added requirements that the U.S. Attorney General report on antitrafficking efforts, including the numbers of survivors receiving TVPA benefits, continued presence of trafficked immigrants, and those who are convicted of trafficking (Clark 2019). There was additional funding allocated to be used to warn travelers about the connection between sex tourism and sex trafficking, and documentaries and other forms of media to expose the slavery-like conditions many sex workers experienced overseas. Finally, the 2003 TVPRA allowed victims to sue their traffickers in federal court. Washington was the first state to pass antitrafficking legislation in 2003, followed by Texas in the same year (Clark 2019). In 2004, Polaris Project developed a Comprehensive Model State Law to provide states with a template to address trafficking at the state and local level. At the time, much of this work focused on trafficking overseas. But the passage of the 2005 TVPRA began to shift the focus from international trafficking to domestic trafficking.

The 2005 TVPRA acknowledged the increase in U.S. citizens being trafficked and created programming for states to recognize trafficking at the local level and provide services (Clark 2019). Furthermore, activists and lawmakers were increasingly concerned with runaway and homeless youth and set out to improve data collection and services. The bill prioritizes sex trafficking, but includes language on all types of trafficking, in a post-9/11 context, which prioritizes pro-law enforcement and security. The law also expanded criminalization of trafficking by U.S. employees and contractors, even if not on U.S. soil, which was a first attempt to deal with the abuses within the supply chain. The Reauthorization also gave \$5,000,000 worth of grants to law enforcement to investigate trafficking in urban areas, which increased funding for vice units and patrolling (Bernstein 2010). The law increased the punishment for traffickers,

with punishments up to 99 years. Law enforcement arrest prostitutes to secure their testimony against their trafficker. The law also discusses labor trafficking conditions and developing future awareness campaigns (Clark 2019). Furthermore, the reauthorization of the TVPA required the Department of Labor to produce a report of goods which are created by known or suspected child forced labor. Since 2009, the U.S. Department of Labor (2022) has produced a list of goods produced by child labor or forced labor, which can be viewed by country and by good. The 2005 TVPRA also acknowledges an increase in trafficking where peacekeepers and military are deployed. Thus, the TVPRA begins to target root causes and develop plans to eliminate conditions favorable to trafficking (Clark 2019). These areas were expanded upon in the 2008 TVPRA.

The TVPRA of 2008 was the most significant expansion of the TVPA 2000. This reauthorization created the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) coalition (Clark 2019). ATEST is an antitrafficking social movement organization (ASMOs), which built a coalition of other ASMOs to work together in fighting trafficking. The TVPRA of 2008 also made it easier to prosecute traffickers, increased penalties for those conspiring to commit trafficking or benefiting from trafficking, and several changes were enacted for minor survivors. For example, minor survivors were no longer required to prove force, fraud, or coercion, acknowledging that children cannot consent. Furthermore, unaccompanied foreign children were required to be screened for trafficking within 48 hours of arrival in the U.S., with further processing and access to a counselor within 180 days for child victims. The Department of the State was also required to keep a list of countries using children as soldiers, which is utilized to remove U.S. military aid (Clark 2019). The 2008 TVPRA also increased victim services; report requirements in the TIP for trafficking efforts of all countries, not just those with 100 or more



victims as was the case in the past; and increased the minimum standards benchmark identified in the TVPRA. This new standard included sustained efforts to end the demand for trafficked sex work, support indigenous populations in ways that reduced vulnerability to trafficking and upholding the sentencing of traffickers and clients. Failure to do so would result in new consequences by the U.S.

The reauthorizations in 2003, 2005, and 2008 were bipartisan, with little controversy, in part because trafficking intersects with so many issues, such as crime, sex work, immigration, human rights and children's rights (Clark 2019). There was also increased attention on human trafficking and an increase in the number of organizations addressing the problem. However, the media was spreading the narrative that all victims were innocent, usually girls and women, who needed to be rescued from predators, typically men. This narrow definition of who is a victim and offender harms those do not fit into this categorization, such as boys/men and transgender survivors, and those who initially entered sex work voluntarily (Clark 2019). As a result, many different types of organizations, with many different goals have emerged. Because of the narrative of trafficking, many organizations focus on sex trafficking of girls and women and the eradication of sex work. But organizations vary – some focus on international survivors, prevention efforts, and/or the rehabilitation of survivors. As a result, ATEST wanted to connect these different types of organizations into a coalition to enhance policy at the federal level (Clark 2019).

The 2011 TVPRA was not reauthorized, prompting antitrafficking activists to create a new public awareness campaign in Times Square and several newspapers encouraging individuals to contact their representatives and urge them to renew the TVPRA (Clark 2019). Activists also wrote blog posts, invited individuals to sign petitions to support the legislation, and

partnered with CNN to create a public forum on human trafficking. However, the country was still suffering from the 2008 recession, and the conservative Congress refused any increased spending, and instead pushed for spending cuts (Clark 2019). This led to a 25% decrease in the national budget for antitrafficking programs. ATEST was working with both political parties, however, partisan questions were being asked about the effectiveness, lack of oversight and direction of funding. Specifically, Republican Senators were criticizing antitrafficking programs as “a growing bureaucracy [which was] wasteful, mismanaged, and duplicative” (Clark 2019: 71). Furthermore, the Republican Senators argued that the funding was imbalanced, disproportionately benefiting immigrants, instead of domestic survivors. At the same time, celebrity activists, Ashton Kutcher, created a campaign asserting “real men do not buy girls” (Clark 2019: 71). During this period, several government agencies and antitrafficking agencies were citing different statistics on the number of those who are being trafficked, provoking criticism from scholars and media outlets (Clark 2019). The criticism of the size and scope of the trafficking problem affected the framing of trafficking. Organizations stopped citing the estimates and requested funding to improve estimates. Furthermore, organizations started focusing on the number of survivors recovered, and improving prosecution and prevention efforts. Organizations also began to discuss the ambiguity in the numbers, and that many are underestimates of the true extent of trafficking.

ATEST continued to fight for antitrafficking funding and reached out to organizations to sign multiple letters requesting that the Senate protect antitrafficking funding (Clark 2019). Over 110 organizations signed on to the letters, which acknowledged the fiscal situation while advocating for effective and important programs. ATEST made a moral argument, stating “slavery damages our communities, taints the products and services we consume and the profits

we earn, and is one of the most pressing human rights challenges of our time” (Clark 2019: 72). There were further complications over funding, given that some religious organizations refused to refer trafficking survivors for abortions or contraception. However, ATEST was committed to remaining nonpartisan and did not support the House bill because of the partisan nature of the bill’s exclusion of abortion and contraceptive services, while supporting the Senate’s version. The Senate’s version did not include exclusionary language surrounding abortion and contraception. ATEST continued to push for the same recommendations in the 2011 TVPRA, such as strengthening provisions to monitor labor recruiters, and publishing lists of goods made with child labor. Because of the difficulties and uncertainty surrounding the reauthorization, budgets, and politics, ATEST began a public campaign to have voters pressure Congress. In January 2013, ATEST commemorated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, which abolished slavery. After just over a year of delay, the TVPRA was signed as part of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in February 2013. Many saw the connections and similarities between domestic violence and trafficking abuses, including their histories; the two pieces of legislation and subsequent difficulties in reauthorizations; and the early domestic violence movement and the antitrafficking movement.

The 2013 TVPRA included provisions to prevent U.S. aid being given to countries which utilize child soldiers, offered grants to reduce risks of trafficking, criminalized the taking of identification documents, and increased the capabilities of the U.S. government to convict citizens of trafficking who are living abroad (Clark 2019). The shift in the political environment, which led to the politicization of antitrafficking policy resulted in new strategies which continued in upcoming years. In 2013 to 2014, ATEST began shifting focus to labor trafficking and supply chain transparency (Clark 2019). There were many international labor abuses

happening and highlighted, such as the fire at a garment factory in Bangladesh, which killed 112 workers (Clark 2019). The Solidarity Center documented the conditions at the factory including the low wages, lack of fire extinguishers, locked doors, and the presence of flammable materials which were not stored properly as causes for the fire. The U.S. government suspended trade preferences, which grants products made in Bangladesh as duty free. In response, ATEST pushed for policy action and consumer awareness of forced labor.

ATEST was able to target different levels of policymaking, and advocated for new bills, including the Fraudulent Overseas Recruitment and Trafficking Elimination Act (FORTE) and the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (Clark 2019). Both bills focused on international trafficking, immigration policy, and the push factors for people to enter the trafficking supply chain. However, ATEST began to get pushback from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other groups (Clark 2019). The private politics model tends to employ more confrontational tactics because activists are trying to persuade private companies into engaging in ethical practices, which likely cuts into their profits. However, ATEST framed its work as being beneficial to business and not a regulatory burden. ATEST also welcomed new member organizations, Futures without Violence, the National Network for Youth, and the National Domestic Workers Alliance (Clark 2019). All three organizations are not focused on trafficking specifically, but their work overlaps with trafficking. One organization, Not for Sale, left the coalition but continued their support.

In 2014, there was a 100% increase in unaccompanied minors who were crossing into the United States at the southern border. Many politicians were criticizing former President Obama's Immigration policies as being weak and recommended that minors be sent back without a review

of their case, which was a violation of the 2008 TVPRA (Clark 2019). ATEST condemned these efforts and continued to fight against proposals to weaken the protections of the 2008 TVPRA. In the 2017 TVPRA, funding was added for the training of school resource officers to recognize and respond to trafficking, improve data reporting requirements, data collection, services for survivors, trainings and technical assistance, and interagency coordination (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2022). The 2019 TVPRA was signed as four separate bills: The Frederick Douglass Trafficking Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2018; the Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017, and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2017 (Polaris Project 2022b). Provisions included strategies to reduce the demand of sex trafficking and sex work by ending government partnerships with the commercial sex industry (meaning no federal funds are to be used for adult entertainment); compels the SPOG to create a working group which works to end demand domestically and internationally; and requires the DOJ to report on the tactics to reduce demand and train their officers. Furthermore, the bill creates new authorities for federal agencies, utilizes new mandates and updates previous mandates and programs in the original TVPA (Polaris Project 2022b). These new mandates include training for federal law enforcement officers and prosecutors; implementing best practices to deliver justice for survivors; improve the national strategy to eliminate trafficking; specialized training for service providers; investigating complex trafficking networks; understand the effects of severe trafficking; and implementing the International Megan's Law, which limits global travel for American pedophiles, among many other provisions.

In 2018, two bills, Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA) were passed by former President Donald Trump (Romano 2018).

These bills go after online websites which allow ads for sexual services, and reverses the safe harbor rule of internet providers, which prevented internet providers from being held responsible for creators' content. Many websites acted immediately to censor or ban parts of their website. The intention of these bills is to curb online sex work after activists demanded internet providers, like Backpage, be held responsible for ads posting sexual services. Congress was responding to activists' concerns after the lawsuit against Backpage was dismissed in 2016.

### **Criticisms**

The TVPA attempts to protect victims by allowing a pathway to legal citizenship and other federally funded benefits (Jones 2010). For instance, immigrants can apply for a T-visa with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which are specific visas given to up to 5,000 trafficked persons annually. To be considered for T-visas, trafficking survivors must demonstrate that they have been victims of “severe” trafficking, are still physically located in the United States, willing to assist in the prosecution of trafficking offenders, and would suffer “extreme” hardship if deported from the United States (Jones 2010). In 2015, there were 2,224 applications received for T-visas, the most to date (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2016). Nearly every year, the number of applications has increased. Since 2008, approval rates of T-visas have fluctuated between a low of 59% in 2015 to a high of 100% in 2013, with an average of 80% acceptance rate (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services 2016).

One criticism of the TVPA is that often victims cannot meet the requirements, particularly the requirement to assist in prosecuting the offender (Kempadoo 2005; Jones 2010). Those who do not meet the requirements are not defined as trafficking victims and are then unable to access benefits (Fehrenbacher et al. 2020). As a result, social service providers criticize law enforcement for gate keeping, which poses a barrier for them to identify transgender persons

who are trafficked. Often trafficking victims cannot explain the circumstances in which they arrived in the U.S. or what happened to them (Jones 2010). There are sometimes language barriers and some traffickers have tricked the victim, leaving them confused about the events leading to their trafficking experience. Furthermore, the TVPA protections are not effective for those who are suffering from severe illness, PTSD, or fear that the traffickers will harm them or their families (Jones 2010). Thus, the way in which the government grants visas limit the effectiveness in prosecuting traffickers and protecting those trafficked.

Moser (2012) finds that NGOs, non-profits, the Department of State, and the Department of Justice do attempt to communicate and work together in reducing trafficking. In research that evaluates antitrafficking agencies' ability to effectively train law enforcement officers, social service workers, health care professionals, and immigration attorneys to identify and link trafficked persons to assistance programs, Potocky (2011) found that even though an increasing number of people were trained to identify, and help trafficked persons, this did not lead to an increase in identification of trafficked persons. Overall, research suggests that identifying victims for antitrafficking services has been largely inadequate and many government interventions are not effective in assisting victims.

Although antitrafficking efforts are done with good intentions, some antitrafficking organizations, policies, and legislature are critiqued by some as causing more harm than good (Heil and Nichols 2015; Kempadoo 2005). Kempadoo (2005) argues that the injustices and violence towards women are created or worsened by some antitrafficking efforts. First, the dominant international approach identifies international gangs and "source" countries as the criminals, while failing to hold "receiving" countries accountable as well (Kempadoo 2005). For example, prosecutions of foreign traffickers outnumber prosecutions of U.S. officials, who are

accepting bribes to look the other way or otherwise assist in trafficking. Second, the framework adopted by the U.N. often supports capitalist endeavors, rather than working with the underprivileged people around the world (Kempadoo 2005). For example, current trade agreements with the United States do not protect workers in other countries. Therefore, as a U.S. consumer, we may be unknowingly sold products, made in other countries, under trafficking or slavery-like conditions. Kempadoo (2005) argues that there are two consequences resulting from the dominant international approach; it reflects a racist or xenophobic agenda, and it ignores the enmeshment of legal sectors with organized crime, in this case trafficking. Furthermore, LGBTQ+ victims of trafficking, who are disproportionately victimized, may experience gaps or otherwise inadequate care in services provided to victims of trafficking (Heil and Nichols 2015).

Some evidence suggests that trafficking victims are treated as illegal immigrants or criminals instead of victims of human trafficking (Kempadoo 2005). Victims report that U.S. officials treated them as undocumented migrants who entered the country illegally, despite being forced to enter the U.S. against their will (Kempadoo 2005). Some trafficking victims are sent to jail or detention centers and may be deported for being in the U.S. illegally, without being given any information about criminal proceedings against their trafficker. When some trafficking victims return to their home communities, they may suffer retribution at the hands of their families and communities when they hear the victim was involved in sex work, despite being forced into the trade (Kempadoo 2005; Crawford and Kaufman 2008; Van Hook et al. 2006). For example, Siddharth Kara (2005) retells the story of Mara, 19, who was sold by her parents, who were promised that she would have a job in a factory and be able to send home \$10 a month. The man resold her to a *dalal* (trafficker) and the next day they both traveled by foot to India. After escaping the sex trafficking situation twice, she discovered that she was HIV positive while



receiving services at an antitrafficking shelter. Because of the stigma attached to non-marital sex, sex work, and HIV, her parents refused to allow her to come home because she could never marry and would bring shame on the family. While not all victims of trafficking are cut off from their families, there are other cultural concerns about returning home, particularly for foreign victims of trafficking. Furthermore, some victims who return to their country of origin are often at further risk of being re-trafficked because they cannot find work and are vulnerable to traffickers promising work abroad (Kempadoo 2005). Thus, some trafficking policies contradict the goals of antitrafficking work, which is to minimize trafficking incidence.

In this section, I have reviewed the history of the antitrafficking legislation, how the antitrafficking social movement influenced this legislation and antitrafficking services, and criticisms of these laws. In this discussion, I have shown that trafficking legislation continues to be reassessed and revised every couple of years. As the delay in the reauthorization of the TVPA demonstrates, funding and legislation accomplishments are not guaranteed. Under financial distress, activists worried that antitrafficking legislation, policies and funding may be rolled back. However, there has been an increase in antitrafficking organizations, partnerships between antitrafficking organizations, and between antitrafficking organizations and government. The increase in antitrafficking organizations will likely result in organizations having to compete for funding and resources. As a positive consequence, survivors will have more options in the services they choose. In the next section, I discuss the history of the local antitrafficking movement, and the development of faith-based organizations and how evangelical Christianity influences antitrafficking services.

## **The Local Antitrafficking Movement**

In this section, I cover the local antitrafficking social movement in a large Midwestern city where I conducted my study. I discuss the divisions in the local antitrafficking movement, specific tactics that activists engaged, including the creation and modification of antitrafficking programs and legislation. Because this section describes the growth of the local antitrafficking movement, activities are organized chronologically. First, I begin with current divisions within the trafficking movement.

### **Divides in the Antitrafficking Movement**

There are different streams of activism within the local antitrafficking movement (Clark 2019), two of which appeared in this sample: conservative religious activists and liberal feminist activists. Most of the activists in this sample were conservative religious activists. The conservative religious activists in my sample conflate trafficking and sex work. Consensual sex workers are considered exploited because they: 1) do not have other opportunities for success, and 2) have histories of abuse, particularly child sexual abuse. In contrast, liberal feminists separate sex trafficking and sex work. Liberal feminists believe that prostitution should be legalized for several reasons, including 1) to increase the physical safety of sex workers; 2) to regulate the industry, including mandated STI screening; 3) because there are few legitimate opportunities to become economically successful for some; and 4) some believe that creating a legal sex industry would help to combat sex trafficking by increasing the supply of consensual sex workers. In my sample, only two activists believed that sex work should be legalized, one Break the Cycle volunteer and an agent in the Department of Homeland Security. A couple of liberal activists believed that sex work should be decriminalized. The conservative evangelical

activists, who comprised most of the sample, felt that it should be decriminalized to sell sex (because sex workers are victims), but not to purchase or traffick sex.

### **History of the Local Strategies and Tactics**

In February 2002, a major city newspaper reported that the city police, U.S. attorney's office, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), and human rights advocates formed a task force, which met twice over the four months prior to plan antitrafficking efforts (Main 2002<sup>1</sup>). One of the strategies of the task force was to utilize the new T-visas, which would reportedly be available in March 2002. At the time, there were 91 ongoing federal investigations across the country, three of which were in the city. At the time, victims were characterized as foreign.

On March 20, 2005, the Governor announced the creation of a new statewide coalition and pledged to support new legislation which established new criminal offenses for trafficking (Main and Sweeney 2005<sup>1</sup>). The proposed legislation would make it a felony for a conviction of involuntary servitude, sexual servitude of a minor, and trafficking of people for forced labor and services. The new legislation also increased punishment to include monetary restitution for victims and prison time for offenders. The state coalition includes an educational and awareness campaign focused on educating social service providers who work with immigrants and victims of sexual and domestic abuse, and training police officers across the state to recognize the problem. At the same time a new county-wide task force was created in partnership with Break the Cycle, which focused on trafficking of minors. Domestic trafficking was beginning to be recognized as a local social problem because of the work being done by Break the Cycle. Break the Cycle's program is located within the larger organization Freedom Ministry. The program works with law enforcement, co-leads the county's human trafficking task force, provides

trauma-informed services to survivors, and provides education and awareness. Further examination of Break the Cycle, which is included in my sample, is covered in greater detail in Chapter 5.

In June 2005, the Department of Health and Human Services launched the first annual Rescue and Restore Campaign in the city, with the help of community organizations, including social service providers, health providers, the faith-based community, law enforcement, and child welfare groups (Horn 2005<sup>1</sup>). At the time the Rescue and Restore campaign ran the national trafficking hotline for referrals and information. Legislators passed new legislation, Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude Act, which defined human trafficking, sex trafficking, sexual servitude and involuntary servitude as a crime and mandated tougher penalties, restitution for victims, and asset forfeiture to fund prosecution and victim service (Tanagho 2007<sup>1</sup>).

In August of 2005, a local journalist, Sweeney (2005<sup>1</sup>) ran a series of news articles to raise awareness of trafficking. She also reported the city police department had plans to assign two people who are dedicated to investigating trafficking on the internet and the streets. The officials would also coordinate with social service agencies to assist victims. In December 2005, former trafficking survivors, sex workers and activists protested the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pimp Ball (a pseudonym; Mitchell 2005<sup>1</sup>). A former trafficking survivor spoke at the protest about the violence she endured, the young age at which she was recruited, and describes the event as a:

ball for child molesters. It's a ball for rapists because that's what pimps do. They rape you in. They beat you in and they have minors. Most of the people who are in the sex industry under pimp control prostitution are under 18. They are 14. They start as young as 12 years old through manipulation and force, and through parents selling to pimps for drugs

(Brenda M.; Mitchell 2005<sup>1</sup>: 1)

A Polaris Project staff member and survivor stated:

Stop glamorizing pain ... Two years ago in Atlanta, they stopped it and arrested 15 pimps and charged them. One pimp had a 10-year-old girl in his stable  
(Tina F.; Mitchell 2005<sup>1</sup>: 1)

Another protestor held a sign saying, “Pimps stay away” (Mitchell 2005<sup>1</sup>: 1). Despite protest tactics being rare for sex trafficking activists, the Pimp Ball motivated activists to protest.

In 2006, the state passed the first trafficking law, Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude Act, which created punishments for those found guilty of involuntary servitude, involuntary servitude of a minor, and trafficking in persons for forced labor or services (Office of Justice Programs 2013<sup>1</sup>). In April 2006, the state held its first anti-human trafficking day, also called “Rescue and Restore – Human Trafficking Outreach Day” (Hussain 2006<sup>1</sup>). This was part of the Governor’s yearlong effort to raise awareness of the growing problem of trafficking. Volunteers hung and distributed approximately 13,000 multilanguage posters across the state, asking the public to look out for sex and labor trafficking. Volunteers hung posters in health clinics, gas stations, highway rest stops, train stops, libraries, and laundries. In 2006, the city also created a new human trafficking investigative team after receiving a \$450,000 federal human trafficking grant (Sweeney 2008a<sup>1</sup>). This team consists of seven officers of different ethnic backgrounds who speak several languages, and work with other police departments to trace trafficking victims’ movements. They still investigate international victims, but also are devoting increased attention to domestic victims, and finding pimps and traffickers. They investigate child trafficking and babies sold on the black market. In 2008, law enforcement partnered with Break the Cycle to bring outreach workers to rescue operations with them (Sweeney 2008a<sup>1</sup>). When social service providers are on the scene of a rescue operation, they provide support for survivors, which allows police to get information on the pimps and traffickers more quickly (Sweeney 2008b<sup>1</sup>). Although the state had antitrafficking legislation on the books since 2006 for

domestic trafficking of adults (City Media 2011), it was so hard to prove it had not been used by the close of 2008 (Sweeney 2008b<sup>1</sup>).

In 2007, the [City] Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE; a pseudonym) was created (CAASE 2022a<sup>1</sup>). They are a feminist organization with the goal of eliminating all forms of sexual exploitation, including sexual assault and prostitution. Their program values state:

Social and institutional systems do not adequately serve survivors of sexual violation. Sexual violation disproportionately harms people from marginalized communities, including girls and women, people of color, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, and immigrants and undocumented people. To best support survivors, CAASE confronts the inequities that fuel or intersect with sexual harm. Our dedication to this work is reflected in our values.

(CAASE 2022a<sup>1</sup>: 1)

Their work focuses on community engagement; legal services; prevention and education; and public policy and advocacy. In community engagement they connect survivors to each other and allies through events and programs which may support them. Their legal services allow survivors to speak with a free attorney to assist in criminal and civil matters, including assisting with criminal records relief and protective orders. Their prevention program provides education to “think critically about gender, consent, and boundaries” to students in grades 9 through 12, parents, school staff and professionals (CAASE 2022b<sup>1</sup>: 1). They offer workshops for mixed-gender youth or just men to end sexual exploitation, which focuses on healthy relationships, violence prevention, and social and personal responsibility. Their policy and advocacy work focuses on local and state policies and laws which expand options for survivors, hold offenders and systems accountable, reduces the criminalization of trauma behaviors, and prevents future violence. Their latest work has been to support laws which allow survivors to file for protective orders remotely; created a task force for missing and murdered women (most of whom are black and involved in sex work); remove mistaken age as a defense for solicitating sex from a minor;

prohibition on source of income discrimination in housing; and creating a commission on children of incarcerated parents.

In 2007, the Predator Accountability Act went into effect for the state, which allows trafficked victims to file a civil lawsuit against their trafficker or anyone who profited from their activities (Office of Justice Programs 2013<sup>1</sup>). The same year, the First Offender Felony Prostitution Act was passed which allows those charged with felony prostitution to be placed on probation if they had not received a prior felony prostitution charge. In 2008, activists created Freedom from Traffick a 501(c)3 organization, focused on providing free education and resources to assist survivors of both sex and labor trafficking. In 2017, Freedom from Traffick opened an “overnight drop-in center” for survivors of sex trafficking and sex workers but closed the doors in 2021. The organization also sat on the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force, serving on the victim services, LGBTQ, and training subcommittees.

In March of 2009, the County Sherriff filed a lawsuit against Craigslist to remove the “erotic services” section of its website, where prostitution ads were posted (Konkol 2009<sup>1</sup>). As part of the lawsuit, the Sheriff asked that Craigslist reimburse the county for more than \$100,000 for the salaries of officers who spent time investigating prostitution and trafficking on the site. The lawsuit came after two years of the Sheriff asking Craigslist to remove the section several times. By May of 2009, Craigslist dropped the erotic services section and replaced it with adult services, where submissions would be reviewed by Craigslist staff before posting (Donovan 2009a<sup>1</sup>). Even after the changes were implemented police were still finding and arresting persons on prostitution and trafficking charges approximately once a week (Donovan 2009b<sup>1</sup>). In October of 2009, a federal judge threw out the lawsuit, arguing that Craigslist was not explicitly offering sex and was instead an intermediary, and not culpable for the misuse of their services

(City Newspaper 2009<sup>1</sup>). In 2009, The Church Ladies was created, and is a faith-based antitrafficking organization. They offer services to victims and sex workers looking to leave the sex industry. The Church Ladies is the subject of this investigation and will be discussed at much greater length in Chapter 5.

In 2010, a Senate Judiciary panel was held, titled "In Our Own Backyard: Child Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in the United States" where politicians gathered to discuss their antitrafficking work (Sweet 2010<sup>1</sup>). The State's Attorney testified at a federal panel that she created an organized crime and human trafficking initiative in July of 2009. This allows her team to communicate across criminal cases, to provide information relating to human trafficking. She testified about her work which included prosecuting pimps and traffickers and connecting minor victims to social services, who are not criminalized (Sweet 2010<sup>1</sup>). Her human trafficking team also built coalitions with social services providers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to assist law enforcement. The team is also working with federal agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the U.S. Attorney's Office to share expertise. She identified the biggest challenge as funding to continue her work. Furthermore, she identified funding difficulties for social service providers to provide for trafficking survivors.

In August 2010, the Governor signed new legislation, the Safe Children Act, which prevents children under 18 from being charged with prostitution and instead should be treated as victims (Golab 2010<sup>1</sup>; CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). The new law also allows wiretaps and increases penalties for pimps and clients, including the impoundment of vehicles for a \$1,000 retrieval fee. This fee will be split between the arresting agency and the Department of Human Services to provide services to victims of human trafficking. By 2010, the Sheriff began cracking down on clients,



and warned them that law enforcement will pose as sex workers (City Newspaper 2010<sup>1</sup>). Clients will be fined \$2,000 and will be educated on the new ordinance and the backgrounds of the women who they are purchasing sex from.

In 2011, the Governor signed new legislation, the Justice for Victims of Sex Trafficking Senate Bill 1037, which allows sex trafficking victims to clear charges of prostitution in court (City Media 2011; CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). Furthermore, the first man to be arrested for sex trafficking was convicted and sentenced to 4 years in prison. However, he was released after five months (State's Attorney 2020<sup>1</sup>). Between 2011 and 2012, 55 defendants were charged with human trafficking and related crimes ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report 2018<sup>1</sup>). In 2012, Sandy created Hope, an evangelical non-profit focused on providing antitrafficking education, awareness, and services, which will be discussed at more length in the Chapter 5.

In 2012, Reforming [State] Human Trafficking Code, was signed into law, expanding the scope of the involuntary servitude law to include additional tactics in which a trafficker can obtain or maintain a victim (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). This bill removed convoluted language, places less of an emphasis on force, and extends the statute of limitations for minors bringing about sex trafficking charges. Activists at the City Legal Aid (pseudonym), which is part of the Metropolitan Services were awarded a three-year federal grant to provide antitrafficking training for lawyers, social workers, counselors, community members. They offer free civil, criminal, and immigration legal services to survivors of both sex and labor trafficking and serve all populations. They also offer case management services, and training and awareness.

In 2013, a sex trafficking survivor and her family opened Sam's Daughter, a Christian antitrafficking organization with three goals: education around trafficking; rescuing, rehabilitating, and reintegrating survivors; and ending the demand. The headquarters is in the

suburb of the city but has expanded to chapter locations in five other states. The organizational website states they have rescued and offered support and resources to over 1500 survivors; and since 2015 hosted almost 700 community awareness events, and trained hundreds of volunteers. Sam's Daughter conducts street and club outreach, has Super Bowl missions; and operates a call center, first responder team, and transportation team. They offer housing; case management; education and training; clothing; crisis services; family reunification; health care; outpatient mental health services, individual counseling, and group counseling; repatriation; biblical counseling; transportation assistance; service animals; life skills training; a support group called Moms Against Trafficking; an educational group Dads Against Trafficking; and prayer. They offer several different educational programs for specific workers, such as staff working in hotels, airlines, sporting venues, manufacturers, and logistics. There is conflicting information on whether they offer long term housing. In July 2013, the first man to be convicted of sex trafficking was rearrested for sex trafficking again (Kissinger 2013<sup>1</sup>). In July 2013, the City Council heard testimony from the State Attorney, who reported that her office has brought charges against 77 local traffickers (Foulkes and Fioretti 2013<sup>1</sup>). Survivors testified about the abuse they endured from traffickers and clients and being arrested multiple times without being offered services. They recommended that survivors should be offered resources, which include housing and survivor-led, and trauma-informed services. The Governor signed a bill, Eliminating Felony Prostitution in [State] to reduce the penalty for prostitution, so that it is no longer considered a felony (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>).

Physician antitrafficking activists created a program in the suburbs, Passage (a pseudonym), in 2014 focused on educating physicians, residents and medical students about human trafficking. The goal of the organization is to enhance awareness about the scope of

trafficking; identify at-risk patients; provide trauma-informed care; train health professionals to intervene safely; and connect patients to providers for resources. The training is a free, three-hour virtual training, in which physicians can get continuing education credits. In 2014, a state senator introduced the Stop Advertising Victims of Exploitation Act, aka the SAVE Act, which makes it a felony to sell ads facilitating kidnapping, trafficking and exploitation of children, and any illegal sex, pimping, prostitution, and sex trafficking (Ihejirika 2014<sup>1</sup>). The act targets Backpage.com, a site widely used by traffickers and clients, and would lift protections of internet sites, allowing federal prosecutors to shut down ads which promote underage sex. The new legislation provides penalties of up to five years in prison. Furthermore, state legislators passed Services for Survivors of Human Trafficking bill in 2014, which creates more funding for victim services, redirects fines and forfeitures of traffickers, pimps, and clients to pay for services, and creates funding for prosecutors on human trafficking (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). In 2015, state legislators passed Creating an Affirmative Defense for Survivors, which allows sex workers to create a defense for themselves against prostitution charges if they were trafficked (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). This law also creates procedures for trafficking victims if they are concerned for their safety in being able to utilize the affirmative defense in open court.

Hope posted on their social media “Two new laws in [state] that will be put in place as on January 1st! Awesome!” the Human Trafficking Resource Center Notice Act and the Human Trafficking Hotline (Hope social media). The Human Trafficking Resource Center Notice Act requires businesses that are ‘hot spots’ for trafficking to post information about trafficking and the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline number. The Human Trafficking Hotline law requires the Department of Human Services to work with the state Department of Transportation to promote public awareness of the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Hope

also sought to educate activists and potential activists on a federal bill that was introduced when the organization posted,

The Secure Our Skies Act (SOS) would be a tremendous help in fighting traffickers from flying victims across the country. This Act would be put in place to ensure the safety, health, and overall security of passengers on board. Human trafficking doesn't just happen on the ground, so airlines need to also play a role in stopping the traffickers if they notice anything suspicious.

(Hope social media)

Along with the caption above, Hope reposted a YouTube video of Utah representative Titus introducing the bill.

Physician activists opened a medical clinic in 2016, to serve survivors of trafficking and sex workers. The founder is an OB-GYN who has previous experience working with survivors in a clinic in New York City. She also serves on the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force and serves on the board of an Antitrafficking Network and Passage. The clinic provides direct comprehensive healthcare services to both sex and labor trafficking survivors, including primary care for acute illness, disease management, and preventative health; contraception; treatment for sexually transmitted infections; pelvic exams and screenings; individual and group counseling; and more. They also provide education and training for health care workers to identify and respond to human trafficking. They do not provide housing, food, or legal services, but refer to community partners. In 2016, a new ordinance was proposed which renewed debate about the 23-year-old city-wide ban on strip clubs with full nudity who were prevented from selling alcohol (Spielman 2016<sup>1</sup>). The License Committee Chairman proposed a new ordinance relaxing the rules to allow alcohol into the clubs and regulate them. She argued that the ordinance would create revenue for the city, level the playing field between the suburbs (which have strip clubs), allow bring your own beer (BYOB) clubs to obtain a liquor license, which will cost clubs

\$75,000, and allow the city to collect taxes off liquor sales, and \$400,000. At the time, fully nude strip clubs could not sell alcohol. Clubs which sold alcohol could only allow women to be partially nude. Trafficking activists, lawmakers, and others asked the committee chairman to drop it, and asked the city Mayor to block the ordinance, citing increased crime, violence, harassment, drug dealing and human trafficking in strip clubs that sell alcohol. The ordinance was approved, but the license committee chairman stated she was working to make some changes.

In August of 2016, the Governor signed two state bills to combat sex trafficking, one of which brings together lawmakers, the director of the state police, and the [county] task force to create a larger task force who will determine how the state can best combat human trafficking (Seidel 2016<sup>1</sup>). The other bill provided medical assistance from 2018 to June 30, 2019, to foreign survivors of human trafficking, torture, and other serious crimes. In 2016, a national evangelical antitrafficking program, Safe Space (a pseudonym), opened a new home for adult women survivors and those at risk of trafficking/exploitation (sex workers), which proports to be trauma informed. They have seven locations in six states throughout the U.S. They offer long term housing, up to 12 months; emergency housing for 30 to 90 days; food; clothing; crisis intervention; emergency transportation; individual case management; trauma counseling and therapy; trafficking, substance abuse, and violence education; life skills training; personal goal setting; educational services; health and wellness programs; financial planning; peer support services; job search and placement; housing assistance; relational support and accountability; and continued counseling. They also sell survivor made goods, such as jewelry, leather goods, candles, and apparel

In 2016, Hope opened their first safe house focused on minor girls, originally designed for girls and women from 11 to 21 (they later opened a home for adults in 2020 and the age requirements changed to 11 to 17). The safe house has 10 beds, offers a range of services including medical, dental, vision, counseling, access to an online GED program, mentorship, and education on daily life skills. Between 2016 and 2017 a program based out of Florida (founded in 2011) created a new program in the city, Reflect Freedom (a pseudonym). Reflect Freedom is an evangelical organization, run mostly by white women. In addition to the new program in the city, they opened another program in a third state. The program provides five programs: a 12 to 24-month residential program; outreach and law enforcement training; prevention program; and advocacy and awareness (GuideStar 2022<sup>1</sup>). In 2022, Reflect Freedom reports that since its opening in 2011, they have served 6,282 survivors, offered parenting courses and new opportunities to survivors; trained 27,347 children and adults; educated 171,345,700 individuals; re-united over 50 children with their mothers; and mentored over 60 organizations. They raised \$4,320,861 in 2022, which was raised with over \$1.8 million in grants, and \$2.4 million from the public. In 2022, their spending was \$3,690,839, 8.16% on administration.

In May 2017, a city alderman proposed a new ordinance, with the help from city police, the city's Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, and antitrafficking activists (Spielman 2017a<sup>1</sup>). The goal of the ordinance was to penalize traffickers who operate a massage parlor as a front for trafficking and give police more tools to shut down the business. Fines would quintuple to \$5,000 for each licensing violation. Massage therapists would have to be 18 or older, up from the age limit of 15. A valid license would be required, and massage parlors would not be permitted to have a direct passageway from the business to a private residence. Furthermore, those arrested for prostitution could have their charges removed if they could prove

they were coerced. This ordinance follows a crackdown called “Operation Hot Towel,” which resulted in arrests at six massage parlors, 178 citations, and 11 “cease-and-desist” orders against unlicensed businesses and orders to correct the violations (Spielman 2017a<sup>1</sup>; 2017b<sup>1</sup>).

In March 2018, The U.S. Senate passed the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act, which was signed by then President Trump (Mitchell 2018<sup>1</sup>). This law allows human trafficking survivors to seek recourse against those who profit from their exploitation. This law led to the shutdown of Craigslist’s personal ads section, Reddit’s “paid services involving physical sexual contact;” and Erotic Review’s U.S. pages. This prevents sex workers and sex trafficking victims to post ads to these specific sites to sell sexual services within the city. Two of the three local antitrafficking organizations I sampled pushed for this bill to be passed. For example, Hope posted on their Facebook

The Senate is voting today on SESTA. The House passed it on 2/27 and we have 6 hours to let our voices be heard. Sample phone message: “My name is [name]” and I live in [State]. I am urging Senator [Senator name] to VOTE YES on SESTA. It will close the legal loophole that allows exploiters to escape liability for knowingly facilitating trafficking, while sending the message that exploitation is unacceptable, no matter where it occurs. Thank you.” In [State]: [Contact information for Senators] If you do not live in [State], call the Senate switchboard at 202-225-3121 to be connected to your Senator's office.  
<https://www.cnn.com/.../sesta-child-sex.../index.html>  
<https://www.congress.gov/.../115th-congress/senate-bill/1693> #Take[Hope]back  
(Hope social media)

However, critics of this bill suggests that the bill does nothing to target sex traffickers, but instead targets sex workers, and increases their harm and danger (Romano 2018). When sex workers are forced to sell sex on the streets instead of the internet, they have less protection and ability to screen clients. Furthermore, research suggests that the internet assists law enforcement to identify sex trafficking survivors. A coalition of sex workers, advocates, sex trafficking survivors, and the Department of Justice have denounced the bill. At the local level, Public Act

100-0692 was passed, which allows survivors of trafficking to petition to have their record sealed if their crime was the result of trafficking ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report 2018<sup>1</sup>).

In June 2018, an alderman from the west side of the city passed an ordinance to outlaw “prostitution-related loitering,” which would allow city police to order sex workers to leave (Spielman 2018<sup>1</sup>). Neighbors and organizations complained that women were dressed immodestly and taking over blocks. Police stated that they were not trying to pursue women selling sex, but coercion would be an affirmative defense against a prostitution charge. Yet a representative from the American Civil Liberties Union argues that the vague language could encourage police to order people to disperse for innocent and constitutionally protected behavior. He noted

...that a similar law in New York resulted in people being arrested based on how the person dressed, where they are standing/walking, whether they are carrying money, and who they were associating with or talking to

(Ed; Spielman 2018<sup>1</sup>: 1)

In July 2018, the state annual report on human trafficking was published, which found that in 2017 there were 193 identified cases of trafficking, which involved 552 trafficking survivors ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report 2018<sup>1</sup>). Of the 193 cases identified, 150 involved sex trafficking, 26 labor trafficking, 10 of sex and labor trafficking and 7 unspecified. As of 2017, the state ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the number of trafficking cases. Between 2011 and 2017, calls to DCFS’s Human Trafficking hotline increased over 400%. In the last 10 years there were 1,148 human trafficking cases, with 2,832 survivors. The report outlines the increased likelihood of specific demographic groups, such as recent migrants, those with substance abuse or mental health concerns, those involved in the child welfare system, and runaway and homeless



youth. The report also states that the cycle of abuse mirrors the abuse found in domestic violence relationships, and that antitrafficking work must follow in a similar path of domestic violence advocacy. The report concludes that there are several legislative and regulatory deficiencies. They recommend that: 1) seed money be provided to the [State] Human Trafficking Task Force for at least three years; 2) focused education and training efforts on potential allies and industries rather than generalized awareness; 3) enact legislative changes to increase education and awareness of human trafficking. They also made several recommendations based on the subcommittees for health and human services, law enforcement, and court responses.

The [State] Task Force's Health and Human Services subcommittee recommended: 1) appointing a diverse set of trafficking survivors to the advisory council; 2) recommend state-wide housing options to address the needs of trafficking survivors; 3) add protections for survivors within the name change process for the state; 4) amend the domestic violence act to allow human trafficking specific residential programs to have the same protections as domestic violence shelters in being an undisclosed location; 5) recommend access to obtaining identification without a permanent address, or using an agency address for trafficking survivors; 6) implement a program which provides a free P.O. box to trafficking survivors to protect them from being found by perpetrators; 7) recommend expansion of public benefits to include eye and dental care; 8) recommend state-wide training to inform staff and citizens about policy changes; 9) create or maintain financial support for a resource list of trafficking-specific service providers; 10) recommend service and medical providers to receive training on trauma-informed care, and identification of survivors; and 11) recommend statewide planning to collect data on people served in domestic violence shelters and trafficking-specific programs to better understand capacity ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report 2018<sup>1</sup>).

Law enforcement recommendations are to: 1) be consistent with enforcement; 2) increase availability of services of those at high risk; and 3) designate resources for the development of multi-disciplinary teams ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report 2018<sup>1</sup>). The team also made specific recommendations for law enforcement response with minors to 1) educate those in foster care and schools; 2) create specialized placement options for high-risk youth, which are secure and trauma-informed; and 3) implement risk assessment to facilitate interagency communication. Recommendations for court responses include: 1) recognizing trafficked persons will interact with legal system; 2) grant access to advocates for specialized court calls and assist in case management; 3) expand availability of community-based services and residential treatment, which have standards and will assist in referrals; and 4) there is a need for advocates to be properly trained to prevent cycling through the criminal justice system. Finally, the task force subcommittee made recommendations for prosecution to: 1) continue to communicate regarding the status of the decriminalization of prostitution, including providing information on the impact of legalization; 2) clarify the “involuntary servitude” statute, specifically whether knowledge of age is required for conviction; 3) merge “solicitation” and “patronizing a prostitute” laws for clarification if it matches lawmakers intent; and 4) impose stricter punishment for perpetrators of trafficking.

January 1, 2019, two new antitrafficking laws took effect to increase protections for victims (Hartz 2018<sup>1</sup>). These new laws allow victims of both sex trafficking and labor trafficking to sue their traffickers for damages; have a longer window to report their offender; and will be paid to turn in their trafficker. The other law allows victims of labor and sex trafficking to bring civil suits against anyone convicted of trafficking them. This law amends the Code of Civil Procedure, which allows victims to bring suits against their traffickers for up to 10 years after

being initially trafficked, turning 18, or being freed. In 2019, Public Act 10-0939 amended the Predator Accountability Act, changing the title to Trafficking Victims Protection Act, adds references to involuntary servitude and labor trafficking throughout the act, allows involuntary servitude and labor trafficking survivors a cause of action against their perpetrator; allows a guardian, family member, agent of the victim, court appointee, or government entity to bring action on behalf of the victim; among other changes ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report 2018<sup>1</sup>). Public Act 100-0671 was also amended requiring massage parlors and bath houses to post the Trafficking Resource Center Notice Act; the issuance of a permit from the local government; and requires the government to regulate a business or establishment by monitoring and enforcing compliance with the act. Public Act 100-1037 allows victims more time to report the crimes to meet the requirements for notification and cooperation with law enforcement to be eligible to bring civil action.

In July 2019, the Governor signed Senate Bill 1890, which requires hotels and motels to train employees to recognize human trafficking and establishes reporting requirements to the authorities (Nowicki 2019<sup>1</sup>). The bill also establishes penalties for companies that benefit from sex or labor trafficking, companies can be fined \$100,000, and persons charged with Class 1 felony. Hope posted to their social media “New legislation advocating for hotels and motels to both train employees and be responsible for trafficking in their care of guests. #Take[Hope]Back. Learn how your place of employment or business can participate in ending trafficking and letting victims know we care by contacting us at info@[Hope].org,” with a reposted local article titled, “[State] lawmakers tackle sexual harassment, human trafficking, teacher pay and more in closing days of legislative session.” Public Act 100-0705 requires that the Department of Children and

Family Services enter into contracts with public or private agencies which specialize in treating child survivors of sex trafficking ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report 2018<sup>1</sup>).

The city mayor announced in February 2021 that she has created a group of representatives from city agencies to advise her to assist survivors of gendered-based violence, including human trafficking (Clingenpeel 2021<sup>1</sup>). This comes after a spike in gender-based violence during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of the group is to advise the mayor and develop policies for improving coordination among partnerships. The mayor's budget for 2022, included more funding to reduce gender-based violence and human trafficking (Malagón 2021<sup>1</sup>). The goal is to improve police response to human trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence; changing what is defined as gender-based violence and human trafficking; and analyzing policy changes to reduce violence and increase coordination. A working group will implement the plan, composed of community-based organizations and an oversight advisory board. The budget is about \$25 million, which covers emergency financial assistance, legal services, housing, and a new job, Director of Gender-based Violence Strategy and Policy. It would also increase staff at the Department of Family and Support Services domestic violence team.

In this section, I have covered the work done by the local antitrafficking movement, including the passage of new legislation, law enforcement policies and activists' tactics since 2002. As recommended by the TVPA 2000, antitrafficking work has focused on the four P's approach: protecting victims of trafficking; prosecuting suspected traffickers and clients; prevention through education; and partnership among agencies, organizations and activists. Activists' and law enforcements' work protecting victims has focused on identifying survivors and working together to find and access trafficking specific services, sometimes on very short

notice. Activists have created antitrafficking programs, which provide a range of services, depending on the program, including housing, temporary housing, medical services, mental health services and counseling, mentorship, hygiene items, food, clothing, education services, legal services, case management, and referrals for other services. In terms of prosecution, activists, legislators, and law enforcement have worked together to increase the penalties for traffickers and clients; shifted their focus from the criminalization of sex workers to the criminalization of clients and traffickers; and created new legislation aimed at reducing trafficking, such as requiring increased training for the hospitality industry. Activists, legislators, and law enforcement have focused on prevention efforts via education and awareness surrounding trafficking. The goal of this is to understand and prevent people from entering abusive relationships, but also to gain knowledge on how to identify victims to prevent future trafficking.

### **Conclusion**

Antitrafficking activists on the national level were able to push for federal antitrafficking legislation, which has been reauthorized every couple of years since its inception in 2000. With each reauthorization, activists have been able to modify the legislation, creating tougher penalties for traffickers; establishing victim services and programming; establishing educational and awareness programs and campaigns; creating and encouraging partnerships between law enforcement and antitrafficking organizations; and increased funding. The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives prioritized funding for faith-based organizations to carry out their missions. This has allowed many religious organizations to receive public funds for faith-based social services (Barkowski and Regis 2003). Research demonstrates that evangelical services were prioritized in funding decisions under the Bush administration

(Zimmerman 2010). In 2009, then-President Barack Obama signed an executive order changing the name of the faith-based initiative to White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, while retaining the basic administrative structure. The changes under the Obama administration made it easier for secular services to compete with faith-based service providers.

Local and state activists have worked in a similar vein to push for harsher punishments for traffickers and clients, decriminalize the sale of sex on the sex worker's end, create new victim services, create partnerships with law enforcement and criminalize internet websites that allow for sex to be sold. In the next chapter, I examine the three evangelical organizations sampled in this study and the criminal justice response to human trafficking.

## CHAPTER V

### THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The three organizations I examined for this research are evangelical, non-profit organizations, which provide services to trafficking victims on a voluntary basis. Each of the three organizations are different in size, structure, culture, and the services provided. Each of the organizations works with other service providers, law enforcement, and sometimes they work with one another to provide services. I also examine the criminal justice system, focusing on law enforcement and courts in the city and county and how they process trafficking and prostitution cases. The aim of this chapter is to describe the three organizations in this study and the criminal justice system; compare the organizations in terms of services, requirements for services, and culture; and analyze how these organizations fit into current research on antitrafficking organizations.

#### **Data**

Data from this chapter comes from ethnographic notes, interview data and organizational documents from all three organizations. Ethnographic notes examined are from public awareness and educational events, professional and organizational meetings, one-on-one conversations with staff, and fundraisers were utilized. I also examine interview data with staff, volunteers, and survivors to understand how the organization works, and to evaluate the organizations. Finally, organizational documents were also examined, which includes volunteer handbooks, brochures, websites, and social media.

## Hope

Hope is the largest of the organizations and opened in January 2012, originally providing awareness education and prevention training. They have an office space, donated to them by a church. Other church spaces, such as auditoriums and meeting spaces, are available as needed. The organization is run by Sandy, the Executive Director, a Chinese American, middle-class, 47-year-old woman. Sandy is described by staff and volunteers as a friend and mentor. In my own observations, Sandy was an empathetic listener and expressed care and a desire to help. A survivor, Cupcake, described her as nice, open, and determined to help. Cupcake was skeptical of services initially, but what made her feel comfortable was Sandy's immediate assistance with educational services. She also feels like she can call Sandy at any time for anything.

Overall, the organizational structure is flat and wide. Other leadership are primarily white middle-class women who oversee different departments within the organization. I interviewed staff and volunteers, who were mostly middle-aged white women, with an average age of 44. Previous research on antitrafficking efforts finds that most antitrafficking activists are white middle-class and upper-class women (Bernstein 2007), although other research suggests white economically privileged men are involved as well (Shih 2016). Although staffing varies, there are approximately six paid staff that run the organization. Underneath the leadership, Hope is organized into direct staff and volunteers that work closely with survivors, and indirect volunteers that do not work with survivors and instead focus on education, fundraising, volunteering for events, and planning. There are paid staff who work inside the safe house supervising the girls and women. Direct service volunteers, who are Christian, mentor the girls and women in the safe house once a week. There are approximately 400 volunteers on their volunteer list and approximately 100 active volunteers at any given time. The number of



volunteers was unusually large in comparison to other organizations, and relative to the size of the organization. Most of the volunteers tended to be white, middle-class or upper-middle class, women, Christian, and a member of a local church in the area. Hope opened a safe home for minor girls who have been sex trafficked or exploited in 2016, followed by a safe transitional home for adult women in 2020 (after I left the field).

### **Training of Staff and Volunteers**

Hope conducts several trainings throughout the year. Direct care staff, who work in the safe house, are required to take on-going trainings. Indirect volunteers are encouraged to attend the training. I attended three training sessions at three different churches in the area. During these three training sessions I took extensive notes. The first training was an introduction to human trafficking and the organization, presented by Sandy, the Executive Director, and Mary, the Director of Development. The training was held at a large evangelical church in the suburbs. The goal of training is so that staff and volunteers can understand trafficking as a general social problem; the consequences for survivors; and how to interact and support survivors. The mission of Hope is to end the cycle of sexual exploitation, but they are not just focused on trafficking. The language is vague, but Hope is alluding to others who may not meet the definition of trafficking. This allows Hope to appeal to their supporters without directly establishing that this may include sex workers and others who may have experienced sexual abuse, violence, and exploitation. Hope's training places blame primarily on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) but does acknowledge that there are larger social forces at play, like poverty. Activists spent most of the presentation on the ACE study when discussing the root factors of trafficking. Hope activists argue that abuse and disorganized attachment lead to dissociative coping, which leads to difficulty in paying attention to red flags in relationships. Abused children learn that interactions

are transactional, they doubt themselves, mistrust others, and learn a sexualized self as a core identity. This abuse is a pathway (Daly 1992) into the sex industry and sex trafficking, in which victims come to normalize abusive relationships into adulthood if there is no intervention. Activists are building the case that trafficking survivors are highly traumatized, where they are considered psychologically “ill” or “unhealthy” and in need of mental health interventions. This argument follows a medical model or disease model of trauma, in which a survivor with symptoms is diagnosed with a mental illness, which is then treated with the goal of eradicating symptoms (Levine 2022). The theory suggests that there are brain or genetic defects, which are triggered by psychosocial variables, resulting in mental illness. Levine (2022) argues that symptoms are often not evidence of a disease or illness, but a coping mechanism of trauma. These coping mechanisms become habituated, counterproductive, and create tension for authorities. Furthermore, this medical model of psychiatry may induce more trauma for some survivors, while for others a diagnosis and treatment may help.

The goal of activists is to teach survivors about healthy relationships and rebuild a secure attachment with them; provide them with mental health interventions like therapy; provide them with education and job skills training; and demonstrate that “love is greater than fear” (Hope observational notes). Hope also gives an overview of the services provided during trainings, which includes the safe house for minors, education and prevention, organizational information, and their hotline number. For antitrafficking organizations with a group home for survivors, these services are common in larger cities (Nichols 2016).

The second training, a direct service training, was held at a large Baptist church in the suburbs. A trauma psychologist, Jon (white, middle-aged man) who is a professor at a local university, presented more detailed information on the ACE study including the number of

persons with ACEs, the effects on the brain, health consequences, how this leads to distrust and effects social relationships, and suggests to staff to give survivors choice, therapy, and healthier coping mechanisms. Hope activists are trained on giving them as much choice as possible:

First thing they need to know is that they are safe. It's stressful to enter a trafficking program, they may not trust the staff right away ... We feel stress when we have no control or predictability. Choices allow them to feel in control and letting them know the plan. When reward and punishment are unpredictable and unreliable, it increases stress. Give them as much choice and control as possible. Be sensitive to how they've been treated in past relationships. Betrayal trauma is when the caregiver or parent betrays, it puts the child in a bind – resisting abuse threatens the attachment. They may dismiss feelings/memories of abuse.

(Hope ethnographic notes)

Although Hope trains staff to give survivors choice, they are not told specifically how and when. Furthermore, this information contradicts other information and norms activists are taught. In antitrafficking services, staff and volunteers are presumed to know what is best for survivors for two reasons: survivors are young or underage, and they are mentally ill or believed to be psychologically damaged from the trauma. In traditional parent and child relationships, parents are thought to always know best, and they have considerable control over children. This results in parents often making unilateral decisions for children, often based on their own socialization of morals, cultural norms, and values. This translates to antitrafficking services in several ways. First, within the group home, Care House, survivors are restricted from leaving the home, calling others, using the internet, taking pictures and going on outings where boys or men might be present. Outside the group home, survivors are encouraged to convert to Christianity and obey Christian's morals and norms (discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7).

In the last part of the training, two FBI officers, one man and one woman (both white), presented more general information on trafficking, including the causes and descriptions of what

trafficking can look like, how pimps can prey on and groom vulnerable persons, the culture of pimping in the area, and what law enforcement is doing to curb trafficking.

Symbolic pimping is all over culture. Blacksploitation. [Pimp] Ball in [city], and pimp products are made in [city]. Girls are seen as a repeatable commodity ... Some call their traffickers daddy ... Pimps prey on ANY vulnerability ... Many pimps have nicknames, some girls may not know their names. Victims may form family units under the same pimp. They also may use nicknames. Some victims become predators later ... Run demand operations National Day of John's 90 agencies in U.S. ... 4 of 5 John's in busy [neighborhood] had wives with cancer and that's why they were purchasing sex, their wives won't perform.

(Hope, ethnographic notes)

At the conclusion of their presentation, an FBI officer made comments that Beyoncé was inappropriately dressed at the Billboard Music Awards and that there is a correlation between pornography and purchasing sex, particularly because pornography is much more readily available. These comments were not by Hope staff but reflect the conservative ideologies of many of the staff and volunteers at Hope. I discuss these connections more in Chapter 6.

The third training, focused on Trauma in Children and was presented by a clinical psychologist, who teaches at the same local university. The training was held in a smaller church. He presented information on the ACE study, clinical issues, symptoms, dynamics of the perpetrator-victim relationship and trauma informed care. Again, symptoms are presented in a medical way:

Symptoms [include] depression, anxiety, and PTSD; [which are] the most common diagnoses among adult sexually abused populations. 60-80% [have] comorbid mood disorder, PTSD, and sometimes drug abuse ... When safety is lost and threat is perceived human beings experience profound changes in autonomic processes. The appearance of threat can change autonomic functioning before the individual is cognitively aware of the threat, particularly if the threat is a nonverbal or sensorimotor stimulus. When the arousal state goes too high or too low, the cortex shuts down and intellectual capacity is diminished. All children who have been abused have had to submit, activating their dorsal vagal, which causes immobilization.

(Hope, ethnographic notes)

Thus “symptoms” of trauma are not parsed out into more biological consequences (the shutting down of the dorsal vagal) and coping mechanisms (alcoholism). In doing so, the assumption is that behavior (coping mechanisms) is explained by biological differences in the brain, due to the trauma.

## **Fundraising**

Hope is the most successful in fundraising of all the organizations examined. Hope raises approximately \$1,000,000 annually, half of which is collected through their annual Gala fundraiser, and approximately 20% comes directly from churches. Hope is primarily donor funded by several fundraising events, churches, and individuals who are often connected with a church. They have previously competed for and received small grants for a survivor art show and for media projects and awareness campaigns. They have several major fundraising events throughout the year: a dance fundraiser, a 5K race, and an annual Gala. After I left the field, Hope implemented a new fundraiser, party with a purpose, which is a fundraising event in which volunteers invite their own social network over, provide food and drinks, and educate their network about Hope and raise funds. I attended four fundraisers: the dance fundraiser, a 5K race, and two Galas. During these events Sandy, the Executive Director, often speaks about the problems of sex trafficking and recent successes of the organization or survivors.

The dance fundraiser I attended was on a Saturday night, in a small dance studio, and is a representative example of the dance fundraisers. Tickets were purchased beforehand or at the door for \$25 for a single person, and \$40 for a couple. Event sponsors spent \$250 for two tickets to the event, placement of the company logo on the organization’s social media and was recognized as a sponsor for the event. I arrived early with two other volunteers, both white

women, to help set up. Attendees entered slowly, drank, ate appetizers, and mingled. Approximately 53 people were in attendance, all white except six of whom appeared Asian American. Attendees wore formal dresses and suits, while the volunteers were more casual in dress. Once the event began, a singer performed before Sandy, the Executive Director of Hope, spoke to the crowd. Sandy spoke of human trafficking generally, before speaking of Hope's recent successes: the safe house opened, and four survivors were baptized. Praising survivors for converting to Christianity was common during events, meetings, in email and on social media. Sandy's praise of survivors indicates the cultural expectation of Christianity in the spaces for survivors as well as staff and volunteers. I discuss this more in depth in Chapter 7.

After Sandy, a retired police officer thanked Sandy for her work and spoke about how far we have come by illustrating that his first experiences were arresting "child prostitutes," which he acknowledged would not be the language used today. The officer recognizes how the law and policing have come to redefine children as victims of sexual exploitation and adults as criminal prostitutes. The officer thanked Sandy for providing a safe space for survivors to heal. After the police officer spoke, a dance instructor gave a dance lesson to most of the attendees. This was followed by a dance performance by a couple, and a dance competition between four teams. Attendees voted for the best dance team with a dollar bill, the dancing couple with the most votes won.

I volunteered on the 2018 5k committee and volunteered at the 2018 5k run. Participating in the 5k committee entailed planning of the event. There were approximately 21 volunteers on the 5k volunteer list, but fewer attended the monthly meetings for planning. A pediatrician was at the meeting March 22, 2018, who said that she would be able to volunteer her services to ensure that all participants were safe on race day. The course took place in a suburban neighborhood,

with the neighborhood church hosting. The cost to register was \$13 per individual, but Hope encouraged attendees to sign up 13 people, \$13 each. There are three levels of sponsorship: \$250, \$500, and \$1000. Sponsors received a logo on Hope's race day t-shirt. Volunteers were positioned throughout the course to cheer on the runners and pass out water. I helped set up the start and finish line with water, ice, bananas, and granola bars. Before the race began, there were a few announcements made by Mary, the Director of Development; Sandy, the Executive Director, spoke; and John, the Prayer Leader, prayed for the runners, survivors, and organization. A recording was played of a few of the survivors at Care House singing the star-spangled banner. Three hundred and thirty-eight runners participated. Once the runners completed the race, they were given complimentary water, a banana, and a granola bar. Afterwards there was a family fun day full of activities for children, such as face painting, hair braiding, and two space suits. Attendees could also purchase Chick-fil-A sandwiches with water and chips for \$5, and a portion of the profits went to Hope.

I volunteered at the 2017 and 2018 annual Gala fundraisers, which took place in different hotel conference rooms in the southwest suburbs of the city. I attempted to volunteer for the 2018 Gala planning committee but was unable due to a scheduling conflict. The Gala event included drinks, a gourmet dinner, auctions, a paddle raise, dancing, and music. My duties for both events were to supervise the prizes. Prizes at the event included 200 bottles of wine at \$40 each; 100 glasses of champagne at \$100 each, one of which had a diamond at the bottom; 36 gift cookies/gift cards at \$25 each; travel packages; sporting events; food and entertainment; and artwork and jewelry. Sponsorship started at \$2,500 and went up to \$25,000, which pays for a table for 8 or 10, recognition as a sponsor at the event, on the event program, in the presentation, on the event website, and social media. The most expensive sponsorships get a half page ad in

the event program. Attendees stay out late eating dinner, socializing, and being entertained. The Gala fundraisers raise approximately \$500,000 each year. In comparison to both Church Ladies and Break the Cycle, Hope is the most successful at raising donations from churches, community members, businesses, and other organizations, which allows Hope to offer more comprehensive services, such as their residential space, described in detail in the next section. Hope offers more comprehensive services, including permanent housing, which the other two programs do not. Eighty percent of Hope's costs are spent on the safe house. The house was donated to Hope, and costs are focused on staffing and healing. There is a lack of research on donations made to antitrafficking programs. However, government funding shows that antitrafficking programs receive between \$87,328 and \$8,817,916 per award between 2004 and 2021 (Office for Victims of Crime 2022). There have been 788 awards, which are often given out for one-year time spans, for a total of \$507,007,384.

### **Safe House**

Hope operates a safe house, Care House, which opened in January 2016 and initially provided 10 beds for girls and women ages 10 through 21. Once the transitional home for adults opened in 2020, Care House served girls from 11 to 17, and women 18 to 25 were provided services in the transitional home. The goal of the safe house is so that, "exploited children are able to heal, play, complete their education, and reclaim the path of freedom and hope." Funds support life skills/support (30%), administration (6%), family or DCFS liaison (7%), education (7%), vocational training (7%), therapies (22%), food, clothing, and toiletries (8%), intake (6%), and supervision (6%; organizational document). The house counselor (whose title is now survivor advocate, a change that occurred after I completed my fieldwork) reported that half the residents of the safe home are black and half white. The home is certified and inspected by The



Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The location of Care House is geographically isolated and not given out freely, even family of survivors who reside at the house meet in public to keep the location secure and private. The goal of keeping the location secure and private is so that traffickers cannot find the survivors. There is also a small security team, operated by Bruce (Hope volunteer, Asian American man, 40), a current National Guard military professional, that monitors and protects the location. Due to security concerns, the girls and women are not able to come and go as they please, which prevents survivors from obtaining a job or attending school. This is part of what led to the planning of the transitional program discussed below. Services at Care House include medical, individual and group therapy, homeschooling, training in daily life skills, exercise, and emotional support. Survivors also paint and join in on other arts and crafts, interact with a dog who is being trained as a therapy dog, go on outings, and other fun activities. The major complaints from the survivors are the strict rules for the home and the infrequent outings due to staffing issues or if one of the residents is on restriction. Restrictions are placed on residents by staff, but it is unclear what leads to restrictions. Over the period of one year, the safe house provided services to 15 girls and women.

Residents attend counseling services two times a week, and psychiatric services as needed. Furthermore, the survivor advocate (previously titled house counselor) who works within the home, sees the residents of the safe house five days a week. There are no formal evaluations of services. Sandy, the Executive Director, has a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.), but it is unclear how much supervision is given.

### **Transitional Home**

In 2020, Hope opened a transitional program, Daring House, for young adult women aged 18 to 25, with the goal of providing ongoing support for Care House graduates and young

adult women needing support after exiting sex trafficking or sexual exploitation. Their program is trauma-informed and a therapeutic environment to address the needs of young adults. Daring house offers individual and group therapies, vocational and life skills training, and opportunities for higher education (Hope website). This living environment allows young women to have their own living space, while they are healing. Furthermore, they are able to obtain a job, go to school, and have fewer restrictions than Care House.

### **Mentorship**

Hope runs a mentor program wherein each of the residents are assigned to a mentor. Other survivors not residing at Care House or Daring House may also receive mentorship services. Over one year, 15 persons received mentoring services, but this number has likely grown because Hope serves more survivors. The organization requires mentors to volunteer for at least a year in a non-direct role. The organizations' goal is to vet the prospective mentor to ensure fit for mentorship, while also conducting necessary background checks. I did not apply to volunteer for mentorship, as I understood the requirements that volunteers must work for one year in a non-direct role prior. All mentors I met with were evangelical. Only allowing survivors to be surrounded by Christians helps to encourage survivors to convert to Christianity and internalize Christian cultural norms and values. Yet, limiting who survivors are allowed to spend time with is a similar control tactic used by abusers (National Domestic Violence Hotline 2020) and cults (Perrodin 2021). This is discussed in more depth in Chapter 7.

### **24/7 Hotline**

Hope operates a 24-hr hotline operated by volunteers. The purpose of the hotline is to help in an emergency, answer questions, and provide referrals for services. If there is a person in

crisis, the hotline operator reaches out to the First Responder's team, who then meets with the survivor. The First Responder's team helps provide immediate resources and referrals, such as hygiene products and finding services and placement in a healing program, as needed. I did not work as a volunteer on the hotline, because volunteers are required to work for one year in a non-direct role before moving to a direct role.

### **Education and Prevention**

Hope also conducts education and prevention training with children (and sometimes their parents), typically in schools and churches. During my time in the field, I volunteered for the Education and Prevention team, which met approximately once every two months. I attended six education meetings. There were approximately 7 to 14 volunteers in each meeting, most of whom were white women. Two white men and a few women of color were also on the team and showed up to meetings occasionally. The curriculum is designed to be after school because some parents do not want their children to learn about trafficking. Their curriculum focuses on parents and children in churches and schools (after hours), which is based on the age group of the children in the audience. My ethnographic notes illustrate:

Younger children, up to 3rd grade, trainings focus on safety issues and bodies, bad touches, and not real friends (ones that make you keep secrets). After 3rd grade start talking about sexual abuse. After 6th grade start talking about sex trafficking. Christian schools push back, they don't want the school to talk to their children about sex. Spotters look out for children who might look like something is going on. Engage kids to develop rapport and let them know we are safe people.

(Hope ethnographic notes)

There was no formal evaluation of the educational program, however, the group planned on creating a form for student feedback in June 2018. After a recent educational event, Sandy and Dana reported that the high school girls were distracted with their phones during a presentation

to 100 high school girls with their mothers. Dana suggested having a phone free zone, with selfies beforehand to avoid audience distraction in the future.

During my time volunteering at Hope, the education team planned and worked on finding schools and churches to present the curriculum to. We also discussed expanding the curriculum to include information on grooming; discussed trafficking in the nearby suburbs; read the book *Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children and Teenagers Safe* by Gavin DeBecker; planned to develop brochures, flyers, and cards; and planned to expand the educational curriculum for those in the healthcare field, truck drivers, and hotel and hospitality staff. During my first meeting, Chatche, the Education Director, ran the meetings and first went over the four upcoming educational events in the next two months and did a general overview of their educational program. Out of the four planned events in the next two months, two of the events were for parents, one was for an African American leadership program, and one was for a kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade school. She stated that the purpose of education is to encourage abused children to open up about what has happened to them. Erin's Law was passed in the state, which mandates that children are taught about abuse, but the legislation is unfunded. Erin's law has been passed in 37 states and pending in 13 more (Erin's Law 2022). Organizations must pay for resources and organize the training for students. In January 2018, after Chatche stepped down as Education Director, Sandy, the Executive Director, spoke at educational events, which decreased in frequency.

### **Religious Identity**

Hope is an overtly evangelical organization, and most organizational events held prayers either before or after. Hope is similar in religious identity to the Church Ladies, and both programs are more religious than Break the Cycle. Indirect volunteers can be any religion, but

most are Christian. The organization is overtly evangelical, utilizing prayer and Christian symbols and language in office spaces, trainings, emails, and social media. Christianity shapes Hope in three different ways: the services provided to survivors, the organization recruits out of churches and within church networks, and the staff and volunteers practice Christianity during most events and meetings. The safe house openly practices Christianity in the house, although the survivor advocate, staff, and volunteers report that it is not forced on anyone. Although providing services is the primary objective, evangelizing is secondary. This has a normalizing effect on survivors' overtime, who are surrounded by nearly all Christians, who encourage Christian cultural norms and values, services, prayers, and other activities such as attending a Christian church. A few people come in and teach Christianity in groups. Those who convert to Christianity are celebrated by staff and volunteers.

Paid staff are Christian and much of the recruitment for staff and volunteers occurs through the churches in the area. Fifteen of the 16 (94%) staff and volunteers I interviewed were Christian, while one of the volunteers had no religious affiliation. Most of the staff and volunteers used Christian language during conversation and some women wore cross necklaces. They believe that with prayer and action, change can occur. For example:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
I long for us to be the community that prays not just prayers of words lifted to the throne of Heaven, but prayers that intercede on behalf of one another. Too often, my prayers are more like a list of issues, struggles, and praises I tell God. But, God's word says, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." We are all made righteous when we have Jesus as our LORD and, therefore, our prayers are powerful and effective. God somehow superpowers our prayers, prayed in His Spirit and in His Will, to truly change the course of events. I have been blessed by the prayers of many of you and want you to know that we will pray and intercede before the omnipotent God of the universe on your behalf if you want ... I am praying for you, our community. Please let us know if there are any prayer requests you may have so that we can intercede on your behalf!!!

(Hope email)

Emails like this were common throughout my time in the field. Hope has a prayer team that sends out religious emails consisting of prayers, encouragement, religious scripture, and prayer requests. The volunteer prayer team collects prayer requests and the volunteer on duty prays. Volunteers cover the prayer calendar 24 hours a day, seven days a week in six-hour shifts and focus on the healing and evangelization of trafficking survivors; the well-being of the organization, volunteers/staff, and law enforcement; increased education and awareness among the public; and any other special requests. They collect prayer requests mostly through email, but they can come in through text or phone calls. On the first Friday of the month volunteers are asked to fast for one meal while engaging in prayer.

### **Evaluations of Hope**

Evaluations are systematic methods for examining the effectiveness of programs with the goal of improving the program continuously (Centers for Disease Control, 2022). Program evaluation is important to ensure outcomes are met and to ensure monies are being utilized efficiently. Furthermore, evaluations help to identify best investments, and to establish and maintain best practices. Hope evaluates services informally and in a non-systematic way. However, after a year in the field, on June 23, 2018, Hope began seeking formal feedback from students after educational events. Systematic evaluations were not implemented in other areas of services. In this section, I examine the evaluation data I collected from staff, volunteers, and one survivor.

To evaluate survivor services, Hope leadership will ask residents questions and seek feedback about services during conversations. Sandy reports:

We, we do hear from our girls that they, even if they don't like the rules, or they feel controlled, or you know, some of the other complaints that, that teenagers say, um, they all do feel loved

(Sandy, 47, Chinese American woman, Hope staff)

Sandy recognizes that most complaints from survivors surround the rules and feeling controlled, but then minimizes these complaints due to survivors being teenagers. She likens these complaints to normal teenage complaints. What Sandy does not acknowledge here is that because trafficking survivors have experienced trauma and abuse in the context of being controlled, that this controlling context may be retraumatizing for survivors. The group home is more controlling than most other contexts, survivors are not allowed to leave by themselves; are restricted in what activities they do leave for; restricted in who and when they make phone calls; internet usage; taking pictures; and are discouraged from engaging in behavior that is sexual in nature (such as dancing and/or trying to get attention from boys or men).

Evaluations of Hope by one survivor was mostly positive, while evaluations from the staff and volunteers were overwhelmingly positive. I did not have contact with survivors within the group home, as they were minors, and was only able to interview one survivor from Hope who is an adult and did not seek services in the residential program. Thus, these evaluations cannot be generalized to all Hope survivors. I will address the evaluations of the survivor first before discussing the evaluations of staff and volunteers. Cupcake received services from Hope for two years as a mentee. She has never lived in the Care House. Prior to receiving services from Hope, Cupcake was receiving services from a different program, which she describes as "awful," and was considering a lawsuit against the previous organization. She described the

previous antitrafficking program (not described in this research) as engaging in labor trafficking practices:

I think programs like that, it's like, not all programs is good ...if [victims] get out of traffick, and then basically going to another one, basically being trafficked, but without sex, it's still like the same thing, and it still bothers them, to where it lures them back into being sex trafficked again. And, I think that is like, you know, people that have these, um, you know, these um, non-profit organizations, people should really like talk to them, the girls privately, or whatever, because there's a lot of these people that's in the non-profit organization, that's owning it, is really just doing it for the money or whatever, and I have been a victim of being in, um, of being in a, um, program like that. So, yeah, it's deep.

(Cupcake, 22, African American woman, Hope survivor)

For Cupcake, the problem with these programs is that they are allowed to operate despite the fact that they are breaking the law and engaging in labor trafficking. She also describes the impact that this has on survivors, who are retraumatized by the experience, leave the program and go back to their sex trafficking experience. She alludes to the fact that antitrafficking organizations are unregulated but *should* be regulated. She is correct, there is no one providing oversight to ensure that antitrafficking programs are providing adequate services and not retraumatizing victims. Cupcake left this program and got in touch with the “feds” (FBI) to discuss the labor trafficking she experienced within this program. The FBI recommended Cupcake seek services with Hope. Cupcake evaluations of Hope were generally positive, rating the organization a 9 out of 10, with 10 being the best.

I've never been like around them 24/7, but from when I call them, they help, or whatever. So, I think it's, I think it's good, I think they're good, yeah ... I think if a girl didn't work out, and my opinions that, it's because of, you know, that girl and what she's going through, and I think that's just that, cause, you know, you can't help all people. But, other than that, you can make it far with them. They're good.

(Cupcake, Hope Survivor, African American woman, 22)

But she did have a negative encounter with a staff member, which she described:



Um, I really like everyone, I had my differences with [staff], but it was like, you know, cause I guess they're used to rough girls, and I guess she was talking to me rough one time, and I told [staff], "You know, every girl is not the same." So, I guess it's based off her experiences with all these girls, and she feels like she has to be rough with them. I was like, "you don't have to be rough with every girl, because I understand everything, you don't have to talk to me, you know, any type of way," and after that conversation everything went like great, like she calmed down, she been talking to me correctly. Uh, she been helping me, making sure I stay focused on my books and everything. So, everything has been a blast.

(Cupcake, Hope survivor, African American woman, 22)

From Cupcake's perspective, the staff person began the interaction with her from an adversarial position without knowing Cupcake. This conversation between Cupcake and staff raises questions about services being trauma-informed, adequate training, and expectations of staff. In her story, Cupcake is the one that must deescalate the situation and remind staff that she should speak to survivors with respect and dignity. This contradicts Hope's goals in healing, which focus on building a healthy and secure attachment to staff. Survivors are going to be less likely to be able to build a secure attachment and learn about healthy relationships when staff are not modeling and teaching these. Fortunately, Cupcake builds a good relationship with this staff overtime. Cupcakes' other complaint about Hope is that she felt that Hope was understaffed and a little unorganized.

Overall evaluations from the 16 staff and volunteers were positive. Many of the respondents stated that the staff and volunteers are dedicated, loving, and are willing to do anything to meet survivors' needs. However, many of the challenges reported reflected the difficult nature of the problem of trafficking, the difficulty in survivors accepting such a different lifestyle, and limited resources. Lucee, who has worked with several antitrafficking organizations states that it is one of the best she has worked with:

It's honestly, I've worked at a few different ones and they're one of the best that I've worked with, whether volunteer capacity or employment. And, I say that

because they really do a great job, not only in the [Care] house, the house isn't easy. Um, you know, we see a lot of runaways and we see a lot of dropouts, but we also see a lot of great successes. They just recently had a girl graduate the program and is now going to college.

(Lucee, Hope staff, white woman, 29)

Lucee's prior experience in working in antitrafficking programs (because they are relatively new) is rare; most are new to the antitrafficking field. She goes on to report that the reason she feels that Hope is one of the best she's worked for is due to the success rate of girls graduating from the program and going to college and Hope's involvement in the community, including involving those who want to help. Hope's ability to engage the community and pull in volunteers outpaces that of the other two organizations.

In terms of successes of the organization, most of the staff and volunteers pointed to individual success stories of the girls and women in Care House. For instance, when they graduate from high school, enroll in college, or have been baptized, staff see this as a cause for celebration. This finding matches previous research on evangelicalism. Many evangelical Christians point to individual successes, individualistic solutions to social problems, and the importance of each individual life "saved" (Emerson, Smith, and Sikkink 1999; Munson 2009). Individualistic solutions are justified by beliefs that every person is valuable, which are common in white evangelical culture. While every person does have value, it is simplistic and limited in terms of effectiveness. Broader social changes, like reducing racism, sexism, and poverty, prevent the conditions that allow sex trafficking to occur. Other less common successes focus on the organization, and the relationships and partnerships with other organizations, such as law enforcement.

Most common challenges reported for the organization are focused on limited resources, such as funding, and the emotional toll of the work, particularly on those who work directly with

survivors. Like domestic violence survivors, survivors of trafficking may go back to their abuser, which is difficult for staff and volunteers to witness.

I would say just the challenge of how hard it is, for people who've been hurt that badly to trust and how often they're gonna quit and come back, and hopefully come back. But how hard it's going to be when you see someone's value, and you've invested so much love and care, and you know how much God, when you know He has so much better plans for that person, and to see them go back. I would think it would be the hardest thing, and then, to just keep going.

(Rachel, Hope volunteer, white woman, 51)

For Rachel, there is an emotional toll that comes with becoming close with a survivor of trafficking when they leave and return to their trafficker. Another aspect for Rachel is the amount of time and care that an activist puts into the relationship, for them to leave. She alludes to the fact that it hurts and is the “hardest” aspect of the job, but they are expected to continue to keep going, and keep showing up to assist trafficking survivors. This pain is like the pain experience in other fields such as nurses, domestic violence advocates and counselors. Research suggests that these stressors and pain can be reduced by formal and informal training opportunities, creating a support team at work, and learning emotional management to reduce burnout and improve overall wellbeing (Bierema 2008; Morris 2008). At the same time, staff report that they feel supported by their colleagues and engage in self-care practices when needed.

Less commonly reported challenges for the organization include parents not wanting their children to be taught about trafficking, security of the safe house, and the difficulty in having mostly teens in a group home setting, such as discipline and making sure they are stimulated enough by leaving the home for activities. Although only mentioned once by a respondent, another challenge is releasing the survivor back to a good home environment. Releasing a survivor into an unstable or destructive environment might increase the chances of returning to a trafficker or sex work. Previous research does report activists' concerns about releasing survivors

back to their home environment, particularly in a foreign context, where survivors maybe stigmatized for illegal migration and sex work (Nichols 2016). These survivors may be discriminated against, harassed, or thrown out of their family home. Next, I turn to an examination of Church Ladies.

### **Church Ladies**

The second organization, Church Ladies, was founded in 2009, and has grown to 15 chapters throughout the metropolitan area, with 100 volunteers. This is the second largest organization out of the three. There is no permanent office space, but space is provided on an ad hoc basis, usually by churches. Volunteers typically work from home. The organizational structure is wide and flat. The Church Ladies consists of the Executive Director, Michelle (white woman, 50) who oversees the whole program. Survivors describe Michelle as a friend, support system, and family. In my own observations Michelle is caring, listens with an empathetic ear, and wants to help. Michelle has a small team of managers, also called directors, that run different aspects of the operation. For instance, there is a Safe Home Initiative, which provides temporary housing in crisis situations. This is overseen by the Safe Home director, Nyla. Michelle also works closely with 15 different chapter leaders, meeting with them once a month. Chapters are required to be church sponsored and range in size. Chapter leaders and members must be trained by Michelle, the Executive Director, before beginning a new chapter. These chapter leaders oversee their local chapter's volunteers. There are no paid staff, everyone is a volunteer, including the Executive Director, Michelle. Most volunteers are Christian, white, middle-class women, with an average age of 38.

## **Outreach**

The Church Ladies reach out to women whom they suspect might be in a trafficking situation. They typically reach out to women posting ads soliciting sex, women dancing in strip clubs, and women working in Asian-themed spas. I was not allowed to participate in outreach to potential trafficking victims because I was not connected to a church with a chapter. These data come from activists reporting their activities to me, and not observation. To find women soliciting sex online, activists search for online postings by women in the area and call the woman's phone number. When they call the number, they ask the woman if they can pray for her, and how Church Ladies can help her. Survivors report distrust and suspicion when Church Ladies contact them. If they find someone who they suspect is under the age of 18, they report the ad directly to the police. When I first entered the field in 2017, many of the volunteers used Backpage.com to search for women. However, in April 2018 Backpage.com was seized by the FBI and the founder was arrested (Porter, 2018). Although a popular website for soliciting sex, Backpage was just one of many websites and many more remain in business. In a call with Michelle after I left the field, she revealed that she began using a new program, which searched for phone numbers attached to ads selling sex, and then Church Ladies will text those numbers. The program was given to the Church Ladies for free from another antitrafficking organization from another state.

The second method of outreach is done in person at Asian-themed spas and strip clubs the Church Ladies believe serve as fronts for sex trafficking. Unlike many other large cities, there are few strip clubs inside the city, and most are in the suburbs. They identify businesses they suspect may be a front for sex trafficking, which are reported to have doorbells, locked doors, and security cameras. The Church Ladies often bring gift bags or food for the women and

try to develop a rapport with the manager or bartender so they can talk to the women without incident. This is a new tactic, not reported in previous research by Shih (2016). She finds that antitrafficking activist police poor and minority communities and will approach women in the street and inside massage parlors, but not their managers. Another departure from tactics previously documented, Church Ladies activists develop a rapport with them by bringing them gift bags once a month, mostly containing hygiene products, home cooked food, and other small gifts, hoping these women will contact the Church Ladies when they want help leaving their current situation. They often ask if they can pray, how the women are doing, and if they need anything. Here activists are utilizing an individualistic solution of ‘rescuing’ trafficking victims, without police knowledge or support. Church Ladies does work with law enforcement, so it is unclear why they do not call police if presented with a trafficking operation. Furthermore, if these businesses are serving as a front for sex trafficking, then their actions do little to prevent more trafficking victims from entering a trafficking situation. Once Church Ladies interacts with a survivor who wants services, they offer referrals to other services, which they will assist in the funding.

### **Referrals**

The Church Ladies does not offer any services directly, but refers survivors to other services, which they assist in paying for and the transportation to and from each service. For instance, Church Ladies refer and pay for services for counseling, medical services, college tuition, groceries, hotels for temporary housing, job readiness training, transportation (which may include the purchase of a vehicle), child-related services, computers, household items, dental care, and legal costs. They do not provide permanent housing or funding for rent but will assist survivors to find these. Volunteers first develop a relationship with the survivor, and then

discuss what services are needed, and if deemed reasonable and feasible, then Church Ladies provide the funding for those services. Services are provided relatively quickly, often within a day and transportation such as Uber is provided. In an emergency, Church Ladies provide transportation and temporary housing in a hotel, or in a volunteer's home, until the survivor determines whether she wants to go into a long-term program or not. Once the woman is receiving services, she is discouraged from engaging in sex work, and is required to show up and participate in those services. As one survivor stated:

They, definitely strict, they, once I was, once a car was donated to me, I definitely had to continue to go to therapy, and the job training. And, if I miss a session, you know, I definitely got that warning, like "hey, you know, you do this," you know, the car won't be released to you. So. They're strict in a good way.

(Roxy, Church Ladies survivor, black woman, 25)

Although survivors acknowledge that they are strict in their requirements, they interpret it as a positive aspect to keeping them on track. Church Ladies does this so that women stay on track to meet their goals and get the help they need, but also to protect themselves from being taken advantage of. Women who fail to show up for counseling or an Uber ride may be restricted from services in the future.

### **Temporary Housing**

Although the Church Ladies does not have permanent housing, there are two options for temporary housing: a hotel or staying in a volunteer's home, Secure Home (pseudonym for the program). The decision on when temporary housing is provided depends on the survivor's preferences and circumstances. Typically, survivors are provided with housing in an emergency, such as escaping a dangerous situation, or if they are considering a long-term recovery program and are waiting for placement. A hotel placement allows survivors some respite and alone time. Sometimes the hotel environment of staying in a hotel can trigger survivor's trauma or entice

them back into the sex trade. Often hotels are where sex trafficking survivors are sold, which may retrigger traumatic memories, while for others the isolation is difficult. In contrast, Secure Home is a home placement in the basement of one volunteer's home, who has four children. The Church Ladies heavily screens before placement in the volunteer's home. While in the home, the family attempts to make the survivor feel part of the family by having them eat with the family and go on outings with the family. Typically, survivors may stay up to 10 days, but longer stays are allowed when waiting for placement in a long-term program.

### **Training Law Enforcement**

Law Enforcement Training (LET) is a distinct program, run by Church Ladies, which focuses on training law enforcement on trafficking and proposing new state laws to end human trafficking in the state. I did not volunteer or observe any meetings or meet anyone on the LET team in my time on the field. The LET program team consists of a police officer, two professors from a nearby university, a lawyer, a therapist, and a paralegal. LET is affiliated with Church Ladies but run as a distinct program.

### **Education / Training**

The Church Ladies also engage in education and awareness activities in the community focused on sex trafficking, pornography, sextortion (which is threatening to reveal the victims' sexual activity unless the victim provides sexual favors or money to the extortionist) and sexting (sexually explicit text messaging). There are two education teams, six volunteers on the awareness team, and three on the juvenile detention team. They present information to churches, schools, juvenile detentions, and other community spaces. I volunteered for the Education team. I attended one of their presentations, *Human Trafficking 101*, in which two of the volunteers,



Nyla, the Safe Home Director, and Lisa, a therapist, presented basic facts about sex trafficking. A visual was presented with a child trapped in a space, and around the child was a circle of mechanisms and social processes that are used to keep children in a trafficking situation. They provided general information about trafficking and their organization. During their presentation, Church Ladies argue that pornography is closely tied to sex trafficking but does not explain how:

Lisa takes over presenting and argues that there is a connection between porn and sex trafficking. She sees porn addicts and sees what it does to their life. She presents some information about porn: 90% of porn is violent today; 10% positive/healthy sexual behavior takes place in porn.

(Church Ladies, ethnographic notes)

Interestingly, Lisa acknowledges that some porn is healthy and positive, but does not elaborate on how this may affect outcomes in comparison to violent porn. She also does not explain how pornography and sex trafficking are connected, just that they are. Church Ladies are the most vocal in suggesting that pornography leads to sex trafficking. Activists connecting sex trafficking and pornography occurs repeatedly throughout my time in the field, which is discussed at length in the following chapter. Many of the educational events are done in coordination with other organizations like Hope, Break the Cycle, Safe Space, local law enforcement, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, politicians, and churches in the area.

More recently, a sextortion and sexting curriculum was developed for teens using a real-life scenario.

Julie and Romeo are freshman students at the same high school. Romeo is on the JV football team. A few weeks after school starts, they meet at a Friday night football game and add each other on Snapchat. Julie has a crush on Romeo, so later that weekend she snaps a cute selfie. It only takes a few minutes for him to chat back: Nice. He responds with his own picture, a snap of his shirtless abs with the caption: Your Turn. Julie giggles, embarrassed, but also excited that he's interested in her. She takes a picture with her shirt pulled down over her shoulder but deletes it. Then she takes one that shows more cleavage, and finally deletes that, too. She's in high school now and boys expect to see skin. She takes off the

shirt and sends a picture in her bra. It only shows her from the stomach up, no worse than a bikini. What could be the harm? ... Romeo screenshots the snap. On Monday, when he's in the locker room getting ready for football practice, he shows the screenshot to his best friend. He's surprised Julie sent the picture and he's hoping to get some advice on how he should ask her out. "I didn't even ask her to send it! What do I do next?" Dale, an 18-year-old varsity football player, overheard the conversation. "You guys talking about Julie Smith? She's a freshman, right?" Romeo ignores him, but his friend confirms. "Yeah, she sent Romeo a bra shot after the game." ... On Tuesday, Dale seeks out Julie in the hallway between classes. "I heard you're sending pics around," he says. "When can I get one?" Julie's face turns red, and she tries to walk away. How does he already know? "I don't even know what you're talking about. I gotta get to class." But Dale follows her and grabs her by the arm. He pulls her close to him and whispers in her ear, "Listen, I've got the screenshot on my phone and can share it with my whole contact list... or you can send me a nude. You decide." The idea of Dale sharing the picture of Julie in her bra with everyone on his contact list is enough to make her sick. She doesn't want to, but she sends a nude picture to Dale anyway. Dale screenshots it right away and then forwards it in a text thread he has with a bunch of his buddies from the football team. A few of them pass it to other friends that go to different schools. None of the boys even think twice. By the following day, nearly 40 people have access to Julie's nude photo. ... The nude picture gets back to Romeo... and so does word that Dale sent it to a ton of other people. Romeo looks for Julie at school the next day, but she isn't there. He starts to get worried that she skipped because of everything that is happening with the picture. He knows Julie will probably get upset with him, but he tells the football coach what has happened. It's eating him up inside that all this started after he showed the first picture of Julie in her bra to his friend. He can't imagine how uncomfortable she must feel. The football coach tells Romeo that what has happened is known as "sextortion." He reports the sextortion incident to the proper authorities the very same day. Less than a week after Julie sent the initial bra shot to Romeo, Dale is charged with a felony for the solicitation, possession and distribution of childhood pornography. He is added to the registered sex offender list. He will be required to disclose his sex offender status on every college application and job application for the rest of his life. His full-ride football scholarship to a great university is revoked, and he spends time in jail. When he is released, he is unable to rent an apartment or purchase a home because of the record. The other football players on the team are charged according to their ages and their level of involvement in the incident. Some, who like Dale are 18 and forwarded the picture to others, receive felonies and are added to the sex offender list. The football players under 18 receive misdemeanors and probation. Some of these boys have never even met Julie. As for Julie, she becomes depressed and drops out of her current high school. Her self-esteem plummets, and sadly she loses touch with many of her former friends. Romeo carries the guilt of having been involved at the onset of this whole situation. He sees how extreme the consequences have become for Dale and some of the other football players. He's

very aware of how different Julie is now than before. Although he won't be charged legally on his permanent record, the stress of his involvement leads him to a breaking point. He commits suicide two weeks after receiving the original picture of Julie. (Romeo's story closely mimics that of a real student from [state].)  
(Church Ladies, organizational documents)

Throughout the story, the Church Ladies educational team discusses the implications and consequences of the case and asks teens to speculate as to what happens next. After, students are then asked to identify trusted adults at home, at school, and in the community, who they could turn to for help. According to their website, the Church Ladies developed the sextortion curriculum for the purpose of: “1) to provide safe opportunities for teens to engage in conversation regarding sextortion 2) To inform teens about the short-term and long-term consequences of engaging in sextortion behaviors 3) To connect teens with resources and trusted people.” The curriculum warns teens not to send nude pictures to anybody, despite research showing that sending nude pictures is a common phenomenon among teens. In a meta-analysis of 110,380 participants, 14.8% of teens report sending a sext, while 27.4% reported receiving a sext (Madigan et al. 2018). This research shows that as the teen ages, the more likely it is they will send a sext. Furthermore, their research shows that 12% of teens forward a sext without the consent of the person, and 8.4% had a sext forwarded without their consent. Because this curriculum is so new, I was not able to observe this training, but did have access to the organizational documents for it. An important aspect of this training which is missing is the coercion piece. Teaching teens about building trust overtime in healthy relationships and coercion might assist them to understand why it is not a good idea to sext someone (which may end poorly), particularly someone they do not know well or that is coercing them to send a sext. Teaching individuals that all sexting is wrong or bad, does little to teach them about when sexting might be safe and okay.

## **John Helpline**

A John Helpline was implemented at the end of my time in the field but was later abandoned. The Church Ladies developed services for men who struggle with sex addiction, cybersex, pornography, and pornography addiction. Church Ladies would put an ad on Backpage, which would redirect men to their website, who were struggling with sex addiction. Men had access to a hotline, which they could call, email, or send a message through the website, and speak to another man about any issues. The website offered resources for sexual compulsion and addiction, Sexaholics Anonymous, information on pornography and cybersex, Christian recovery groups, online groups, referrals, and sex addiction screening. The goal is to train men to answer the help line and educate other men about sex and pornography addiction. However, after Backpage was taken down, the program struggled to retain the numbers to maintain the program and it was abandoned. Out of the three organizations I studied, The Church Ladies were much more vocal about the connections between pornography, purchasing sex, and sex trafficking. While I was interviewing a volunteer of Church Ladies, Lisa, a therapist, reported that her husband, also a therapist, was in the next room running a group for men with pornography addiction through their joint practice.

## **Fundraising**

The organization raised slightly over \$87,000 in 2015 (GuideStar 2019<sup>1</sup>). The organization receives donations from churches, and the Bridal Boutique, although most funds are received from partner churches. The Church Ladies opened a Bridal Boutique in 2017, which aimed to increase funding of the organization. There are approximately 20 volunteers working at the Bridal Boutique. Traditional wedding dresses are donated to the Bridal Boutique, and then sold at 50% to 80% of the original price. They have approximately 250 wedding dresses and also

sell accessories such as veils, shoes, and jewelry. As I was leaving the field, the Bridal Boutique proceeds have already paid for ten women to go to weekly counseling and purchased four cars for women.

### **Religious Identity**

The Church Ladies is an overtly Christian organization, and six of the seven (88%) volunteers I spoke with were Christian. The one non-Christian activist identifies as Hindu but attended Catholic school and “likes” Christianity. Almost everyone working with Church Ladies is Christian. Chapter members are required to be Christians and to be sponsored by the church. Non-direct staff, such as those involved in education, are allowed to be of any religion, or non-religious. Activists in the organization speak about their faith in their everyday language and many wear Christian symbols, such as a cross necklace. Activists’ events begin and end in prayer. Before a chapter can officially commence operations, the chapter members are expected to pray for months beforehand. When conducting outreach to women, many of the volunteers ask the survivor if they may pray. If the survivor says no, Church Ladies activists report that they do not push any further. The Church Ladies also has a prayer team, with prayer team leaders, who collect and disperse prayer requests. Prayer requests are often concerning the people Church Ladies meet or talk to on the phone, the volunteers, and getting more volunteers for the chapters. Ivy (white woman, 32), a prayer team leader, ends each week with requests for prayers for all the abused, the pimps, madams, traffickers, and clients.

### **Evaluations of the Church Ladies**

Church Ladies evaluates services informally, typically by checking in with the survivor whether the services were satisfactory. It is unclear how consistently these are done. Survivors’

and activists' evaluations of Church Ladies were overwhelmingly positive. I spoke with 10 survivors who receive services through Church Ladies, and seven volunteers. I will begin with evaluations by the survivors. The survivors mostly reported how personal, friendly, and loving the members of Church Ladies are. Survivors were asked to rate Church Ladies from 1 to 10, with one being poor and 10 being fantastic. Six survivors rate Church Ladies a 10, and one rated them a 20 out of 10. One survivor stated,

First, they help you. They're absolutely amazing, they treat me amazing, especially Ms. [Michelle], she makes me feel like family, like Ms. [Michelle] is my friend. Like, she's not just some service just trying to help me. Like, I genuinely care about her wellbeing. She genuinely cares about my wellbeing. If there is something funny that we think of that reminds us of that person, we'll send it to each other. Like she just makes me feel like family. She makes me feel loved.

(Mandy, Church Ladies survivor, white woman, 32)

This was a typical type of response when talking about Church Ladies activists, who provide the type of support which is characteristic of a family member. Activists provide emotional support, encouragement, show they care, and provide financial support and referrals. They answer phone calls and texts into the night and on the weekends, like a friend or family member would, which is not characteristic of more formalized workplaces (such as Break the Cycle). This type of extra care shows survivors that the Church Ladies are ready and willing to help as much as they can. At times, activists do become burnt out, in which case they let survivors know that they will be unavailable for a day to a couple days to recuperate.

I spoke with seven volunteers about the services that Church Ladies provides. Evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, but two volunteers acknowledged the need for services is much greater than what they can provide at times. Although survivors and volunteers

both evaluate the services as positive, when I asked Michelle, the Executive Director about the services provided, she reported that survivors most appreciate that someone cares.

Honestly, I don't even know if it's the services we provide. It's that somebody cares, they know that somebody cares, and they've said that to me over and over. A girl that's in central [state]. I know when I leave her, she always said, and I know I already told you this, it gets me teary-eyed. She is always like don't tell me goodbye, don't tell me goodbye. She says I wish I could stay all day. She just, she had one of the worst cases of sexual abuse that the juvenile detention center had ever seen. And, she's had a really rough life, but she has a really tender heart. You know? So, for her, is it because I Uber her to, well I don't, but [Church Ladies] Ubers her to work or wherever? No, I mean it shows we care too, but she knows that I care.

(Michelle, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 50)

When asked about successes of the organization, the volunteers of Church Ladies usually pointed to examples of women transitioning out of 'the life' and developing relationships with them.

Again, evangelical activists focus on individualistic solutions by "rescuing" one survivor at a time, rather than broad systematic changes. Although less commonly reported, several volunteers suggested that successes were the "great" leadership and the organization, specifically being able to have chapters in different areas of the city. The challenge for Church Ladies is the difficulty of the task, of breaking the cycle of exploitation, including the difficulty in breaking down survivor's emotional walls, and keeping enough volunteers. Lisa, a licensed therapist, argues that leaving "the life" is more difficult than breaking an addiction. Other, less commonly reported challenges include the need for affordable housing, and sometimes having difficulty in working with other organizations, particularly when there may be overlaps in providing services. Next, I turn to an examination of Break the Cycle, the smallest of the programs.

### **Break the Cycle**

The third organization, Break the Cycle, was founded in 2006, and is the smallest in size with 6 paid staff, and approximately 20 volunteers. Break the Cycle is a program underneath a

larger evangelical organization, Freedom Ministry (a pseudonym). Break the Cycle has the most hierarchy and structure because it is under Freedom Ministry, which emphasizes local control that is accountable for following national standards. Break the Cycle has several different office spaces throughout the metropolitan area, and one downtown drop-in space with office space. There is one supervisor who is a white woman, and five women who are full-time social work staff (also referred to as case managers), and a handful of interns. All paid staff are white women with master's degrees in social work, one of whom identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Break the Cycle staff tend to be younger, with an average age of 29. There were women of color at the initial training I attended, including two African American women and two Latinx women. However, I only saw one woman of color who volunteered throughout my time. Break the Cycle provides a few different services: a drop-in center for girls and women (both cisgender and transgender women); case management with referrals for services; a 24/7 hotline; a mentoring program; educational and awareness; and they co-lead the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force in coordination with law enforcement. They also work with law enforcement on operations to recover survivors and provide services to those arrested on prostitution charges. Previously, Break the Cycle experimented with street outreach but was unsuccessful because staff realized, "we don't look like any of the people. No one trusts us. Um, so, and that works in some areas. Right? Like it doesn't work for us in this space right now" (Lucy, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, 28). Most activists are middle-class white women trying to connect with poorer minority women. Break the Cycle staff pivoted to distributing flyers, instead of hiring a more diverse staff. Although having survivors seek out services, instead of activists seeking out potential trafficking survivors improves trust, having an all-white staff or nearly all white staff will continue to lead to distrust. Survivors distrust activists in part



because they feel that they would not understand their situation or what they have endured, including intersectional oppressions like racism, classism, and homophobia. Furthermore, representation of black, indigenous, and other people of color in activism and other leadership positions allows survivors to see future career possibilities and allows for additional mentorship and trust. Not actively seeking and hiring a diverse staff is a missed opportunity to further build trust and connect with survivors.

Break the Cycle has three main objectives: to raise awareness through training; enhance collaboration in community; and conduct outreach and provide services to survivors. Their 2018 Annual Report states that they have assisted over 300 survivors of labor and sex trafficking. Previous research finds that survivors engaged in services for a median of 117 days and maximum of 678 days (Gibbs et al. 2015). However, fewer than 35% of survivors engaged in services for more than six months. They also found that staff lost contact with survivors in 45% of closed cases. Cases were closed for several other reasons: no longer needing services (19%), aging out of the program (22%), survivor relocation (19%), survivor discontinued (17%) and other (4%). Staff report that survivors sometimes are not ready to exit the sex industry, but they continue to work alongside survivors. There is no requirement that participants leave sex work or their trafficking situation. This allows survivors to make choices in when and how they leave a trafficking situation or sex work and builds trust between the survivor and activist/organization. If a survivor leaves the program, Break the Cycle will reopen the case if survivors return for services. This provides the most flexibility for survivors who may have limited choices.

### **Case Management**

Social workers provide case management services to survivors which entails meeting one-on-one with survivors, providing trauma-informed resources, and emotional support.

Previous research finds that referrals were provided from law enforcement, hospitals, and the State's Attorney's Office (United States Department of Justice 2015<sup>1</sup>). This work is funded through the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) grant for domestic victims of sex trafficking. Survivors must have a history of sex or labor trafficking and want services. Previous research found that services were discontinued after three months if the case manager could not confirm trafficking (Gibbs et al. 2015). To gain rapport with survivors, staff often distinguished themselves from law enforcement, taking a 'softer approach,' and often tried to meet survivors at fast-food restaurants for a free meal. One-on-one meetings are not counseling sessions, but are goal focused and sometimes include motivational interviewing techniques. Motivational interviewing is a counseling method, which enhances motivation to change (Lubman, Hall and Gibbie 2012). Survivors determine the goals that they want to work on, such as finding employment, studying for the General Educational Development (GED) exam, learning something new, or obtaining documents. Goals are re-evaluated every two months. The case managers work with survivors in planning how to accomplish that goal. Sometimes this includes going grocery shopping or to medical appointments with survivors. However, they do not sit in on legal meetings to avoid being subpoenaed. Staff report that survivors sometimes disappear, and sometimes for long periods.

### **Drop-In Center**

Although Break the Cycle agreed that I could conduct the study, the program manager negotiated with me on where I could collect data. She did not want me to collect observational data in the drop-in space because it is a low-threshold program, meaning there are few demands put on the survivors. I agreed and did not take observational notes during or after my shifts. Not being able to take notes during this time greatly reduced the amount of data I was able to collect

from Break the Cycle. I did collect data on meetings among staff, trainings, and conduct interviews with staff, a volunteer, and a survivor. I worked 20 shifts for a total of 80.5 hours in the drop-in space, often working one four-hour shift every two weeks. Staff duties in the space include providing case management and referrals, incentive planning, and building relationships and a rapport with the women. In much of my volunteer work at the drop-in center, I was the only volunteer, and the staff person would be in and out, between the office and the drop-in space. Occasionally there was another staff member or intern.

The drop-in center is for girls and women (both cisgender and transgender), approximately 14 to 30 years of age. The purpose of the space is to allow girls and women to feel safe, where they could relax, play, or work on life skills like cooking, job skills like writing resumes, and getting connected to other services. Girls and women who attend drop-in have a history of trafficking or are categorized as at risk for trafficking (sex workers). The drop-in space resides in a four-room space within a large historic church downtown and was only open two days a week for a total of 11 hours. Other church staff came through the space sporadically, as the kitchen and refrigerator were in the space, and was used by church staff as a break room. The space was often too hot or too cold, and I questioned whether it was appropriate for a drop-in space given that survivors were coming in off the street. The windows often did not open and were old and drafty. One winter day, it was so cold in the drop-in center that I welcomed visitors while shivering, dressed in a winter coat, and covered up with blankets. I had a hard time keeping warm.

Once a new person enters the space, a staff person conducts an intake, which asks questions about why the survivor came to the center, what goals the person would like to set, and they are given a brief introduction to the space. The girls and women in the space can earn points

for doing specific tasks like cooking, cleaning the kitchen, working on a resume, job hunting or schoolwork. Survivors earn points, which are added up to earn prizes or gifts. There are higher priced items, such as gift cards to restaurants and stores. Survivors are given bus fares, hygiene items, and condoms regularly. Survivors also have access to a thrift store where they can shop for free upon first visit, at Christmas and on other special occasions. These small items were intended to be incentives to encourage survivors to attend the drop-in and to work on their goals. Often, survivors would cook a late lunch or early dinner one day a week and staff would order take out the other day. The food was paid for by Break the Cycle, and survivors chose what type of food they wanted to cook and order out, often taking turns between survivors.

Unlike many other programs, transgender women and children are welcomed into this space and religious materials, music, and books were banned. Many of the women colored in books, cooked meals, played music, fixed their hair, socialized, played movies or games, worked on resumes, looked for jobs, or asked to get connected to other services like low-cost housing and English as a Second Language (ESL) services. Swearing, verbal outbursts, and verbal aggression between the survivors and towards staff were common, making the atmosphere extremely tense. However, when this occurred staff would intervene and try to separate conflicted parties.

### **The Hotline**

The purpose of the 24-hour, seven days a week hotline is to provide emotional support, connect people to housing resources, pass tips to and contact law enforcement. Their 24/7 hotline was answered by social workers and volunteers in shifts. Shifts typically break down into a day, a night, or a weekend shift. For each shift, there is a staff person available for back-up if there are questions or assistance is needed. Because Break the Cycle does not provide housing, much of

the hotline work entailed helping the caller find other services or sharing information about the drop-in center where they could be connected to the social workers for case management. I volunteered as a hotline worker for 10 shifts, totaling 151.5 hours. Nine shifts were day shifts, and one shift was a weekend shift. I received 14 calls in total. Overall, most of the calls were individuals calling for information about services. Three calls were from a former service participant who moved out of state and was seeking emotional support, three were from callers looking for services, two were from callers asking about Break the Cycle's services, and one was from an FBI agent giving a heads up that a survivor would be calling shortly, which did not happen. I also received two hang ups. Before I had even worked a shift on the hotline, hotline volunteers were required to attend a meeting because the survivor and former participant had called one volunteer all weekend, tying up the line. Therefore, the staff had asked that the volunteers to try to prevent her from tying up the line for too long.

## **Mentorship**

Break the Cycle also provides mentorship services for service participants. Mentors must apply, get a background check, go through two interviews, a two-day training, and submit a three-to-five-minute video explaining why they want to mentor, which the mentee will see. Mentors were expected to provide general support to the survivor by attending events, being an active listener, sharing a meal together, assisting with resume writing, assisting the survivor with practicing for job interviews, tutoring and homework help, and connecting the survivor to other supports. Mentors are required to meet with the survivor they are paired with for two to three hours, once or twice a month for six months, and check in weekly through phone or text. I applied to become a mentor but was not selected. Staff member Molly told me that the survivor

who requested me to be her mentor simply wanted me to drive her places and that it was not a good fit, despite me having a good relationship with this survivor.

### **Human Trafficking Task Force**

Break the Cycle also has a staff person who co-leads the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force in the area, which is a multi-disciplinary team with law enforcement and other antitrafficking organizations in education, awareness, and prevention. They are funded through the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office for Victims of Crime. The goal of the Task Force is to provide collaboration between law enforcement and service providers, using a victim-centered approach in investigating and prosecuting trafficking crimes, and provide high quality social services to trafficking survivors. The Task Force Liaison completes most of the work for the annual conferences and upholds the relationships with the attorney's office and service providers. The Task Force has several subcommittees that focus on specific areas like health care, training, victim services, labor trafficking, and LGBTQ+ survivors.

I attended two training sessions with the LGBTQ+ subcommittee, one in person and one online. The in-person training was attended by 14 people total: five women of color, eight white women, one white man, and one man of color. These two trainings overlapped considerably. The trainings covered differences between sex, gender, and sexuality, describing them as being on a continuum; definitions of trafficking; misconceptions of LGBT persons; and findings from two studies of LGBTQ+ persons engaged in sex work and trafficking. One of the studies they cited found that:

The great majority did not like having sex for money, but they needed to survive. Youth do not identify as victims; study challenges CSEC [Commercial Sexual

Exploitation of Children]. Youth accessed services for LGBTQ+ but did not disclose participation in sex trade.

(Break the Cycle, ethnographic notes)

The training went into detail about the increased vulnerabilities of LGBTQ+ youth, which leads them into survival sex, sex work, and exploitative work. For example, activist stated LGBTQ+ youth vulnerabilities include:

Lack of housing ([due to] discrimination in shelters and other programs); Survival and economic need; Rejection and discrimination by family, community, and employers; Lack of access to gender affirming medical care and related health issues (using wrong names, and pronouns).

(Break the Cycle, ethnographic notes)

The training also covered misconceptions about LGBTQ+ youth. For example:

LGBT communities support one another, which is a strength. [City] women in 2002 – parents told kids to leave at age 15; and this still happens. LGBTQ folks are victims of labor trafficking also not just sex trafficking.

(Break the Cycle, ethnographic notes)

The trafficking task force also holds an annual two-day conference on trafficking in the area, primarily attended by providers, academics, and law enforcement to get the latest information on trafficking in the area.

## **Training / Education**

Break the Cycle conducts several trainings and educational events each year, which volunteers are encouraged to attend. Break the Cycle conducts a two-day training for the public and professionals on human trafficking outside of the trafficking task force. Training covers information about human trafficking, consequences of trafficking, how to identify victims, organizational information about Break the Cycle and Freedom Ministry, volunteer expectations and job descriptions for Break the Cycle; the 2014 State Ratings Report; and different state laws regarding human trafficking. To become a volunteer, the two-day training is mandatory, which

costs \$60. Students can request a discounted rate of \$30. I attended the training, which took place in the same downtown church as the drop-in center. Each of the Break the Cycle staff presented different modules, in one- to two-hour presentations. All the trainings involved hypothetical scenarios, which were workshopped in groups. Break the Cycle was the only organization to train staff and volunteers to be aware of social privilege and disadvantages tied to race, class, gender, and sexuality. For instance, the Break the Cycle Volunteer Manual contains a section titled “Power and Privilege Packet” from the Women of Color Network, which defines and provides information on power, institutional power, prejudice, stereotypes, oppression, privilege, race, racism, ally, and internalized oppression. For instance, the volunteer manual states:

Remember...PRIVILEGE IS unearned. PRIVILEGE IS not your fault.  
PRIVILEGE IS having it whether you know it or not. PRIVILEGE IS your responsibility. PRIVILEGE IS not being able to give it back. PRIVILEGE IS one of the best tools to dismantle oppression. PRIVILEGE IS a systemic position of power. PRIVILEGE IS systematically reinforced. PRIVILEGE IS being able to define the norm. PRIVILEGE IS not having to overcome the exhausting, wearing, debilitating effects of deprivilege. PRIVILEGE IS taking it for granted. PRIVILEGE IS not having to believe or understand the pain of the target group. PRIVILEGE IS deciding you’ve heard enough of the target group’s pain. PRIVILEGE IS focusing on the pain of the privilege group. PRIVILEGE IS defining what pain is. PRIVILEGE IS POWER.

(Break the Cycle, organizational document)

The two-day training also includes trainees participating in the Privilege Walk. This activity asks participants to take steps forward for privileges (such as racial and class privileges), and steps back for disadvantages (such as racial and class marginalization). The results visually illustrate the different experiences of privilege and marginalization experiences by members in the group by positioning the most privileged in the front, the least privileged in the back and people with some privileges and disadvantages towards the middle. The activity asks questions about race,



class, gender, and sexuality. This activity is intended to get participants to think critically about how their experiences may vary in important ways from the people they seek to serve.

While the two-day training was professional and well done, I noticed a key omission. First, the training does not prepare staff and volunteers for the realities of the drop-in space. Break the Cycle does present information about de-escalation methods, and tips on working with survivors in a general sense. This was well done and the most detailed training in terms of how to respond and interact with survivors out of all three organizations in this study. However, Break the Cycle might consider training opportunities to role-play de-escalation methods, as conflicts are common in the drop-in space. This would help volunteers practice de-escalation skills. Furthermore, Break the Cycle should train volunteers on common issues within the drop-in center and specific tips on how to best respond to survivors that regularly show up (and the best ways of dealing with issues). To protect identities, this could be done by removing identifying information. For instance, one survivor did not respond well to new people asking questions and came to believe that a different volunteer, Leslie, was collecting data in the space. Leslie's full-time job was a researcher, but in the healthcare field. Tensions and conflicts like this could be avoided if volunteers were trained on specific behaviors to avoid or to emphasize around survivors.

## **Fundraising**

Break the Cycle raised money by fundraising events, collecting donations and grant monies. I attended one of their fundraisers, a live benefit concert, held at a small local restaurant and venue on the north side where eight artists performed. Tickets were purchased for \$25. I was responsible for monitoring a table with silent auction prizes and helping people get checked in. Donations included money, cars, clothing, hygiene items, and gift certificates. The primary

source of funding came from grant monies, which were provided by the Office for Victim of Crimes (OVC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HSS). Break the Cycle was the most successful of the three organizations in this study at winning government grants, averaging \$654,294.99 per year (see Table 3).

Table 3 Break the Cycle Grant Monies Won by Year

Funding Source	Year	Amount
Department of Justice	2020	\$750,000.00
Department of Justice	2018	\$750,000.00
Department of Health and Human Services	2017	\$580,500.00
Department of Health and Human Services	2016	\$898,824.00
Department of Justice	2015	\$709,330.88
Department of Justice	2014	\$300,000.00
Department of Justice	2012	\$500,000.00
Department of Justice	2010	\$600,000.00
Department of Justice	2009	\$800,000.00
		\$5,888,654.88

### Religious Identity

As a program, Break the Cycle attempts to be more secular than its larger umbrella organization, Freedom Ministry. Out of all three organizations, Break the Cycle is the least religious. About 66% of the staff are Christian, but all come from a Christian background. Staff search for new employees and volunteers by posting ads on their website, but also by recruiting through the church. One staff member, Molly, was recruited by the manager through the church. However, staff are discouraged from discussing religion unless a survivor does. Religious materials, books, and music are banned from the drop-in space. Religious language and artifacts are not used in the spaces, although many of the program’s spaces are within churches. However, the umbrella organization, Freedom Ministry states that their goal is to preach the gospel and

meet human needs. According to Lucy, a social worker at Break the Cycle, survivors may view Break the Cycle as a religious organization because it is associated with Freedom Ministry and survivors may be averse to seeking services because of this. Survivors are told during intake that Freedom Ministry is a religious organization and are asked if they are interested in pastoral care. If survivors are interested, then further discussion of faith may happen. Freedom Ministry language and symbols, often overtly religious, appear on some Break the Cycle programmatic materials.

## **Evaluations**

Because Break the Cycle is a part of Freedom Ministry, they do have to adhere to some norms and policies, which includes inspection and evaluations of the program. Break the Cycle has a more formalized evaluation process which includes evaluations by supervisors, having paperwork audited every three months, evaluating survivor outcomes, discussions with survivors, and collecting annual evaluative survey data from survivors. In comparison to the two other organizations, Break the Cycle did the most internal evaluative work. I interviewed one survivor, two paid staff, and one volunteer from Break the Cycle. The survivor I spoke to had been receiving services and attending drop-in on and off from Break the Cycle for two years. Her perceptions of the organization varied over the years, depending upon whether she felt a connection with the staff, volunteers, and other survivors. When I interviewed her, she said that she currently likes the staff, and feels that they care about her. She stated that she previously had issues getting along with other survivors. She rated Break the Cycle an 8 out of 10, with 1 being poor and 10 being fantastic. When asked in what way services could be improved, she stated that the volunteers should be trained better, but did not elaborate further.

One staff member of the organization had favorable views of the organization, recognizing that there are challenges in it being associated with Freedom Ministry. Lucy illustrates:

I think we're, I mean I think we're doing a pretty good job. It gets difficult like, as you know, [Freedom Ministry] is an evangelical Christian organization. Um, [Break the Cycle] is separate from that, so I think that ends up being a challenge because people view it as the [Freedom Ministry], as a church part. So, that makes it difficult. But I think we're doing okay (laughs). I mean we can always improve. Right? But

(Lucy, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, 28)

I ask if she believes non-Christians are turned off by the Christian aspect, to which she responds:

Sometimes, it can get. Sometimes non-Christians and sometimes I think LGBTQ community. Um, which makes sense, and it's a huge need in that area. So, like if folks are going to [LGBTQ+ program] and like, which we have relationships with now. But only with certain individuals, you know? So, there are people that, point people in our direction, but I think people are 100% like, "oh [Freedom Ministry], they don't like gay people. I'm not going there; I'm not calling that number." Or, like, they might make me talk to law enforcement, that's another like misconception. Um, like I don't trust law enforcement to deal with that. Um, so that can be an issue.

(Lucy, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, 28)

When asked to evaluate the program, another staff member was vague and avoided answering the question directly. Instead, she describes the strategies used in developing a rapport. Even after prompting her again to give an evaluation, she evaded making a judgment about the services and instead described them. One volunteer, who has been with the organization about a year, states that she thinks that the staff are encouraging and patient with survivors:

Um, it seems to be pretty, it seems to be, kind of based on whatever works for the survivor. They don't seem to be very pushy about forcing people to do anything. But they do seem very proactive ... I think that they don't seem pushy in the sense that they tell people like you need to leave now or you need to go into this facility. But they seem very proactive in the sense of, giving people time to be ready to do those things. But always being really ready to make those moves and help them facilitate those moves, and help them, um move into shelter or moving to a new

place ... uh, come to the center, or not, not just the drop-in center ... they also seem to be really good at, um, kind of encouraging people to do better ... and so the staff is only really good about being like, “Yes, you can totally do this.” Let’s look it up or let’s check, or come in the office, we’ll make a phone call, and so I kind of feel like that’s, that’s a really good thing that they have going for them (laughs).

(Leslie, Break the Cycle volunteer, Mexican American woman, 29)

Staff, volunteers, and survivors report an individualized plan to meet the survivors’ goals, which may or may not include leaving a trafficker. As a program, Break the Cycle is not ‘pushy’ or forcing women to engage/disengage in specific types of behaviors, aside from violence. In comparison to Hope and Church Ladies, Break the Cycle is much more flexible in terms of working with survivors. By being flexible this allows survivors to make choices that work for them, in their own time, thereby building trust. Treating survivors in this way teaches them that they deserve respect and that their voice and choices matter and should be respected.

Much like the other two organizations, successes of the organization are focused on individual accomplishments for survivors. Although Break the Cycle is more secular, white evangelical culture, specifically individualism, influences the organization in a less direct way, such as focusing on individual success stories. Although the focus is on individually assisting survivors, Break the Cycle is also involved in the Task Force, thereby working towards structural problems which contribute to the problem of trafficking. This is a much more effective strategy, to come at trafficking both from a bottom-up approach and a top-down approach. This allows activists to alleviate the current pains of survivors of trafficking, while also working towards longer term solutions in preventing the conditions which allow trafficking to flourish. One interviewee also discussed training as a success of the program.

Common challenges reported focused on being associated with Freedom Ministry. As discussed above, being associated with Freedom Ministry may cause some survivors to be

hesitant about seeking services at Break the Cycle, particularly non-Christians and LGBTQ+ survivors. Molly also reported that a challenge is meeting all the needs of survivors.

I think for clients I think the hardest thing is just boundaries, um, and the limits of what we can provide for clients who are like totally rebuilding their lives, um, and her needs don't necessarily end but our limits of what we can assist with financially, and just programmatically, um, they do end at some point, so it's hard to differentiate between a need and what we can help with. That's the biggest complaint that I've heard.

(Molly, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, estimated late 20s or early 30s)

All three organizations experience the same issue of trying to meet the needs of survivors, but not being able to. Previous research finds that this is a common problem among antitrafficking organizations (Nichols 2016). While less common challenges include working with other organizations, boundaries between survivors and staff, and more programming within the drop-in space. Church Ladies also reported that sometimes there are challenges in working with other organizations. Neither Hope nor Church Ladies reported concerns about boundaries between staff and survivors. Hope and Church Ladies activists have a closer relationship with survivors, which sometimes develop into friendships. Break the Cycle activist, Lucy, reports that survivors are unhappy with the boundaries set by staff. Survivors want to be closer than what activists can be. Furthermore, Lucy reports that survivors are dissatisfied when their case closes and contact may drop off significantly, which feels like a loss for the survivor. Finally, survivors report to staff that they would like more programming within the drop-in center, an ask that activists are unable to meet due to the drop-in center being a low-threshold space. For instance, sometimes survivors request different programming, like field trips to specific places, or special prizes they can earn through the point system at drop-in. However, field trips are not possible because staff need to be present in case a new survivor comes into the space.

## **Overview and Comparisons of Organizations**

Much of what is found in my research is reflected in previous research. Most survivors seeking services are girls or women, disproportionately non-white, and have histories of child neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse (Nichols 2016; Gibbs et al. 2015). Staff and volunteers report difficulty developing a rapport with survivors because they do not trust others. Previous research supports this (Nichols 2016). Seeking out a more diverse staff, including survivors who are prepared for leadership, would go a long way in building trust and rapport with survivors who are new to services. The training programs by all three organizations were professional and adequate for volunteers providing indirect services. However, two additional lessons could be included more consistently for those interacting with survivors: tips and role-playing activities on how to interact with survivors and learning de-escalation techniques. Trainings should include examples of survivor's triggers, preferences, and goals; challenges on the job; and role-playing activities. Trainees should practice and role play de-escalation techniques for direct service volunteers and staff, law enforcement, and others who interact with trafficking survivors. Being successfully prepared to interact with survivors will aid in developing a rapport with survivors.

Staff and volunteers at Hope and Church Ladies view their work as a religious duty to serve Christ, which aligns with previous research by Rebecca Allahyari (2000). Hope and the Church Ladies focused on being nurturing, loving, and caring, as they attempted to surround survivors with community. The demeanor and atmosphere of Break the Cycle was different, grounded in a more professional relationship, characterized by boundaries. Hope and Church Ladies' survivors thought of the staff and volunteers as friends, family, and mentors. At Church Ladies and Hope hugging, and texting and calling to check in were common. Break the Cycle was much more formal and practiced professional boundaries. There were no hugs, and

Alexandria reports that staff did not check in with the survivors. Staff report providing emotional support for the survivors, but it appeared like a regular job for staff.

The demographics of the organizations were mostly similar. Hope and Church Ladies activists tended to be white, conservative Christian, middle-class, middle-aged women; whereas Break the Cycle activists tended to be white, Christian, middle-class, adult women, who were more liberally minded and about 10 years younger. Break the Cycle is the only organization to train on privilege. Across organizations, activists do not try to create an inclusive environment based on race, class, or sexuality, leading to a pool of mostly white, middle-class, heterosexual women. Hope and Church Ladies activists are explicitly looking to “save” economically and racially marginalized girls and women. The racial and class difference led sex workers and trafficking survivors being skeptical of activists. One survivor reported that it took her three years of Church Ladies calling before she finally tried their services. Activists also target Asian-themed spas, upholding a stereotype about Asian women and sex work. Hope and Church Ladies activists also do not take a critical stance in their work, they uphold the racist patriarchy by not challenging the system. Instead, they encourage women to enter low paying work (which pays significantly less than sex work). They are not anti-racists, meaning they do not try to make the world more racially equitable. So, they ignore the racist structure, which means the root causes of trafficking are not part of their efforts. Break the Cycle activists are more critical in their work but are still blind to some of the ways that the racist capitalist patriarchy affects their services.

Most of the risk factors for trafficking presented across all three organizations matched that of previous research (Heil and Nichols 2015), aside from the presentation of pornography and pornography addiction as a factor leading to sex trafficking and exploitation. Staff and volunteers within Church Ladies and Hope believe that viewing pornography changes the brain



structure; objectifies and sexualizes women; becomes a ‘gateway’ to purchasing sex; and is more addictive than substances. Stella states that,

I really think pornography’s tightly entwined at least with the sex trafficking part of it. And so, and people just don’t seem to think that that’s a problem, and I know how it, how addictive it is, just from studying the brain science behind it, um, that it’s more addictive than cocaine or heroin, and it takes longer to lose the addiction than cocaine or heroin.

(Stella, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 62)

Michelle (white woman, 50), the Executive Director of Church Ladies, argues that “pornography is the fuel for all of this.” A younger and more liberally minded Christian, who works with Hope, states that

I have a hard time because I also don’t, I don’t agree with porn, with strip clubs and all of that. And I know there are some women that choose to go into those worlds, um, but I think what happens in our society is they want the next level. So, once, even though a girl might be choosing to go into what they think of as, you know, just having sex on camera that’s consensual and all that stuff. Then, the next time they go to a shoot, it’s well, I want forceful sex, and then the next time they go to a shoot, it’s forced. Um. So, I really, like my personal belief, like [inaudible] should be illegal, I believe that we shouldn’t have strip clubs. I know that’s not realistic beliefs, but that’s what my dream would be for. Um, because I think the porn culture really creates the demand for prostitution and trafficking. Um, and then the porn culture so extreme of becoming violent in porn, and, uh, rape porn and all of that, then makes fantasies even worse.

(Lucee, Hope staff, white woman, 29)

These data fit with Nichols (2016) analysis of conservatives who oppose pornography for moral reasons. Conservatives argue that pornography undermines traditional family values, the sanctity of marriage, religious morals, and the stability of society. Pornography is believed to be addictive, with viewers seeking out more hardcore pornography each time. Although volunteers and staff at Hope believe similarly that pornography is tied to sex trafficking, it is not presented during educational presentations to volunteers or community members.

Two of the three organizations, Hope and Church Ladies, are overtly Christian and practice Christianity in the presence of survivors. Although both organizations claim that they do not force Christianity onto anyone, the organizations are attempting to influence survivors to become Christian. Although evangelization is not a stated goal of either organization, staff and volunteers openly believe that evangelization is a secondary goal. Converting to Christianity is influenced through two processes in both organizations: the practice is institutionalized and a social norm in both organizations, and each of the organizations give verbal praise when a survivor is baptized or converts to Christianity. According to staff, survivors tend to come from a Christian background, but lost their faith and may report they are now atheist or agnostic. Several of the survivors I interviewed did not feel forced into Christianity, although many of the survivors did become more Christian over time. For instance, in an interview with Tazz, I asked, “In what ways do you think the organization has helped you achieve your own goals?” She responded:

The fact that they gave me hope and helped me to believe in myself. And helping me honestly finding God, I mean not to be like a Bible thumper or nothing, I’m still not perfect. But, helping me find a spirituality within me.

(Tazz, Church Ladies survivor, Hispanic woman, 46)

All but one of the survivors I interviewed were Christian. There is concern with faith-based organizations evangelizing survivors. Survivors are much more socially vulnerable than staff and volunteers, and as such, it is unethical for staff and volunteers to utilize survivors’ recovery as a time to evangelize. Chapter 7 will provide a more detailed analysis of religion within the three organizations.

In this section, I have given an overview and compared the services of three antitrafficking service providers. In the next section, I examine the local criminal justice system,

who partners with activists in identifying victims, on sting operations, and education and awareness.

### **The Criminal Justice System**

The criminal justice system comprises several law enforcement agencies (city, county, state, and federal), courts (including an intervention court), and correctional facilities within the city. Law enforcement officers, lawmakers, and politicians were present and/or presenting information at the meetings and conferences I attended during my time in the field. They are partners with service providers; thus, an analysis of the criminal justice system is needed. In this section, I examine the criminal justice system in the area, including evaluations by service providers and organizations. There were several evaluations of the criminal justice system, one of which is by an antitrafficking program within the city, [City] Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE); one by Polaris Project, which is the prominent national antitrafficking organization; and one by the [State] Human Trafficking Task Force. I also examine evaluations by activists and survivors of trafficking.

The criminal justice system within the field is large and hierarchical, with a specialized division of labor. There are several federal law enforcement agencies in the area, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the U.S. Marshal Service. The FBI, ICE, DHS, and CBP may be involved in human trafficking investigations, but ICE, DHS and CBP may only become involved if the trafficker, client, or trafficking victim is not a U.S. citizen. The state police department has 22 districts, and one district covers the county the city is in. While in the field, the County Sheriff aggressively

pursued sex trafficking, which was part of the reason he was named one of the most influential persons in the world (County Sheriff website 2022a<sup>1</sup>). There are over 500 officers in the County Sheriff's Police Department (County Sheriff website 2022b<sup>1</sup>) The [City] Police Department (CPD) has five areas and 25 districts to patrol within the city. At the beginning of 2018, there were approximately 12,500 police officers in the city (The Civic Federation 2022<sup>1</sup>), which is one of the largest police forces in the country. The city created the [City] Prostitution and Trafficking Intervention Court (CPTIC) in 2015 as a specialized deferred prosecution program for those involved in the sex industry (CAASE 2022<sup>1</sup>)

In 2017, the city police made 12 arrests for human trafficking, which increased to 15 arrests in 2018, a 25% increase (CPD 2018<sup>1</sup>). For comparison purpose, there were 667 individuals arrested for selling sex (91%), 60 arrested for buying (8%), 3 for pimping (0.4%) and 4 for "other" (0.5%) in 2017 (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). These statistics demonstrate that city police are targeting those who sell sex and not traffickers, pimps, and buyers. County officers made 264 arrests for human trafficking in 2017 and 94 in 2018 (County Sheriff website 2021b<sup>1</sup>). Many, but not all of these cases were not formally charged as human trafficking; formal charges included criminal sexual assault, promoting prostitution, promoting juvenile prostitution, unlawful restraint, and kidnapping among others. County officers made 38 arrests for prostitution in 2017 and 9 in 2018 (County Sheriff website 2021b<sup>1</sup>). These were formally charged with promoting and patronizing prostitution. These data demonstrate that county law enforcement are targeting traffickers, pimps, and buyers and not those who sell sex. In the [State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report (2018<sup>1</sup>) county and state law enforcement officers state that their goal is to pursue traffickers and not those selling sex. County and state police also acknowledge that they focus on sex trafficking of minors and adults and utilize different strategies in doing so ([State] Human

Trafficking Task Force 2018<sup>1</sup>). Between 2011 and 2016, the State's Attorney's Office successfully prosecuted 10 cases of human trafficking and 27 cases of prostitution (County Sheriff website 2021a<sup>1</sup>). These data are not yet available for 2017 or 2018. Conviction rates remain low for human trafficking. The FBI made 27 arrests for sex trafficking and 5 arrests for labor trafficking within the entire state in 2018 (FBI 2019<sup>1</sup>). Activists in this research believe law enforcement officers are coming to see sex workers as victims and are running demand operations more frequently.

### **Law Enforcement**

City police officers pose as customers to arrest those selling sex and they have discretion whether to arrest or to ticket (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). Police have special orders for how to behave, wear their uniform, and interact with certain populations, yet there are no special orders for how to handle prostitution cases or how to interact with those selling sex. There is a lack of standard procedure in how an officer should determine which charges should be issued. In 2014, CPD issued a special order regarding human trafficking, stating that police will most likely interact with victims during an arrest for prostitution. The officer is supposed to call the CPD 24-hour hotline, yet the special order does not state whether a trafficking victim should be arrested or referred for services. CPTIC participants believe that officers issued tickets if they were not creating conflict, were working with the police as an informant, performed sexual acts to avoid arrest, "appeared" to be in prostitution (as opposed to actively getting into a vehicle), or if the officer said they would "go easy" on them.

The number of arrests and tickets for buyers and sellers have decreased, but efforts are disproportionately focused on arresting and ticketing those selling sex by city police (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). One participant reported that the

police targeted her for selling sex, rather than the person they presumed to be her trafficker. She recalled being arrested for prostitution while she was walking on the street with her boyfriend. During her arrest and booking, officers repeatedly referred to her boyfriend as her “n----- pimp,” which she disputed. In the re-telling of her experience, she expressed confusion as to why police would arrest her for prostitution, and not her boyfriend too, if they thought he was her pimp.

(CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>: 10)

Not only did the officer target the woman, but the officer explicitly admits that he perceives her boyfriend as a pimp/trafficker yet does not arrest him. Further, this discrepancy has grown in recent years. Approximately 74% of prostitution related arrests by city police were of those selling sex in 2013, but that proportion jumped to 90% of arrests in 2017. Those who are arrested for pimping has remained very low, in 2017 it was 0.4% of all prostitution-related arrests by city police. However, strategies and tactics utilized by police agencies vary by jurisdiction.

According to the [State] Human Trafficking Task Report (2018), the County Sherriff’s department reported they are working to aid sex workers, consider the needs of trafficked persons, and are working to identify factors which lead to involvement in the sex industry and assisting them getting out of ‘the life.’ Law enforcement report that they are not arresting sex workers and are allowing them time to consider whether they would like to exit the industry. Yet, they contradict themselves

Law enforcement indicated that sex trafficking is both online and on the street, and both require different interventions. Addressing the issue can be difficult, because law enforcement desires to prioritize the needs of trafficked persons and offer services. However, law enforcement must also balance the desires of the public for this to not be on the street, near their homes or businesses.

([State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report, 2018<sup>1</sup>)

Here law enforcement acknowledge that victim needs should be the priority but justify the fact that they are not because of their perceptions of the desires of the public to not have sex trafficking or sex work on the street. Thus, the focus on law enforcement is removing deviance

from public view, and not on protecting victims of sex trafficking from violence and harm. This also alludes to a law-and-order approach, where law enforcement officers are arresting trafficking victims, instead of trying to get the trafficking victim services (which would also remove the victim from public view). Further, it is likely that the public and law enforcement officers are making judgments on who is selling sex based on stereotypes about girls and women who are wearing ‘revealing’ clothing, much the same way service providers do (Shih 2016).

County and state law enforcement goals also focus on responses to youth sex trafficking ([State] Human Trafficking Task Force 2018<sup>1</sup>). State law allows law enforcement to take custody of youth for up to 48 hours, yet the law enforcement subcommittee acknowledged in the report that detention cannot be the default solution for placements due to lack of housing

There was a discussion about what “secured” means. It does not necessarily have to mean that the doors are locked, but it should mean that the youth is not able to readily leave and get back into the same life. It could mean that the youth is removed from that neighborhood.

([State] Human Trafficking Task Force 2018<sup>1</sup>)

Law enforcement officers discussed tactics to remove child sex trafficking victims from the life, which may include removing them from their neighborhood on a hold of up to 48 hours. Law enforcement officers, who may not be known to the child, can take a child sex trafficking victim to an unfamiliar neighborhood, an unknown structure, and lock them in a space. Although these law enforcement officers indicate that locking a child in a space is probably not the best option, it is still presented as an option. Furthermore, this meeting is attended by service providers, who are not alarmed by the ways in which this scenario might re-traumatize child victims and/or lead to situations of abuse by law enforcement. Immediately after, the report states

It was specifically noted that all involved should keep in mind that a rape survivor while likely have a better understanding of their trauma than a trafficked person. A trafficked person may not understand their trauma.

Here law enforcement pathologize child trafficking victims, as having a false consciousness, and not understanding their own experiences. This explanation is a generalization and leads to a paternalistic view of children (and women) in which law enforcement knows what is best and should make decisions without the input of the trafficked person.

Activists also note that law enforcement is doing a better job at running sting operations. Break the Cycle often rides along in the sting operations to determine if those selling sex are trafficking survivors and what services they may need. Activists report that victims are often unwilling to open up about their experiences at first, which makes identification a challenge. Further trafficking survivors may be emotionally attached to the trafficker or may not understand the circumstances which led to the trafficking situation. In trafficking cases victims are often required to testify, which makes prosecution of these cases extremely difficult. At a Hope training a FBI agent states, “law enforcement has to get girls to agree to go through the court process, which is the biggest challenge” (Hope, ethnographic notes). Sometimes they are arrested on prostitution charges, in which case they may be sent to CPTIC or misdemeanor court. But those who are not and who are identified as trafficking survivors are often provided with hygiene items, clothing, food, and housing. While receiving services, one of the goals is to open up about what happened to be prepared for court and witness testimony.

## **Court**

In 2015, the [City] Prostitution and Trafficking Intervention Court (CPTIC) was created as a deferred prosecution program, after research on best practices for trafficking intervention courts across the country (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). When someone is arrested for prostitution, they receive a personal recognizance bond (I-bond) from police and are told to go to CPTIC for their



first court date. Sometimes they spend the night in jail before bond court in the morning, which determines how much bond will be and the future court dates and locations are scheduled. Most people are released on an I-bond, court dates are set, and individuals are referred to CPTIC.

Only adults who are arrested for selling sex can be a CPTIC participant (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). Those in the CPTIC program were most often black women between the ages of 20 and 40, who described the program as a positive experience because it is less adversarial compared to the typical courtroom. All participants in the study had previous interactions in the criminal legal system and preferred CPTIC. In the 18 months of observation, CAASE only observed women-identified participants, although the court does not restrict men or others from participating. The court does restrict those with histories of violent felonies from participating in CPTIC. Only one individual was excluded during the observation period. A CPTIC representative stated they try to include, not exclude (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). Public defenders stated CPTIC participants have higher rates of addiction in comparison to others arrested for misdemeanor offenses. They also are likely to have histories of complex trauma, like intimate partner violence and child abuse, housing insecurity, and poverty.

Unlike traditional courtrooms, the prosecutor and attorney work together to discuss the participants progress, along with service providers (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). Unlike other intervention courts around the country, the judge does not sit in on these conversations. The goal is to offer opportunities and establish a life outside of prostitution. Participants must agree to participate, and then complete an intake with either a Christian Health Center (a pseudonym) or Break the Cycle (if trafficking is suspected). Participants decide on four goals they would like to complete, which often includes getting documentation (state identification), obtaining housing, applying for jobs, completing addiction treatment, obtaining medication, and going to a medical appointment.

It is still considered an arrest, but the goal is to not make it feel like a traditional court system. CPTIC is the only deferred prosecution court in the county, where service providers are in court every day to meet participants. Christian Health Center runs a workshop, which offers support for women to apply for jobs, complete housing applications and more. The organization also provides support groups to survivors, where they can discuss their experience with trauma and violence, attend presentations about sexual and reproductive health by health care professional. Break the Cycle is also present to meet with participants.

Since CPTIC's creation in 2015, there have been 396 graduates (as of September 2019) out of 748 cases (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). The graduation rate is 53%. Their most common goals are to attend the workshop, complete HIV testing, complete a housing application, complete a mental health screening, and obtain identification. There is no required time limit, participants usually take from one to six months, but they can take longer if needed. If the four goals are complete the prostitution charges are dismissed. There is also a graduation ceremony where participants receive a certificate, a backpack filled with clothes, gift cards, toiletries, and snacks, which comes from donations to the public defender's office. Participants report enjoying the celebrations of their accomplishments, particularly having a judge and state's attorney clap for them and offer them congratulations. One participant stated:

It encourages (participants) even more, to see there are people on the other side of the wall acknowledging that they're trying ... But it's like I'm equal to them, that's how they make me feel in that courtroom.

(CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>: 20)

If the individual is re-arrested for prostitution, then they can return to CPTIC, but they must complete five goals instead of four. Public defenders do not necessarily define success as completion of the program, but instead suggest that success is when individuals are aware of

services and resources, and they know that there are people there they can trust to help them exit the sex trade (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). One public defender stated steps like getting sober, finding housing, and making doctor appointments should be considered successes, even if prostitution charges are not dismissed and the participant did not graduate from the program.

Criminal records are a burden to trafficking survivors because it creates barriers for them to exit the sex trade (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). The National Survivor Network found in a 2016 survey that 73% of survivors reported losing employment or never receiving employment, and 60% had a hard time finding housing because of their record. CPTIC are in the process of creating “exit packets” for graduates with information on agencies and services that can assist with expunging their records and/or sealing of records. Participants prior records are often in felony and misdemeanor prostitution, possession of drugs, battery, or aggravated battery (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). But only prostitution convictions are eligible for vacatur, but vacatur is the best option because it nullifies the case. It acknowledges that the person should not have been charged with the crime. Other states allow survivors to vacate other types of crimes, stemming from their victimization as well. The National Survivor Network found in a 2016 survey that 90% were arrested at least once, and 40% more than nine times.

When the court was originally created, there were full-day and half-day trainings on human trafficking for court officials prior to CPTIC assignment, which have been disbanded (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). They often rely on previous attorneys or take training on their own. There are CPTIC participants who show signs of trafficking, yet no one in court screens for trafficking. Instead, they refer participants who are suspected to be victims of trafficking to Break the Cycle, who offer services. Christian Health Center’s intake does contain screening questions related to trafficking, and if the individual is believed to be trafficked, they will be referred to resources in

the community and connected to services providers or law enforcement officers, who are also survivors of trafficking. Since 2015, 31 CPTIC participants have received services through Break the Cycle (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). Although state law allows defendants charged with prostitution to use an affirmative defense if they are a victim of trafficking, this was not utilized in CPTIC during CAASE's (2020<sup>1</sup>) observations. To utilize the affirmative defense, a participant would be transferred to a misdemeanor courtroom to take a plea or go to trial. CPTIC cases are also not utilized to build cases against traffickers. CPTIC prosecutors and defense attorneys felt this was problematic and would traumatize victims to be compelled to testify and work with police if they did not feel safe doing so.

CPTIC is lenient if defendants do not appear in court, as opposed to other courts (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). Typically, a warrant will be requested if a participant does not appear after three to six scheduled court dates in a row, instead of just one. Once they appear in court, the bond is lifted, and they are released on their own recognizance. If the participant does not appear in court after an arrest warrant is used, then they will transfer the case to misdemeanor court. The judge will ask for the criminal history of each participant to determine the bond, which is typically from \$1,000 to \$5,000, but was as high as \$15,000 in one case (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). But the participant does not need to pay bail to be released, they use a warrant with a bond attached to compel the participant to come to court. The bail is dropped and converted back to an I-bond for future court dates. But the bond amount varies.

Participants who choose not to participate or do not show up are transferred to misdemeanor court (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). During their period of observation there were 25 cases which were transferred after missed court dates or if defendants asked to have their cases moved. It is likely they plead guilty and receive time served. Because participants cannot plea in CPTIC,

this means there are more court cases with new processes and public defenders for those who transfer to plea. If they want to use an affirmative defense because they are a trafficking victim, they must go to misdemeanor court to fight the charges. However, this is not effective as it creates more steps and court dates. Activists in this research believe that judges are also coming to see pimping as a more serious crime, coinciding with the shift in the law from a misdemeanor to a felony (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>)

### **Evaluations and Recommendations by Activists and Survivors**

When asked to rate law enforcement efforts to curb trafficking and prostitution, activists were divided. Eleven activists stated that law enforcement officers were doing poorly; four did not know; six believed they were doing better; two believed they ‘do the best they can;’ and three believed they did a good job. Activists that believe the police were doing a poor job stated that officers can be racist and corrupt; they arrest women and treat them poorly, and do not offer services; that suburban officers do not believe that sex trafficking is in their area and do not have the education and awareness to deal with sex trafficking; while some officers look the other way, and do not care. One activist does not want law enforcement to police those who sell sex

Um, I don’t know if they’re effective at it quite honestly. I know that we, through [Church Ladies] have personally come across corrupt law enforcement that is being paid off whether, money, services rendered, whatever so we’ve seen a definite no in that. I’m sure though that there are some who are, (laughs) but yeah, I don’t know. I know that that’s one of those, [I] don’t know if I actually want them to because of my personal abuse (laughs).

(Ivy, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 32)

Many activists were not sure how to evaluate the police because they do not interact with them regularly, or do not feel that arrests and busts are commonly reported. For instance, a Hope activist says,

I don't, you know, I, I, I don't know. I mean I think they could, I mean I know I'm sure they set up like stings and things of that nature. Um, I don't, I just, I think there is more they could do to protect people from this. I just don't know what to be honest.

(Anna, Hope volunteer, white woman, 36)

Others felt that they are doing better, but that they still have room to improve

I think, I think they're doing a good job. I don't think they're doing a great job because ... we've spoken directly with law enforcement, and we said if we know that the spas have women that are there performing these services. If I know that, why aren't you doing something about it? And the manpower. The police are so burdened with dealing with drugs, and robberies, and murders, and car jackings. And all of these things, honestly, unfortunately [it] is kind of small potatoes to them. And, they are not, it is not high on their list of priorities. They don't have the manpower. They don't have the time. They just don't have the resources to deal with this ... I just think that the industry is just so big, and the police, they're doing what they can, but they don't have the manpower to put towards it is my feeling.

(Dana, Hope volunteer, white woman, 46)

Two activists believe law enforcement are doing the best that they can, but that it is hard to find, people will find new ways of selling sex, and it is a game of 'cat and mouse,' in which law enforcement eliminate one trafficking ring, only for another ring to be created. Six activists believed that law enforcement officers are doing a better job at identifying trafficking and running sting operations. Three activists felt law enforcement officers were doing a good job at curbing trafficking. Much of the praise for law enforcement was directed at the FBI and County Sheriff's officers specifically. Local police officers were believed to not be as well trained on the issue and to harass those who sell sex. Four activists felt that the FBI does a good job, in part because they are better trained, educated, and more compassionate. Activists reported that the FBI will answer calls in the middle of the night and take children home with them if needed. Furthermore, Hope praises law enforcement frequently on their social media. For instance,

Truly grateful for the men and women in law enforcement who are working to get children to safety. [Hope] works closely with local officials on a regular basis. Together we can #endexploitation and #stopchildsextrafficking #Take[Hope]Back  
(Hope social media)

This comment was posted with the news article “More than 100 sex trafficking victims rescued across US amid busts: FBI.” In sum, evaluations of law enforcement vary, particularly between agencies. Activists recommended that law enforcement could improve by becoming more educated on the topic, adding more labor and resources, seeing those who sell as victims, and punishing traffickers more harshly. After discussing some of the issues within the police force, such as racism and corruption, Michelle stated that some police should be given psychological testing and kicked off the force.

Five survivors rated the police poorly, citing rape by police, and police working with traffickers and corruption. For survivors the most egregious types of violence and corruption were the most problematic. As Shay says,

I don't like cops at all. I have been raped by a cop, um, I feel like a lot of them are for it. I don't like them whatsoever. Um, a lot of them are all for it, and, and they use that, they use police thing against you. “Okay, well you're either gonna give me some or you're gonna go to jail.” Some of us are willing to go to jail and they still do what they wanna do. And, then they'll take us to jail or still rape us and then leave like nothing ever happened. So, I feel like a lot of them are all for it. I just, I really don't like them.

(Shay, Church Ladies survivor, African American, 30)

Even when survivors attempt to not be manipulated into sex, by stating they would rather go to jail, officers still rape. This has detrimental effects on Shay, and she still does not trust them or like them. This has detrimental effects on criminal investigations and the relationship between police and communities.

Survivors were also dissatisfied with police interactions because they often criminalize those selling sex, instead of going after the pimps/traffickers. Two survivors stated that law

enforcement is doing okay, one stated law enforcement is doing their best, and two felt that they do a good job. Survivors felt that police should scan and police the internet more looking for sex trafficking, go after the pimps/traffickers, offer services to those selling sex, and refrain from rape/sexual assault. Shay goes on to say,

If they're gonna come in and arrest us, like do what you need to do. Let's not make this about you, let's not, um, sway our way into, well if you give me this, it's, it's a trade thing for them. I just feel like they need to do their job. Do your job. Serve the people. If you're coming to bust me or arrest me or whatever. Do that. Don't come and want a favor from me. I don't want that just; I feel like they just need to do their job. And a lot of them don't do it.

(Shay, Church Ladies survivor, African American, 30)

### **Evaluations and Recommendations by Service Providers**

Overall, CAASE (2020<sup>1</sup>) argues that the policies for policing prostitution are “wrong-headed.” They find that prostitution related charges have decreased significantly over the last decade, but police continue to arrest those who sell sex rather than those buying or trafficking. Laws were put in place in 2014 to fund law enforcement efforts to target buyers and traffickers, but the proportion of arrests for sellers has increased. Some CPTIC participants reported positive interactions with police, who offered food, water, or condoms; allowed women to warm up in their squad cars during cold months; asked about their wellbeing; but women officers showed more empathy and compassion (CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>). These positive interactions were limited in comparison to the negative experiences reported. Those in the sex industry continue to report negative interactions with police, including harassment and sexual misconduct by officers. CPTIC reported police as customers and having to perform sex acts to avoid arrest or harm. For instance, one participant reported:

You have them few that are good to you, and you have them few that aren't. And then you have them few who take advantage of their badge...I used to have one, on the regular, who would come around and have me get in the back of the police wagon.... And I was obligated, otherwise I was getting locked up



and he would make my life a living hell, period.

(CAASE 2020<sup>1</sup>: 8)

Participants also reported degrading comments, name calling, or slurs. One officer would drive through rain puddles to splash water onto women on the streets.

Furthermore, the state has also passed laws to incentivize law enforcement to target buyers and traffickers and not sellers, yet they have not. CAASE (2020<sup>1</sup>) argues that the mayor and police superintendent need to bring police practice in line with policy. They recommend the mayor:

- 1) Make clear that CPD should not target sex sellers and ignore buyers.
- 2) Insist CPD develop or amend orders to appropriately arrest or fine buyers and issue tickets to sellers if they insist on policing sex sellers.
- 3) Should make clear to the police superintendent that sex sellers should be treated with dignity, offered resources and information, and sexual conduct should be prohibited.
- 4) The Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) should create an outreach campaign to victims of sexual misconduct by police, so they understand how to file a complaint and do not fear retaliation.
- 5) Should implement buyer-side laws, which fund supportive services for those exiting the life and amend prostitution ordinances.

In the [State] Human Trafficking Task Force Report (2018<sup>1</sup>) law enforcement recommended implementing a way to screen individuals to determine if they are high risk for trafficking, and not just those who self-identify; and increasing social services for survivors. Law enforcement identified trafficked persons aging out of services as another barrier. CAASE (2022<sup>1</sup>) also recommends all stakeholders, including law enforcement, court officials, and service providers

should convene a task force to center the needs of those selling sex, and identify gaps in services, and learn how to better connect them to services. This group should also support amending the Justice for Victims of Sex Trafficking Act such that criminalized trafficking survivors receive the greatest criminal record relief possible.

Rather than arresting those who sell sex, CAASE (2020<sup>1</sup>) argues that the CPD should offer support and services to those selling sex and instead hold buyers and traffickers accountable. CAASE (2020<sup>1</sup>) offers six ways to improve police practices.

1. Take buying sex as a more serious offense by issuing a special order to always arrest and charge buyers with state solicitation of prostitution. This breaks the historic pattern of giving buyers a ticket and impounding their vehicle, while those who sell sex are arrested and pay harsher penalties. Buyers should be given an I-bond instead of being booked and held unless they make bail to hold them financially accountable.
2. Fund services for sex trafficking survivors with fines and fees from sex buyers. Service providers should provide trauma-informed services which are specialized. As of 2019, the fund only had \$5,000, which can be increased by arresting more buyers and traffickers. This funding could also support those in the CPTIC program.
3. Prohibit officers from sexual contact during prostitution and trafficking investigations by issuing a directive.
4. Inform victims of police misconduct about the options of reporting by creating an outreach campaign. Sexual misconduct is the second most common form of police misconduct. In a survey of 200 women in the sex industry, 24% reported being raped by a police officer.
5. Stop arresting individuals for not having state identification, as many city residents and

CPTIC participants do not have identification.

6. Offer information and referrals for services to people selling sex. District leadership should create a culture of compassion and dignity towards people they interact with.

These steps would go a long way in assisting those selling sex, including victims of trafficking, and not re-victimizing victims.

Improving collaboration and increasing opportunities will remove barriers for participants. The criminal justice system should be holistic and participant-focused, which would improve the system, instead of continuing the harmful arresting and re-arresting of those selling sex. According to a collaborative report by Polaris Project rating the criminal relief for trafficking survivors, the state is rated a 49, which is an F rating, and ranked 21<sup>st</sup> (Polaris Project 2019<sup>1</sup>). The rating comes from the American Bar Association's Survivor Reentry Project, Brooklyn Law School, the University of Baltimore School of Law, and Polaris Project. The state score is based on ranking throughout the system, and is based on range of relief, arrests and adjudications relief, offenses covered, judicial discretion, nexus to trafficking, time limits and wait times, hearing requirements, burden of proof, official documentation, confidentiality, and additional restrictive conditions on relief. For range of relief, the state was given an 8 out of 10 because it provides a vacatur of convictions; a 5 out of 10 on arrests and adjudication relief because it only applies to convictions (and not to arrests, non-prosecuted cases, and other records); a 5 out of 30 because only prostitution related crimes are eligible for relief (as opposed to all compelled crimes); a 10 out of 10 for judicial discrimination because the courts provide relief even when the prosecutor objects; a 10 out of 10 for nexus to trafficking because trafficking survivors must prove crimes were the result of trafficking; a 4 out of 8 on time limitations and wait times because there is leniency regarding time limits; a 5 out of 5 for hearing

requirement because no hearing is required; a 0 out of 5 for burden of proof because the law does not state the standard of proof; 0 out of 5 on official documentation because official documentation does not create presumption of eligibility; 0 out of 5 on confidentiality because there is no provision in the law to protect confidentiality or allowances for filing documents under seal; and 2 out of 2 on additional restrictive conditions on relief because there are no additional restrictive conditions on survivors applying for relief. CAASE (2020<sup>1</sup>) recommends that courts should

1. Have mandatory trafficking training for all CPTIC personnel, which should cover the signs of trafficking, the effects of trauma, and ways it would impact participants in CPTIC.
2. Stop prosecuting trafficking victims. The prosecutor should dismiss charges if there are signs of trafficking. They should connect the victim to services providers and legal aid.
3. As part of closing cases help CPTIC participants clean up their records, to eliminate barriers to housing and jobs. They should do this by referring them to providers, like CAASE. All participants should be given this information.
4. Support CPTIC participants' petitions for vacatur.
5. Open CPTIC to all genders, which should be communicated throughout all levels of the system.
6. Remove court attendance barriers by offering a meal, transit, and toiletries. When they do not have their basic needs met, they are not going to be able to show up to court.
7. Allow participants to plea in CPTIC so they do not have to transfer to misdemeanor court and have more court dates and steps to resolve their case.

8. Stakeholders must collaborate by convening a working group or task force to center the needs of those who sell sex, to identify gaps in services and how to better connect them to service providers. Needs identified include having a resource fair, a housing resource liaison in court, more outreach workers outside of court, and identifying and partnering with services providers in Asian communities. It is important to use a systematic lens to implement goals effectively.
9. Provide stronger criminal record relief to survivors of trafficking by amending the Justice for Victims of Sex Trafficking Crimes Act. The state has a failing grade due to its lack of criminal record relief for trafficking survivors. The state only allows vacatur for prostitution charges, instead of all charges while a victim. It needs to also provide a burden of proof standard and allow victims to file a petition confidentially and under seal.

Overall, the city should reform its policies on how it enforces prostitution laws and focus on buyers and traffickers. Further, targeting poor women of color must stop. People who sell sex should also be treated with respect when interacting with the system.

In this section, I examined how law enforcement handles trafficking and prostitution cases in the area, along with the process of CPTIC for those who are arrested for prostitution charges. Activists report that the FBI and County Sheriff's Office does a better job of focusing on sex trafficking and treating those selling sex with respect. More research is needed on how different law enforcement agencies handle trafficking and prostitution cases. Further, the FBI and County Sheriff's Office should be further involved in training city police and helping to transform the policies and culture of the city police department.

## Conclusion

Services for survivors of human trafficking are varied, but many are led by faith-based activists, as is the case with the three organizations in this study. Between the three organizations, Hope, Church Ladies, and Break the Cycle provide a safe house, temporary housing, 24/7 hotlines, a drop-in center, counseling and mental health services, medical services, education, referrals for other services, food, clothing, hygiene items, and other tangible items. The biggest challenge in providing services is the lack of housing and other needed resources. Each of the organizations finds unique ways to meet these challenges and to provide as many services as possible. All pursue fundraising activities. Hope and the Church Ladies rely primarily on donors, while Break the Cycle secures governmental grants. The religiosity of the organizations may create a barrier for survivors who are not Christian or open to Christianity, and they may avoid services because of this. However, most staff, volunteers, and survivors report positive evaluations of their respective programs. Faith-based organizations run into unique ethical dilemmas and challenges in providing services. Many survivors report that staff and volunteers evangelize to survivors and become more Christian over time. Survivors are vulnerable compared to those providing services and having a secondary goal to evangelize survivors is unethical, particularly if survivors feel compelled to participate in religious activities to receive services.

I also examine the criminal justice system, focusing on law enforcement's methods of policing sex trafficking and prostitution, and the way courts process cases in the intervention courts. Law enforcement often partner with service providers, such as Hope, Church Ladies and Break the Cycle. City police still focus on arresting those who sell sex, while not focusing on pimps/traffickers and buyers, whereas county police focus more on buyers and pimps/traffickers.

Activists evaluate the FBI and county police much more favorably than city police. Survivors do not distinguish between different police agencies. In general, police are not seen as being effective at curbing prostitution or sex trafficking within the city. Service providers, activists, and survivors make recommendations to improve law enforcement and the court processes. Next, I turn to how all three organizations frame the problem of trafficking and who/what is to blame, referred to as diagnostic framing; how they plan to solve the problem of trafficking, referred to as prognostic framing; and how they motivate others to donate and join the cause, referred to as motivational framing (Benford and Snow 2002).

CHAPTER VI  
DIAGNOSTIC, PROGNOSTIC, AND MOTIVATIONAL FRAMES THROUGH THE LENS  
OF CHRISTIANITY: HOW ANTITRAFFICKING SOCIAL MOVEMENT  
ORGANIZATIONS FRAME SEX TRAFFICKING

Contemporary antitrafficking social movement organizations are relatively new in the United States, most have been created in the last 20 years. Federal antitrafficking legislation is reauthorized every few years. Furthermore, each state has its own legislation criminalizing trafficking, 46 states allow vacating, expungement, or sealing of criminal convictions resulting from acts traffickers forced survivors to commit, and 35 states have “safe harbor” laws which prevent children from being prosecuted for prostitution (United States Department of State 2022). There are now over 3,000 (and growing) service providers who are part of the National Human Trafficking Hotline’s Referral Network, who offer social and legal services to trafficking survivors (Polaris Project 2018). Approximately 36% offer some form of housing. In short, antitrafficking legislation and services have expanded rapidly.

Antitrafficking social movement organizations (ASMOs) play an active role in defining sex trafficking, ensuring trafficking is criminalized, and in garnering support that allows activists to offer services to survivors (Clark 2019). This process of constructing a social problem for those in and outside of a given social movement is referred to in the sociological literature as framing. Framing is “the practice of presenting information in a way that causes the audience to view an issue from the framer’s perspective” (Clark 2019: 3). Benford and Snow (2002) argue



that “frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action” (614). There are three types of core framing tasks that are important for the work that ASMOs engage in: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing (Benford and Snow 2002; Snow and Benford 1988).

Diagnostic framing is focused on identifying the problem and who or what is to blame (Benford and Snow 2002). For example, activists argue that one of the causes of sex trafficking stems from systemic sexism. Activists argue that the systemic oppression of girls and women leads to their sexualization and objectification, stereotypes of inferiority, lack of educational and occupational opportunities, and violence. Prognostic framing refers to the solutions activists identify for the diagnosed problems (Benford and Snow 2002). The consequences of sex trafficking are correlated to the prognostic framing of sex trafficking, meaning the identification of the problem influences the solutions. Finally, motivational framing focuses on inspiring others to action, such as public service work, volunteering, and providing financial support (Benford and Snow 2002). Activists develop discourses around the severity and urgency of trafficking as a social problem as well as the efficacy and propriety of their proposed solutions to motivate potential activists to join the movement.

This chapter addresses three key research questions: 1) “How do evangelical antitrafficking organizations frame the problem of trafficking, including the causes, who is to blame, and consequences?”; 2) “How do evangelical antitrafficking activists frame the proposed solutions? And what strategies are utilized?”; and 3) “How do evangelical antitrafficking activists motivate potential activists to action? I first examine how the three ASMOs diagnose sex trafficking as a social problem, propose solutions, motivate activists to become and stay involved, and encourage public concern. The ASMOs use an injustice frame (Snow and Owens

2015), arguing that human trafficking is an injustice to victims and survivors. I describe how some of the ASMOs offer two different diagnostic frames, one to prospective activists and one to the larger public. I demonstrate how the ASMOs utilize stereotypical frames of trafficking to gain support and attention in public. For all three organizations, the problem of sex trafficking is the exploitation and abuse of survivors of sex trafficking, and the frequency, severity and cruelty of the act is emphasized. Activists within all three organizations connect sex trafficking to the Atlantic Slave Trade, referring to human trafficking as “modern-day slavery.” Hope activists also believe that sex trafficking is part of a cycle of abuse, often starting in childhood. Hope and Church Ladies activists believe sex trafficking also stems from the legality and availability of pornography. Many activists believe that cultural issues lead to sex trafficking, such as the sexualization of women and children, pimp culture, rape culture, and violent culture. Although less prominent, some activists in the organizations believe sex trafficking stems from larger societal issues such as poverty, sexism, and racism. Activists believe that trafficking will never be completely eradicated, but the goal is to reduce it. Activists motivate others to action by emphasizing the severity of sex trafficking, that it occurs “in our own backyards,” that the problem is urgent, life threatening, and victims need to be “rescued” immediately. I argue that activists create a moral panic that adds urgency to their diagnostic framing.

### **Data**

Data utilized in this chapter include ethnographic field notes, primary organizational materials, and interviews with volunteers and staff. Field notes address training and educational meetings, where organizations are presenting trafficking information to the public, staff, and volunteers. These educational meetings address a broad range of information concerning trafficking, including the frequency of trafficking, how to identify trafficking, negative

consequences for trafficking survivors, information about the organization, and why audience members should become involved in the fight against trafficking with the organization. I also rely on primary organizational materials, such as internal training documents, organizational websites, and social media content. Some of these materials are intended for activists and potential activists, while others are aimed at the public. I examine both below. First, I discuss how the three ASMOs diagnose sex trafficking as a social problem (diagnostic framing), how it should be solved (prognostic framing), and how staff and volunteers motivate activists to become and stay involved and encourage public concern (motivational framing).

### **Diagnostic Framing**

Diagnostic framing describes how ASMOs identify the causes of a social problem and accompanying problems. Previous research finds that trafficking leads to 1) breakdown of families and communities; 2) growth in organized crime and corruption; 3) depriving communities of human potential; 4) weakening public health efforts; and 5) imposing economic costs to communities and individual victims (National Institute of Justice 2016). However, I find that activists focus more on individual harms, and do not focus on community and public health consequences. Activists in antitrafficking work often utilize injustice frames (Snow and Owens 2015). Activists across the three ASMOs believe that sex trafficking is a human rights violation and therefore an injustice against girls and women. Some activists understand the gendered nature of trafficking as part of systemic patriarchy. All three ASMOs identify the emotional, sexual, economical, and physical abuse and exploitation that trafficking survivors experience as the problem.

The frequency, severity and the cruelty of sex trafficking are emphasized by the ASMOs to add urgency to the problem of trafficking. However, this also works to grab the attention of

potential activists and is also part of their motivational framing which is discussed more below. For example, Hope posted on their social media: “One in 185 - think about it...” along with reposting an article by Reuters.com titled, “Factbox: One in 185 a slave: snapshot of today’s trade in humans” (Hope social media). Although estimates of trafficking incidence vary widely, all three ASMOs emphasize the millions estimated in trafficking or the annual increase of cases to illustrate how frequent trafficking is. For example, the Church Ladies reposted a Polaris Project article showing a 25% increase in cases, stating, “Human trafficking cases jumped by 25% in 2018. What does that mean for the antitrafficking field?” (Church Ladies social media). The ASMOs understand that sex trafficking is undercounted in the official statistics because not all traffickers are caught or reported, nor are all victims identified. The ASMOs believe that by educating the public, official incidence rates will continue to grow because the public will learn signs of trafficking and be able to identify and report trafficking cases. However, evangelical activists conflate sex trafficking and prostitution. In doing so, antitrafficking activists are engaging in frame transformation. For example, on Church Ladies website, it states that

[Church Ladies] is a ministry of love, hope and presence to women in the adult industry through safe relationships and empowerment. National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888. If you sense someone is trafficked or exploited, please call the above trafficking hotline. [Church Ladies] is a faith-based outreach to women in the [city] area. Since 2009 our chapters have been reaching out to women working in massage parlors and adult venues, and to women posted in online prostitution ads. [Church Ladies] is a not-for-profit. We have no paid staff and currently do no fundraising but solely rely on the funds generated by our bridal boutique and donations from churches and ministry partners who are passionate about reaching women in the adult industry with the love of Jesus ... [Church Ladies]' Bridal Boutique generates funds to benefit exploited and trafficked women. Proceeds benefit [Church Ladies] and other local organizations assisting exploited and trafficked women.

(Church Ladies website, organizational document)

The Church Ladies website utilizes different language throughout the website including trafficking, exploitation, and prostitution. Hope’s language is similarly vague in their 10-year report:

Sexual victimization robs children of the most precious elements of growing up. A decade ago, we started by pondering the simple questions of “What if?”:

- *What if* we imagined that it was truly possible to **not only prevent** child sexual abuse and exploitation, **but to reach into the lives** of those living with the secrecy of abuse and tell them there is hope, there is another way?
- *What if* **EVERY child were free from sexual abuse and exploitation** – and **ALL** children could grow up feeling safe and loved?

With a handful of dedicated volunteers, these contemplations soon became actions with the establishment of [Hope] as a non-profit in 2012

(Hope, organizational document)

The reason the language is vague is that Hope and Church Ladies serve sex workers and trafficking survivors. In an interview with a Church Ladies volunteer, I asked if the organization determines a difference between trafficking victims and prostitution. She goes on to say,

Um, my understanding, like for [Church Ladies], or [Safe Space], whether you entered into it willingly or not, if you want out, and you want a new life, they want to help you. Because there are all kinds of barriers, like I said, there is the women, who like ... you know, a woman who wanted out. But because she had very little education, she wasn’t, hadn’t been very good at school, she didn’t read very well. She didn’t feel like she could make money, make a living at anything else ... She’s not being held criminally, but opportunity wise, or how she sees herself ... You know none of these ministries would say, “Well unless you were kidnapped, we’re not going to help you” (giggles). You know, if you just want out, but you don’t know a way out, we’re a means to get out.

(Rachel, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 51)

Activists believe that even if selling sex was legal, decriminalized, and/or regulated, like in Amsterdam, sex workers are still exploited and do not have a ‘true’ choice. Mary argues that

What we have seen is even in countries where it is decriminalized and regulated there is still a level of coercion, there is still control. In most cases the sex worker is not the person who benefits primarily, financially. You still, like even in Amsterdam you have people who are controlling them, you still haven’t a level of whether it’s legal or not, you still have a level of exploitation, that is occurring of that sex worker. And so, my personal belief is the exploitation aspect is very

common a part of the process whether it's legal or not ... like if you talk to ... women who, um, have done sex work who are in healing houses because maybe it's been, it was illegal and they got arrested, and they're choosing to try to break out of that life, for most of the workers, it started when they were kids, it started when they were teens, and so they were trapped into the cycle at a very early age. So even though it was a choice, it wasn't really a choice.

(Mary, Hope staff, white woman, 51)

Later in the interview, she goes on to state that prostitutes use substances because

it's very hard for people to live that life without numbing out and, even the fact that it's very hard for people to live that life without numbing out to me says there is a problem with it (laughs).

(Mary, Hope staff, white woman, 51)

Thus, sex work and sex trafficking are not viewed as existing on a continuum of free to exploitative work but are collapsed into a single category of exploitative work. Antitrafficking efforts are not framed in such a way where the exploitation is the sole problem, but the exploitation and selling sex are both problematic. Activists utilize sex trafficking as the reason that selling sex is a problem. Women do not choose sex work, even if they are not being forced, threatened, or coerced by another. Sex workers are framed as lacking other choices, being traumatized, and on drugs, such that their 'choice' exists under false consciousness. Furthermore, evangelical activists do not acknowledge that all choices to work are constrained by structural conditions and most work in a capitalist system is exploitative. Instead, evangelicals believe that women who choose sex work are "sick," and forced by the conditions in their life (if it is not at the hands of a trafficker). Selling sex is viewed by evangelical activists as dangerous and violent, which demeans women, and often women would not, choose sex work if given other options and were informed about the dangers of sex work. Sex work frames are transformed into sex trafficking frames. As Sandy states:

It's one thing for somebody to say I choose this line of work, it's another thing to say, if I were given all the occupational choices, um, that you could possibly

choose, would you choose to do, and you had complete informed consent of what that career path looked like, like this is gonna be, you're gonna be seeing this many men, have sex with this many people, men, there's a likelihood of this, they, they all the things that we give people when, when you're taking medication, you give them all the information and then they choose prostitution or sex work, that's one thing. I can pretty much guarantee that most of the women, even those that say they choose sex work, if they were given their choice [inaudible], they knew all the risk factors and went along with that particular line of work, very few women would choose that, truly choose that.

(Sandy, Hope staff, Chinese American woman, 47)

Sandy is correct; sex work is dangerous work. Sex workers experience high levels of physical abuse (82%), being threatened with a weapon (83%), rape (68%), and current or past homelessness (84%; Farley and Barkan 1998). They are also at increased risk for sexually transmitted infections (Steen and Dallabetta 2003). Evangelicals locate the danger of this work as inherent in the work itself; whereas sex workers and sex work rights activists argue that criminalization and stigmatization are the causes of the harms (Jackson 2016).

Her logic also implies that all other job choices are safe because they are legal, and that individuals are not constrained in their choices for legal occupational work. She also assumes that if given all the information about risks, individuals would not choose sex work. However, given all the occupational choices, many individuals would not choose service industry jobs due to the low pay, rigidity in the work, control by supervisors, and other significant issues, like harassment and violence. Service industry jobs, which are largely the jobs available to marginalized women, are not safe. Women experience sexual harassment in astonishing numbers (Frye 2017), as the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have documented. Furthermore, sex workers have more flexibility in their work and can make significantly more money than service industry positions.

Finally, Sandy implies that the reason that sex workers choose this work is due to oppression, a ‘slave’ mentality and false consciousness (Agustín 2007). Thus, activists work to ‘enlighten’ or awaken sex workers from this false consciousness so that they can choose a legal (and acceptable) form of work (often in the service industry). Furthermore, Bernstein (2012) finds that many antitrafficking activists are also anti-prostitution activists, who want the state to preserve ‘family values.’ Thus, activists are using the state to secure the sexual boundaries at home.

There are several consequences to the conflation between trafficking and sex work. First, by conflating sex work and trafficking, it further clouds our understanding of trafficking, particularly when it comes to the number of incidents. Conflating sex work and trafficking will cloud the data collected, the theories proposed, and the scientific endeavor. Second, much of the funding, private and government, is being awarded based on reducing sex trafficking, yet is used to deter voluntary (albeit illegal) sex work. Agustín (2007) argues that this is an authoritarian form of liberal government, in which those who are being governed are not considered free; and a colonialist notion wherein sex workers are not qualified for self-rule.

Trafficking is also framed as a social problem which is no longer “just” overseas. Here activists are utilizing frame amplification (Snow et al. 1986), to clarify misperceptions that trafficking is not a problem for Americans. Frame amplification is one of the frame alignment processes to build support for the social movement. There are two types of frame amplifications: value amplification and belief amplification. Activists are using belief amplification, which is when mobilization occurs when beliefs are amplified or transformed. Activists argue that trafficking is a problem within the United States and attempt to dispel myths about it being only an overseas problem. This increases the seriousness of the problem for the audience and



emphasizes the necessity for mobilization because it affects people ‘like them.’ For example, a Hope Flyer states, “HUMAN TRAFFICKING: NO LONGER JUST AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM” (Hope organizational document). Furthermore, in a post, Hope states: “Child sex trafficking can happen anywhere” reposting an article titled, “Human Trafficking Survivor from Texas visits White House (Hope social media).

The goal of the activists is for Americans to be aware that trafficking is happening in the United States so that they can help identify victims and perpetrators. Previous research finds that this is a common frame within the antitrafficking movement (Shih 2016), and the shift from international trafficking to domestic trafficking is due to the U.S. government failing to identify international trafficking victims (Brennan 2008). Shih (2016) refers to this as “Backyard abolitionism” where activists work to eliminate ‘undesirable’ elements, such as immigration, low wage, informal work, and delinquent sexuality. Backyard abolitionism as a tactic prioritizes policing objectives over welfare to regulate the poor; and leads to trafficking shelters becoming sites of ‘prisonfare’ and ‘workfare,’ where rescuers become empowered agents of the police state order. She argues that the concept of backyard abolitionism is not entirely correct, as activists often focus on what is happening in other people’s backyards, often working-class and immigrant communities, instead of their own backyards.

Activists also frame trafficking as a crime that can happen to American children, which extends the frame to include a different type of victim. Frame extension redefines who is considered a victim, which is done to link personal and group interests (Snow et al. 1986). Frame extension is one type of frame alignment processes utilized by activists to build support. For example, Hope posted to their social media: “Perpetrators employ tactics enticing to youth. Social media is increasingly used as a means of both gaining access to and exploiting

unsuspecting youth,” along with reposting an article by local newspaper titled, “[City] man gets 22 years in prison after luring teen girls into sex via Facebook, promising cash.” However, by arguing that trafficking can happen to anyone (including white middle-class suburban children) in the United States, the activists are unknowingly creating fear (and a moral panic). Research suggests that racial minorities, the poor, undocumented immigrants, and LGBTQ persons have increased risk of being trafficked (Nichols 2016). Those who are most privileged have lower risks. Yet, several volunteers and staff indicated that the reason they became involved in the trafficking movement is because trafficking *could* happen to their child. Part of this fear coincides with the understanding that trafficking is now happening in the United States. For example, Betty, a Hope staff, indicated that,

At the time I heard about [Hope] I had a 13-year-old daughter myself, and then, the thought of that kind of, this kind of abuse is happening to one of my own daughters, like I said. I’m tearing up right now even talking about it. It was just like horrifying and I could not do something.

(Betty, Hope staff, white woman, 45)

While sex trafficking happens across the socioeconomic spectrum, those most marginalized by race, gender, sexuality, and class experience higher rates of trafficking (Nichols 2016). For Betty, however, all women are vulnerable to sexual abuse at the hands of men. The expanded definition of who is considered victims, from black and brown women overseas to white middle-class teenage girls, regardless of actual risk, is used as a tool to recruit activists, fundraise, and generally gain support. This tactic has also created fear, particularly for parents. Previous research finds that similar sex panics have occurred throughout history (Bernstein 2007, 2010, 2012; Shih 2016; Agustín 2007).

For these ASMOs, trafficking is framed as a crime which men, as both traffickers and clients, inflict upon girls and women. Men and boys are rarely acknowledged as survivors. In

fact, the idea that men are predators and women are survivors is so ingrained that activists and survivors almost exclusively refer to survivors as girls (even when victims are adult women), or she/her and predators as men, or he/him. Trafficking of men is almost completely absent from the literature, news, and other media (Jones 2010). Jones (2010) claims that this socially constructed conception of males' continual dominance and not ever being vulnerable, particularly in context with human trafficking, is flawed. Inherent in this discourse is that only women are vulnerable to trafficking and thus only women need protection. Most shockingly, young boys are left out of the discussion, even though they comprise about half of child pornography in the United States (Jones 2010). Jones (2010) illustrates how susceptible boys and men are to trafficking and forced labor by pointing to a case in 2008, Operation Blue Orchid, which uncovered a trafficking network who filmed the rape of little boys from Russia. Additionally, males account for half of all children missing in the United States, which 16 percent are known to be sexually abused (Jones 2010). Moreover, the number of boy prostitutes is approximately 300,000, which is estimated to be about half of female children.

Jones (2010) argues that the result of boys being trafficked leaves severe physical, psychological, and social consequences on the child, specifically "headaches, stomach aches, eating disorders, fear, anxiety, depression, declining grades, aggression, and increased likelihood of adolescent prostitution, substance abuse, and suicide attempts" (Pp. 1151). Jones (2010) argues that this may be more traumatic for boys, which results in more stigmatization, because they are "supposed" to be more self-reliant and want to have sex. Furthermore, because the human trafficking discourse focuses primarily on women and girls, the incidence of trafficking of boys, the profit from trafficking of boys, and the impact on the boys' health are not known (Jones 2010). Finally, seeing victims only as girls and women leads to an organizational

structure and an antitrafficking field that provides few services for transgender individuals, boys, and men. The three ASMOs provide case management-type of assistance to boys and men, mostly by referring them to other services, but provide much more comprehensive and holistic services to girls and women. Furthermore, boys and men are excluded from Break the Cycle's drop-in space, and Hope's residential space. In other words, services for men are severely limited.

### **Causes of Trafficking**

There are multiple causes of sex trafficking, which intersect in a complex web of vulnerabilities and lead some to increased rates of victimization. As such, the blame for trafficking varies by organization, and to some extent by activists. For example, activists believe sex trafficking stems from systemic issues, prior sexual abuse, pornography, the sexual revolution, and that there is a connection to drug addiction. How ASMOs frame the causes of trafficking will also shape the solutions proposed. In this section, I examine where activists place the blame for trafficking.

Some activists in all three organizations believe that the problem of sex trafficking is connected to other systemic social problems, such as poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism to varying degrees. These activists tended to be more liberal and educated. Evangelicals and those who were less educated tended to not understand how structural inequality leads to trafficking situations. But there is variation in activists' understandings of these larger social structures and how much these larger issues are discussed. For some activists these larger social structures are the foundation and primary cause of sex trafficking, particularly for Break the Cycle activists. For example, Lucy states

Like, I mean, you know, there's transient male populations, so [inaudible] for the demand talk. But there's also non-legal ways to make money in neighborhoods. Like, it's not just trafficking, but it's also like selling drugs and having illegal hair braiding salons out of your apartment. It's having illegal daycares unregulated things because you can't make a living [at] the places that exist to get a job. It's definitely an overlapping issue with poverty. Right? Um, and the way we treat people in this country as less than. So, some of that racism, sexism, homophobia, it causes violence against women, it causes violence against people. It makes it okay to do bad things to other people because it's normal, because they're not a person, because they're just a prostitute, or they're just x, y, and z.

(Lucy, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, 28)

Many activists understand that much of the problem of sex trafficking is caused by the inability of marginalized women to provide for themselves through legal work. While for others, social inequality exists but is not necessarily connected to sex trafficking. Very few activists believe that social equality has been reached. Sex trafficking is a complex issue with several contributing causes. Other systemic causes of trafficking discussed by activists include greed and money. A few activists also believe that sex trafficking is caused by lack of personal accountability, gang affiliation, transient male populations, a hyper-sexualized culture specifically the hyper-sexualization of women, the normalization of casual sex, desensitization and indifference on the part of the police, losing morals and values, societal acceptance, “men’s sin nature,” power, sex, prostitution and family prostitution; not being aware; early use of technology and social media; violence against women; and running away from home. Break the Cycle (comprised of younger, highly educated, and more liberal activists) discusses systemic economic and social issues the most as causes, while Hope and Church Ladies tend to focus on causes related to child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, and pornography.

Activists in Hope believe that sex trafficking stems from child sexual abuse. These early experiences in childhood serve as pathways (Daly 1992) to the sex industry and sex trafficking victimization. Activists use frame extension to link sex trafficking to child sexual abuse, which

allows activists to increase participation by extending their values to the values that others care about, namely children. For example, Hope posts to their social media: “The link between child sexual abuse material and child sex trafficking is clear, and the statistics are heartbreaking.” (Hope social media) reposting a TED Talk video titled, *How we can eliminate child sexual abuse material from the internet*. This type of frame extension is one of the first steps in hooking people into the organization. As an organization, Hope is much more vocal about the relationship between childhood abuse and sex trafficking, often citing the research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). During trainings, Hope brought in a trauma psychologist, Jon (white middle-aged man), from a local university to train Hope staff and volunteers on the impacts of trauma (ACEs) twice, once in the spring of 2017 and once in the spring of 2018. Jon presented the research on ACEs, which include household dysfunction; violence in the home; parental mental illness; parental substance use; emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; and emotional and physical neglect. The more adverse experiences that an individual has, the greater likelihood that individual will engage in risky behavior; have social, emotional, and cognitive impairment; have chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, addictions, and mental disorders; “low life potential,” and an early death (Jon, trauma psychologist, white middle-aged man). He goes on to say:

ACEs [lead to] disrupted neurodevelopment – social, emotional, and cognitive impairment, adoption of health risk behaviors, disease, disability and social problems, and early death. ACEs interfere with developing the building blocks for affect regulation. They often don’t get secure attachment, don’t have modeling of appropriate coping, identification figures may not be very positive, and do not develop good self-esteem. Most of the girls who come to [Care house] have multiple ACEs, and missing building blocks for that affect regulation, frustration tolerance, ability to delay gratification, and focus on long term goals. They have a history of insecure attachments and have been interpersonally betrayed. They will have trust issues.

(Hope ethnographic notes)

Abused and neglected children have been betrayed by those that are supposed to love them most, which leads to trust issues in their future relationships. Sex trafficking survivors have trouble with emotion regulation, dealing with frustration, ability to delay gratification, and focus on long term goals. Survivors are often diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Survivors with PTSD can experience different types of flashbacks. One of the most common are affective flashbacks, where survivors experience the same feeling as they did during their abuse. Activists believe that survivors of childhood abuse, particularly childhood sexual abuse, are more likely to be abused again in the future because they cannot recognize red flags in relationships and have unknowingly normalized being in abusive and unhealthy relationships. For Hope, survivors are more vulnerable to trafficking because they come to understand relationships as transactional, and many internalize ideas about their worth stemming from their sexuality. During a Hope training, Sandy (Hope Executive Director, Chinese American woman, 47) states that

all children can be vulnerable. Often choices they make is what we would all make. They doubt themselves, mistrust others, and caregiving is often mixed with control and abuse.

(Hope, ethnographic notes)

Predators and traffickers often use grooming and seduction techniques to gain the trust of abused children, who are more vulnerable to these techniques. Thus, because children have previously been abused, traffickers are able to prey on that vulnerability, gain trust, and abuse again.

Activists connect sexual abuse and sex trafficking to help frame sex trafficking victims (and sex workers) as victims. In doing so, activists can create the narrative that trafficking survivors and sex workers need help to become aware of their false consciousness due to their oppression and 'slave' mentality.

Many activists in Hope and Church Ladies also believe that pornography leads to sex trafficking. Activists utilize frame extension to incorporate the problem of pornography. Snow et al. (1986) argue that activists utilize frame extension to amplify the ideas to clarify the connection between personal and group interests. For example, the Church Ladies posted on their social media "It's time to shut down super-predator site Pornhub and hold the executive megapimps behind it accountable. Sign the petition, friends!", along with reposting a Change.org petition, with the logo "Trafficking hub," a play on the popular Pornhub site (Church Ladies social media). By connecting the problem of trafficking to pornography, activists argue that pornography leads to purchasing sex, which is detrimental to individuals and relationships. This narrative fits into a conservative and religious ideology of gender and sex, which I discuss at greater length in Chapter 7. Eleven of 26 activists (42%) interviewed discussed the connection between sex trafficking and pornography. For example, Michelle (Church Ladies Executive Director, white woman 47) states that "pornography fuels. Pornography is the fuel for all of this. For sure, for sure, it's the big fuel for all of this." These activists believe that boys and men learn about sex from pornography, which is easily found for free online. Through watching pornography, boys and men learn about unhealthy sexual relations and objectify women. Overtime, boys and men viewing pornography leads to a pornography addiction. As Stella points out:



I really think pornography is tightly entwined at least with the sex trafficking part of it. And so, and people just don't seem to think that that's a problem, and I know how it, how addictive it is, just from studying the brain science behind it, um, that it's more addictive than cocaine or heroin, and it takes longer to lose the addiction than cocaine or heroin ... I know, it's, it's, and it destroys families, and it destroys, um, people's inter-relational skills. So just, I would, if I had a personal hope, it would be to, that I could see, um, that awareness in schools, in churches, with the youth cause I mean they get them, they're like, there's eight, nine, ten. I mean you just have to click on the internet, and you're gone.

(Stella, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 62)

Evangelical activists believe that once a pornography addiction sets in, the addict will search for more extreme pornography, and eventually purchase sex, including trafficked sex. Bernstein (2012) documents how evangelical Christians' anti-pornography activism is connected to antitrafficking activism and sex panics. She argues that past cries against white slavery, pornography, abortion rights, and birth control are related to their 'family values.' However, these sex panics are not new, what is new is the increased concern due to the increase in scope and reach of sex work due to globalization. In response, many evangelicals have been pushing to criminalize pornography (Perry and Whitehead 2020). Furthermore, antitrafficking activists use frame extension to connect antitrafficking and anti-pornography, which allows activists to enlarge participation by extending their values to the values that others care about, in this case anti-pornography. Nyla argues that it is one of the root causes:

Looking at the root causes, so we're gonna have to look at pornography ... If you don't focus your stuff, if you don't focus on those things it's gonna be pretty much nearly impossible to eliminate it ... You know? Cause the, the connection to, to pornography is, I mean, it's over and over, you can see it over and over. It's so closely connected.

(Nyla, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 37)

By connecting anti-pornography in with antitrafficking, activists can hook people in. One activist spoke about her first experience listening to Church Ladies:

So, um, I actually didn't even start working with it, um, until the last year. And so, I had a friend who came up to me, well she had a, she got a webinar or something and said, 'oh you need to, you know, read this,' cause she knew that I was very interested in it. And, so I listened to it, um, and then they were talking about human trafficking and the link to strip clubs, and pornography, and a lot of that, that most people don't even realize that they're linked.

(Stacy, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 35)

Because pornography has expanded exponentially online, it has become much more diverse in terms of fetishes, and often contains violence and other problematic scenarios and scenes.

Activists believe that pornography addicts escalate to more graphic and violent pornography overtime. I took notes at a local conference of Lisa, a counselor for Church Ladies and presenter at the professional conference:

[Lisa] takes over presenting and argues that there is a connection between porn and sex trafficking. She sees porn addicts and sees what it does to their life. She presents some information about porn: 90% of porn is violent today; 10% positive/healthy sexual behavior takes place in porn.

(Church Ladies, Ethnographic notes)

Through watching graphic and violent pornography boys and men come to think that sex is about dominating, objectifying, and being violent towards women. Activists believe that pornography is addictive, and eventually boys and men will turn to purchasing sex to satisfy sexual desires commonly found in sexual addicts. When boys and men purchase sex, they are at risk of purchasing trafficked sex.

Activists believe that pornography leads to a sexual addiction, and increased desires for novel sexual experiences, which then leads to purchasing sex. Evangelical activists point to *Fight the New Drug's* website as evidence that pornography is addictive and leads to sexual abuse and exploitation. *Fight the New Drug* is an organization with the goal of banning pornography. Their website publishes pop psychology and pseudoscientific articles which lack scientific rigor and citations. Both activists' claims about the link between pornography and buying sex and *Fight*

*the New Drug's* website lack any empirical evidence or consideration of the characteristics of the pornography. Some important characteristics to consider in examining pornography would be violence and autonomy (if any) displayed by characters, clothing, the messages found in the scenarios and scenes, and whether stereotypes are deployed to advance a particular image or plot. *Fight the New Drug's* lack of clarification in defining pornography implies that any sexually explicit material, even that portraying sexual activity between consenting adults wherein neither has power to coerce the other is automatically harmful and in the same category as violent, coerced sex. There is lack of empirical evidence that watching pornography leads to a sexual addiction or to purchasing sex (Burke and MillerMacPhee 2021).

Some research does document problems associated with viewing pornography, such as accepting prostitution myths (Menaker and Franklin 2018), not intervening in sexual harassment or assault, accepting rape myths, and increased intent to commit sexual assault (Foubert, Brosi, and Bannon 2011). However, much of the research does not define and distinguish between violent and problematic pornography from consensual and less problematic forms of pornography. Furthermore, peer-reviewed research has not documented a correlation between pornography and sexual exploitation or sex trafficking, except that sexual exploitation can happen in the pornography industry. For instance, all child pornography is sexual exploitation because children cannot consent. Out of calls to the National Hotline (n = 10,583), Polaris Project (2021) finds that 8.9% of trafficking situations occur in pornography (n = 941). Activists also utilize anecdotal evidence of adult sex trafficking in pornography, particularly from a conservative perspective where all sex work is conflated with sex trafficking (Watson 2021; MacKinnon 2005; Hughes 2010). However, Comerford (2022) argues that the conflation of sex work (in this case pornography) and sex trafficking further marginalizes sex workers.

The research is mixed on whether pornography addiction causes changes in the brain (Love et al. 2015; Prause and Fong 2015). Love et al. (2015) suggests the brains of consumers of pornography are like other addicts. Like other addicts, those who watch internet pornography compulsively and chronically, dopamine is released which stimulates and reinforces the experience. Overtime, neuroplastic changes build maps for sexual excitement, and the user must progress to more graphic pornography to maintain higher levels of excitement. Other research suggests that there are decreased brain reactions to pornography overtime (Prause and Fong 2015). The American Psychiatric Association (2013) does not include pornography addiction in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM 5; Parekh 2018). Yet, there are many organizations, many of which are conservative and religious, who continue to argue there is a correlation between sex trafficking and pornography, such as Focus on the Family, Integrity Restored, Fight the New Drug, One Million Men, and Stop Porn Culture. By medicalizing pornography addiction, evangelical activists can then understand and have compassion for clients and traffickers who are not willfully sinful but sick. By internalizing this theory, it allows evangelicals to see clients and traffickers as “sick” individuals in need of therapy, services, and support.

Antitrafficking efforts also utilize frame extension to incorporate the problem of drug abuse. Activists working for the Church Ladies argue sex trafficking is connected to the heroin epidemic in two ways. Sex trafficking victims are sometimes forced to take drugs so that they are more compliant in sexual acts. Additionally, the Church Ladies believe that sex work and sex trafficking are both physically and psychologically harmful, leading some women to cope with drugs, particularly heroin. Over time, in both scenarios trafficked women develop a physical addiction to drugs. Heroin and opioids are more likely to be chosen due to ease of availability

and ongoing epidemic. Ivy (white woman, 32), a Church Ladies volunteer, reports the Church Ladies started encountering more heroin addiction over the last couple of years. During my time in the field, the Church Ladies also experienced the loss of a friend and participant from a heroin overdose. During a volunteer retreat, I saw that the event program mentioned that one of Church Ladies participants passed away and asked Nyla (white woman, 37) about it:

Nyla said it was sad, [participant] had tried to commit suicide 10 times in the last year and used heroin to self-medicate. Nyla felt that [participant] shouldn't have been in the community without mental health supports.

(Church Ladies Volunteer Brunch, ethnographic notes)

Research does suggest that drugs are connected to the sex trade (Pinkham and Malinowska-Sempruch 2008). Some drug users turn to selling sex to support their drug habit. Other research finds that traffickers sell victims to pay for drugs or drug debts (Nichols 2016).

Activists also believe that non-marital sex, immodest clothing, and expressions of sexuality are part of the problem with sex trafficking. Activists believe that trafficking survivors are oversexualized, and expressions of any sexuality such as 'immodest' clothing are seen as symptoms of the problem and needs to be addressed. One activist points to survivors yelling out to boys as one of their problematic behaviors:

you know the girls that are recovered, um, you know, as you know, have come from terribly abusive and traumatic backgrounds, and so they act out in different ways. You know, sometimes, they're just too loud when you're in a public place, or they'll yell out to boys, or they swear loudly and often.

(Chatche, Hope volunteer, white woman, 46)

Then she suggests that survivors should not be interacting with boys at all:

Sometimes their thoughts and ideas about things aren't healthy for them. Like if they ask to go to a, I don't know, um, a place where there are a whole bunch of boys and it would be too hard to supervise them, you know, the girls might ask to do something like that. But, of course, the staff would say no, but then they would try to compromise and find, you know, a different outing they go to where it's

easier to supervise, and there wouldn't be as much, you know, interaction with boys.

(Chatche, Hope volunteer, white woman, 46)

Here Chatche argues that even being around boys can be a problem. Many activists acknowledged that sexual behavior should be reserved until marriage with a heterosexual partner. Ivy states:

I do not believe in [sex before marriage]. Did it (laughs), don't believe in it, don't stand by it, and then that also was from, you know, experience that seeing that, you know, it just did not play out how it should have, and how God would have desired it and I see damage.

(Ivy, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 32)

Evangelical activists believe that individuals should wait until marriage to have sex because having non-marital sex causes harm. As Stella states:

Chemical changes happen when you have sex. And there's, um, there is a bonding that goes on, and you might think, you know, "oh great women's, you know, revolution, we get to have sex with whoever." I'm like, "you know, wow, we're so protected now." You know? Not! You get hurt

(Stella, Church Ladies, white woman, 62)

Activists believe that women who have sex outside of marriage will suffer psychological and relationship consequences. When women engage in non-marital sex, there is "damage" that occurs to survivor's sexuality. The consequences for women who have sex outside of marriage include feelings of guilty, shame, and comparing past sexual relationships with a current spouse.

Maria makes this point:

Biblically, you're not supposed to [have sex before marriage]. It's not blessed. And, uh, I believe that I believe that when you have sex with someone you give a part of yourself away. There's a spiritual, um, involvement. That is connected to that person. And, if that person is no longer in your life that it, it leaves a, it leaves a hole.

(Maria, Hope volunteer, white woman, 58)

For evangelicals, non-marital sex, and sex trafficking strikes at the foundation of what makes a “healthy” home for evangelical activist, particularly for children. Bernstein (2012) documents similar findings, activists who believe that trafficking stems from prostitution, but also more permissive sexual attitudes. She argues that the problem with the sexual revolution is it created sexual temptation for men (outside of families). For evangelical activists, nonmarital sex is the political target because it causes harm, leads to exploitation and abuse, and destroys the ideal family. Thus, they see families as safety for women and children, one which the criminal justice system should protect. Yet, research suggests that this traditional view of sex has declined rapidly among most Americans, except for evangelicals (Petersen and Donnerwerth 1998; Allison and Risman 2013).

In this section I have examined how activists frame the causes of trafficking. Although there is overlap, activists from the different organizations focused upon different causes. Break the Cycle focused on intersectional dimensions of marginalization; Hope focuses on ACEs; and Church Ladies focus on pornography. But other causes were discussed and there is some overlap amongst activists. In the next section, I examine how activists frame the consequences of trafficking.

### **Consequences of Trafficking**

All three ASMOs focus on individual-level symptoms of trafficking, namely survivors’ symptoms from the abuse experienced. Trafficking survivor symptoms of abuse include health/physical, social, and mental health consequences both in the short term and long term. Activists do not discuss consequences to the community or public health, despite research finding that trafficking leads to breakdowns in families and communities; increases organized crime and corruption; depriving communities of human potential; and costing communities and

victims (National Institute of Justice 2016). In this section, I discuss survivors' symptoms in the short term before discussing long-term symptoms.

Survivors experience several immediate consequences to the abuse experienced in trafficking situations, such as a fear/psychological responses, changes in behavior, evidence of control in their relationships, engaging in covert or suspicious activities, increased risk of injuries, illness, and death. During a Hope training of direct service workers, trauma psychologist Jon (white, middle-aged man) explained that physically, when humans experience danger the autonomic nervous system is activated and physical symptoms appear such as, pupils get larger, skin changes color, skin gets moist, heart rate speeds, and stress hormones are secreted. Some get hyper-aroused (fight or flight), others get hypo-aroused (freeze). Break the Cycle's training manual also suggests survivors may experience persistent fear, depression, anxiety, submissive behavior, hyper vigilant or paranoid behavior, and loss of time and space. Prolonged or repeated experiences with such stress responses can influence long-term consequences for survivors.

Trafficking victims also have a change in behavior and may use new language, such as referring to "the life," or a boyfriend as "daddy." Victims may become secretive or vague about their whereabouts; have unexplained absences, and/or become defensive in response to questions or concerns; keep late-night or unusual hours; get a tattoo that they are reluctant to explain; information may change during the telling of their story; and truancy or tardiness from school may become more frequent. Furthermore, victims experience difficulties in their relationships and are more likely to experience intimate partner violence.

Break the Cycle suggests indications of trafficking may also include having no passport or identifying documentation; not being permitted to speak on their own; not speaking English; not being in control of their own money; being showered with gifts and material items such as



unexplained shopping trips or possession of expensive clothing, jewelry, cell phones, salon treatments and possessing new material goods with no financial means to do so independently; and family dysfunction, which may include abuse or neglect in the home, absence of a caregiver, or substance abuse. Trafficking victims may also be engaged in suspicious work. Break the Cycle defines suspicious work as working off the books in a low-paying job, a commercial sex worker, inability to move, leave a job or take time off, unpaid for work or compensated very little, and living with co-workers and/or employers with no privacy. There is also increased risk of injuries and illnesses, untreated illnesses or infections, particularly sexually transmitted infections, and signs of substance abuse. Although the organizations do not explicitly discuss death as a consequence, the organizations discuss cases in which trafficking victims were murdered.

Survivors may experience long-term consequences tied to their trafficking situation, such as physical/health consequences, developing a trauma bond with trafficker, loss of trust of others and struggles in relationships; struggles with self-esteem and efficacy; interruptions in schools; impairment of social, emotional, and cognitive development; and increased symptoms of mental health, including alcohol abuse and addiction. During a Hope training of direct service staff, guest speaker and trauma psychologist, Jon (white man, middle-aged) explained that chronic stress increases production of stress hormones, such as cortisol, which begins to kill brain cells in the hippocampus. Trauma and chronic depression cause chronic stress. Victims may also develop a trauma bond with their abuser or trafficker. Jon goes on to explain that “adult survivors continue to feel responsible for what happened to them.” He cites previous research from Salter (1995), “Much of what happens between offender and victim is a battle of realities” (P 251). He argues that much of what happens is that survivors develop the perpetrator’s point of view.

Again, citing research from psychologist Anna Salter (1995), he argues that “It is imperative for the therapist to understand how the offender thinks, to recognize the sound of the offender’s voice – whether outside the survivor’s head or inside it” (P 250). Furthermore, survivors also lose trust of others and struggle in their relationship. A child’s lack of attachment to a parent leads to the child’s insecure attachments in other relationships. Jon (trauma psychologist, white man, middle-aged) explains to direct care staff that,

They lack secure attachment, so children are insecure. When first engaging with them, it is best not to expect anything from them (as it may take time to open up). There was often not appropriate modeling of coping. If the child has a weak relationship with the parent, identification with the parent may not occur. This affects their self-esteem, and they may not be able to regulate their emotions.  
(Hope training, ethnographic notes)

Trafficking survivors also struggle with how they see themselves, feeling self-blame and guilt for the trafficking situation and do not see themselves as victims or survivors of crime. Sandy (Chinese American woman, 47), the Hope Executive Director, explains, “kids often blame themselves, and abused kids see themselves as sexualized and justify selling sex because they are giving it away for free.” Survivors also experience interruptions in school; impairment of social, emotional, and cognitive development; and mental health symptoms, including alcohol and drug abuse and addiction. According to the Break the Cycle Manager, Ellen, “trafficking victims have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at the same level as war veterans.”

In this section, I have examined the diagnostic framing of trafficking. I find that antitrafficking activists emphasize the frequency, severity, and cruelty of trafficking. They argue that trafficking is an American problem (backyard abolitionism); conflate sex work and sex trafficking; and focus on the impacts on girls and women. Activists blame trafficking on childhood sexual abuse, pornography, and other cultural and systemic issues like poverty, drug

abuse, and the sexual revolution. All activists focus on the harms caused to individual sex trafficking survivors, such as the psychological and physical consequences. In the next section I discuss how activists frame the solutions to trafficking.

### **Prognostic Framing**

Prognostic framing presents activists' proposed solutions for problem of trafficking, addressing the question, "what is to be done?" (Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2002). Activists' prognostic framing shapes the strategies and tactics of the three ASMOs. In this section, I examine the prognosis of the problem of sex trafficking and then the proposed solutions to trafficking. Activists acknowledged that eliminating all trafficking is an impossible feat, however, their goal is to reduce its frequency. Proposed solutions for addressing trafficking fall into three categories: prevention, protection, and prosecution as outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (United States Department of State 2021<sup>1</sup>). The United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 was the first contemporary legislation against human trafficking, and greatly influences the strategies used by the antitrafficking organizations in the United States and abroad. Thus, most antitrafficking organizations are working in at least one of the areas of prevention, protection, or prosecution. Activists in this sample spend more time and resources on protection, followed by prevention, and the least time on prosecution. Prevention focuses on preventing future trafficking incidence by educating and warning the public about what abuse and trafficking looks like; and to identify victims to prevent future abuse. Protection focuses on the protection of trafficking survivors, meaning they are removed from the trafficking situation to heal and work on becoming more successful in the future. Prosecution focuses on working with law enforcement on rescue operations and preparing victims for court. Most of their work is focused on an individual level, trying to improve life

outcomes for survivors and educate the public. In other words, activists are not focused on poverty reduction, or the criminalization of public officials involved in sex trafficking, such as corrupt border patrol agents. First, I begin with a forecast of sex trafficking as a problem, followed by an examination of the strategies that ASMOs utilize in their antitrafficking work.

The prognosis in solving human trafficking, and sex trafficking specifically, is bleak. Activists in all three ASMOs believe that trafficking will never completely end, but their goal is to reduce it. Sandy (Chinese American, 47), the Hope Executive Director, says, “well, you know our mission is one of those things that people have said you’re never going to see the end of, you’re never going to achieve that, and so it is a truly God-sized mission and vision that we may never see the end of, but we work towards it.” Next, I discuss the proposed solutions, which fall into three categories: prevention, protection, and prosecution.

## **Prevention**

All three of the ASMOs hold educational and awareness events and educate the public through social media platforms and the organization’s websites. Educational events are promoted on their social media platforms and websites. Hope also created a Junior Advisory Council and created a prevention video for teens and children. Hope’s education and awareness events for minors include identifying healthy versus unhealthy relationships, and for adults’ general information about trafficking and how to identify traffickers. The Church Ladies developed a law enforcement training program (which is not directly affiliated with the program), a John prevention program (which was later abandoned), a sexting/sextortion prevention program, and a specific program for girls in the local juvenile detention center. Break the Cycle developed and ran special subcommittee trainings in coordination with the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force, such as special topics in labor trafficking and LGBTQ+ issues. The overall strategy for

prevention is to educate the community about trafficking generally, including what to look for in abusive relationships, being able to identify trafficking, and how to reach out if someone is being abused. When victims are identified and leave (or are removed from) abusive situations, then future abuse is prevented. In this section, I compare features of all three ASMOs prevention strategies before discussing unique features of each organization's prevention strategy individually.

The educational events typically give a brief introduction on human trafficking, the harms and consequences for survivors, indicators of sex trafficking, along with what the organization is doing, and how the audience can engage with the organization. Hope explicitly created lesson plans based on age and has educational events for teens and children, yet most educational sessions were with adults across all three ASMOs. The goal of these educational events is to disrupt the paths towards trafficking. Sometimes these events show documentaries and films, have survivors retell their stories, plan activities, and/or have discussions after the presentations. The trainings also contain very technical information, such as trafficking law definitions, estimates of incidents, and the psychology of trauma, developed from government websites and social science research.

Educational events are held most often in churches and schools, but also take place at the juvenile detention center and truck stops and workplaces, like Lyft, the rideshare service company. Hope and Church Ladies have specific educational teams, whereas Break the Cycle staff provide trainings and education. Break the Cycle does have a specific staff member, the Task Force Liaison, who does much of the work putting together the events. But presenting information is shared amongst the staff. All three organizations rely often on their religious networks and churches to hold events, meaning they utilize church spaces, and within Hope and

Church Ladies topics are sometimes discussed from an evangelical perspective and promotion of the events occur through church networks.

All three ASMOs use social media to various degrees to target their audience, recruit volunteers and staff, collect donations, educate the public about their cause and proposed solutions, shape political debates and outcomes, and mobilize the public. Which social media platforms they use and how often they post vary. The most common platforms used were Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Break the Cycle and the Church Ladies also utilized a blog to discuss topics in much more detail. Using social media is a very common tactic for social movement organizations but comes with obstacles and risks (Rohlinger and Corrigan-Brown 2018).

Break the Cycle utilized only one social media platform and had the fewest social media posts and interactions. They also posted blog posts to their website more frequently. Their website contained information about human trafficking, their program, and contained a blog, which was written by the paid staff. Often Break the Cycle's blog posts clarified myths and misconceptions of trafficking, such as victims being kidnapped and/or held in chains or behind bars. They also tackle more complicated topics, such as the connection between sexual harassment and trafficking, the lack of understanding and concern for labor trafficking, and how traffickers use religion to manipulate and control survivors. In comparison to Hope and the Church Ladies, Break the Cycle utilizes more scientifically valid information, as opposed to religious ideology, and provides a more nuanced understanding of human trafficking.

These organizations varied in the amount of usage, and success in mobilizing activists and educating the public. Hope utilized social media the most consistently, posting frequently on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; and utilizing the events feature on Facebook. Hope had the

greatest attendance at their events, raised the most funds and donations, and held more educational and training events. Hope strongly encouraged volunteer involvement and would often allow people to do the type of work they wanted and work as much as they wanted. Their success was likely a combination of their networks and social media presence. Break the Cycle did not have their own social media account. Instead, their parent organization, Freedom Ministry ran their social media accounts – most of which did not focus on Break the Cycle’s work. Instead, Break the Cycle utilized a blog on their website to write about their work. They held fewer events than Hope, but more than the Church Ladies. Break the Cycle had moderate attendance at their events. They raised some funds and collected donations and were awarded grants by the government. Break the Cycle was less successful in mobilizing potential activists in engaging in their work, but they also had less volunteer positions available. The Church Ladies had a more moderate presence on social media, utilizing Facebook and Instagram, but not Twitter. They held the fewest events, raised the fewest funds, and held the fewest educational and training events. They did have a moderate presence at events. They were connected to several churches throughout the area yet were not as successful as Hope at mobilizing potential activists. Next, I discuss each organization’s prevention efforts.

### *Hope*

Unlike the other two organizations, Hope develops programming specifically for teens and children. Hope conducts education and prevention training with children and sometimes their parents. According to the Hope website,

Prevention is critical in the battle to end child sex trafficking. It won’t end unless we can prevent children from being manipulated, coerced, and lied to by predators. [Hope] works from a holistic model to intervene in the abuse and exploitation of children. These programs help children and families to properly

understand the risk factors and to develop a strong sense of their value and self-worth.

(Hope website)

The curriculum is designed to be an after-school program because some parents do not want their children to learn about trafficking and abuse in school. Their curriculum targets parents and children in churches and schools but varies based on the age group of the children in the audience. For second grade students and younger, Hope teaches younger students about safety issues and bodies, 'bad touches,' and 'not real friends.' The curriculum uses simple language for this age, such as teaching children that true friends do not hurt the heart, hurt the body, or ask to keep secrets. For students between third grade and sixth grade, the curriculum includes discussions about sexual abuse. Students in sixth grade and over are taught about sex trafficking. Hope also created a prevention video after receiving a grant from a suburban chapter of the Rotary Club. The goal of the prevention video is to "protect children from predators," and to show that abusers often seem "perfect" at first, before any manipulation or abuse occurs.

Hope also created a Junior Advisory Council, which is comprised of high school and college students, who are working to raise awareness about human trafficking. Hope asks Junior Advisory Council members to educate their campuses about sexual exploitation and help in fundraising for the organization. Recruiting teens and young adults for Junior Advisory Council happens face-to-face at events, as well as on the website and social media.

During my time volunteering at Hope, the education team planned and worked on finding schools and churches to present the curriculum to. During these educational meetings we also discussed expanding the curriculum to include information on grooming; discussed trafficking in the nearby suburbs; read a book on trafficking; made plans to develop brochures, flyers, and cards; and discussed expanding the educational curriculum for those in the healthcare field, truck



drivers, and hotel and hospitality staff. The goal was to educate first responders and those who would be most likely to interact with trafficking survivors.

### *The Church Ladies*

The Church Ladies also engage in education and awareness activities in the community focused on sex trafficking, pornography, sextortion (which is threatening to reveal the victims' sexual activity unless the victim provides sexual favors or money to the extortionist) and sexting (sexually explicit text messaging). There are two separate education teams, with six volunteers on the awareness team and three on the juvenile detention team. The awareness team focuses on educating the public about sex trafficking in churches, schools, and other community spaces. The juvenile detention team focuses on educating incarcerated juveniles, who are at a greater risk for trafficking, about the dangers of trafficking. I volunteered for the education team. I attended one of their presentations, Human Trafficking 101, in which two of the volunteers, Nyla, the safe home Director, and Lisa, a therapist, presented basic facts about sex trafficking. A visual aid was presented with a child trapped in a space by bars, and around the child was a circle of mechanisms and social processes that are used to keep children in a trafficking situation. During their presentation, Lisa, a Church Ladies volunteer, argued that pornography is closely tied to sex trafficking but does not explain how. Much of the content presented during events is based on academic and government sources, but also contain evangelical perspectives, such as the unsubstantiated connections between trafficking and pornography. Many of the educational events are done in coordination with other organizations like Hope, Break the Cycle, local law enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and churches in the area.

The Church Ladies also created a John prevention program with the goal of reducing the demand for sex services and prevent men from purchasing sex in the first place. Services were

for men who struggle with sex addiction, cybersex, pornography, and pornography addiction. A john helpline was implemented where clients can call, email, or send a message through the website, and speak to another man about any sexually 'deviant' issues. The website also offered resources for sexual compulsion and addiction, sexaholics anonymous, information on pornography and cybersex, Christian recovery groups, online groups, referrals, sex addiction testing, and computer programs which redirect clients from searching for sexual services on Google Chrome. This program was later abandoned due to insufficient numbers of johns seeking their services.

Michelle, the Executive Director, stated that the goal was to train men to educate other men about sex and pornography addiction. To do this, the Church Ladies targeted men who visit pornography sites for these services. Thus, men who watch pornography or purchase sex are defined as 'bad' men (Bernstein 2012). Out of the three organizations I studied, The Church Ladies were much more vocal about the connection between pornography, purchasing sex, and sex trafficking. While I was interviewing a volunteer of Church Ladies, Lisa, a licensed counselor, reported that her husband, also a therapist, was in the next room running a group session for men with pornography addiction at their joint practice. Yet, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM 5) does not have such a diagnosis or offer recommended treatments (American Psychiatric Association 2013)

The educational program at the juvenile detention is an all-woman team which addresses the dangers of sex trafficking, pornography, drug abuse and domestic violence. Typically, volunteers hold this session on the third Saturday of the month for approximately an hour. The Church Ladies report that girls at the juvenile detention center are at greater risk for being

trafficked, many already have been trafficked, and recruiters are often still attempting to lure and groom them for sex trafficking after their release.

### *Break the Cycle*

Break the Cycle staff provides educational and training seminars on their own and through the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force, discussed below. Break the Cycle provides a two-day education and training event, which is mandatory for volunteers. Staff break up the educational content into one-to-two-hour presentations. This training includes information on Freedom Ministry; the local programs; family and community services; the Break the Cycle Program; human trafficking; legal information, state and federal antitrafficking legislation; drop-in information; mentorship information; public awareness and outreach; the 24/7 hotline; and volunteering information. According to their training manual, Break the Cycle and The Freedom Ministry:

undertakes education and awareness raising activities so that those who use products or services supplied by trafficked people are confronted with the human misery, suffering and injustice created by their continuing use of these services or products.

(Break the Cycle, organizational document)

Their website goes on to say,

our community trainings comprehensively lay the foundation for communities who are new to the issue by discussing real life situations of trafficking pertinent to their local context, by exploring ways to collaborate with a multidisciplinary team, and by outlining processes to help folks critically determine how to create task forces like ours in their own community.

(Break the Cycle, organizational website)

They dispel myths of trafficking, instead painting a more realistic picture to help community members identify trafficking. Their training discussed the legal definition of trafficking, the ways that people enter a trafficking situation, the tactics that traffickers use to maintain power and

control over survivors, and the red flags that generally present in a trafficking situation.

Attendees are then given suggestions for how to and how not to respond to survivors, how to be trauma-informed, how to safety plan, and how to connect to the appropriate resources. Once trainees can better recognize red flags and indicators, the training turns toward how trainees may be able to better collaborate to combat trafficking. For example, the volunteer manual states:

Human trafficking is Modern-Day Slavery.

PREVALENCE.

- 27 million slaves in the world today.
- Approximately **800,000 to 900,000** people are trafficked across international borders worldwide each year. Between 14,500 and 17,500 are trafficked into the United States each year.
- Roughly 80% of those considered trafficked are women and children.
- Every 40 seconds a child is found missing or abducted. 1 of 3 teens on the street will be lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.

(Break the Cycle, organizational document)

This information provides potential activists the information they need to know about the problem of trafficking, antitrafficking laws, and Break the Cycle's program.

Break the Cycle also has a staff person who co-leads the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force in the area, which is a multi-disciplinary team comprised of law enforcement, activists, and other antitrafficking organizations. This team is funded through the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office for Victims of Crime. The goal of the Task Force is to provide collaboration between law enforcement and service providers, using a victim-centered approach in investigating and prosecuting trafficking crimes, and provide high quality social services to trafficking survivors. The Task Force Liaison completes much of the work for the annual conferences and maintains the relationships with the attorney's office and service providers. The Task Force has several subcommittees that focus on specific areas like health care, training, victim services, labor trafficking and LGBTQ+ survivors.

I attended a training session with the LGBTQ+ subcommittee, in which they outlined how LGBTQ+ persons are often more vulnerable to trafficking. The trafficking task force also holds an annual two-day conference on trafficking in the area, which service providers, activists, academics, and law enforcement attend to get the latest information on incidence and responses to trafficking in the area.

Break the Cycle also conducts trainings for variety of stakeholders, including community centers, churches, hospitals, clinics, schools, nonprofit organizations serving youth, immigrant populations; people experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, and sexual assault; and workers' rights centers so trainees can be better able to recognize human trafficking within their own settings and recognize the value community efforts to identify victims. However, most of those who participate tend to be social service providers, educators, law enforcement, as well as concerned community members. Across the board, people have stated that they are troubled knowing that human trafficking exists in their communities and that they would like to find practical ways to act. In one year, Break the Cycle conducted 52 antitrafficking training sessions for 1,735 individuals. In March of 2019, Break the Cycle trained 106 people in four different suburban communities on how to respond to human trafficking. Break the Cycle hopes to conduct more trainings in the future.

Although activists feel that sex trafficking will be reduced through antitrafficking efforts, the challenges of the public's lack of awareness and intense need for education on the topic complicate the prognosis. Education and awareness campaigns are also important in the fight against trafficking because part of the challenge in finding and prosecuting trafficking cases is that many citizens, front line workers, truck drivers, and health care workers do not know what to look for and what questions to ask. All citizens, but front-line workers, need to be trained on

trafficking so that they can easily identify a trafficking victim, and report it, so the victim may receive services. Activists' strategies focus on training certain professions, like health care workers, which allows all three ASMOs to target where training is most needed. The ASMOs focus on specific front-line workers, but also want the public to be trained in trafficking to help identify trafficking survivors, so they may get assistance and heal.

## **Protection**

Antitrafficking work requires a considerable amount of investment to provide protection for survivors. Service providers are charged with providing materially, emotionally, and socially for survivors that are working towards their own recovery. To provide protection for survivors, service providers in the sample offer a 24-hour hotline, emergency response services, active outreach, permanent and temporary safe houses, case management, a drop-in center, referrals, and mentorship. The goal of these services is to remove survivors from the trafficking situation and provide a therapeutic environment where they can heal from the trauma they've endured, while also increasing their likelihood for success in the future via education and job readiness. In this section, I discuss the various services and compare them between organizations.

### ***24-hour Hotline and Emergency Response Services***

Two of the organizations, Break the Cycle and Hope, operate 24-hour hotlines, which anyone can call when they are themselves or suspect they are interacting with a trafficking survivor. For Break the Cycle, the purpose of the 24-hour hotline is to provide emotional support, connect people to housing resources, and pass tips to and contact law enforcement. Their 24/7 hotline was answered in the day by social workers and at night on weekends by volunteers in shifts. Shifts typically were divided into a day, a night, or a weekend shift. For each

shift, there is a staff available for back-up if there are questions or assistance is needed. Because Break the Cycle does not provide housing, much of the hotline work entailed helping the caller find other services, sharing information about the drop-in center, and where the survivor could be connected to the social workers for case management. During my time answering the 24-hour hotline, the callers were most often other service providers and law enforcement calling with questions regarding the program. A few times a past participant at Break the Cycle called in for emotional support. However, the volunteers were told in a special meeting to try to keep the call short, if possible, because there had been issues with her calling in too much and needing support for too long. This means that the line was busy for others if they needed it. According to their 2018 Annual Report, 100 survivors were assisted through the hotline. Although not on a 24-hour basis, Break the Cycle will ride along with law enforcement to potential trafficking situations (i.e., potential rescue operations). During these, Break the Cycle staff would be present during operations, where the staff are talking with and assisting the survivor(s), while the police are making arrests and investigating the crime(s).

HOPE operates a 24-hr hotline operated by volunteers. The purpose of the hotline is to help in an emergency, answer questions, and provide referrals for services. If there is a person in crisis, the hotline operator reaches out to the First Responder's team, who then meets the survivor. The First Responder's team helps provide immediate resources, such as hygiene products, find services and placement in a healing program, as needed. I did not work as a volunteer on the hotline, as volunteers must work for one year in a non-direct role before moving to a direct role.

The Church Ladies does not offer a 24-hour hotline but does provide a number on their website to reach out if someone is seeking help leaving the adult sex industry. They answer when

they can and do say they will reach back out within 24-hours. However, the Church Ladies offer other direct services.

### *Outreach*

The Church Ladies directly reach out to women in the sex industry and those whom they suspect might be in a trafficking situation. They typically reach out to women posting ads soliciting sex, and women working in strip clubs and Asian-themed massage spas. To find women selling sex, they search for online postings by women in the area and call the woman's phone number. When they call the number, they ask the woman if they can pray for them, and how they can help them. If they find someone who they suspect is under the age of 18, they report the ad directly to the police.

When I first entered the field in 2017, many of the volunteers used Backpage.com to search for women. However, in April 2018 Backpage.com was seized by the FBI and the founder was arrested (Porter 2018). There are many websites which remain in business. More recently, the Church Ladies have begun using a new program, which analyzing ads for sex, and then Church ladies will text them. The program was given to the Church Ladies for free from another partnering antitrafficking organization.

The second method of outreach is done in person at strip clubs and Asian massage spas, which they suspect serve as fronts for sex trafficking. Each chapter examines their local neighborhood/community for potential trafficking sites and attempts to connect with women. They identify these businesses by looking for doorbells, locked doors, and security cameras. Once they arrive at these locations, the volunteers bring gift bags and/or food for the women and try to develop a rapport with the manager or bartender, so they can talk to the women without incident. Volunteers continue to develop a rapport with them by bringing them gift bags once a



month, mostly containing hygiene products, home cooked food, and other small gifts, hoping these women will contact the Church Ladies if they want help leaving their current situation. Additionally, the volunteers often ask if they can pray for them, how the women are doing, and if they need anything. According to their website, each month the chapters collectively reach out to over 60 venues and over 100 women advertised online for prostitution.

Activists across all organizations utilize the language of ‘rescue’ or ‘saving’ when discussing recovering women from a trafficking situation or sex work. Break the Cycle critiques this savior complex in a blog post of their website, while also including it in their volunteer manual (although this language is limited) and partnering with police to recover potential survivors of trafficking. Hope and Church Ladies utilize this language more consistently, which illustrates the binary thinking of exploitation and freedom of evangelical Christians.

Evangelicals focus on “rescuing” victims of trafficking (and possibly sex workers) on the individual level, which does relieve some of the pain and suffering of trafficking survivors but does nothing to confront the root causes of trafficking. Previous research demonstrates that individualistic solutions are the focus for white saviors (Neela-Stock 2021; Murphy 2021; Maurantonio 2017; Hughey 2014) and evangelicals (Smith 2000). In their individualistic solutions, ASMOs paint a dire picture of sex trafficking: a girl or woman trapped in sexual slavery in need of urgent “rescuing.” For activists in Hope and Church Ladies, activists and prospective activists imagine a “savior” type of role in serving trafficking victims. A couple activists express the desire to “save” trafficked girls and women. As John states,

Well, so, you know, I mean my, my dream of it would be that [Hope] would have an arm that does go in and do the dirty work and actually directly rescue girls, like, you know, crack rings. I would love to see that, that's, honestly, I mean if I could say it, I mean that's what I'd really like to do. Yeah, rescue them. Yeah, like physically like. Yeah.

(John, Hope volunteer, white man, 48)

John imagines himself as a white savior, in which he is able to 'save' girls and women from a life of trafficking (or sex work). John speaks to an unnuanced conceptualization of capitalism, trafficking and those involved in trafficking and law enforcement. Here John imagines a crime show-like scenario where a group of law enforcement officers violently busts down the door of the operation's center, arrest several traffickers, and pulls out trafficked girls and women. These military-style operations are the stereotypical images found in tv and films about law enforcement, often used in busting drug rings, weapons dealers, gangs, and human trafficking rings. His conception of trafficking illustrates an over simplistic and dichotomous characterization of actors and of trafficking more broadly.

Underlying John's understanding of the trafficking situation is his beliefs about capitalism and exploitation more broadly. He believes that in a capitalistic 'free market' society, workers have free will to sell their labor without exploitation. His uncritical examination of capitalism allows him to conceive of legal work as free from exploitation and trafficking as exploitative. However, critical researchers conceive work within a capitalistic society as varying levels and aspects of exploitation (Skrivankova 2010). At the bare minimum, workers within capitalism are paid poorly, but those who are in more exploitative situations also may experience withheld pay, unsafe workplaces, harassment and abuse by their bosses, lack of autonomy within their positions, lack of accommodation, prejudice and discrimination, inadequate equipment, illegal attempts to discourage unionization and organization of workers, schedule inflexibility,

and denying leave (International Labour Organization 2009). Furthermore, institutions within the capitalist system are also characterized by poor labor inspections, enforcement of labor violations, and insufficient regulation of recruitment. Skrivankova (2010) argues that two conditions lead to exploitation: the impunity of violators and the poor access to rights. At the other end of the continuum is decent work, which is desirable work in safe conditions with dignity and adequate pay, which is above bare minimum. Common law standards focus on the terms and conditions of work, such as pay, working hours and union rights. Although these expectations are set, certain workers are more vulnerable to exploitative legal work, such as migrant workers. Forced labor is the extreme form of exploitation but included in the continuum are 'lesser' forms of exploitative work, such as labor violations.

For John, the actors within a trafficking situation are oversimplified as well. Law enforcement officers are the "good guys" who are justified in using high levels of violence against the "bad guys" in trafficking. His views about the good guys are uncritical, while his view of both the good guys and bad guys are overly simplistic. His views do not consider the fact that law enforcement commit domestic violence against their partner, engage corruption, and other illegal behaviors (Erwin et al 2005; Cox et al. 2019). At the other end, he sees the bad guys in simplistic terms as well, not acknowledging that traffickers often come from poor backgrounds, or may have grown up in familial trafficking situations. The bad guys utilize violence against girls and women for exploitative purposes. John wishes to be a "savior," which allows himself to identify as one of the "good guys." He believes that by physically removing trafficked girls and women, that their lives will markedly improve, and they will be free from abuse and exploitation. Previous research on evangelical antitrafficking organizing demonstrates a focus on this rescue narrative (Bernstein 2010, 2012; Shih 2016; Agustín 2007).

Further, John expresses a simplified and uncritical examination of police interactions in these scenarios. While these military-style busts occur all too often in practice, they are often overly violent and may further victimize trafficking victims. John was not the only activist using this language and approach. I found further evidence of this savior language and approach to trafficking among Hope and Church Ladies activists. For instance, Hope posted to social media:

The [Hope] 5K is less than 10 days away, and we are hoping for at least 100 more runners/walkers, so we have a math miracle for you! If you are reading this, you are one of more than 1800 people following [Hope]. If each one of you shares this post with 13 friends, we will reach 23,400 people. Less than ½ of 1% need to sign up to reach that goal. Help us make the miracle happen and help reclaim the childhoods of girls that have been rescued from trafficking. Join us today!

(Hope, social media)

This rescue language was common throughout Hope and Church Ladies:

You know, but these were people that really cared and would go out and rescue, um, you know, women and children, and you know, I just remember just wanting to thank them, and tell them how much it meant to me to hear that.

(Rachel, Hope volunteer, white woman, 51)

Furthermore, this language is common throughout the field, including the media. The Church Ladies reposted a news article from *Fight the New Drug's* website, referring to survivors as being rescued. This article was titled:

400 Children Rescued / 348 Adults Arrested After Police Take Down \$4 Million Child Porn Empire

(Church Ladies, social media)

Hope posts an article, adding that the survivors are now safe:

Truly grateful for the men and women in law enforcement who are working to get children to safety. [Hope] works closely with local officials on a regular basis. Together we can #endexploitation and #stopchildsextrafficking #Take[Hope]Back.

(Hope, social media)

The article titled, “More than 100 sex trafficking victims rescued across US amid busts: FBI” (Hope, social media post). For activists, “rescuing” victims is a process of identifying and removing victims from a trafficking situation (Shih 2016; Agustín 2007). The rescue language is in very black and white terms and does not consider the nuances in trafficking situations. Furthermore, research shows that many trafficking survivors do not identify as victims and have increased risk of victimization in the future (Nichols 2016). Further, because evangelicals conflate sex work and sex trafficking, it is likely that many of those they are attempting to rescue are not or would not be defined as trafficked or exploited, as is found in Shih’s (2016) ethnographic research on evangelical rescue efforts. Finally, for Hope and Church Ladies, survivor goals are imposed on them. They are required to stop selling sex and pursue education and legal work opportunities.

After being “rescued,” survivors are expected to stop selling sex, and plan for a new career of their choice. Survivors are encouraged to finish their General Education Development (GED), and to enter community college or other specialized education and training based on survivor’s career preferences. Yet, discussions of other future career choices do not include discussions of harassment, abuse, illnesses, and injuries which may occur on the job. Risks in other jobs are taken for granted and not discussed because legal work is assumed to be better work.

Break the Cycle was the only organization to critique the savior complex of sex trafficking. One social worker, argues that she believes it stems from misunderstandings of sex trafficking in general:

It doesn’t look like some stranger who is insulating them. Um, it looks like someone they know who is manipulating them ... there’s a big savior complex in the media. And that’s not often what people need. They need healthier

relationships, um, and they need resources, and they need to know someone's there to at least try and understand, um, but they don't need ... I think it is trendy and that there is a lot of awareness going around, but I think awareness that like stems away from that rescue mentality would be helpful. Um, and just helping people see what their local contexts looks like it's not helpful for everyone to envision people getting kidnapped, you know? Cause it's not what's going on within their community. But just a more realistic portrayal then somebody in chains (laughs) posted on the billboard.

(Molly, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, estimated to be in late 20s or 30s)

Overall, Break the Cycle had a much more nuanced view of sex trafficking, which influences the way they deliver services. As Molly explains:

How much people are willing to engage, of course, looks really different. I know we've worked with some clients for years, and they're still in their trafficking situation. But they are safe, and they're surviving, and they're doing what they have to do, and they're engaged, and so I think in that way we are successful. And we do provide good services because often, I mean, one of my clients has had the same goals for a year now and they're still not obtained, but because of other things that they're doing, it's like that's success right there and so often success is like really, really hard to measure it doesn't look like success. Yeah, and that like relapse cycle is so real and ... I think it's, it's a matter of like always holding the belief that people can get somewhere they want to be in life, and, but knowing that that's not necessarily what success looks like for them. Yeah, cause our idea of help, I think rarely looks like what clients' ideas of help are.

(Molly, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, estimated to be in late 20s or 30s)

Break the Cycle's goal is to provide support around a trafficking victim so that they can choose when and if they are ready to leave a trafficking situation. As this quote illustrates, they do not impose any of their ideas about what success looks like onto the survivors.

### *Housing*

Hope opened a safe house, Care House, in January 2016 which originally provided 10 beds for girls and women ages 10 through 21. In 2020, Hope opened a transition program, which provided housing and services to women 18 to 25. After the transitional program opened Care House focused on providing services to girls 10 to 17. At the time, the Care House was the only housing option for minor trafficking survivors in the state. Much like housing around the

country, housing in the state for trafficking survivors is severely lacking. This means that the beds have stayed mostly full. Services at Care House include medical, individual and group therapy, homeschooling, training in daily life skills, exercise, education, mentorship, food, clothing, hygiene items, leisurely activities, and support with emotional needs. When I entered the field, 80% of Hope's costs were spent on the safe house. The house was donated to Hope, but costs are focused on staffing and healing. Hopes funds support life skills/support (30%), administration (6%), family or DCFS liaison (7%), education (7%), vocational training (7%), therapies (22%), food, clothing, and toiletries (8%), intake (6%), and supervision. Survivors are also encouraged to paint and join in on other arts and crafts, interact with a dog who is being trained as a therapy dog, participate in Christian services, practices, and traditions, go on outings, and other fun activities. Outings do not occur as frequently as the residents would like due to staffing issues or if one of the residents is on restriction. The goal of the safe house is so that, "exploited children are able to heal, play, complete their education, and reclaim the path of freedom and hope." Over the period of one year, the safe house provided services to 15 girls and women.

The home is certified and inspected by The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The location of Care House is geographically isolated and not given out freely, even family of survivors who reside at the house meet in public to keep the location secure and private. There is also a small security team, ran by a current National Guard military professional, that monitors and protects the location. Because of the secure location, the girls and women are not able to come and go as they please, which prevents survivors from obtaining a job or attending school. These issues led to the creation of the transitional house, Daring House.

Daring house was opened in 2020, with the goal of providing Care House graduates and adult survivors of trafficking additional support and healing after exiting a trafficking situation. Women survivors can leave to attend school and work but receive trauma-informed services. They have their own living spaces, and receive individual and group therapies, vocational and life skills development, and opportunities for continuing their education. Daring home is a rental, but Hope is asking for donations to purchase a house to move into a more permanent house.

The Church Ladies provide a temporary safe house, but there are no options for permanent housing. There are two options for temporary housing: a hotel or staying in a volunteer's home. The decision on when temporary housing is provided depends on the survivor's preferences and circumstances. Typically, survivors are provided with housing in an emergency, such as escaping a dangerous situation, or if they are considering a long-term recovery program and are waiting for placement. A hotel placement allows survivors some respite and alone time away from their abuser. The home placement is in the basement of one of the volunteers, who has four children in the home. While in the home, the family attempts to make the survivor feel a part of the family by having them eat with the family and go on outings with the family. Typically, survivors may stay up to 10 days, but longer stays are allowed when waiting for placement in a long-term program.

### ***Case Management and Referrals***

Break the Cycle social workers provide case management services to survivors which entails meeting one-on-one with survivors, providing trauma-informed resources, and emotional support. Previous research finds that referrals were provided from law enforcement, hospitals, the State's Attorney's Office, and others (United States Department of Justice 2015<sup>1</sup>). This work is funded through the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) grant for domestic victims of sex



trafficking. Survivors must have a history of sex or labor trafficking and want services. Survivors determine goals that they want to work on, such as finding employment, studying for the General Educational Development (GED) exam, learning something new, or obtaining documents. Survivor goals are re-evaluated every two months. The social workers work with survivors in planning how to accomplish their goals. Sometimes this includes going grocery shopping or going to doctor's appointments with survivors. Staff also made referrals to and helped survivors obtain those services as needed. Staff report that survivors sometimes disappear, sometimes for long periods. Ninety-five survivors were assisted by direct support, according to Break the Cycle's 2018 Annual Report. According to Break the Cycle's website, they have served over 300 survivors of sex trafficking.

The Church Ladies does not offer any services directly, but refers survivors to other services, which they assist in paying for and the transportation to and from each service. For instance, Church Ladies refer to services and assist financially for counseling, medical services, education, groceries, hotels for temporary housing, job readiness, transportation, child needs, computers, household items, and dental and legal costs. Volunteers first develop a relationship with the survivor, and then discuss what services are needed, and if reasonable and feasible, then Church Ladies provide the funding for those services. Services are provided relatively quickly, often within a day and transportation, such as bus passes and Uber, is provided. In an emergency, Church Ladies provide transportation and temporary housing in a hotel, or in a volunteer's home, until the survivor determines whether she wants to go into a long-term program or not. Once the woman is receiving services, she is discouraged from engaging in sex work, and is required to show up and participate in those services. Women who fail to show up for services might be restricted from services in the future.

Because of the severe lack of beds for trafficking survivors, Hope is unable to house all trafficking survivors who ask. Therefore, they often refer to services as well. What services they refer to, and how many survivors they are working with outside of the Care House is unknown.

### *Drop-In Center*

Although Break the Cycle agreed that I could conduct the study, the program manager negotiated with me on where I could collect data. She did not want me to collect observational data in the drop-in space because it is a low-threshold program, meaning there are few demands placed on the survivors. I agreed and did not take observational notes during my shifts. I worked 20 shifts for a total of 80.5 hours in the drop-in space, often working one four-hour shift every two weeks. Staff duties include providing case management and referrals, incentive planning, and building relationships and a rapport with the women. In much of my volunteer work at the drop-in center, I was the only volunteer, and a staff person would be in and out, between the office and the drop-in space. Occasionally there was another staff or intern.

The drop-in center is for female-identified youth (both cisgender and transgender women), approximately 14 to 30 years of age. Girls and women who attend drop-in are categorized as at risk of trafficking or who are trafficked. The purpose of the space is to allow the girls and women to feel safe, where they could relax, play, or work on life skills like cooking, job skills like writing resumes, and getting connected to other services. The drop-in space resides in a large space, consisting of four-rooms, within a large historic church. There is a full kitchen, a living room with a TV and Wii gaming console, a library with many books, and a dining room area. Drop-in was only open two days a week for a total of 11 hours.

Once a new person enters the space, staff conducts an intake, in which the survivor is asked questions about why they came to the center, what goals they would like to set, and they

are given a brief introduction and tour of the space. Survivors are given bus fares, hygiene items, and condoms regularly for showing up. Furthermore, the girls and women in the space can earn points for doing specific tasks like cooking, cleaning the kitchen, working on a resume, job hunting or schoolwork. These points are added up to earn prizes or gifts, such as gift cards to restaurants and stores.

Unlike many other programs, transgender women and children are welcomed into this space and religious materials, music, and books were banned. Many of the women colored in books, cooked meals, played music, socialized, played movies or games, worked on resumes, looked for jobs, or asked to get connected to other services like low-cost housing and English as a Second Language (ESL) services. The children often played video games, watched movies, or spent time with their mom. Swearing, verbal outbursts, and verbal aggression between the survivors and towards the staff were common, making the atmosphere extremely tense at times. However, when this occurred, staff would intervene and try to separate the survivors.

### ***Mentorship***

Hope runs a mentor program wherein each of the residents at Care House are assigned to a mentor. Other survivors not residing at Care House may also receive mentorship services. Over one year, 15 persons received mentoring services. The organization requires mentors to volunteer for at least a year in a non-direct role. The organizations' goal is to vet the prospective mentor to ensure fit for mentorship, while also conducting necessary background checks.

Break the Cycle also provides mentorship services for service participants. Mentors must apply, get a background check, go through two interviews, a two-day training, and submit a 3-5-minute video explaining why they want to mentor, which the mentee will see. Mentors were expected to provide general support to the survivor by attending events, being an active listener,

sharing a meal together, assisting with resume writing, assisting the survivor with practicing for job interviews, tutoring and homework help, and connecting the survivor to other supports.

Mentors are required to meet with the survivor they are paired with for 2-3 hours, once or twice a month for six months, and check in weekly through phone or text.

## **Prosecution**

Most of the three ASMOs efforts are directed towards prevention and protection, however, they do some work in prosecution. Mostly the ASMOs focus their attention in working with law enforcement by reporting suspected trafficking incidents, particularly when activists suspect the survivor is a minor. The ASMOs also go with law enforcement during trafficking and prostitution rescue operations. During these operations, the service providers talk with the survivors to determine what their needs are, and if they are ready to stop selling sex or leave their trafficking situation. Sometimes the police will also call the ASMOs once they have identified a victim, to see if they could meet with the survivor. Often sex workers and trafficking survivors do not trust the police and are unwilling to talk to them about their situation. Because most of the service providers are women, this accomplishes two goals, it makes women who do not trust police feel more comfortable, and it allows women feel more comfortable about discussing their victimization.

The other way ASMOs work in prosecution is by pushing for harsher punishments for traffickers, clients, and anyone who facilitates trafficking, including social media sites and websites. Again, this was less present, but there were several instances where the ASMOs used social media to motivate activists to reach out to their representatives to vote on a specific bill. For instance, Hope posted an article about the SESTA/FOSTA legislation, which is a new law which closes the loophole that gives immunity to internet service providers who fail to prevent

people for being sold for sex through their websites. This law is intended to apply to websites, and not people who are posting to them. Hope encouraged their followers to call their Senator to vote yes on the bill.

Surprisingly, the three ASMOs did not connect their work often to the #TimesUp and #MeToo movements in 2017, despite the amount of attention both movements received and their connection to sexual violence. Activists also did not attend or promote the Women's Marches during this period, where millions of other women protested the sexual harassment and violence at the hands of men. In fact, at the time in 2017, these were likely the largest protests on a single day (Chenoweth and Pressman, 2017). However, previous research finds that ASMOs often do not engage in confrontational tactics or protests (Houston 2015). By not connecting their work to the #TimesUp and #MeToo movements, the organizations missed an opportunity to connect to more activists and survivors and educate the public. But this may have been a conscious choice to avoid more secular activists, as these movements are not grounded in evangelical ideology.

In this section, I have reviewed how activists work to prevent trafficking, protect survivors and work to increase prosecutions of trafficking. I find that the services these organizations offer are different, but sometimes overlapping services. All organizations conduct education and awareness events, but the content of their education is different. All organizations provide services to victims, but how this occurs varies. All organizations also work with law enforcement to increase prosecution and Hope and Break the Cycle participate in rescue operations. In the next section, I examine how activists motivate potential activists to action.

### **Motivational Framing**

Sex trafficking is a type of victimization, which causes physical and psychological trauma to survivors. Research suggests that most traffickers use psychological tactics, instead of

physical violence (Nichols 2016). Furthermore, the annual number of victims is estimated to be in the millions, but data is contested among experts. Yet, Hope and Church Ladies motivate their staff, volunteers, donors, and prospective activists by focusing on the severity of the problem, the threat of trafficking happening “in our own backyards or suburbs,” and a sense of urgency in “rescuing” trafficking victims. Break the Cycle does not frame trafficking in the same way to motivate potential activists, but like Hope and Church Ladies, they refer to trafficking as “modern-day slavery.” I find that all three organizations use motivational framing that is overstated and overemphasized, by using contested statistics and creating a sex panic that sex trafficking is occurring in ‘nice’ neighborhoods to children. The organizations create a sense of urgency about the problem – that young sex trafficked girls and women are trapped in sexual slavery and need rescuing now. Finally, all three organizations discuss their successes in victim services to motivate activists and potential activists.

ASMOs often emphasize the severity of trafficking. All three ASMOs understand that the most severe and cruel sex trafficking cases are the least common. In a personal conversation with the Executive Director of Hope, Sandy (Chinese American woman, 47), at the Dance fundraiser, illustrates this:

[Sandy] and I talked a little bit after she arrived. She stated that she read my email and was sorry that she couldn't get back to me ... she would appreciate any feedback of her organization. And I said sure, and I that I thought her organization was professional and positive. She said that she tries to keep it positive, and not show pictures of girls in chains because it's not representative of the human trafficking victims she's interacted with.

(Hope ethnographic notes)

Yet, the media is more likely to cover these stories, which are then used by the ASMOs to grab the attention and raise awareness of potential activists, potential funders, and others. For example, Hope's homepage on their website depicts the silhouette of a young woman, who has

chains around her wrists, which are broken. She is reaching up and outwards towards the sun, as if to celebrate her freedom. The text next to her reads, “I am free, I am no longer a slave.” Hope shares multiple news stories which highlight this violent abuse, such as one headline titled, “After emotional testimony from mother of slain teen Desiree Robinson, girl’s pimp sentenced to 32 years in prison.” Hope wrote other posts, such as

A child becomes a teenager. A child is vulnerable to being drawn into sex trafficking. A reminder we can, together, transform our society into one where every child can grow up free from sexual exploitation.

(Hope social media)

And,

Victims of sexual abuse and exploitation are often silenced. In secrecy, victims may experience: Forced sexual encounters – Threats – Violence – Shame – Trauma. Our inaugural [Hope] Voices Art Exhibit is designed to give voice to those experiences of survivors using their personal creative artistic style to tell their story.

(Hope social media)

Furthermore, their website reads:

Predators who seek out adolescents use systems of oppression and violence to employ fear and control. This extreme control creates strong bonds of attachment

(Hope website)

Despite the most common tactic of traffickers and abusers being psychological manipulation and coercion, Hope presents more violent tactics. The issue here is that when activists only believe these tactics are violent, they may overlook or minimize the experiences of survivors who were controlled through psychological manipulation and coercion. However, this is very effective in motivating potential activists to become involved and for donors to contribute financially. Unlike many other issues, sex trafficking is understood by the public in stark terms as a social evil, so there is no oppositional or countermovement to contend with. As such, antitrafficking activists

do not have to convince the public and potential activists that trafficking is a problem, they simply must amplify those beliefs and motivate support and mobilization.

By emphasizing the severity and the extent of trafficking, potential activists may become outraged and then involved. Furthermore, despite knowing that dramatic images often distort the true nature of trafficking, chains, jail-like bars, and other slavery-like imagery are used by Hope and Church Ladies, often on social media and for educational events. Activists articulated more nuanced understandings of these images behind closed doors in trainings, but not in more public forums. For example, during a Hope training, staff state explicitly that “most grooming of children is not necessarily physically forced” (Hope ethnographic notes).

Break the Cycle did not use this imagery and spoke more often about the misconceptions of chains and physical force being used in trafficking in trainings and on their website. For example, Break the Cycle writes in a blog post focused on why the most extremely violent trafficking cases are used more frequently than cases suggest, explaining that it helps draw in attention. The Break the Cycle manager, Ellen (white woman, estimated to be in 30s or 40s) writes:

Have you read the stories? A strange male in a white cargo van pulled up and kidnapped a young girl. Her hands were restrained; perhaps she was given some type of drug to disorient her and things got worse from there. Or maybe you've read about the young mother at a big-box store who was being followed by several men. Fortunately, she sought help from an employee of the store who made sure she was able to exit the store and get her kids into her car safely. And of course, when she reached out to law enforcement, they informed her that the individuals following her in the store were (sex) traffickers targeting her young children. Can we take a moment for some brutal honesty? These are just distraction techniques. If those recruitment tactics were common, or even relatively consistent, reporters would be ALL OVER those stories. We would hear about it during every news hour. We would get news alerts on our phones. But we don't. Because cases like that are the anomalies. Recruitment into human trafficking is typically much more subtle than a white van kidnapping or a



big-box “shadow.” The most common recruitment into sex trafficking that participants in the [Break the Cycle] program report is a grooming relationship... If these scenarios are inaccurate, why do we share them? Why do these messages continue to be perpetuated? Instead of focusing on the realities, the subtleties of trafficking, we go for shock and awe. We share the stories and post the pictures of the most dramatic scenarios (which often are not even trafficking) because they draw attention. These efforts can help us personally feel good because we are doing something to right this horrendous crime and organizationally, they help raise our public profiles and bring in financial donations that are so desperately needed by programs addressing human trafficking. We get it. We’ve grappled with this tension – the need to honor people’s lived experiences and restore power and also raise money to be able to continue to provide services.

(Break the Cycle, website)

Despite what they present to the public, activists understand that most traffickers control trafficking victims through psychological coercion and emotional abuse in the relationship. More dramatic anecdotes, however, are more likely to rally support.

The cruelty of trafficking is also emphasized by activists, often through social media posts about specific cases. For example, Hope shared a news story, “New Jersey woman admits forcing 16-year-old into ‘hellish’ life of sexual slavery.” The physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse of victims helps activists galvanize the audience to increase donations and recruit volunteers. All three organizations share some of the worst cases of trafficking on their social media platforms. Yet, they believe that the more severe trafficking cases, particularly physically abusive ones, are rare while the more common form of trafficking involves psychological coercion and manipulation. Traffickers and other sexual predators groom and seduce their victims over many months, developing a strong bond, which is then utilized against victims to control and abuse.

As part of emphasizing the cruelty and severity of trafficking, several activists and all three ASMOs suggest there is a connection to the Atlantic Slave Trade and use the language of “modern-day slavery.” Activists utilize the slavery abolition movement to ground their work and

connect both struggles. For example, the Church Ladies website states that their purpose is to, “educate adults to make them aware that slavery has not ended and presents ways in which they can help in the fight against it.” Hope utilizes similar messages with images of hands in chains. During a Hope training a police officer from the Sheriff’s Office states that “modern day slavery, it’s mental and physical, often mental,” during a direct service training for staff who provide direct services for survivors. Break the Cycle uses the messages of “modern-day slavery,” but does not use the imagery of chains. Break the Cycle’s training manual for volunteers working on the 24-hour hotline refers to human trafficking as a “modern-day form of slavery” three times. Another example of this slavery analogy combines this trope with Christian themes. The Church Ladies posted:

North Korea has the most human slaves in the world, according to the 2018 Global Slavery Index, with research showing it is keeping over 2.6 million people in modern day slavery. Among the nations in the top 10, most are some of the worst persecutors of Christians as well. The 2018 Global Slavery Index ... reported that one in every 10 North Korean citizens is forced to work under slavery conditions.

(Church Ladies social media)

Here Church Ladies uses the language of slavery and connects the issue of trafficking to Christian persecution in nonwhite countries. The way in which Church Ladies utilizes slavery in this context implies labor trafficking and is not explicitly connected to sex trafficking. Yet, the Church Ladies demonizes North Korea as a country with high rates of slavery. The Church Ladies is framing trafficking utilizing a limited understanding of human rights abuses regarding labor practices. This is a form of “othering” nonwhite countries and painting them as “evil” (while maintaining an uncritical stance towards labor conditions under capitalism).

There are several critical differences in the ways pre-Civil War slavery was practiced in America and human trafficking, namely the enslavement of racial minorities in America was

state-sanctioned and enforced. However, today trafficking is illegal and prosecuted in much, but not all, of the world. Furthermore, slavery as practiced in the United States was raced-based, whereas current activists understand human trafficking as gender-based. Official statistics demonstrate that women are more likely to be trafficked for sex and labor (United States Department of Justice 2011). Human trafficking continues due to informal processes, cultural attitudes, corruption, and indifference. All three ASMOs use the language of modern-day slavery to connect human trafficking to the struggle to abolish slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Connecting human trafficking to the Atlantic Slave trade bridges these two struggles, which is a tactic known as frame bridging in the social movement literature (Snow et al. 1986). Frame bridging is one of the most frequent forms of alignment in social movements and allows activists to mobilize potential activists. Messages that slavery has not ended helps emphasize the cruelty and severity, which ultimately builds support for the antitrafficking social movement to fundraise and recruit staff and volunteers.

Furthermore, Hope and Church Ladies activists are quick in discussing the fact that trafficking survivors have traditionally been arrested and charged with prostitution, even as children, although children cannot legally consent to sex. Discussing the injustices experienced by trafficked children within the criminal justice system leads to potential activists being outraged and leads to action. For example, the case of Cyntoia Brown (a sex trafficking survivor who murdered a client in self-defense) led to antitrafficking activists to organize, resulting in Governor Bill Haslam granting her clemency (Allyn 2019). Legally speaking, children are unable to consent, and therefore, any sex work they engage in is nonconsensual sex work. Today, even using the language of child prostitute enrages activists. As one police officer points out, the discourse around children and sex work has changed considerably:

A retired police officer from [City] spoke. He was the first and sole officer for a while on trafficking cases. But he told us that before that he arrested juvenile prostitutes, which was the language then.

(Hope fundraiser, ethnographic notes)

Many activists within the ASMOs feel passionately that child prostitution is an oxymoron because a child cannot consent to sex, let alone sex work. Therefore, children should not be charged with sex work. Activists believe children who sell sex are victims; push for legislation and policies which punish traffickers and clients harshly; and offer services for survivors. Hope and Church Ladies argue that consenting sex workers over the age of 18 often began before the age of consent and should be considered victims of sex trafficking as well, even if they are not being forced to sell sex.

While the situation of trafficking victims is both dire and urgent, activists frame trafficking as widespread and a situation any individual girl or woman is at significant risk for. In doing so, activists unknowingly create a moral panic, something perceived to be a social crisis despite an absence of compelling evidence regarding the prevalence or severity of the phenomenon. Moral panics are when a

condition, episode, person, or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians, and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears; submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes.

(Cohen, 1972: 1)

Sex trafficking has become a moral panic because there is an increased fear that children and women will be taken, violently and repeatedly raped, and sold for sex. The media often portrays

the most extremely violent scenarios, which tend to be those least commonly found in practice. Sex trafficking is often portrayed as a violent attack where girls and women are taken from their homes, heavily drugged, and sold for sex/repeatedly raped. These scenarios are often played out in blockbuster films like *Taken*. However, in practice, survivors are often coerced and manipulated by loved ones, often intimate partners, to sell sex. Activists believe that the more common sex trafficking cases involve little to no physical abuse.

The activists in my sample, who are mostly white, middle-class women, are concerned and involved in the antitrafficking social movement are not those who are most at risk. Activists working for Hope and Church Ladies believe that those at most risk come from abusive homes and backgrounds. When I asked directly if marginalized communities have greater risk, one activist from Church Ladies stated:

I don't work enough with other populations to really comment on that. So, yeah, I work with mainly probably Caucasian, white women. (laughs), So I mean, for the most part. You know? So, I think that I couldn't really even comment on that, if that's a higher, a higher population or not.

(Lisa, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 57)

Activist highlight that trafficking can happen to anyone, even those from “good” homes, as Mary illustrates:

You know they're, there is a, one of, there is a woman who's in one of our support groups right now who is, you know, was raised in a faith-based background who raised her daughter in a faith-based background, who is going to a Christian school, who her daughter is a teenager in high school and is being trafficked ... And it's not necessarily just because they were, were uh raised in poverty, you know, there are wealthy kids from good homes, and you know theoretically good homes.

(Mary, Hope staff, white woman, 51)

Yet, white, middle-class girls and women are often the least likely to be trafficked. While it still occurs, it is not very likely. Some activists, particularly those in Break the Cycle, acknowledge

that those most marginalized by race, gender, income, disability, and LGBTQ + identities are the most at risk. Only eight out of 26 (31%) activists mentioned structural disadvantage as a risk factor for sex trafficking, including three of seven (43%) Church Ladies activists, three of 16 (19%) Hope activists, and two of three (66%) Break the Cycle activists. Most of the activists' reference to structural disadvantage focused on economic disadvantage:

But most of them are like under 18, um, when they first started, abusive homes, a lot of like problems with like physical, emotional, sexual abuse. A lot of drug use in the families. Um. They'll have, um, like, they'll have, they'll live in neighborhoods where, sometimes there will be pimps who walk around and recruit them. They'll know who to target, sort of. So, I mean, race wise I mean it's like anything. [East coast city], it was more mixed actually. It was like half, it was more so white and black, half and half, um, but I think overall, it's demographic is the same, but it's just lower socioeconomic demographics.

(Kevin, Church Ladies volunteer, Indian American, 27)

Another activist states that

From my perspective, and the little that I know about, um, they are pretty much all from, um, disadvantaged communities. So, not, not all inner city, but disadvantaged communities is huge. They've all had, probably have been, not all but many have been sexually abused as children. We've had girls who were trafficked as early as 8 and 9.

(Kerry, Hope staff, white woman, 55)

Previous research also demonstrates that those who are most marginalized by race, class, gender, disabilities, and LGBTQ+ identities have a higher risk of trafficking (Nichols 2016). Yet, Hope and Church Ladies education and awareness events do not mention these factors. Furthermore, the educational and awareness events are in predominately white, more economically privileged areas. Break the Cycle does mention these factors, and trains activists in these areas.

Activists point to the large number of purported victims in the United States and the local area, often suggesting that trafficking is happening in their own backyard. For instance, Break

the Cycle posted a video on their webpage about their services describing the extent of the problem:

Human trafficking is a multibillion-dollar criminal industry that denies freedom to over 40 million people around the world and no matter where you live chances are it's happening nearby. 71 percent of victims are women and girls. 25 percent are children survivors. All share one thing, the loss of freedom. [Freedom Ministry] is fighting for their freedom through awareness and training, prevention and outreach, survivors services, and recovery and partnerships and advocacy.

(Break the Cycle website, organizational document)

Activists also share the most severe and cruel cases of trafficking, despite knowing that the more severe cases tend to be the least common. For example, in a brochure by the Church Ladies, they write, "Every year, 15,000 to 24,000 people in [city] become victims of human trafficking. Of these, 35-40 percent are under age 18. Most are trafficked for sex" (The Church Ladies, organizational document). Hope shares similar reports on their social media. In a social media post, Hope reposted an article by Reuters.com titled, "Factbox: One in 185 a slave: snapshot of today's trade in humans." With their caption "One in 185 - think about it..." (Hope social media). And,

1 in 6 children reported missing are likely victims of sex trafficking, according to Trafficking by the Numbers, NCMEC. This is a big statistic with big implications on the lives of innocent children. Are you doing your part to keep the kids in your life safe?

(Hope social media)

Activists share statistics on human trafficking, even though these statistics are contested due to their serious methodological problems. Part of the problem is that there are no uniform statistics accepted, and mass media outlets continue to report large numbers of trafficking victims. Furthermore, activists often highlight how sex trafficking affects children to emphasize the cruelty and severity of the act. For instance, Hope wrote "Perpetrators employ tactics enticing to youth. Social media is increasingly used as a means of both gaining access to and exploiting

unsuspecting youth” with a reposted article by local newspaper titled, “[City] man gets 22 years in prison after luring teen girls into sex via Facebook, promising cash” (Hope social media).

Hope along with other local organizations held a movie night to educate the community about trafficking. They screened *In Plain Sight*, a documentary about sex trafficking. The trailer begins with a couple describing the ‘ideal’ neighborhood to raise children, but turns dark quickly:

(Acoustic up-beat music playing)

[Married woman]: It’s so family friendly, if you want to really put down some roots you really can have it all here, I believe. I love it.

[The narrator:] Many of us feel the same way about our own city, (music turns ominous) but would it surprise you to know (sounds of a camera clicking) vulnerable women and children are being targeted by sex traffickers in your area in plain sight.

[Interview with woman]: Young women and young men that are caught up in this are actually victims. You know? They’re being manipulated and coerced, and they’re slaves.

[Narrator]: Do you realize the average age for girls trafficked into prostitution is 12 to 14 years of age.

[Trafficked victim]: I can’t explain it. It’s just when I was 8 years old, my mother sold me and I’ve been doing this ever since.

[Narrator]: Do you know this is all happening in the United States?

[Man speaking to married couple]: All of these are ads for, uh, sex, but we found that minors are being trafficked on here.

[Married woman]: And the location of that was right near us.

[Narrator]: Are you willing to open your eyes? Are you willing to hear what is really going on? The truth is that woman and children are being sold for sex in your city against their will. (Begins displaying list of cities). Join the journey across America as we meet people who are bringing hope in the midst of darkness.

[Woman]: We have to be willing to roll our sleeves up, get our hands dirty, and be willing to say, “No more. We’re not being a part of continuing this anymore. Whatever is causing it must stop.”

(Trailer posted on <http://www.inplainsightfilm.com/>)

The trailer highlights the frames within the antitrafficking movement that trafficking is a U.S. problem (and happening in all neighborhoods), that children and women are the victims of trafficking, and references to sexual slavery.



To prevent sex trafficking, Hope and Church Ladies in particular urge parents to monitor children's behavior, in person and online. Parents are encouraged to always supervise their children, know who their children are spending time with, where they are, and what they are doing. For instance, on a training brochure, Hope writes:

Educating children regarding means of self-protection and prosocial behaviors is insufficient for prevention of child abuse. The Parent component of [the training] addresses dynamics of abuse and exploitation and, also, focuses on the growing complexities of social media. Parents, ultimately, need the tools to keep their children safe. Through [the training], parents are taught how to adequately monitor and help children negotiate the complexities of the Internet and to become savvy about predator tactics so they are better equipped to protect their children.

(Hope training brochure, organizational document)

Parents are urged to know the signs of sex trafficking and sexual abuse, predatory behavior, and symptoms in survivors.

All three ASMOs hold educational events in which they inform the public, professionals, parents, and children about the severity of trafficking. The goal of the educational events and awareness campaigns are to educate the public about trafficking, so citizens can identify incidents of trafficking. All three ASMOs also warn attendees that sex trafficking is happening in their neighborhoods, which creates a sense of panic, particularly for parents that predators are preying on their family and neighbors. Hope and the Church Ladies train on internet safety and try to warn parents and children about internet safety. Parents are encouraged to take steps to restrict and monitor internet usage and children's behavior.

To motivate prospective activists and donors to get involved in their organization, organizations often provide the numbers and facts demonstrating their good work. All three ASMOs provide the number of survivors they serve, and the number of trainings conducted. ASMOs provide the numbers and an overview of services which demonstrate to activists and

potential activists what they are doing to reduce trafficking and help survivors. Providing the numbers demonstrates the effectiveness of the work, as do compelling survivor stories. For example, during a presentation on human trafficking, where all three ASMOs presented, Jack presents what is most important in services and then gives the success rate of their safe house (which was closed shortly after):

The most important part of service delivery is breaking the trauma bond and getting the victim care. [Safe] house has an 80% success rate of broken trauma bonds ... [Freedom Ministry] has trained 50,000 law enforcement across 5 states.  
(Jack, Freedom Ministry manager, white middle-aged man)

Here Jack is making the case that Break the Cycle is successful in their work to recover and heal trafficking survivors. In the 2018 Annual Report, Freedom Ministry also reports on the successes of their antitrafficking program, Break the Cycle:

[Freedom Ministry] service in greater [Midwest city] by the numbers ... 95 survivors through direct support; 100 individuals through hotline; 52 anti-trafficking training sessions for 1,735 individuals.  
(Break the Cycle, organizational document)

This tactic is used by all ASMOs in this study. For instance, Sandy, Hope's Executive Director spoke at a dance fundraiser at the beginning about the recent successes of Hope:

[Sandy] spoke to the room a little bit about [Hope], and how since the last Fundraiser [Hope] opened the [Care] House. She stated that four of them were baptized/converted to Christianity.  
(Hope, ethnographic notes)

Finally, the Church Ladies website also reports on their work:

Each month our teams collectively reach out to over 60 venues and make calls to over 100 women advertised online for prostitution. We also teach about the dangers of sex trafficking and prostitution to at risk and incarcerated young women and men, and raise awareness within our communities about the dangers of sex trafficking ... Just this past year we were able to help with the following: counseling services, car purchases, emergency transportation, medical bills, junior college tuition, groceries and hotels for women who need safe living situations.

(The Church Ladies, organization website)

In a personal phone call with Michelle, I ask how her, her daughter, and the Church Ladies is doing, and she describes the new developments:

I also asked how [Hope] was doing. She said that she is using this new program called [Program Catch], which analyzes the sex ads, and [Michelle] can then send them a text. She said that she got the program from [an out-of-state anti-trafficking program], and that they were allowing them to use it for free. She said the [bridal boutique] has been doing well and paying for 10 women to go to weekly counseling, and she was able to buy 4 cars for women that are exiting the life.

(The Church Ladies, ethnographic notes)

By presenting overviews of the specific services of the ASMOs, the leaders provide potential activists with a template of the type of work they can do to be involved, and the success that results. In this section, I have demonstrated how antitrafficking activists motivate potential activists by focusing on the frequency, severity, and cruelty of trafficking; that trafficking is an American problem (backyard abolitionism), the urgency of rescuing trafficking survivors; what the organization is working on to eliminate the problem, and how potential activists can become involved in the fight against trafficking.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that antitrafficking activists diagnostically frame trafficking by focusing on the frequency, severity, and the cruelty; by conflating sex work and sex trafficking; by arguing sex trafficking occurs within the United States (and in *our* own backyards); and as happening primarily to women and children. Antitrafficking activists vary in who is to blame for trafficking to some degree, pointing to previous childhood abuse, pornography and sex addiction, non-marital sex, and cultural and structural issues, such as the sexualization of women and children, and drugs. Activists primarily focus on the physical and psychological consequences and harm that trafficking victims experience. Antitrafficking

activists utilize the main prognostic frames on the action they take against trafficking: prevention, protection, and prosecution. In this way, activists follow the 2000 TVPA to prevent trafficking through education and awareness; protect survivors through victim services; and assist law enforcement in prosecution.

## CHAPTER VII

### WHITE EVANGELICALISM WITHIN THE ASMOS: FOUNDATIONS OF A MOVEMENT

In this chapter, I examine how evangelical Christianity influences the organizations, and the antitrafficking movement. I answer the research question, “How does evangelical Christianity influence services within the context of antitrafficking organizations?” I demonstrate why evangelical Christians are so active in antitrafficking work, then I discuss the four ways evangelical Christianity influences the organizations through services for survivors, training for staff and the public, the recruitment of staff and volunteers at church, and the practice of Christianity in front of and with survivors. I explore the outcomes of these frames, finding that these evangelical frames allowed for political opportunities and identity formation of activists. I also discuss how evangelical Christianity influences their understanding of gender and sexuality, and how this influences services. I find that activists and survivors are more likely to be Christian and conservative, particularly when it comes to gender and sexuality. This stems from activists’ conservative beliefs being pushed on survivors as part of their effort to teach them white evangelical values and norms. I argue that antitrafficking work is a field in which white saviorism is put into practice. Activists “rescue” trafficking victims from their trafficking situation, and then work to teach them white evangelical values and norms, which are meant to prevent victims from returning to trafficking. Behaviors outside of white evangelical values and norms, such as deviant gender and sexuality, are seen as symptoms of trafficking.

## **Data**

I utilize observational data; interviews with staff, volunteers, and survivors; and organizational documents, such as organizational emails, websites, and social media posts. Observational data comes from educational and awareness events, and staff training and volunteer meetings. Educational and awareness events are intended to educate the public about the problem of trafficking and how the organizations work to eliminate trafficking. Staff training and volunteer meetings focused on more nuanced information on trafficking and planning on prevention efforts.

## **Evangelical Antitrafficking Services**

Evangelicals believe that Christians should give back to the community through acts of service and evangelizing others as a way of serving God. For evangelicals such action is the essence of one's identity as a member of Christianity; you are what you do (Avishai 2008; Kelly 2014; Smith et al. 1998). Evangelicals do antitrafficking work to please God, by doing work God wants and expects of them, but also to develop an authentic evangelical identity. In the sociological literature, this is referred to as "doing religion," where individuals perform their religious identity (Avishai 2008). Evangelicals' reasons for doing antitrafficking work, how they do this work, and converting survivors to Christianity are all connected to their belief that they are serving God. Evangelicals believe that God represents healing for survivors, which compels them to expose survivors to Christianity and attempt to convert survivors to Christianity. When I asked John, a middle-aged white evangelical man, what this job means to him, he states:

"It, it's what I believe it means to God and, and my service to Him. I really can't explain to you how important it is to me to know that what I do pleases God. And so, I know that this is the heart of God."

(John, Hope volunteer, white man, 49)

For John, the number one priority in his antitrafficking work is to please God. For evangelicals, the relationship to God is the most important relationship one has, even more important than relationships with spouses and family. Part of the way John expresses his love and obedience to God is serving through good deeds, in this case antitrafficking work. For evangelicals, God calls on them to assist the poor, immigrants, strangers, and the needy. Thus, pleasing God is integral in why evangelicals are so heavily involved in antitrafficking work. Another Hope activists describes:

For me, it's about my faith. And I think that what it means to me, it doesn't mean that I think it's going to get me into Heaven cause that's not it at all. It means that I think that, um, that God's ideal plan for mankind was broken, in that, he calls people to work with him on restoring that ideal, and the restoration of that idea is Shalom ... But I believe that when Christ came the first time, he brought his kingdom with him, he showed us what that meant by how he lived his life, um, through healing, through especially, and, you know, this is very dear to me especially through reaching out to the marginalized women of the time. But that demonstrated for us how we're supposed to join Him in the work that he's already doing. And, um, so for me, it's about my faith, it's about this idea that everybody carries within them the image of God. That God has bestowed that on every person and that every person deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

(Kerry, 55, white woman, Hope staff)

In sum, God calls evangelicals to charity work. For activists, they are following the work of Jesus by working with marginalized women. Because of this calling, evangelicalism is institutionalized in the structure and culture of many social movements and their attendant organizations (Kelly 2012), including the antitrafficking field.

All three ASMOs examined in this study are evangelical Christian organizations. Hope and Church Ladies activists feel that their faith must guide them in the fight against trafficking.

For example, Hope post to their social media:

“Christmas is coming soon, and for us, this is a season to reflect on the gift of Christ with gratitude. We believe the Church must lead the way in the fight

against exploitation and are pleased to announce our two newest members of the [Hope] Church Coalition!”

(Hope social media)

In addition to faith being the reason for their antitrafficking work, there are four ways evangelicalism shapes the activities of the Church Ladies and Hope: the services for survivors, training for staff and the public, the recruitment of staff and volunteers at church, and the practice of Christianity in front of and with survivors. Break the Cycle did not show this pattern systematically, but there are ways Christianity influences the organization, which I discuss later.

First, Hope and Church Ladies offer and encourage religious services, such as going to church, praying, and studying the bible. Activists explicitly discuss their faith with survivors. The Church Ladies and Hope have strong connections to the churches with which they partner, which also provide funding, recruitment for staff and volunteers, and other resources. These church partners are vital to the success of both organizations, who rely heavily on the church for funding, recruitment, and other resources. Activists also provide referrals to other faith-based programs, such as food pantries and crisis pregnancy centers. Services vary in how ingrained Christianity is into the culture but Hope and Church Ladies tend to refer survivors to services that are also Christian based. Surrounding survivors with Christian services ensures that survivors are influenced by Christianity. Restricting who survivors spend time with based on religion suggests that activists do not want survivors questioning evangelical beliefs, practices, norms, and values. Furthermore, restricting survivors' access to others based on religion is similar to control tactics utilized by cults (Perrodin 2021) and abusers (National Domestic Violence Hotline 2020). This is common practice and normalized among evangelical Christian organizations, non-profits, and schools, who require statements of faith. Break the Cycle does offer religious services and asks survivors if they would like to be involved in pastoral care



during intake, which connects survivors to Freedom Ministry or other community services. However, this is the only religious service which is offered to survivors. Even though many of the Break the Cycle staff were Christian, they did not share their beliefs or push their beliefs onto survivors. Instead, they supported survivors where they were and offered them services and offered options outside Christian traditions and norms, such as referring to secular services, such as abortion providers.

Hope, the Church Ladies, and many referred services use religious language in everyday conversation, in their organizational materials, website and social media. Using religious language makes it clear that Hope and Church Ladies are Christian based, are guided by their faith in God, and that they utilize a Christian perspective in their antitrafficking work. For instance, meetings are begun in prayer, where activists pray for survivors, activists, and for the organization. Furthermore, organizational and individual wins are attributed to God and God hearing the prayers of antitrafficking activists. Activists believe that with prayer and action, change can occur. Often, activists described being led or directed by God to the field of antitrafficking. Because I am an atheist this led to tension at times. For example, during my interview with Mary, she describes to me how she got into the antitrafficking field:

I personally would say it was a God thing, that I was meant to be here. And, then when I met [Sandy], like we knew all these people in common. I, [Betty] and I went to the same church, we serve in Stephen Ministry together. So, it wasn't in a trafficking related issue, I knew [Betty] because of other things. I didn't even know she worked for [Hope] ... because you know each other on a different kind of level ... And, and so I'm like, "really, you work with them? I had no idea." (laughs) So, it was just one of those like weird (claps)

(Mary, Hope staff, white woman, 51)

And I ask, "coincidences?" To which she responds: "I wouldn't describe it as a coincidence, except that I really felt for me it was God directing me (claps) (laughs)" (Mary, Hope staff, white

woman, 51). Although this moment did not rise to a serious level of tension, it becomes obvious that I am not embedded into evangelical culture and norms. Again, Break the Cycle does not use this religious language, thus there were no interactions that highlighted our religious and cultural differences.

Second, Hope and Church Ladies train staff, volunteers, and community members about sex trafficking, at times from a religious perspective. Most of the information is presented in a technical way and comes from academic research and government sources. Yet, at times an evangelical perspective is often interwoven into the framework. For instance, Church Ladies held a training titled “Trauma-Informed Training,” which was a two-day training, one day was dedicated to understanding trauma from a faith-based perspective. In another training, Donna from the Church Ladies presents information at a local trafficking conference on the dangers of pornography, arguing that there is a connection between pornography and sex trafficking. Again, this is not found in the research, but commonly found in evangelical contexts. Training also utilizes religious language and scripture and begins and ends in prayer. Break the Cycle does not show this pattern.

Third, Hope and the Church Ladies recruit staff and volunteers from churches systematically through church social networks and by considering faith in the hiring process. Activists applying for volunteer positions with the Church Ladies and Hope are requested to provide statements of faith and faith appears to also influence which roles and positions activists can fill. Non-Christians were only found in non-direct services, such as education. Break the Cycle requests that volunteers have an “appreciation for faith-based service organizations” (Break the Cycle, organizational website). Break the Cycle does recruit staff and volunteers from churches but does not require staff or volunteers to be Christian. Break the Cycle recruited a

social worker through a church, but this practice appeared less systematic. Most of the staff and volunteers I interviewed were Christian (90%). Six of seven (88%) Church Ladies activists, 15 of 16 (94%) Hope activists, and two of three (66%) Break the Cycle activists are Christian.

For Hope and Church Ladies, the connection to churches also assisted in their ability to gain more support, particularly from Christian networks. Social movement scholars refer to this as frame diffusion (Snow et al 1986). Frame diffusion occurred primarily through Christian networks, media, telephone, and mail. The first step in the frame diffusion process is to connect Christian obligation to antitrafficking work. Furthermore, Church Ladies and Hope tapped into conservative ideas about sexuality and femininity to make antitrafficking work relevant to potential activists and supporters, particularly churches. The successful diffusion of antitrafficking work in evangelical churches and networks is why the field of antitrafficking work is dominated by evangelical services.

Finally, Hope and the Church Ladies practice Christianity in front of and with survivors. Although activists and survivors believe that Christianity is not forced upon survivors, an exclusively Christian culture will influence survivors to adopt Christian practices. Activists in Hope and Church Ladies praise survivors for showing signs of faith and baptisms. Religious language, customs, and symbols are also used in both organizations. Most survivors from Hope and Church Ladies report that staff do talk about their faith and that faith is an important part of Hope and the Church Ladies. Staff and volunteers believe developing faith is helpful in healing for survivors. Staff and survivors at Hope's safe house engage in daily religious rituals, such as praying, and attending church weekly. Sandy (Chinese American, 47), the Hope Executive Director, states that their goal is to "show what love looks like first, and then, to kind of tag that to a name of why we are the way we are." Survivors receiving services with Church Ladies are

brought to church and report receiving daily devotionals and religious messages. The Church Ladies also ask survivors if they can pray for the survivors and give them Bibles. Bible studies are also provided. As a result, some survivors reported becoming more religious overtime. When asked how the organization is influenced by religion, a survivor stated,

I want to say it's like one of the strong foundational parts, the key to the organization. I mean there's a lot of like prayer that happens, and like... the go-to is always about like, 'What Christ wants you to do?' Or just being like the Church, being like us as people coming together to help each other and stuff like that, so they always point you back that way."

(Stacee, Church Ladies survivor, African American woman, 28)

Staff, volunteers, and survivors know that faith is integral to the services provided by Hope and the Church Ladies. During most discussions, the religious services are viewed as a positive influence by staff and survivors, but some survivors also reported how they pushed back when not interested:

Being in the lifestyle seeing a lot of preachers and things like that, I am very against church ... [Michelle] has gave me a list of churches, and I'm like, '[Michelle], I'm not going. I'm not going.' And she's like, 'Okay, well you just don't want to try?' Nope. I'm not going.

(Shay, Church Ladies survivor, African American woman, 30)

Again, both Church Ladies and Hope survivors typically report that religion is not forced but encouraged. Despite Shay's clear refusal because of prior bad experiences with preachers, Michelle, the Executive Director of Church Ladies, still pushes her to go to church. Although Michelle ultimately accepts Shay's refusal, pushing Shay to go suggests that she does not respect Shay's stance. Michelle does not question whether Shay would benefit from a church environment but assumes going to church is healing and would be positive for Shay. Further, these are survivors that are open to Christianity, many more survivors may avoid services

completely if Christian services are the only available services. Again, Break the Cycle does not engage in Christian dialogue or practices unless a survivor initiates it.

Break the Cycle activists tended to be less influenced by their religious beliefs, and they are younger and more liberal than Hope and the Church Ladies activists. This observation should be expected, within the general population, the younger and less religious do tend to hold more liberal views (Masci 2016). Religious materials, language and practices were banned from the drop-in space, unless a survivor initiated such a discussion. Break the Cycle is still comprised mostly of white, middle-class women, like that of Hope and the Church Ladies. In terms of their views of gender and sexuality, out of the three Break the Cycle activists I interviewed, all favored legal access to abortion, cohabitation prior to marriage, comprehensive sex education, same-sex marriage, and non-marital sex.

Within Hope and Church Ladies, staff and volunteers' religious beliefs include specific ideas regarding gender and sexuality. Christian staff and volunteers from Hope and the Church Ladies were more likely to report conservative views of sexuality, abortion, pregnancy, and same-sex relationships. Many pointed to their Christian beliefs as the reason for their view. Survivors reported being aware of staff and volunteers' anti-abortion and sexually conservative beliefs. I discuss this in more depth below. Again, those working at Break the Cycle did not show this pattern.

Because the ASMOs' messaging and culture reflect evangelicalism, the framing of sex trafficking is relevant to the life of the evangelical activists. Benford and Snow (2002) argue that frame resonance varies based on the credibility of the frame and its salience. Credibility arises due to frame consistency, empirical support, and trustworthiness of the frame articulators. The frames resonated with activists because the ASMOs framed sex trafficking similarly and in

consistent ways throughout my time in the field: as sexual slavery (and conflating sex work and sex trafficking); as happening in the United States (backyard abolitionism); and as mostly occurring to girls and women. Trafficking frames also resonated with activists because of empirical evidence. The ASMOs utilized academic, government and non-profit research in their awareness and educational campaigns, followed by ways potential activists could then get involved. Yet, evangelical activists also utilize pseudoscientific information on the dangers of pornography, which goes uncritically examined. Finally, the ASMOs utilized credible leaders to articulate the framing of trafficking. All three ASMO leaders are highly educated, one with a bachelors, one with a masters, and one with a doctorate. All three ASMO leaders are involved in their respective churches, which assists with credibility, frame resonance, and several types of support. Staff and volunteers of Hope and the Church Ladies all report respecting the leaders of the ASMOs.

### **Outcomes of Framing**

Benford and Snow (2002) argue that there are outcomes of framing, namely political opportunities, the creation of individual and collective identities, and movement specific outcomes. They argue that social movement organizations (SMOs), in this case ASMOs, must show that the movement can create change. ASMOs have shown that they can create social change through encouraging lawmakers to pass new legislation, providing services for sex trafficking victims, and individual and collective identities are formed. In this section, I examine these outcomes of antitrafficking work and framing.

The ASMOs work with politicians to ensure that criminal codes punish traffickers and clients. Since the creation of the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force, Break the Cycle and other activists have been working with the State's Attorney's Office to ensure laws are adequate

to hold perpetrators accountable. During my time in the field, a Republican Congressman served on the Task Force and spoke at a conference *Not Taken: Halting Human Trafficking* (Church Ladies, ethnographic notes). The Task Force allows activists, politicians, and law enforcement a space to coordinate their antitrafficking efforts, including legislation. Hope activists also work to fulfill the training requirements of legislation, such as Erin's Law, which requires public schools to implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program. Both Hope and Church Ladies also push their activists to vote on particular bills, such as Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking ACT (SESTA). These laws often are guided by the ways in which activists have framed trafficking, such as focusing on sex trafficking, focusing on girls and women. Many of these have improved the situation of trafficked persons, such as preventing the incarceration of individuals for sex work, who have a defense of sex trafficking. While other laws, such as FOSTA-SESTA have been criticized as making sex workers and sex trafficking victims less safe.

All ASMOs also work to show that the work they are doing is successful, primarily their services for survivors. Nearly at every public event and often during meetings, leaders would speak about survivor accomplishments, such as graduating from the program, graduating with their high school diploma, and converting to Christianity. Of course, what evangelical activists believe are accomplishments are also guided by their religious ideology. For instance, activists praise survivors for baptisms or otherwise accepting Christianity. Hope and Church Ladies also began turning their focus on working with men to educate them on the harms of pornography and purchasing sex.

Finally, activists form new individual and collective identities by engaging in antitrafficking work. Individual and collective identities are formed in ASMOs relating to their

evangelical identities and savior complexes. Activists do this a couple of different ways. First, activists deepen their evangelical identity by engaging in antitrafficking work. By engaging in antitrafficking work, they believe they are pleasing God, which brings them closer to the divine. Second, activists develop identities in relation to the organization they are working for and the roles they are engaged in. For instance, activists who are involved in conducting educational and awareness events develop identities as antitrafficking educators. Finally, some activists in the movement may develop a savior antitrafficking identity. Activists believe that if trafficking survivors are removed from their trafficking situations, then they are “saved” from this abuse. However, trafficking survivors often experience abuse and control in other relationships, such as family and intimate relationships (Nichols 2016). Activists also work to evangelize trafficking survivors, so they are “saved” by Jesus. By bringing survivors to Christianity, activists believe they are ‘saving’ the souls of trafficking survivors. Physically ‘saving’ trafficking survivors from abuse, ‘saving’ the souls of trafficking survivors, along with education, counseling, and therapies, allow activists to internalize their beliefs and practices as righteous and the best path towards healing. These tasks allow activists to believe they have ‘saved’ trafficking survivors.

In this section, I have discussed how services are influenced by evangelical Christianity and the consequences of that framing. In the next section, I discuss how evangelical beliefs influence activists’ understandings of gender and sexuality, and how that influences services and survivors.

### **Evangelical framing of deviant gender and sexual behavior**

Evangelicals tend to have a more conservative view of gender and sexuality, particularly concerning topics of marriage, homosexuality, non-marital sex, sexuality, and gender presentations and expectations. These conservative ideologies lead to a framing of deviant



gender and sexual behaviors as part of the problem, or diagnostic framing, resulting in an ideology of victim blaming. First, I discuss the conservative gender norms of evangelicals before discussing how activists frame deviant gender and sexual behavior as part of the problem of trafficking, which results in victim blaming.

Evangelicals are more likely to support a patriarchal family model (Bartkowski 2001). Further, Bernstein (2012) finds that evangelical antitrafficking activists believe this model is safest and needs to be protected by men and the state. This means that men are expected to be the head of the household, the financial provider, and the final decision maker. Women are expected to raise the children and take care of the home, despite often working for pay outside the home. Evangelicals believe that marriage should only occur between one man and one woman, and that couples should wait until marriage to engage in sex. Same sex relationships are seen as sinful and against God's wishes. Evangelical views of sexuality are influenced by gender and are more likely to reflect a sexual double standard (Allison and Risman 2013). As shown below, activists believe that men are biologically inclined towards sexually aggression, while women are sexually passive and responsible for controlling men's sexual desire. If women display a desire for sex, then they are behaving 'badly' for women. However, men displaying similar behaviors would not receive the same criticisms. Men are expected to naturally want sex.

In the sociological literature, this is referred to as "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman, 1987). According to this perspective, gender is a performance, in which one can adhere to, modify, or challenge gender norms. Evangelicals expect women to be sexually passive, dress modestly, marry men, and become a nurturing Christian mother. Thus, when survivors are overtly sexual, they are breaking traditional evangelical gendered norms. For instance, a Hope

volunteer describes the behavior of trafficking survivors, who are teenagers and young adults, in a negative way.

These girls are sexually overcharged ... There are six, so right now there's six girls and they have, you know, been in the, in these, you know, sexual situations for extended periods of time. They like to get all gussied up [for] each other, and kind of do some flashy dancing. The landscaper guys come on Thursday, they like to press themselves in the window, and try to get attention. You know? From the landscapers, and you got the mentors "come on, come on, let's go do something else." But that sort of sexualized behavior, they feed off of each other, and then, "Oh, if you're going to bump and grind in the window, I'm going to bump and grind on her. And then we're going to do that in the window." Or there's a, there's a banister and one of them is like bumping and grinding on the banister, but she's looking to get a rise out of the other ones. And the other ones will get her more fired up.

(Mimi, Hope volunteer, white woman, 46)

Instead of seeing this behavior as normal for isolated young girls and young women, who are discovering themselves, dancing and playing, Mimi believes this behavior indicates that they are "sexually overcharged." They are encouraged to stop, and/or may be threatened with loss of future privileges. They are also encouraged to stay away from boys and men. For instance, if a survivor asks to go on an outing to a place where there may be "too many" boys, then the staff person will say no and suggest another location.

Gendered ideas about girls and women as victims and men as perpetrators pervade the discourse among all three ASMOs. Nearly all staff and volunteers in the three organizations were women, and most of those served are girls and women. Most of the staff and volunteers I interviewed are women (85%) and all the survivors I interviewed are women. Each of the programs did acknowledge that trafficking happens to boys and men, yet provided limited services to men and boys, mostly referring out to other services. Boys and men are excluded from Break the Cycle's drop-in space and Hope's residential home. Hope's residential home also restricts transgender girls and women, but Break the Cycle allows transgender girls and women

in the drop-in space. Activists in all three ASMOs acknowledge that LGBTQ+ persons, particularly transgender persons, have a higher risk of being trafficked. Hope and Church Ladies do not address these additional risk factors with any programs or services. However, Break the Cycle does and is the most inclusive of LGBTQ+ persons. Furthermore, Break the Cycle trains staff and volunteers on LGBTQ+ vulnerabilities and experiences of trafficking. Yet, survivors are almost universally referred to as girls (even if adults), or she/her, and traffickers as men, or he/his by all activists. The universal usage of the term girl among staff, volunteers, and survivors, suggests misogynistic understanding of women being child-like and not capable adults. Molly (white woman, who appears to be in her late 20s or early 30s), a social worker with Break the Cycle, states that often survivors of trafficking are unable to reach all their developmental milestones, which explains why they act impulsively and like “teenagers.”

Culturally, Hope and the Church Ladies expressed a much more conservative view of gender and sexuality than Break the Cycle. Again, these conservative beliefs are tied to Christianity. These conservative beliefs came from most activists, yet these conservative activists are more conservative than most Americans. For example, when I asked about her feelings about abortion, Kerry states

I am, what I would consider pro-life, I guess. Um, I am not judgmental of people who've had abortions. It's legal in this country. Um, I struggle with the answer with what should be done. Um, I donate some, some money to a pregnancy counseling organization, that works with women, and their children, and their unborn children. Not just to save the child, but to help those women achieve, a measured success in their life ... I just think this is part of our capitalistic, um, materialistic viewpoint, is what's not convenient is easy to get rid of it. I think that the, uh, we should change that, the convenience piece of it. Like, just because it's not convenient, doesn't mean it's, it's the right thing to do (laughs). However, there are circumstances, which I understand are harder to deal with, when a woman has been raped, when, when a woman has a, a child, when they know the child is, is damaged somehow, not going to be born with full capacity. I know that those are tough decisions. I have compassion for those tough decisions, but I have

to believe that if abortion is wrong because it's taking the life of the unborn, then it's probably wrong in every circumstance. Right? That's just my, that's my personal belief. Um, I would not begin to say that that should be imposed on other people. But on the other hand, I wouldn't be true to my personal belief, that life is God given, if I didn't say, I wish it could be imposed on people (laughs).

(Kerry, Hope staff, white woman, 55)

Kerry identifies as pro-life and believes that abortion is taking a life of the unborn in every circumstance and is wrong. Yet, she wrestles with whether it should be imposed on others and wishes it could be. Ultimately, she would probably vote to make abortion illegal in all instances. She empathizes with women in situations of rape or fetal medical conditions, but also suggests women have abortions out of convenience.

Evangelical activists also believe girls and women should not display their sexuality. For example, at a trafficking conference at a local university Jack (white man, middle-aged), an administrator of Break the Cycle discusses:

girls wearing short 'plastic wrap' skirts to school. He discussed how he works with the girls to try to desexualize them and make them understand that their body isn't the most important thing about them – and they begin to wear less revealing clothing and stop wearing "4-inch" heels. He argued that Mr. Normal next door is the one buying the sex. He's a situational abuser.

(Break the Cycle ethnographic notes)

Jack's language suggests that girls and women's clothing is immodest and expressions of inappropriate sexuality, which leads to trafficking. For Jack, women should not dress in a sexualized manner. Evangelical conservative ideology suggests that "good" women dress modestly and de-emphasize their sexuality. Women are expected to be passive sexually and say no to sex unless married to a man. But survivors are receiving mixed messages. Society, media, and peers encourage girls and women to dress in more revealing clothing. Fashion trends for young girls are focused on wearing clothing which reveals many parts of her body, such as stomach (crop tops), short skirts, and low-cut shirts. These fashion trends are often popular

among girls and young women, yet evangelicals perceive these fashion choices as indications of selling sex (Shih 2016). At the same time, schools' dress codes disproportionately affect girls, but not boys. Some schools restrict girls from revealing their shoulders. This teaches individuals that girl's and women's bodies are inherently sexual and that they must be covered, that girls and women are objects, and that boys are incapable of controlling themselves (Whitman 2020). Further, these dress codes maintain oppression of girls and promote white hegemonic masculinity.

Furthermore, abusers and traffickers require women to wear revealing clothing. Girls and women who are trafficked are required to wear revealing clothing to attract men and sell sex. Research demonstrates that traffickers purchase the clothing for trafficking victims as part of preparing them to sell sex (Nichols 2016). His explanation is simplistic and lacks any consideration of power and control, particularly in the context of sex trafficking. Believing that women's dress is a factor in sexual violence is one of the many rape myths that persists (McMahan and Farmer 2011). For Jack, and other evangelicals, girls and women should de-emphasize their sexuality and say no. Boys and men are expected to be sexual, which is why he believes "Mr. Normal" is the one purchasing sex. This implies that all men are inclined to purchase sex and/or abuse women and implicitly indicates that sexual abuse, including sex trafficking is a systemic problem without accusing "all" men or explaining this further. This gendered dichotomy, where women are expected to be passive and say no and men expect sex, sets up scenarios which lead to violence against women and are representative of the larger American culture. He misses the opportunity to really delve into the systemic oppression of girls and women which allow sex trafficking to flourish. This is a common pattern among white

evangelicals, who focus more on individualistic explanation of social phenomena and solutions to social problems (Bartkowski and Regis 2003)

Evangelical ideologies are persistent in American culture and systems. But evangelical activists are more conservative than most Americans and in some cases the difference is significant and striking. Seventeen out of the 26 (65%) staff and volunteers I interviewed are against abortion, three of whom suggested that abortion is murder. Six out of seven (86%) of Church Ladies activists and 11 out of 16 (69%) of Hope activists reported attitudes against abortion. None (0%) of the activists working with Break the Cycle reported attitudes against abortion. In comparison to average Americans, this sample of antitrafficking activists report higher rates of anti-abortion attitudes but are about the same for white evangelical Christians in America. According to the 2018 General Social Survey, 51% of Americans are against abortions for any reason (NORC at the University of Chicago 2020). A solid majority (67%) of white evangelical Christians favor abortion being illegal except in cases of rape, incest or when the life of the pregnant woman is at risk (APNORC 2020). Furthermore, activists have higher rates of opposition to sex before marriage (62%) than other Americans (39%; NORC at the University of Chicago 2020); higher rates of disapproval of cohabitation (48%) than other Americans (31%, NORC at the University of Chicago 2020); higher rates of disapproval of same-sex marriage (42%) than other Americans (22%; NORC at the University of Chicago 2020); and 52% would like to see abstinence only sex education compared to 36% of Americans (Bleakley, Hennessy and Fishbein 2006). Furthermore, these researchers found that about 50% of Americans are opposed to abstinence-only education. Because evangelization is a secondary goal, and a conservative view of gender is embedded in evangelical Christianity, survivors receiving services from Hope and the Church Ladies may be influenced to develop more conservative

views of gender and sexuality overtime. When these conservative ideals of gender and sexuality are not met, evangelicals believe that problems may arise, including sex trafficking. As one activist describes:

I do think it's part of the problem in the whole women's lib movement of wear whatever you want, it's your choice, what you want to put out there, and blaming men for doing what they're wired to do, which is look. I do think we have a responsibility to think about those things, and so I quit wearing short skirts because I'm like, you know what, I don't ever want that to be an issue. And if I choose not to wear it, even though he's the one who was inappropriate, not me, I'll just take it off the table (laughs). You know? And so I think we as women, can be conscious of the fact that, you know what, if you don't flaunt it quite so much, at least you're taking the temptation to look down a notch, and I think that's okay... because men are wired to be visual and if we choose to put our visual wares out there, it's really unfair to blame them for being visual cause it's how they're wired.

(Mary, Hope staff, white woman, 51)

Mary describes being sexually harassed at work while wearing a short skirt. She believes that by wearing a short skirt to work, that this opened her up to sexual harassment. This puts the bulk of the responsibility on women to control men. Instead of teaching boys and men empathy, to control themselves, and empirical facts about gender and sex, Mary, like many evangelicals, believes women should be modest, as to not tempt men, because men are “wired to look.” She has internalized the idea that gender is genetic and that men cannot control themselves and so women should be responsible for controlling men's behavior. Thus, for Mary, women's dress and behavior factors into men's bad behavior, abuse, and violence. These ideologies are correlated with victim blaming and other myths about sexual harassment, assault, and rape. This explanation lacks consideration of unequal power and control in a trafficking situation. For evangelicals, part of the problem in sex trafficking is that survivors have internalized a sexualized identity, leading to survivors dressing more revealing, behaving more sexually, and engaging in non-marital sex. Thus, displays of sexuality and revealing clothing are symptoms of

abuse and/or trafficking. Shih (2016) finds in her previous research that antitrafficking activists use women's dress as an indication of whether a woman may be in a sex trafficking situation.

Again, Break the Cycle does not show this pattern overall, except for Jack.

Evangelical activists' conservative beliefs are pushed upon survivors. For Hope and Church Ladies, part of the problem with sex trafficking is the oversexualization and unfeminine behavior of sex trafficking survivors. Non-marital sex, immodest clothing, and sexual behavior are all tied into sex trafficking. Additionally, part of the horror in sex trafficking, is the "damage" that occurs to survivor's sexuality. Evangelicals believe that women who have sex outside of marriage will suffer psychological and relationship consequences. Evangelicals believe that women who have sex outside of marriage will feel guilty, ashamed and compare past sexual relationships with a spouse. Sex trafficking strikes at the foundation of what makes a "healthy" home for evangelical activist, particularly for children. As a result, Christian activists' strategies are to encourage women to dress modestly and resist sexual behavior. These gendered ideas are inextricably tied to their evangelical culture and beliefs, which survivors are encouraged to adapt as they receive services. Activists believe that survivors overtly sexual behavior is both a symptom of previous abuse, and a signal to traffickers and other sexual predators. Hope activists control survivor outings and discourage sexual behavior. They are discouraged from dancing in a sexual way, speaking to boys or men, or going places which may have boys and men. Break the Cycle and Church Ladies do not operate a safe home; thus, activists did not discuss this as much. However, during a conference on trafficking in the local area, Jack illustrates how discouraging "immodest" clothing was a part of his strategy in providing services for sex trafficking survivors.

Church Ladies activists also discourage abortions, even though activists are working with women who have been raped and will be retraumatized by carrying their rapists' child. One



survivor asked for transportation to receive abortion services and was told the Church Ladies will not support abortions. Three survivors reported that abortions are discouraged. Michelle, the Executive Director of Church Ladies, stated that if a survivor were seeking an abortion, she would send her to a local crisis pregnancy center (CPC). Previous research finds that CPCs are anti-abortion evangelical organizations that offer services for women considering abortion but refuses to offer referrals or services for abortion (Kelly 2012). Instead, CPC staff and volunteers attempt to dissuade pregnant women from having abortions. They do also provide women with resources if they do decide to continue their pregnancy, but this often is not enough to fully support a child. Thus, the burden of childbirth and childrearing lie squarely on women, particularly women of color and women who are already struggling economically. This forces women into a more dire economic situation, thus raising her vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of abuse.

During interviews with survivors, I asked what behaviors are encouraged and discouraged by the ASMOs. Survivors reported that selling sex, sex before marriage, cohabitation, violence, negativity, alcohol, hanging with “bad” crowds, and toxic behaviors are discouraged. According to evangelicals, survivors engage in these behaviors which leads to gendered violence and sex trafficking. When asked how sex before marriage is discussed, a survivor stated,

I guess you'd say like positive feedback and just basically, just stuff that's related to, uh, Christian views ... sex before marriage, like okay, sin is sin, and, of course, it's not something that is like, it's something that goes against what's said in the Bible, but it's not like, it's any worse than any other sin basically.

(Stacee, 30, African American woman, Church Ladies survivor)

These quotes were typical, but different survivors mentioned different conservative sexual frames. Non-marital sex, cohabitation, abortion, and same-sex marriage were all discussed with

survivors. One survivor, Nory, reported that when staff and volunteers have indicated that abortion is wrong, she does not respond. Given the power dynamics of the relationship (with activists having more race and class privilege than survivors) and the ability of activists being able to provide resources, it is not surprising that Nory does not feel comfortable sharing her opinion that she disagrees with them. In a more equitable situation, it is more likely that Nory would feel comfortable sharing her opinion. Furthermore, Hope and Church Ladies were not the most stringent programs in the area. One survivor, TJ, reported that another evangelical program (on the other side of the city), Safe Space, who she was referred to by Church Ladies, was very opposed to non-marital sex, so much so that they dismissed one of her friends, another survivor and graduate of the program, when she became pregnant outside of marriage. TJ reported this had a negative impact on her:

It was definitely something that was frowned upon. There was actually a girl that, uh, had graduated from the program and she ended up getting pregnant and obviously she wasn't married when she got pregnant and they just kind of like shunned her. She was already done with the program ... And she used to come and volunteer and, uh, which is, uh a big deal for us being in the program because girls like her, for us, were a motivation. So, then when we see them shunning her, and cutting off contact because of this one, so called mistake, I really felt that was a very negative impact.

(TJ, Church Ladies survivor, white woman, 37)

Thus, other antitrafficking organizations in the field are more stringent in their adherence to evangelical, conservative standards and norms. Furthermore, this is a program that Church Ladies refers to for residential care often, before they even opened a home in the area. Prior to Safe Space opening a home in the area, they had another home out of state that Church Ladies sent women to for care. Hope and Church Ladies' religious ideology also influences gendered expectations and norms of survivors.

## **Race and White Saviorism**

Race influences the antitrafficking field, like all institutions in the United States, because race is structural. Race is a social concept which divides people based on white and nonwhite divides (Hughey 2014). In this section, I focus my examination specifically on the intersections of religion and race. Evangelical whiteness shapes who activists target and activists' antitrafficking actions. I argue that antitrafficking efforts are white savior projects, which maintain the racial hierarchy by engendering a white Christian culture within antitrafficking services and expecting survivors to internalize this ideology. According to Vera and Gordon (2003) white saviors are leaders who save people of color from oppression, poverty, and disease. They are often portrayed as charismatic leaders of a non-white population with large dreams. Murphy (2021) suggests white saviors are also characterized as knowing what is best or having skills that people of color do not have. Neela-Stock (2021) argues that the white leaders are portrayed as the "good" whites, who believe they have a duty and the authority to 'save' the world, particularly people of color, rather than following people of color. Further, white saviors propose individualistic solutions which meet the immediate needs of those they are attempting to aid, but do not address the systemic issues that are at the root of the problem, like racism, classism, sexism, etc. White savior projects are a form of colorblindness, which maintains white supremacy (Murphy 2021). They contrast their own experiences with someone more marginalized, thereby reminding themselves of their own privilege. In the antitrafficking field, racially and economically privileged evangelical women can engage with a sex-filled culture without losing their status as "good" women (Bernstein 2007).

Hughey (2014) argues that there are seven key dimensions in white savior films, which I apply to the antitrafficking field. First, the Church Ladies believe that massage parlors are sites

of sex trafficking but focus their outreach specifically on Asian-themed spas specifically. It is unclear why The Church Ladies focus on Asian spas, but volunteers report looking for Asian spas with blacked out windows, doorbells and locked doors, and heavy security, including cameras. For activists, these are signs of trafficking. Although spas are a place where trafficking happens, there is no evidence that Asian-themed spas are more involved in prostitution or sex trafficking any more than other spas. Activists focus on Asian-themed spas suggests they believe that Asian cultures are more involved in sex trafficking and prostitution, adhering to a racial stereotype. Michelle, the Executive Director of the Church Ladies, reports that outreach to Asian-themed spas can sometimes be difficult because they will not disclose exploitation in order to save face. Although there may be multiple reasons why survivors do not disclose, the language used again is a generalization of Asian immigrants and persons with Asian heritage. It could be that women of Asian descent do not trust the white, economically privileged women entering the massage parlors.

Second, survivors are entering organizations, which are highly stratified by race. Most of the staff and volunteers are white in all three organizations (77% of those interviewed, n = 26), while survivors tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse (66% of those interviewed, n = 12). Furthermore, activists tend to be economically privileged, while survivors are economically marginalized. According to a Hope staff person, survivors seeking services tend to be half white and half non-white. Second, race and ethnicity are rarely discussed at Hope and the Church Ladies as a vulnerability in trafficking and diversity training was lacking. One of the Hope staff, Varita, who is one of the few black women on staff at Hope states diversity training needs to occur. Break the Cycle was the only organization which trained on racial privileges, as part of a system of intersecting privileges and disadvantages (Crenshaw, 1991). There was a much greater

understanding of social inequalities and privileges at Break the Cycle, although diversity was lacking in staffing. Survivors reported that racial differences in staff and volunteers initially made them feel skeptical of services, one who Church Ladies harassed for three years before she decided she would try their services. This likely means that other survivors may not seek services due to these racial differences. As one survivor describes,

I'm a black girl living in the ghetto because I was at my, um, my boyfriend's friend's mom's house... You know? In a low poverty area, and there's these white ladies, they looked like they were a little bit more fortunate than me... It kind of made me a little upset because they were like me and my friend are gonna come. I'm like wait a partner? Like, what do they think I'm gonna rob them or something? So, I was a little uneasy with that. Um, but it was nothing but help... In the beginning I'm like they don't know nothing I'm going through... You know? I felt like they had nothing in common. But, once I started opening up and they started opening up and we just started talking, I'm like, oh my gosh like, they might didn't do exactly what I did. But they had some fall downs in their life as well.

(Shay, Church Ladies survivor, African American woman, 30)

Hope and the Church Ladies do not discuss the impact that racial privilege might have on their service rate. However, Break the Cycle acknowledged that having a mostly white team has led to some programmatic changes,

Outreach has changed. For example, we used to go out, and like go on the track, and like talk to people, and then we realized, "Oh, we don't look like any of the people. No one trusts us." Um, so, and that works in some areas. Right? Like it doesn't work for us in this space right now.

(Lucy, 28, white, Break the Cycle paid staff)

What Lucy does not acknowledge is that these trust issues will happen whether white activists are conducting outreach on the track or allow those who sell sex to walk into the drop-in center, when there are such large differences in race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexuality, nationality, disability and more. In summary, some survivors might be averse to seeking services

because of that racial difference. Break the Cycle did discontinue street outreach, but it would be of benefit to the organizations to seek out racially and ethnically diverse staff and volunteers.

Despite these differences, survivors mostly felt that they were treated fairly within the organizations. One of the 10 survivors stated they were unsure, while another said she believes so. Eight out of the 10 survivors I interviewed from the Church Ladies reported that survivors are treated fairly. A survivor stated that the Church Ladies do not see color. Not seeing color has become the prominent racial order and ideology since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The new racial order required a subtle racism, which appears nonracial, to legitimize the racial order (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). The racial ideology that supports this new form of subtle racism had to change as well to a cultural explanation of racial inequality. For example, whites could justify the poverty of blacks by suggesting that blacks are lazy and would rather collect a welfare check than work. Bonilla-Silva (2014) maintains that whites and blacks see racism very differently with whites perceiving it as individual prejudice and discrimination; whereas blacks tend to believe racism is institutionalized and systematic. He posits that racism seems invisible because the racial order has been institutionalized allowing whites to detach from the way racial agents operate, agencies are perceived to be neutral by using neutral language, and racial events are presented as individual occurrences by the media. Whites are able to still discuss racial matters indirectly, by using semantic moves, projecting their feelings, and using diminutives. Consequently, whites often become uncomfortable and incoherent when talking about race.

White supremacy is also intimately tied to evangelical Protestantism. In the United States, manifest destiny symbolizes racial and religious paternalism (Hughey 2014). It carries assumptions that whites are virtuous and divinely inspired to spread that virtue to others, even if against their will. This was practiced against black slaves and indigenous populations, to convert

them to Christianity. White saviorism was legally practiced and supported by the policies at the time, which moved from the iron fist to the velvet glove of white supremacy. White domination continues today and is maintained through racial paternalism, racial stereotypes, metaphors and concepts, images, emotions, and inclinations. Hughey (2014) argues that the white supremacist order requires a racial savior to reestablish an order based on white expertise and gratitude of nonwhites. Break the Cycle activists are the only activists in the field to critique the rescue complex, but still participate in sting operations with law enforcement. What is different between white saviors presented in films and white saviors in the antitrafficking industry is that there is not just one white savior, several individuals can participate in white saviorism. Furthermore, a feature of white evangelical saviorism is the focus on individualistic solutions for structural problems, such as trafficking. Trafficking is caused by larger systemic issues such as capitalism and poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and more. Thus, removing trafficking victims from the trafficking situation is seen as an effective solution to trafficking, instead of looking to reduce the structural barriers which place individuals at risk for trafficking.

Hughey (2014) suggests there are seven key dimensions in white savior films 1) white saviors cross the color and cultural line; 2) white saviors are framed as being morally or religiously righteous as they fight against injustice and rescue people of color; 3) white saviors experience suffering, which mirrors the pain of Jesus; 4) the white savior is juxtaposed against the bad whites and people of color to make the white person more tolerable; 5) meritocracy and hard work is associated with whiteness; 6) whiteness is associated with civility while blackness is associated with savagery, violence and emotionality; and 7) many films are based on a true story, which makes them less likely to be critically examined by the audience. The last dimension does not apply in this analysis.

First, white saviors cross the color and cultural line (Hughey 2014). In antitrafficking work, activists do this in their outreach work, educational classes, and as part of service delivery. In outreach, Church Ladies enter into Asian-themed spas to build relationships with women. In doing so, activists are entering into spaces where women earn meager wages, and they can learn about their racial and class privilege and the Asian community. One Church Ladies activist says

You know, cause, we talk about, uh, Asian women and the massage parlors. You know? And what they do is because they send money back home, until we can figure out how we can give them a job, so they can send money back home. You're not going to change the lifestyle.

(Lisa, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 57)

In a way Lisa admires the Asian women who work hard to provide for their families. The choices she makes are the choices that any of us would make to support our families, so her family survives and there is food on the table. She also implies there are structural challenges for migrant women of color obtaining high-paying jobs, which lead to marginalization and trafficking, but proposes that an individual job would fix the problem for any individual woman caught in sex trafficking in an Asian-themed spa.

Second, white saviors are portrayed as morally or religiously righteous in their fight for justice for people of color (Hughey 2014). White activists in all three organizations seek to rescue individuals from the injustice of trafficking. In doing so, Church Ladies and Hope utilize religious imagery and scripture to justify their role. Despite most activists not having any knowledge or skills, white saviors' moral commitment to antitrafficking efforts are believed to result in the transformation of traffickers. Their kindness is centered, instead of survivor needs, as they attempt to save individuals of color from their own culture, environment and themselves. People of color need a white savior to rescue them. For example,



I do think that, and helping those, you know. I mean you know, when you go back to the Bible, I mean, you think about those that Jesus helped, and, you know, he didn't help, you know he wasn't helping the huge success stories. He is helping the people that are hurt and that are struggling, and so I think that is definitely the biggest part of it. It is helping those who had, who can't help themselves, for sure. For sure.

(Dana, Hope volunteer, white woman, 46)

Here Dana utilizes Jesus as an example of how she should help others who cannot help themselves. Hughey (2014) argues that the white saviors' role is made clear through religious symbolism, an unrestrained approach to achieving one's goals; and an ability to transform nonwhite dysfunction into white assimilation. Dana's use of Jesus to guide her behavior is common throughout the evangelical antitrafficking field. In Hughey's (2014) research, the religious metaphors in the film are utilized to create an association between the white savior with messages of Christ. Violence and carnage are acceptable to create peace and the white normative order, while nonwhite violence is unacceptable (Hughey 2014). Activists acknowledge that sex trafficking will never be eliminated, but they continue to do everything possible to reduce incidence of trafficking, coming at the problem from multiple angles. Finally, activists have developed antitrafficking programs which transform nonwhite dysfunctions into white assimilation. For instance, survivors are expected to adhere to white evangelical norms of gender, sexuality, marriage, and family.

Third, white saviors experience suffering which mirrors the pain of Jesus (Hughey 2014). In antitrafficking work, many of the activists have suffered their own trauma, primarily sexual trauma. These activists discuss their own trauma, which happened earlier in their life, with each other and with the survivors of trafficking. In films white saviors' decision to save nonwhites leads to a victory for the savior; or the white savior sacrifices themselves to save nonwhites (Hughey 2014). By providing services to trafficking survivors, white saviors can witness

survivors' achievements, which is internalized as a vicarious victory. Even in those instances when trafficking survivors fail in accomplishing their goals, white saviors justify the sacrifices that they make, such as the monies donated and in spending time away from home as worth the sacrifice. Antitrafficking activists are accustomed to the high chances that trafficking victims will return to their situation yet are dedicated to continuing their efforts despite multiple relapses.

Fourth, white saviors are juxtaposed against the bad whites and natives in white savior films, which makes the white savior a more tolerable character (Hughey 2014). In these films, white saviors have character flaws, such as paternalism and subtle racism, which are difficult to accept. To make them more tolerable, white saviors are juxtaposed with two other types of characters 1) racist uncaring whites and 2) a nonwhite community which suffers. Next to the bad whites, white saviors do not seem as bad. Antitrafficking activists are juxtaposed against a harsh criminal justice system, often dominated by white men, which has a history of violence towards and arrest trafficking victims. Antitrafficking activists do a great deal of work to separate themselves from law enforcement by ensuring they take a softer approach and meet without law enforcement present. For instance, Lucy, who often goes on law enforcement operations states she

End up being like, playing crisis intervention for them. So, folks are calm enough to answer questions, but also making sure people have somewhere to go for the night. Making sure that, you know, that we give our hotline number.

(Lucy, Break the Cycle staff, white woman, 28)

This often occurs at sting operations and initial meetings for services. Antitrafficking activists utilize a softer approach, which involves listening with empathy, nonjudgement for the behaviors (and crimes) trafficking victims may be forced into and focusing on how to assist survivors with

meeting their needs and the goals that they may have. Antitrafficking activists are more tolerable juxtaposed with the criminal justice system and police.

Fifth, meritocracy and hard work is associated with whiteness (Hughey 2014). White evangelical culture in America holds that if you work hard enough, delay gratification, and focus on individual triumph that you can become successful. In white savior films, white teachers go through a three-step process to illustrate this: 1) the teacher fails pedagogically; 2) works hard to improve; and 3) the students are transformed. This process applies in antitrafficking work also, as activists work to adjust to the needs and wants of survivors. This serves as a model for trafficking victims, who can become successful if they act white (by focusing on education and work), and racial and economic inequality would not serve as a barrier. Thus, activists believe that if trafficking survivors work hard in legal work that they can move their way into success; hard work is the cure. Thus, structural causes of inequality are not visible and thus, if white saviors can do it anyone can. Trafficking survivors are portrayed as not having the knowledge or motivation until the white saviors show up, after which trafficking survivors are motivated, they work hard, and pursue their dreams which they did not believe were possible.

Sixth, whiteness is associated with civility in films and blackness with savage, violence, and emotionality (Hughey 2014). These stereotypes encourage white intervention. The African trope of savages have become normalized, or hegemonic. The Western movies of the past, with natives as savage and white cowboys, have been replaced in the context of Africa. Africans as savage and white military men (with helicopters and weapons) as the cowboys. In the context of antitrafficking work, the violence of trafficking is savage and in need of intervention. White saviors, like John, fantasize about directly saving girls and women from trafficking

Well, so, you know, I mean my, my dream of it would be that Hope would have an arm that does go in and do the dirty work and actually directly rescue girls, like, you know, crack rings. I would love to see that, that's, honestly, I mean if I could say it, I mean that's what I'd really like to do ... rescue them. Yeah, like physically like, yeah.

(John, hope volunteer, white man, 48)

The role of the white savior is idealized in a highly masculine way, in which (white) law enforcement officers have the legal and moral authority. John wants to physically rescue girls from their trafficking situation by physically removing them. This is portrayed in American films as an operation, which utilizes weapons and force to break into a space using force and catching the offenders.

White people should be involved in social justice issues, but they should take a back seat and let people of color lead (Murphy 2021). They should not center themselves in social justice work but follow the expertise and requests of people who are directly affected by the problem. Because people of color have experience with racial marginalization, they will know best how these systems of oppression affect them and what the best solutions are. Finally, whites should move beyond individualistic solutions to addresses the structural problems that feed into problems like human trafficking. Human trafficking survivors in particular should be encouraged to lead antitrafficking efforts.

In this section, I have argued that antitrafficking work is a white savior industry, in which activists and law enforcement work together to 'rescue' trafficking victims. In antitrafficking work, everyday white evangelicals can participate as white saviors to eliminate the violence and oppression of poor girls and women of color. This white savior complex is common throughout the field, activists often use the language of saving and rescue when discussing removing girls and women from a sex trafficking situation. These tactics are individualistic and do not nothing

to eliminate the structural barriers which place girls and women at risk for trafficking and violence.

### **Conclusion**

Antitrafficking work is dominated by evangelical organizations and activists, who have successfully campaigned over the last two decades to raise awareness of the atrocities of sex trafficking. In this sample, two of the three organizations use their positions as service providers to evangelize to trafficking survivors after experiencing intense traumatic events. In this sample, most survivors reported being Christian and satisfied with services. Two of the three evangelical organizations are explicitly evangelical, praying, using religious language, participating in religious traditions and customs. Those who were unsatisfied with the imposition of Christianity worked around these issues by refusing Christian services or ignoring activists. Because evangelizing is a secondary goal, some survivors, particularly non-Christians, may feel uncomfortable, alienated, and harmed by the groups' attempts to evangelize and push more conservative ideals of gender and sexuality. Finally, having secondary motives to evangelize to survivors is concerning when all survivors need basic services, yet the antitrafficking field is dominated by evangelical organizations and activists. Because the field is dominated by evangelical organizations and activists, non-Christian survivors will have a more difficult time finding services which are secular (or connected to their own faith), where they may feel more comfortable in their healing. All three utilize their church networks to recruit staff, volunteers, and collect donations to various degrees. Two of the three organizations also frame trafficking from an evangelical perspective, often utilizing conservative ideologies to define the problem of trafficking and pathologizing sex trafficking survivors for breaking gender norms and sexual displays and behaviors. I also examine antitrafficking activists' tactics of rescue and connect

these to white saviorism. I argue that antitrafficking is a white savior industry. In the next chapter, I examine the factors influencing the successes of the antitrafficking movement and what future directions the movement may take.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUCCESSSES AND FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT

This chapter addresses three key research questions: “What factors influence the success of evangelical antitrafficking organizations?”; “What are the future goals of the evangelical antitrafficking organizations?”; and “What might the future of the antitrafficking social movement look like as a whole? The first question examines the factors which influence the success of the organization, namely political opportunities, resource mobilization, leadership, grievances, and cultural context. For instance, political opportunities increased after the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). Each of the organizations also mobilizes resources via their connection to Christian churches and galvanizing support. Each of these factors influences the organizations differently and to different degrees. This second research question explores the future goals of the antitrafficking organizations in my sample. I then examine the future plans of the antitrafficking organizations. Hope plans to expand services to men who struggle with pornography or sex addiction. The Church Ladies plans to expand services by opening a home for women with children. Break the Cycle does not have any major plans but would like to continue to be survivor focused. In other words, Break the Cycle intends to stay guided by survivors' needs and wants for the program as much as possible. The third question explores the future of the antitrafficking movement. Most activists would like to see sex work remain illegal, but criminalization should be focused on clients and traffickers, and not sex workers or trafficking survivors. Many activists would like to increase education and awareness

efforts to prevent trafficking. Activists are also working to dispel myths about trafficking, such as it being an overseas problem. Some activists would also like to see a reduction in pornography, and increased education around sex and pornography addiction. Activists also spoke about the movement becoming survivor-led; however, this was not matched with action or effort. Finally, activists would like to see increased funding and resources for antitrafficking work.

### **Data**

Data utilized in this chapter include observational data; primary organizational materials, including organizational documents, emails, website, and social media posts; and interviews with staff, volunteers, and survivors. Observational data come from educational meetings, where the organizations present general information to the public; staff training, where the organization presents more detailed and nuanced information on trafficking; and volunteer meetings, where staff and volunteers discuss plans to eliminate trafficking. These meetings focused on planning in prevention efforts, by educating young people on the warning signs of abusive behavior; and protection efforts, by educating the public on definitions of trafficking and how to identify victims. In my observations, little to no time was spent on planning for prosecution efforts, which would have entailed working with law enforcement on sting operations and recovery of trafficking victims.

### **The Meanings of Success in the Antitrafficking Movement**

Success of antitrafficking organizations is defined as the ability of activists to accomplish the goals they set. Their main goals are to educate the public about the issue of sex trafficking generally, to recognize red flags in relationships and be able to identify trafficking survivors;



provide services to survivors; and work with law enforcement in the prosecution of traffickers and clients. In antitrafficking work, activists argue that success looks different than it would in other fields due to the difficulty in measuring success, which occurs due to the fluid nature of services, some antitrafficking organizations may provide services on a short-term basis and due the relapse cycle of survivors. There are special difficulties in measuring success in education. In this section, I examine how organizations measure success.

Measuring success can be difficult for organizations. Antitrafficking organizations may provide services to a survivor who needs short term housing, food, clothing, and other items before going into another long-term program or moving to another part of the country. They will provide that service and never hear from that person again. Sometimes this is done with coordination from law enforcement. Furthermore, trafficking survivors are likely to return to their trafficking situation for multiple reasons, such as contact with the trafficker (the trafficker may try to convince the victim to come back by love bombing), former friends recommending the victim return to trafficking, and other events which may trigger a trauma response (Nichols 2016). Instances of a survivor leaving does not mean that services have failed, but that the survivor may not be ready to leave the situation, even if it is abusive, much like survivors of intimate partner violence.

There are also difficulties in measuring success with regards to education and awareness.

As Mary suggests:

The goal of prevention education is to keep bad things from happening, so how do you report on how many bad things didn't happen, as a result, you can't really do that. So the best you can do is, talk about how many people you've touched, um, it's, it's difficult to say how effective that education is unless somebody comes forward and you find out specifically, that a child self-identified as a result of, of something that occurred. But even if they did self-identify they might not self-identify to us. They might self-identify to a teacher or guidance counselor or a

parent or pastor or whatever. So, um, the, the tracking and measurement piece of prevention is, is tough, but I really think it is something that we need to expand.  
(Mary, Hope staff, white woman, 51)

The challenges of prevention and education do present some interesting issues in terms of measuring the effectiveness of the education. Someone with a background and expertise in education would agree these issues are across the board with any type of education: can those who are educated about a topic apply that knowledge in the field? Having someone with expertise in education run the prevention and education program would be of benefit to Hope. There are a couple of options to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the prevention and education program that Hope offers. First, having students apply and practice skills of identifying red flags or abuse in relationships, identifying trafficking survivors (not based on gendered and racial stereotypes, but by asking questions), and identifying safe people and places would be of benefit. These activities could be practiced first as a group, and then assessed at the end of the session. Second, getting student feedback on what they like about the education, what they want for future education, and what they found useful would be another measure of that success. Systematic evaluations of programs allow leaders to be able to learn what works, what does not, and guide their decision making for the program. Next, I examine the success of the antitrafficking movement.

### **Factors Leading to a Successful Movement**

There are several factors that have contributed to the success of the antitrafficking movement, such as increased political opportunities, resource mobilization, leadership, strategic use of grievances, and cultural context. These factors influence the organizations differently and to different degrees. For instance, the passage of the TVPA greatly impacts Break the Cycle, who receives government funding, while Hope and Church Ladies do not receive this funding. In this

section, I will discuss these factors and how they contributed to the success of the antitrafficking organizations.

### **Political Opportunities**

McAdam and Tarrow (2018) argue that political opportunities offer structural potential for collective action. The passage of the first federal law on human trafficking, the TVPA 2000, was due to activists working to have human trafficking put on the national agenda. The antitrafficking movement was already in motion, but much of the growth of the antitrafficking social movement is owed to the passage of the TVPA 2000. Without the funding for research, education, and services, many programs would not be in existence, including one program in this study, Break the Cycle, which relies extensively on federal funds. None of the organizations were in existence prior to this federal legislation. In other words, the TVPA led to more activists to work within the antitrafficking field and the increase in resources made available.

Because activists were able to get the TVPA and subsequent reauthorizations passed, many programs have been funded to respond to trafficking. Some activists have been able to use momentum to pass laws which require private industries to examine and report on their supply chain. Thus, activists can spread their work across industries at multiple levels. For instance, in 2010 the California Transparency in Supply Chain Act requires companies to report their efforts to prevent and root out human trafficking within the supply chain within the United States and overseas (California Department of Justice 2022). Consumers are increasingly expecting that their goods and services are produced in a socially conscious way and are demanding that products are labeled as such. Although there are no federal laws or laws in the state demanding the same type of transparency, activists within my sample are pushing for this type of change. For example, activists within the antitrafficking movement have a desire to purchase fair-trade

products. I attended an educational event at a local Christian university, where fair-trade products were compared to exploitative labor, and fair-trade products were for sale:

[Suburban] Church had a table full of products and jewelry, which were made to increase economic security in Africa and prevent exploitation. [International Justice Mission's] The Justice Market buys the products to sell in America, [and] profits are used to buy more products. There was also a table for fair trade versus products made using exploitative labor.

(Hope, ethnographic notes)

This type of work helps to get potential activists and others to think about what they are purchasing, where it comes from, and the types of harm it may cause people around the world.

Due to the increasingly globalization of capitalism, exploitation from large American corporations have meant that they are able to set up their businesses in other countries with no to little regulations on labor or the extraction of goods. Finally, some ASMOs also work overseas to combat trafficking in other countries, although the organizations in this study focus their efforts domestically.

The TVPA also greatly influences the antitrafficking social movement organizations (ASMOs) in a couple of different ways. First, all ASMOs influenced by the TVPA follow the strategies outlined in the TVPA: prosecution, protection, and prevention. Each of the organizations works with law enforcement to assist survivors in prosecuting their traffickers. This includes seeking legal counsel, legal support such as translation services, and preparing survivors for court. Each of the organizations also provides direct services to survivors as part of protecting survivors from their traffickers and allowing them to heal. All three ASMOs also provide awareness and educational events to work towards preventing future trafficking and identifying current trafficking situations (thereby preventing more abuse of those already in trafficking situations). Second, one ASMO, Break the Cycle has received government funding

for over a decade, averaging \$654,294.99 per year due to the TVPA. The ASMOs have also been able to access significant resources via other sources.

### **Resource Mobilization**

Another significant factor in why ASMOs have been so successful is their ability to pool resources. Resource mobilization theory can explain the growth in evangelical antitrafficking organizations, specifically in different types of resources including material, human, social-organizational, cultural, and moral (Edwards et al. 2018). Break the Cycle is awarded grant monies for their antitrafficking efforts. However, Hope and the Church Ladies do not get funding from the federal government. Instead, Hope and the Church Ladies access resources from within their church networks to fund the work that they do. Both organizations collect donations/capital, recruit volunteers and staff, and develop working relationships with the churches and other partners in the area. Furthermore, both organizations can capitalize on shared cultural and moral resources, as they share similar social norms and moral beliefs, which are often taken for granted with the organizations. These organizations vary in the resources they can amass, but overall, each has developed an effective way to maintain their respective organizations.

Because Hope and the Church Ladies operate in an affluent, white suburb of a large city, many of their church partners and church peers are privileged by race and class and able to contribute significant capital to these organizations. Hope raises the most funds through fundraisers, followed closely by Break the Cycle's awarded grants. The Church Ladies is the least financially established, but they have no paid staff and creatively use social-organizational resources to compensate. For instance, they use their connections to other ASMOs to share resources, such as accessing a new program which texts women selling sex online. Another

difference, however, is the Church Ladies does not hold fundraisers, and instead raises funds through the Bridal Boutique, which was discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Each organization uses several ways to recruit potential activists, namely through their website, social media, but also through their church connections. Hope is the most effective at this, as they have the largest number of volunteers and staff; followed by the Church Ladies and Break the Cycle. Break the Cycle is less connected with a specific church, but has recruited through the church, and does not have as many potential spots open for volunteers and staff, and thus are the least effective in recruiting new activists.

Finally, Hope and Church Ladies effectively draw from cultural and moral resources from their church connections; whereas Break the Cycle did not. This also likely influences the degree to which they are successful at pulling their material and human resources from the church. Hope and Church Ladies have specifically structured their ASMOs to be culturally and morally like their churches, and thus there is significant transference occurring between the organizations and churches. Both organizations were connected to multiple churches in the area. For instance, Hope and the Church Ladies can make moral arguments about the need to serve trafficking survivors using Biblical references.

I believe that Jesus brought the kingdom of God with Him when He came to earth. It's the kingdom that's already here – but not yet, not until He comes again. Two thousand years ago, give or take, Jesus came to make a way to save us from ourselves – we were, we are in desperate need of a Savior, in desperate need of the One who sacrificed Himself for us. But the first few verses of Isaiah 61, a prophecy of the coming Messiah, quoted by Jesus Himself in Luke (read chapter 4, verses 18-21), makes clear that He also came to heal the broken-hearted, to release the oppressed, among other things....

(Kerry, Hope staff, white woman, 53, email communication)

Here Kerry is referencing Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners.  
(The Holy Bible, New International Version, 2011)

This reference compels evangelicals to heal the brokenhearted, and free prisoners and captives, in this case trafficking victims. It is common among my sample of evangelicals in the antitrafficking movement to reference Biblical scripture, often encouraging readers to free the enslaved. For instance, the Church Ladies also utilized scripture to motivate activists:

What a joy it is to partner with our Father God in reaching out to and loving His children! We've all been captive and bound up to things before we looked into the eyes of Jesus and were set free. It's such a beautiful picture of His redemption to have the privilege to use the freedom we are given by Him to bring hope and freedom to others. To unabashedly say  
(Church Ladies newsletter spotlight, email communication)

The Church Ladies newsletter, then quotes Luke in the Holy Bible, New International Version (2011):

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.  
(Luke 4:18-19)

These religious messages help motivate other evangelical potential activists who see antitrafficking work as God's work. In sum, the various levels of resources each organization was able to accumulate influenced all three ASMOs to utilize specific strategies of the organizations.

## **Leadership**

Effective leadership is extremely vital for the success of any organization. There are five important leadership practices which influence the success of the organization: 1) relationship building; 2) storytelling; 3) strategizing; 4) structuring; and 5) action (Ganz and McKenna 2018).

For both Hope and the Church Ladies, both leaders were extremely effective in building relationships with other activists, church members, community members, businesses, and politicians. For example, there were several events and meetings in which I would attempt to talk to the leaders of Hope and Church Ladies before or after meetings, and people would line up and wait to speak to them. Often others flocked to them, in such a way, it was sometimes difficult to find time to speak to them. The leaders had both been within the community, and a part of their church communities for a period long enough to build these lasting connections. Furthermore, both the leaders of Hope and Church Ladies were extremely compassionate, empathetic, and well educated. These qualities draw other activists and survivors to them. Activists and survivors spoke highly of both leaders, often referring to the leaders as friends and family.

Both leaders in Hope and the Church Ladies are excellent story tellers, often retelling stories of their own histories of abuse, others abuse, and other successes. As Michelle demonstrates:

Both of my parents struggled with addiction, so kind of living in that chaos, and coming alongside my father who is disabled, but also had a strong alcohol addiction, I knew that when you come alongside somebody on their journey, it doesn't miraculously get better just because you are there. And, then you can walk with somebody, and maybe they never kick their addiction, never get out of the life, and that's okay, that's not your work. That's not your responsibility, you are to love them where they are at, encourage them, help them, and I think, if this is the right word, add dignity to their life. So, we had a gal that had committed, overdosed, probably committed suicide, you know? She knew that we were coming, she knew that we cared about her. Um, it offers dignity to a very horrific event. There were people that loved her, she didn't die on the street somewhere. And I think that with my dad too, he probably would have died on the street, not because I was such a great caregiver or anything, but I said, you know what? You have value, you have a bad addiction. And he never kicked it, but I'm going to come alongside you and care for you, and tell you, you know, the great things I see [in] you. That's kind of how I feel our job, working with women in the life, or coming out of the life, or they stay in the life, just to encourage them.

(Michelle, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 50)



In telling stories, leaders can relate to other activists and survivors, even if they do not have the same experience. For one survivor, telling these stories had a meaningful impact, and allows her to connect to Michelle

Like now I know them and I'm like shocked at some of their stories because you, you look at them and some of the things that some of them have been through as, maybe not in prostitution, but just different lifestyles as, you know, alcohol and things. I'm like wow, like you came from that type of family, like it, it shocked me. But in the beginning, I'm like they don't know nothing I'm going through, they don't know nothing about being like this, they don't know. You know? I felt like they had nothing in common. But, once I started opening up and they started opening up and we just started talking, I'm like, oh my gosh like, they might didn't do exactly what I did. But they had some fall downs in their life as well. So, yeah.

(Shay, Church Ladies survivor, African American woman, 30)

Hope and Church Ladies leaders were very forthcoming with their own experiences which negatively affected them. Although these experiences are not the same as sex trafficking survivors and sex workers, who they assist in leaving the sex industry, it facilitates a closeness and bond between them. Part of a close relationship is being able to share the good and the bad with someone and sharing and opening up about abuse (a taboo topic for most) creates a bond.

In addition to both telling important stories, both the Church Ladies and Hope leaders were excellent in strategizing, they welcomed other activists' ideas and worked with them on accomplishing the goals they set out. Sandy tells the story of why she started Hope:

I had left my job, feeling called by God, which is the only reason that, being called by God to work in this area, and all I could do, I was being told was fundraise, which I can't (laughs). I had no desire to. Um, and I just wanted to do the work, and so, um, so ... I started, uh, [Hope] ... I'm very passionate about helping people find their passion and purpose in this whole arena cause of my own experience of having told that I couldn't really do anything, other than something, one specific thing. So, I'm very passionate about our volunteer program, about helping people define a meaningful way. So, we're always thinking about, um, how can we engage people at different levels?

(Sandy, Hope staff, Chinese American woman, 47)

For Sandy, part of the reason she began doing antitrafficking work is to help other volunteers find a place within the antitrafficking movement, after having difficulty herself. Hope has the most antitrafficking volunteers, and she utilizes them strategically, where volunteers' skills and organizational needs intersect. Part of the benefit of accepting a large pool of volunteers is that Sandy is able to utilize volunteers' skills and knowledge in creative and constructive ways. As Kerry illustrates how she became involved:

I went and introduced myself to [Sandy] and, you know, I told her I was very interested, and I was certified in the state ... to work with abused women and children. I was very interested in, um, working with the girls directly if I could ... I told her I would just email her with some details and see where I might fit into the organization. Well, I did, and I also mentioned what I did for a living, which was, is I'm a CPA. And she came back with, "We need a CFO, and we need one now." We can't get a group license until we, um, we, uh, have CFO. That's one of the three positions required for a group home license. And I'm like, I guess. And she didn't really give me an option to tell you truth. I sometimes joke about it; you know just be careful about how you volunteer with [Sandy] (laughs) because she will direct you down the path that she believes God is telling her that you need to go. And, it was a God thing, it's a God thing for her, for the organization. It was a God thing for me. And so, I become a CFO.

(Kerry, Hope staff, white woman, 55)

By Sandy being open to volunteers she has increased access to volunteers' expertise and talents, in ways that past organizations did not bother to take advantage of. This is a major advantage for Hope, it allows her to draw on skills and knowledge which she may not have had access to prior, build her base of activists, and allow individuals to become involved, whether it is volunteering for one event or growing into a more permanent paid position.

Both Church Ladies and Hope leaders were also strategic in how they structured their organization and the work they do. For instance, Hope expanded dramatically within a short amount of time, that the leader needed to have help organizing the activists by tasks. Thus, Hope began to take on a more hierarchical structure. As the organization grew, Sandy hired directors

for each division within the organization, such as volunteer engagement, community engagement, development, and education. These positions managed volunteers underneath them to accomplish the tasks they needed. For instance, on the education team the education director plans and coordinates educational events and would enlist volunteers to attend for the events in different roles. Church Ladies took an approach which modeled that of a franchise. Churches could start their own chapter of activists to fight trafficking in their area if they were interested in becoming involved. They were required to be church affiliated and pray for several months before beginning their work. Michelle trained and required specific qualifications of chapter leaders and chapters, but also allowed them independence in developing their chapter in the ways they see fit. Finally, both Hope and the Church Ladies were excited by the prospects of new action to take. They both often think about next steps (i.e., transitional home and programming for men), and how to really tackle the problem of trafficking from multiple angles.

Break the Cycle is a part of a larger umbrella organization, Freedom Ministry, which means Break the Cycle must fit into the structure of the larger organization to a certain extent, which influences how much autonomy activists have within the organization. In my observations the Break the Cycle leadership was not as present in many of the activities, which limits relationship building. For example, the manager did not show up for the Christmas party, the trainings I attended, and I did not observe her stop by the drop-in space. Because the leader of Break the Cycle was not frequently present, there was also no storytelling or strategizing that I observed. Again, they had to work within the framework of Freedom Ministry, which limited how they could strategize. However, there was one missed opportunity where strategizing might have led to a different outcome. Break the Cycle activists stated that outreach to survivors was disbanded because the activists did not look like the trafficking survivors, inferring differences in

terms of race and class, and survivors avoided them. However, instead of disbanding outreach altogether, this could have been dealt with by looking for qualified applicants who do look like survivors or are survivors, thereby trying to connect and build trust with survivors. Whether activists are conducting outreach, or survivors come in looking for support, having similar experiences and demographics will help in building trust and rapport. Because Break the Cycle must work within Freedom Ministry, there is limited opportunity for leadership to structure the program as she would like. Finally, there was no significant new action on the part of leadership from which I observed, which is likely limited by being connected to Freedom Ministry. Also, Break the Cycle activists tended to work normal business hours, and put distance between themselves and work after hours. In contrast, Hope and Church Ladies often took calls and texts after hours to remain connected to those they served.

In summary, I was able to observe how two of the three ASMOs, Hope and Church Ladies, practiced effective leadership. Their effective leadership influences the success of the organization by 1) relationship building; 2) storytelling; 3) strategizing; 4) structuring; and 5) action (Ganz and McKenna 2018). I did not observe these factors in Break the Cycle, and there were more professional boundaries in place. The effectiveness of leadership at Break the Cycle is unclear. Next, I examine how grievances influence the success of social movement organizations.

## **Grievances**

Grievances, or threats, are the problems and feelings communities, and groups experience everyday (Almeida 2018). Snow and Soule (2010) argue that the community or group must be felt by the community and not just on an individual level. Often there is a shift in the ways people see the condition, problem, or injustice as a precondition for mobilization. The major

grievance for antitrafficking activists is the sense of injustice they confront when they consider the everyday harms that occur to trafficking survivors, many of whom are also women, including abuse and violence. In confronting this type of violence and abuse of girls and women, potential activists are motivated to join an antitrafficking organization. For instance, Hope reposted about a trafficking victims murder, the article titled: “A precious child’s life cut short by trafficking and the relentless FBI agents – our local heroes – who sought justice for her” (Hope social media). And “[Suburb] man convicted of forcing women into prostitution with violence, threats” (Hope social media).

Grievances have become focused more on domestic trafficking and shifted the framing to American girls and women (Clark 2019). In this sample, activists focused on domestic trafficking and highlighted that it can happen in “good neighborhoods” also:

When all these kids that go missing and disappear, and you always hear these stories about, they were alone, and they, you know, had [a] bad home life, or this or that, or even just, you know, it happens in good neighborhoods to, and kids that are just by themselves for whatever reason.

(Ivy, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 32)

Activists in Church Ladies and Hope suggest that trafficking can occur in any area, including “good neighborhoods,” thus parents should work to protect their children. For example, Hope activists suggest that it’s happening in every community, including the suburbs, in a post on social media:

Article from a Nebraska blogger mom has some good tips for parents wanting to protect their kids. It is happening in every community, in the city and the suburbs, in large and small communities. We need to stay alert: Lets #Take[Hope]Back [http://www.omaha.com/.../article\\_57ba87d7-3812-5288-89bb-33c7...](http://www.omaha.com/.../article_57ba87d7-3812-5288-89bb-33c7...)

(Hope social media)

Activists give education, tips, and suggestions to parents to protect their children from predators:

CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN OUR OWN BACK YARD To help prevent the traffic reality that puts children at risk, [Hope] has created a prevention video called *The Path* that shows one common tactic a predator uses to manipulate a child.

(Hope website)

When activists frame trafficking as occurring to children in “our own backyard,” or in “good” neighborhoods, they are likely to imagine this occurring to someone they care about. Several activists spoke about this pivotal moment when they imagined trafficking happening to their daughters. As John illustrates:

And it’s just that hard for me. And I think about it and I’m like, I know that God, who’s like so much more compassionate than I am, it breaks His heart ... I got daughters and I think about that, you know, day after day that’s their reality and, it’s not just that they’re having sex, but often times with these violent people. It’s, yeah

(John, Hope volunteer, white man, 48)

Some activists imagine that trafficking may happen to their own daughters, which mobilizes them. This is not to say that trafficking does not ever happen in these neighborhoods, it does. It can happen to anyone and in any neighborhood. It is just less likely to happen to economically and racially privileged individuals. At the same time, all children are vulnerable because they are more easily manipulated by adults. Next, I examine the cultural context which influences the success of the movement.

### **Cultural Context**

Finally, cultural contexts can greatly influence the success of a social movement. There are several cultural considerations in understanding how trafficking as a crime has developed overtime, and how antitrafficking activists have responded to these crimes. There are both external and internal cultural considerations which influence the antitrafficking social movement. External cultural factors include the feminist movement, the anti-violence movement, economic challenges, post-9/11 policies and treatment of migrants, a general shift towards conservatism

since the 1970s, and religious activism. Internal cultural factors which influence the success of the organizations include the evangelical culture, including the beliefs, language, images, artifacts, emotions, rules, and norms which mobilize support from the surrounding church. I begin by examining the external cultural factors.

Human trafficking is built upon the anti-violence movements of past generations, specifically activists connect their work to the anti-slavery movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Activists connect their work by using the term “modern-day slavery,” using bars, chains, and symbols of physical captivity, and by comparing trafficking situations to the enslavement of African Americans from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century in America. For instance, on Hope’s home page of their website, there is a girl standing with her arms and hands opened up towards the sky, with broken chains dangling down from her wrists. She is standing in front of a sunrise, which causes her body to be a silhouette. The broken chains symbolize the newfound freedom she has. At the bottom left of the image is a quote from a 13-year survivor, which states “I am free, I am no longer a slave.”

In connecting antitrafficking work to anti-slavery work, activists are engaging in cycles of protests (Snow and Benford 1988). Activists generate frames which align with the structural and material conditions of the past. Past cycles of protest create master frames, which later movements anchor off. For example, using antitrafficking frames of physical force, such as chains and/or bars allows activists to illustrate how sex trafficking victims are sex ‘slaves.’ They transform old meanings to create new ones for the populations affected by them. At the same time, the antitrafficking frames are constrained by these earlier master frames. For instance, framing trafficking as physical force, and representing this through chains and bars constrains activists in their understanding of trafficking, specifically the tactics utilized by traffickers, and

results in less identification of trafficking survivors. For instance, research shows that the more common method of trafficking is not with physical force, but through coercion and manipulation (Nichols 2016). Framing trafficking as happening through physical force results in misunderstandings, which lessens the ability of the public to be able to identify trafficking situations. Although the comparison of trafficking to slavery is widespread in the antitrafficking movement, there are others who critique this comparison. Their critiques center on the inability of enslaved African Americans to seek help and reparations from the state for their physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, captivity, and financial exploitation. Whereas today, the state can be utilized against the trafficker for the abuse and exploitation. Further, slavery as practiced in the United States was race-based, whereas today it is often gender-based. Next, I explore how the antitrafficking movement is built off the work of feminists.

Prior to the different feminist movements, women and children were seen as property of the husband and father. As such, the wife was expected to take care of the house and children, obey and violence was seen as an appropriate method of discipline if the wife or child(ren) did not obey. Violence against women was normalized, and there were few repercussions if the wife went to law enforcement. The feminist movement(s) influenced the shift in social norms for (mostly white) women to work and to decrease their economic dependence on men. Black women and other women of color were already working in low-wage work. Other changes included a change in laws to allow women to vote (1920), own property (by 1900 all states allowed women to own property), open a bank account (1960s), have a credit card (1974), and enforcement and strengthening of already existing laws against violence against women, and creation of new laws against violence against women. For instance, it was legal for a husband in certain states to rape his wife until the 1990s. Prior to this there was an exception in the rape laws



for husbands, as wives were seen as giving consent upon marriage. In the 1970s, the first husband was convicted of rape in *Oregon v Rideout*. By the 1990s, rape by a husband was illegal nationwide. Because of these past feminist developments, violence against women has become more deviant compared to previous generations. As such trafficking and harming women is considered deviant and illegal throughout much of the world. Today, no one can be “for” trafficking, in other words there is not a “pro” trafficking counter movement. To traffick other humans is seen as an immoral violation of others’ human rights. Next, I explore how economic inequality and economic programs have influenced the incidence of trafficking and antitrafficking work.

Economic inequality has increased substantially within the United States since the 1970s when conservatives began waging a war against welfare. Minimum wage and welfare to help the most marginalized Americans have been cut to “save” tax monies and the budget, while corporations and the rich continue to receive corporate welfare. According to the World Bank, the GINI index, which is a measure of economic inequality, has increased significantly since the 1970s (World Bank 2022). In the 1970s the GINI index hovered around 35% but has climbed to 41.4% as of 2018. Since 2018, inequality has continued to increase due to the recession caused by COVID-19 (Institute for Policy Studies 2022). According to this research, inequality has grown significantly because the rich have become wealthier, by increasing their own pay, while not increasing their workers (enough to keep up with inflation) and by increasing consumer prices. Many low-wage workers, often black and indigenous people, were also more likely to lose their jobs, as they could not work from home, while the rich were much more likely to be able to work from home. Thus, COVID-19 affected black and indigenous people to a greater extent because they were more likely to have to work in person, increasing their risk to catch

COVID-19. They also are more likely to be hospitalized and die from COVID-19. These worsening economic conditions also drove up rates of violence against women, who were more likely to be at home with abusive partners and increased the number of individuals who were at risk of trafficking (Hansler 2021).

Due to the increased economic pressure over the past five decades, the different state and federal governments have begun cutting budgets for several programs, which has included education, infrastructure, and welfare. This increases the marginalization of the poor, racial/ethnic minorities, and women, which translates into an increased risk of trafficking. Furthermore, the TVPA hit roadblocks during the reauthorization process in 2011 and 2017 but were finally signed (Clark 2019). This increased concerns for many antitrafficking activists, who began to realize that their programmatic funding was not guaranteed. The antitrafficking field is also influenced by immigration, and legislation and policies surrounding immigration.

Historically, American policies have favored white migrants, while excluding people of color (Takaki 2008). Culturally, Americans have accepted xenophobic understandings of migrants. The United States and the world have also been greatly affected by terrorist attacks since September 11, 2001, when America was attacked by the most fatal terrorist attack in American history. Because the terrorists were connected to the terrorist group Al Qaeda, Americans policies and culture have shifted to a less welcoming environment for immigrants generally, but specifically for Arab and Muslim migrants. Following the attacks, Americans felt more afraid, careful, distrustful, and vulnerable due to the attacks (Hartig and Doherty 2021). Arab and Muslims have also seen an increase in harassment and hate crimes (Kishi 2017). More recently, migration from majority Muslim countries was restricted by former President Donald Trump (Chishti and Bolter 2020). Donald Trump signed an executive order, Border Security, and

Immigration Enforcement Improvements, on January 25, 2017, which expanded the use of detentions, limited the ability of refugees to seek asylum, and enhanced border patrol along the U.S.-Mexico border (Center for Migration Studies of New York 2022)

Immigration policies affect trafficking in several ways. First, when immigrants are demonized and dehumanized, Americans care less about issues which affect them, including trafficking. Anti-terrorism and antitrafficking efforts are closely linked and has increased policing and immigration control (Kempadoo 2005). "The crediting of trafficking to the foreign 'other,' who is configured as a threat to Western societies and civilization, serves thus as a scare tactic to corral racist, nationalist sentiments and to obfuscate the interaction between the state, corporate capital, and underground sectors" (Kempadoo 2005: xix). Yet, there is some evidence that the understanding of offenders and victims as foreigners is changing, the more panic about domestic trafficking the more Americans are willing to engage in antitrafficking activism. At the same time, immigration policies which protect immigrants have not been enforced. For instance, unaccompanied immigrant children are often deported and stripped of legal protections, despite trafficking legislation which is supposed to ensure that they are protected and screened for trafficking (National Immigrant Justice Center 2020).

Finally, the antitrafficking field is greatly influenced by religious activism (Lobasz 2019). Lobasz (2019) argues that evangelicals' prominence in the antitrafficking movements also mirrors that of their return to American politics. Since the 1970s, evangelicals have reemerged, fully participating in political life. Evangelicals' styles of rhetoric and justification for their antitrafficking efforts is justified using Biblical scripture. Evangelicals also focus on fighting the evils of trafficking (Lobasz 2019). This creates a moral imperative for action and a sense of urgency. Evangelicals argue that the Bible compels them to seek justice and 'rescue' the

oppressed. Their utilization of the Bible to justify their activism is based on their understanding of the Bible as the word of God. Evangelicals believe that there is always a spiritual conflict happening, which affects everything on Earth, and stems from the conflict between God and Satan (Lobasz 2019). Sin was first introduced in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan and they both fell into sin. Their sinful act led to the entire world falling into sin, and perpetually engaged in spiritual warfare. To overcome this evil, we must acknowledge the state of the world, and continue to fight against evil, until Jesus Christ returns to Earth.

Furthermore, evangelicalism's principle of *imago dei* (the inherent dignity of every person because they are created in the image of God) is most strongly used in arguments to protect human rights (Lobasz 2019). This belief in equality in the eyes of God is not just found in Christianity, but also Judaism. Because God sees all people equally, Christians make the argument that slavery should be abolished in all forms, and people should be seen as 'brethren.'

Evangelicals also adhere to a conservative notion of sexuality, including the opposition to all forms of sex work (Lobasz 2019). For evangelicals, sexual behavior should be reserved between two people that are married, specifically a man and a woman. However, they believe they are acting compassionately towards those who would otherwise be defined as engaging in sexual sin. And they believe that the faith-based community are the only ones who are qualified to provide care for trafficking survivors. Christians are believed to have the "right" knowledge and skills to assist trafficking survivors, in part because to heal survivors physical and spiritual needs must be met, and spiritual needs are met through Christ.

What is more, salvation is not only for trafficking survivors, but for traffickers themselves who come to know God. But traffickers who do not repent their sins, remain aligned with Satan in the battle between good and evil. Salvation and healing are only offered to those

who come to know God and follow God's wishes in terms of behavior, including sexual behavior. This implicitly suggests that those who do not follow God are destined for an internal afterlife in Hell. But not all activists are evangelical, there are some secular feminists who engage in antitrafficking work. In my sample of activists, evangelicals were dominant in the field.

The internal cultural context of the organizations themselves are important in influencing the success of the movement. The cultural context of a movement are the beliefs, language, images, artifacts, emotions, rules, and norms which mobilize support (Jasper and Poletta 2018). The cultural context of the ASMOs tend to prioritize evangelical beliefs, assumptions, knowledge, cultural materials, language, images, artifacts, emotions, rules, strategies, tactics, and norms, which is discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. Evangelicalism is imbedded into Hope and the Church Ladies, as Stacee illustrates:

I want to say it's like one of the strong foundational parts, the key to the organization. I mean there's a lot of like prayer that happens, and like... the go-to is always about like, 'What Christ wants you to do?' Or just being like the Church, being like us as people coming together to help each other and stuff like that, so they always point you back that way.

(Stacee, Church Ladies survivor, African American, 28)

When asking a Hope volunteer about what the role of religion plays in the organization, John responds:

The leader will definitely explain that it's critical. Um, God and Christ, we realize that we can't do this without Him, that He inspired this fight and, it's only by listening to Him that we will make any headway.

(John, Hope volunteer, white man, 48)

Part of the reason why these organizations were so successful is because the cultural context of the ASMOs were evangelical and connected to Christian churches in the area. Christian churches financially supported the non-profit antitrafficking organization, provided resources like meeting

spaces, and provided a pool of potential activists. Without the Christian church, the organizations would be much more limited in size and scope. Evangelicals in this sample were often introduced to Hope and Church Ladies through their church, as Anna illustrates:

I went to [suburban] Church they had this mission nights where they, they had all these organizations that look for volunteers, and, and so I was walking around, and I saw the [Hope] table, and when I heard about what they did, I was just really interested. So, um, that's kind of where it started.

(Anna, Hope volunteer, white woman, 36)

Often the leaders in Hope and Church Ladies will speak at the churches they work closely with, which will help in drawing in Christian activists. For Church Ladies, the chapters are required to be affiliated and supported by their church. Ivy (Church ladies volunteer, white woman, 32) states that, “A lot of the chapters, or, if not all, are kind of umbrellaed under their own church, so it's their church, then kind of reaching out to the congregation.” This is also how it works at her church. She explains, “we just made an announcement and sat out at a booth, for the next few Sundays and had a sign-up sheet and talked with people” (Ivy, Church ladies volunteer, white woman, 32)

Furthermore, evangelical activists work for the organizations because of their religious calling or duty. As John states:

it's what I believe it means to God and, and my service to Him. I really can't explain to you how important it is to me to know that what I do pleases God. And so, I know that this is the heart of God cause I can't even imagine that anything worse than what goes on, every day. You know? I have. These, these tapes that don't even exist play in my head, like envisioning what's happening ... God is pointing me to help these people. And not only does He point me, He empowers me, He says, you know what [John], you can actually make a difference here.

(John, Hope volunteer, white man, 48)

For John, his duty to God is the reason for his antitrafficking activism, specifically the Bible points to freeing the enslaved. Not only are evangelicals called to help others, but sex trafficking

is a social problem at the intersection of what evangelicals define as social problems, such as the dissolution of the traditional family structure, and nonmarital sex. For the most part, the cultural context appeared to have remained constant throughout my time in the field.

There was only one significant change in the external cultural context, which may have mobilized support. During my time in the field, the culture shifted as Donald Trump was elected to the Presidency. Americans saw the increase of conservative Republicans, particularly Donald Trump, openly using derogatory language to racial/ethnic minorities and immigrants (Leonhardt and Philbrick 2018), women (Prasad 2019), transgender individuals and sexual minorities (Human Rights Campaign n.d.), and differently abled individuals (Carmon 2016). Furthermore, a recording of Donald Trump was released where he admitted to grabbing women by their genitals (Taylor 2016). During my time in the field, many politicians, actors, celebrities, and others were accused of sexual misconduct, sexual assault, and/or rape (North et al. 2021). The subsequent #MeToo and #TimesUp movement may have been a missed opportunity to mobilize more supporters. It is unclear why these evangelical organizations did not take advantage of the increased political action arising from both of these movements. However, the ASMOs may have chosen not to connect their work to these movements because of their 501(c)(3) status, or because these movements are more secular and engaged in more confrontational tactics, such as protesting. Although evangelicals have increased in political activism since the 1970s (Smith et al 1998), Beyerlein, Soule, and Martin (2015) find that only about 8% of over 15,377 protests in America were religious based between 1960 and 1995. Previous research finds that anti-sex trafficking activists often do not engage in confrontational or protest tactics, whereas anti-labor trafficking activists are more likely to (Clark 2019). Instead, Clark (2019) finds that anti-sex trafficking activists tend to partner with politicians, policymakers, and private industry instead of

confrontational tactics, like protests. When activists did critique the state, they did so to amplify the call for the U.S. to address their concerns, instead of calling out individual politicians or policy makers. In summary, the Christian culture of the organizations and connection to churches provided many opportunities and resources. Evangelical activists have shaped the antitrafficking movement, including the TVPA and TVPRAs, and services to a large extent.

Overall, antitrafficking legislation, research, training, awareness, and services have increased overtime. There are several factors which have made the antitrafficking social movement successful, namely political opportunities, resources mobilization, effective leadership, the strategic use of grievances and the cultural context of the organization. Antitrafficking federal legislation passed in 2000 allowed monies for research, services, and training. Since that time research, services, and training have become institutionalized, meaning that service providers depend on this funding annually to do their work. States have followed suit and implemented their own legislation, policies, and trafficking task forces. Training for law enforcement and front-line workers, such as health care workers, have increased over the last two decades. Services have grown exponentially since the passing of the TVPA. Prior to this legislation trafficking survivors had to seek services at domestic violence shelters and homeless shelters, but these services were not specific to trafficking. Now services specifically for trafficking survivors exist in nearly all major cities and are expanding throughout the country. When I originally entered the field there were eight organizations which offered some services to trafficking survivors, but this has grown to 11 organizations as of 2022. All three antitrafficking organizations in my sample have been operating for over a decade and have worked to expand or modify their services in ways they deem necessary. Although the antitrafficking field has grown



significantly since its re-emergence in the modern era, the antitrafficking social movement has experienced challenges in their work.

### **Challenges for the Antitrafficking Movement**

Although antitrafficking organizations have enjoyed increased funding and growth, there are several challenges within the field generally. Antitrafficking activists face challenges in the delay in reauthorizations of the TVPA; having enough services generally given the demand; and struggles with service delivery and evaluations. These challenges impact organizations differently, depending on several factors. In this section, I examine the broader challenges of the movement, which pose a problem to most activists and organizations.

One of the antitrafficking movements largest challenges in the last decade was the delay in reauthorization in 2011 and 2017. This signaled to activists that this funding is not a guarantee, and many activists pushed congresspersons to pass the TVPRA (Clark 2019). These reauthorizations were later passed after about a year in delay. This impacted one organization in my sample, Break the Cycle, whose grant funding was not secured in 2011, 2013, and 2019; and was cut approximately in half in 2014. Because Hope and the Church Ladies rely on individual and church related donations, they were not directly impacted by this delay in the reauthorization. Their reliance on church donations acts as a shield to the changing whims of politicians.

Another significant challenge for activists is being able to meet the needs of all trafficking survivors that request services. Activists may have to turn away trafficking survivors because the demand for services is greater than the services activists are able to provide. For instance, Hope reports that they get too many requests for housing that they cannot house all the girls and women. Instead, they may refer the survivor to other services or assist by offering

services outside their residential programs. Further, both Break the Cycle and Church Ladies are unable to provide specific types of services due to limitations of funding, such as helping survivors pay rent or permanent housing options. Many services are also restricted to girls and women who are sex trafficked. Boys, men, and transgender individuals do not have access to the same services that girls and women do, particularly housing. Activists are also not able to provide specific types of services, such as providing substance abuse services. Many survivors of trafficking do have addictions, often due to the trauma of their trafficking situation, but Hope's Care House is not licensed to provide substance abuse services. The three organizations will refer the survivor to substance abuse treatment prior to receiving services. One of the problems with the separation of these services is that addiction is often linked to trafficking and trauma, and survivors who do go into treatment facilities do not get the specialized services they need to deal with that trauma, which limits their ability to recover when these services are not integrated. Connected to the issue of lack of services, funding is also a major challenge. Due to funding limitations many organizations must limit their services, such as not paying for rental assistance. One of the ways that activists respond to the funding challenge is that they are doing the best that they can, given their resources and capabilities.

Another common struggle is that survivors leave the program and return to traffickers. Previous research suggests that survivors may return to a trafficker several times before finally leaving for good (Nichols 2016), like survivors of intimate partner violence. The healing process for survivors can be slow and breaking the bond between survivor and trafficker is difficult. There are several issues that can increase the chances that survivors return to their trafficker, such as having contact with the trafficker (who may say things to get the victim back), former friends encouraging her to return, or other events that might trigger a trauma response. Activists

also report that survivors are dissatisfied with the rules and requirements within the recovery home, Care House, which do contribute to survivors leaving, but these rules and requirements are often not critically examined. These rules were particularly a problem for women over 18 who had the same rules as the girls in the home. In response, Hope developed a transitional home so adult women survivors could leave the program for work and school and be in a less restrictive environment generally.

Activists also report experiencing challenges in education and awareness, as some parents do not want their children educated on abuse or trafficking. Activists report that sometimes others do not want to hear about trafficking. Challenges that were less commonly reported by activists include some survivors do not want to engage in services; staff need more training; the need for more recreation and entertainment for the survivors in Care House; the emotional toll on staff and volunteers; staff and volunteer turnover; and some survivors may also not want services from a religious organization. Religious programming may retrigger survivors with religious abuse.

In this section, I argued that the three evangelical organizations are successful because of political opportunities, resource mobilization, effective leadership, grievances, and cultural context to various extents. These factors influence the three organizations in my sample differently. However, activists do experience challenges in their work. Next, I discuss the future plans of the organizations.

### **Future Plans for the Organizations**

In this section, I examine the future plans for each of the organizations individually. I begin with Hope. Hope's future goals include a men's initiative, and an adult transitional housing program. The goal of the men's initiative is to develop programming for men and allow men to

develop healthy role models. However, no planning had materialized while I was in the field. However, planning of the transitional program was ongoing while I was in the field. The program opened in 2020, after I left the field. The transitional housing program seeks to provide housing to young adults, who are working and/or going to school, and who need social services. I volunteered for the transitional program team, which met to plan to develop the program. I attended three of the planning meetings. Planning began with discussion of the parameters of the program and researching potential locations, focusing on areas near community colleges. Hope will need approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000 for it to run annually. Staff would be on-site around the clock. The target residents are young adult women, aged 18 to 24, who are attending college or working. Hope views the transition home as a final step in healing for women that graduated from the safe house. Ideally, the location would have security cameras, controlled entrances and exits, much like an apartment style building. Requirements for residents include attending a day program and a curfew. Hope would like to offer social services near or within the location. These social services would include a drop-in center, counseling center, medical suite, and a space for job coaching. After leaving the field, and during the pandemic, Hope opened their transitional home for adult women.

In the long term, Michelle, would like to continue to build the Church Ladies to get at the issue of trafficking from multiple angles:

So, I think um, just continuing to come at the issue of sexual trafficking and sexual exploitation from different angles. So, we want to start, um. We've done some training for it, but we want to train men to talk to men that have a sex addiction, or that are on backpage.com ... We have the awareness piece; we want to continue to get awareness out there and prevention. Um, that case work, that continuing care, to care for those women really well. We talk about, well maybe, we got the Bridal store that's opening, and we thought of another business that we could open to just be self-sustainable. So that we are not depending on fundraising, or outside. We haven't had government funding, but anything like

that. So, these businesses can help fund our initiatives, and also be a place for the women to work. Not, you know, not for a long time, but just they just to come in and get some hours and be around people that will love them and encourage them. And what we have talked about is, having a home for women with children, cause that is the place we don't have. There is one in Texas, and that's the only one that I know of. It's hard because we have to encourage the women to give their children to Safe Families, which is a great organization. But, I have yet to have a woman give their child to Safe Families. And maybe even that program wouldn't be overnight. You come there during the day, you get some healing, and you have case workers that get you the counseling.

(Michelle, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 50)

By the time I left the field, the Church Ladies had successfully created the men's program, where men assisted other men with their pornography and sex addiction; a computer program that directs men away from pornography; education on pornography and sex addiction; and other referrals and services (which was later abandoned). The Bridal Store was also up and running before I left. Michelle indicated the Bridal Boutique has been doing well and paying for 10 women to go to weekly counseling, and she was able to buy 4 cars for women that are exiting the life. Michelle (Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 50) also received a new computer program to assist with outreach using this new program called Program Intercept, which analyzing the sex ads, and can then send them a text. She said that she got the program from Seattle Against Slavery, and that they were allowing them to use it for free (Church Ladies, ethnographic notes).

Michelle's other future goal for Church Ladies is to open a home for women and their children. One of the major reasons she has the goal is due to the obstacles in finding placement for women with children. Many women who need services are unable to access them, unless they give up their child while they are in a recovery program. However, as I left the field, the home had not yet been opened.

Break the Cycle was the only organization that had no specific future plans. Their goal is to stay “survivor focused.” After leaving the field and during the pandemic, Break the Cycle closed their drop-in center downtown (which was centrally-located) and moved it north of the city (in a predominantly white and wealthy area).

### **Future of the Antitrafficking Movement**

Like all forms of gendered violence, the chances that sex trafficking will be completely eradicated from the earth is virtually nil. There will always be some who seek power and resources, but this is made worse in a white supremacist, heteropatriarchal, capitalist system, which oppresses nonwhites, women, LGBTQ+, and the poor. Activists in the movement understand the chances of complete eradication is zero but continue this work to reduce the incidence of sexual violence and sex trafficking. In this section, I discuss the future of the antitrafficking activism and work, focusing specifically on what antitrafficking activists would like to see in their future work in the movement more broadly.

Much of the discussion of future goals is focused on reducing the demand for purchasing sex by increasing the consequences for men who purchase sex. Activists critique the historic treatment of buyers, who are often given no more than a slap on the wrist and charged with vague crimes such as disorderly conduct and lacking any serious penalties. While sex workers and trafficking survivors were often charged with prostitution and other serious crimes, which leads to their further marginalization. More recently, abolitionists and conservatives have shifted to defining all sex workers as victims (Nichols 2016), at the same time activists call for increased criminalization of clients. For activists, justice happens when men who purchase sex are incarcerated, pay larger fines, have their cars repossessed, and result in men having to report to their wives that they were caught trying to purchase sex. They feel that if men fear getting

arrested or publicly outed to friends and family, then many men would not attempt to purchase sex in the first place. Furthermore, several activists would like to see more sting operations, leading to an increase in arrests and convictions of clients and traffickers. Dana believes, “I think they need to stop criminalizing the victims and use those victims to go after the traffickers.” (Hope volunteer, white woman, 46). Many did not want to see victims (both sex workers and trafficking victims) arrested,

Prostitution should be, should be criminalized from the John’s perspective, not from the, not from the women’s perspective, that the women is invariably, either she is a victim, or she has been a victim in her past. And, so to criminalize it from her side ... from the prostitutes’ side, um, invariably if you criminalize that part of it, if you keep that part of it criminalized, then you’re re-victimizing the victim. But the Nordic model has been pretty demonstrative of what’s, what is the right way to go. I mean, you don’t, in Sweden, you don’t have the trafficking numbers anymore ... that was driven by a secular, women’s movement basically, that said, that said, “Prostitution is an act of violence, and, and rape against women and children.” That was the promise of it.

(Kerry, Hope staff, white woman, 55)

Several activists support this sentiment. For example, Michelle states:

I believe that everyone was created in the image of God, has great worth and value from, you know, the women we reach out to, our volunteers, to the pimp, to the john, um, you know that’s, that’s the message I want to give out when we go out. Do I want God’s justice to reign down? Oh, yeah! (laughs). You know, but, yeah, I really want those women to know that they have great worth and value, they have gifts. They have talent, He’s created them that way, and, and not to be limited to the lives that are spoken over them, said to them, or circumstances. So, yeah. Or just speaking that truth in them because that’s what the Lord has done for me.

(Michelle, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 50)

Nearly all activists support increased punishments for clients and traffickers. Most activists conflate sex work and trafficking and believe that consensual sex work should remain illegal, but only enforced on the trafficker and client side. Most staff and volunteers want more arrests and harsher punishments for clients and traffickers, but not for sex workers and trafficking survivors.

Many would like to see clients and traffickers incarcerated and suffer other consequences. Bernstein (2007) refers to these calls for increased punishment as carceral feminist ideologies. Carceral feminism is “the commitment of abolitionist feminist activists to a law-and-order agenda and...a drift from the welfare state to the carceral state as the enforcement apparatus for feminist goals” (Bernstein 2007:143). Bernstein (2010) argues that the antitrafficking movement has created a move towards carceral feminism, where privileged women are seeking tougher punishments for trafficking offenses, often against men of color. This is occurring at the same time calls to reduce the incarceration rate, and increase rehabilitation and restoration are happening. For example, Lisa states

I think John’s need to be arrested. I think, I really do, I think John’s need to be arrested. Um, I think there has to be a process in, in, in pimps, you know? How do you, how do you arrest them? How do you make it stick? And, even if it doesn’t stick, just enough to inconvenience their life for a little bit. ... I don’t think we should, we should arrest women, or at least both partners have to be arrested (laughs). You know? If you’re gonna do it, then, then do it fairly across the board ... I think rehabilitation would be better. You know the laws could change that. You know if you are gonna pick up somebody that you offer them treatment versus, you know, jail.

(Lisa, Church Ladies volunteer, white woman, 57)

Lisa’s views on punishment versus rehabilitation of offenders matches that of most Americans, who are moving more towards a rehabilitative model. Research suggests that Americans would like to see offenders punished, but over the past couple of decades rehabilitation has also become more of a priority (O’Hear and Wheelock 2016). From a legislative perspective, activists want the statute of limitations for survivors of child abuse to be increased, legislation to prevent cryptocurrency being used to purchase sex, legislation which bans websites and hotels from allowing individuals to sell sex, and for there to be more regulations and oversight of adult



businesses. Activists would also like to see law enforcement monitor and shut down websites selling sex.

Many activists within Hope and Church Ladies would like to see a reduction in pornography and more education on sex and pornography addiction. Their goal is to begin talking to children at a younger age about pornography to reduce pornography viewing and addiction. Activists believe that children are already addicted to pornography by the time they are in high school, and this significantly impacts the physiology of the brain. Pornography is often referred to as a gateway drug, and marijuana is often used as the analogy, because it leads to purchasing sex and violence against women. As Lucee illustrates:

I go back to it all the time because I just see it as, um, one step. You know, like how they say marijuana is like the gateway drug. I see porn as like the gateway drug into, um, purchasing sex and trafficking and all that kind of stuff. Um, so I think there really needs to be more regulations on porn, um, and all of that. And maybe law enforcement can do a better job with, um, with some of those areas.

(Lucee, Hope staff, white woman, 29)

When I asked Betty if she wanted to see a reduction in the demand for pornography, she states:

For me, personally, yes. That's what I think that's what we need to do. And I think we need to get them younger. Um, so like at my daughters' high school, they do like, actually um, they talk about the effects of pornography, in their junior year. And I think it's fantastic. But unfortunately, I think a lot of kids are already addicted at that age. And, so, maybe getting them even younger would be better unfortunately. So, for me it's stopping the demand. Teaching young men and young women that there is an emotional impact to the watching, and I don't think they understand that it's emotionally, like, physiologically changing their brain. I don't know that they understand that. Cause they can't, cause they're too young.

(Betty, Hope staff, white woman, 45)

Much of this information is coming from pseudoscientific websites, such as *Fight the New Drug*.

This addiction model allows evangelical activists to feel sympathy for and create programs to treat men who are addicted to sex. Hope and Church Ladies future goals to meet this need mostly

focus on education, training and other programming for boys and men. For example, the Church Ladies developed a men's initiative as I was leaving the field, which targeted men who watch pornography and purchase sex. However, this program was later abandoned. The goal is to develop services for them, including mentorship, counseling, and programs to help steer them away from pornography and purchasing sex. Hope was also in the planning stages of developing a program as well. Activists would like to see more emotional and social training for boys and men who have been convicted of crimes, such as purchasing sex, and other sex crimes to help rehabilitate them.

Many activists would also like to see increased education as a preventative method to stop the cycle of violence from starting in the first place. This occurs through the emotional and social training of boys and men, with the goal of a cultural shift in seeing women differently. Activists understand that many men do not respect or honor women, and how that leads to violence against women. Children are socialized in a hyper-sexualized culture, which has several negative consequences, including focusing on youth as beauty. Instead, activists would like to see a world in which boys and men are taught to see women as human beings, rather than sexual objects.

Activists would like to continue to increase the education and awareness of trafficking of the public as well. Much of the public has misconceptions about trafficking, such as trafficking occurring overseas, instead of happening in the United States; trafficking victims being kidnapped and held in chains; and/or sex trafficking being the only type of trafficking that occurs. Because of this, activists are working on providing more awareness and education, particularly in specific fields and industries, such as health care, law enforcement, truck drivers, hotels and hospitality industry, elementary and secondary education, and families. At times,

activists' educational material is contradictory. For example, at times Hope and Church Ladies activists will use images of chains, while also arguing that trafficking occurs mostly by psychological coercion. Activists argue that this education should focus on general information on trafficking, how to identify a trafficking survivor, and who to report a trafficking situation to. Furthermore, some of these fields and industries are developing their own antitrafficking training. For instance, some truck drivers go through a specific employer-required training, which aims to prevent truckers from purchasing sex, being able to identify a trafficking victim, and who to report trafficking to. Truck drivers in Kansas are required to complete training created by Truckers Against Trafficking, which consists of a 30-minute educational film which they must answer questions about afterwards (Kansas Attorney General 2022).

Activists and survivors would also like teachers and parents to become more involved, including knowing where children are and who their friends are. Although many parents already do this, activists believe that some parents are not involved enough. Additionally, activists would like to see more training for boys specifically, and that training on abuse starts in the third grade and trafficking in the sixth grade for children. The goal of training younger children on abuse is to stop abuse from happening before sexual exploitation happens. Activists would also like to expand education to include understanding the supply chain, and boycotting goods made with slave or exploitative labor.

Activists spoke about the ASMOs having survivors involved in the decision making, and survivors taking leadership positions. For instance,

I think another gap (sighs) in services is like a road for survivor leadership. Um, yeah, so like we're trying to figure that out, with like, like we've got [survivor] in the space ... We have through the task force, like the [County] Human Trafficking Task Force, there is these survivor speaker's standards, and it's also in terms of like getting folks involved in leadership roles ... Like the new grant we've got has

some funding available for some of that survivor leadership, so we are in the process of trying to address that. Um, but it's hard because we're like a crisis-based organization, we're not going to ask someone that's in crisis currently, or was in crisis a month ago to like, alright, take a leadership role, and like make our drop-in center awesome. So, I think there is some challenges with that

(Lucy, Break the Cycle staff)

However, there were no plans in recruitment or training of survivors among the three ASMOs. In my observations, this appeared to be a topic of discussion, but not put on the agenda for serious consideration. Survivors are sometimes given time to speak about their stories during training, but this is rare. Sometimes activists do have survivors speak to one another if that would make a survivor feel more comfortable with receiving services from the activists. For example, if a survivor is unsure about services, sometimes activists will put the survivor in touch with a current or previous program participant and survivor. The potential participants are then able to ask questions and get a better sense of what the program is like from a survivor's perspective.

Despite the lack of survivor input, the U.S. Department of State (2021<sup>1</sup>) recommends to “increase survivor engagement, including by establishing accessible mechanisms for receiving and providing compensation for survivor input when forming policies, programs, and trainings” (P 585). By not including survivor voices in the decision making of policies, programs, and training, service providers privilege their own perspectives and disadvantage survivors' perspectives, despite purportedly working to empower them. Standpoint theory argues that all knowledge is shaped by the individual's social position (Smith 2005; Sprague 2016). Thus, having survivors' perspectives in policies, programs, and training is valuable in eliminating trafficking. If service providers are serious about empowering trafficking survivors, they should begin by assisting trafficking survivors to complete their education and work in leadership in

several sectors of antitrafficking work including law enforcement, education and awareness, and service provision for survivors.

Finally, all activists understand that antitrafficking work is severely unfunded, leading to limited housing, job training, drug/alcohol services, hygiene, education, child services, direct outreach, and resources for single mothers. In a meeting to plan to open a new transitional program, Sandy (Hope staff, Chinese American, 47) states “there are 438 beds for trafficking, in 2013 around the U.S. We hope that there are more beds, but two that we know of have closed.” (Hope ethnographic notes). Furthermore, many activists believe more individuals should become involved in the movement. In my interview with John, I ask him what additional steps he thinks need to be taken to reduce trafficking. He states, “My first thought is go get more people out there, but you know what, it’s, let’s get more technical people on this thing. Let’s get more people scouring the internet (John, Hope volunteer, white man, 48). Survivors would like to see more support from individuals, housing, job training, and oversight of the antitrafficking programs. One survivor illustrates the need for support:

“We need more people; we need more people to just stand by us. I tell people that all the time. Like, I said, and I’ll never stop saying that. Like I said, it took me three and a half years for me to be like, “this is it. This is it.” But we need people not giving up, like how they didn’t give up on me ... People think it’s so easy to get out of the life. It’s not, it’s scary, it’s scary to get a job and, and, and all we bring home \$600 every two weeks. I am now just comfortable with that. ... Just people to keep praying, and keep calling and calling, and praying. And, just let us know that somebody’s always there ... I feel like we need more walk-in places to go into, you know, where girls can come and talk. Because a lot of us do want to escape but we have nowhere to go after we leave.

(Shay, Church Ladies survivor, African American, 30)

Other survivors pointed to more resources, “they should have more housing, and more resources for people like that” (Alexandria, Break the Cycle survivor, Latina woman, 24).

This finding is consistent with past research (Nichols 2016). Housing and resources are severely limited in comparison to the need.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined the factors leading to success for the movement, and the future of the antitrafficking movement. The ASMOs are successful due to political opportunities provided by the TVPA, resource mobilization provided by grant funding and church networks, effective leadership, effective framing of grievances, and the cultural context. The organizations also experience several challenges in the work that they do. Finally, activists report that in the future their goal within organizations is to better educate men, so they see women differently; open a home for women survivors with children; and specific organizational goals to provide more services. Activists would also like to see the antitrafficking movement to reduce demand by increasing the penalties of buyers; eliminate penalties for sex workers and trafficking survivors; reduce pornography and other forms of legal sex work; increased education and awareness about trafficking; increased involvement of parents and teachers; create survivor leadership positions; and more funding and resources for victims. In the concluding chapter, I summarize the findings and make final remarks, including recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

Human trafficking has become a hot button issue in the contemporary American imagination. However, there is still an incomplete understanding of the complexity of the problem. Some still conflate labor trafficking and sex trafficking, sex trafficking and prostitution, human trafficking and human smuggling, and have little understanding of the extent of the problem. Some activists have engaged in conflating sex trafficking with sex work as part of a larger agenda to eradicate prostitution, pornography, and the adult entertainment industry. However, it is important that these concepts remain distinct to fully understand the problem of trafficking, including the true extent and nature of the problem. Understanding the true nature of the problem will allow researchers, activists, and lawmakers to better plan services, education, and legislation. The increased attention has resulted in the passage of new legislation, reevaluations of existing legislation, partnerships between antitrafficking organizations and law enforcement, and increased funding and guidance for services, education, and research. The goal of this research was to understand how evangelical antitrafficking organizations frame the problem of trafficking, including who is to blame and solutions proposed; how activists work to motivate potential activists; what strategies are used to combat trafficking; what factors influence the success of antitrafficking organizations; and activists' goals for future work. I argue that antitrafficking services are white savior projects in which white economically privileged women aim to save their racially and economically disadvantaged sisters.

I examined the history of the antitrafficking movement, beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Conservative Victorian-era activists became concerned about women's purity and focused on women selling sex. Activists created houses of refuge, which aimed to reform sex workers by teaching them new job skills. Legislation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century focused primarily on the sex trafficking of white women but proved to be inaccurate. Scholars today suggest these concerns amounted to a sex panic.

I analyzed the three evangelical antitrafficking organizations in my sample, comparing their size, structure, evangelical culture, funding, and services. Between all three organizations, they offer housing, temporary housing, education, vocational training, individual and group counseling, food, clothing, toiletries, a 24-hour hotline, mentorship, transportation, and referrals for other services and resources. Most victim services are geared towards girls and women who have been trafficked for sex. Most activists in this sample are evangelical, white women and report that the reason they are engaged in antitrafficking work is to serve God or feel compelled because of the injustice survivors experience. Activists and survivors are mostly satisfied with services offered. The biggest challenge in victim services are the limited resources. Sometimes activists are not able to provide the services that survivors need. Furthermore, survivors are skeptical of activists initially, and some survivors may avoid services altogether (particularly LGBTQ+ and non-Christian survivors) because they are evangelical organizations. Also, survivors report to activists that they do not like the rules of the Care House. These three organizations work with law enforcement in 'rescue' operations, education, and preparing survivors for court. I analyze how the criminal justice system handles sex trafficking and prostitution cases and how activists and survivors evaluate the criminal justice system.



I find that the evangelical antitrafficking organizations diagnostically frame the problem of human trafficking as an injustice and a human rights abuse, which happens mostly against girls and women in the context of sex trafficking. The modern iteration of trafficking discourse originally centered on foreign black and brown victims. However, evangelical activists utilized frame extension to suggest that anyone, but primarily girls and women, are at risk of trafficking. Activists also conflate sex work and sex trafficking, believing that all sex workers are victims due to past histories of abuse. Activists emphasize the frequency, severity, and cruelty to illustrate the problem of sex trafficking. Activists also use frame bridging to connect trafficking with the enslavement of racial minorities in the United States, to increase attention and highlight the urgency and the severity of trafficking. Trafficking is caused by many intersecting complex social problems, such as racism, sexism, poverty, and previous child abuse. Activists within each organization focus on different causes, while sometimes acknowledging other causes. Break the Cycle activists blame sexism, racism, poverty, homophobia, and other inequalities. Hope activists primarily blame prior childhood sexual abuse and suggest these experiences create pathways to the sex industry. Activists working within Church Ladies utilize frame bridging to connect the anti-pornography movement with the antitrafficking movement by suggesting that trafficking is caused by a pornography addiction. These messages connect well with other evangelical potential activists, who are targeted within activists' church networks for mobilization. Evangelical antitrafficking activists acknowledge that part of the problem is with boys and men and the way they see women. Many evangelicals believe in an essentialist perspective of gender, resulting in the belief that men are inherently sexual and are 'wired' to be sexually aggressive, while women are non-sexual and passive.

Evangelicals have several solutions to eradicate trafficking, which fall under the 3 Ps approach: protection, prevention, and prosecution. For all three ASMOs, protection consumes most of their time in the work. Under the umbrella of protection evangelical activists offer services to survivors of trafficking, which include housing, education, job training, training in daily living skills, medical and mental health services, and transportation. The quantity and quality of services vary by organization and are typically found near larger cities. Although services are severely lacking, particularly housing, the organizations do what they can, given their limited resources. If they are unable to meet the needs of a survivor, they will often refer out for services. Evangelical activists in Hope and Church Ladies report that proselytization is a secondary goal, which includes adopting conservative ideologies surrounding gender and sexuality. Evangelicals believe that converting to Christianity is healing for trafficking survivors. Girls and women are expected to dress modestly, refrain from expressing their sexuality, and stop selling sex. Despite the many challenges, evaluations of the organizations are mostly positive, but evaluations in this area are often difficult to assess. Activists report that sex trafficking survivors often relapse and go back to their trafficker or leave the program for a variety of reasons. The antitrafficking tactics utilized by activists amount to white savior projects, in which activists maintain the racial hierarchy by engendering a white Christian culture within antitrafficking services and expect survivors to internalize this ideology.

Under the umbrella of prevention, activists conduct education and awareness events, which are customized to the audience. Education and awareness events are held for children, church communities, the public, activists, and law enforcement. These events primarily focus on defining human trafficking, including who and what is to blame, the extent of trafficking, what the organization is doing to combat trafficking, and ways that potential activists can get involved

in the antitrafficking fight. Break the Cycle holds more specialized training, including on the topics of labor trafficking and LGBTQ+ vulnerabilities. The organizations vary in how many events are offered. In terms of how much time is spent on tasks, prevention is second in the amount of time worked on. The prevention work is also very difficult to evaluate because evaluations cannot measure what has not happened. Instead, activists count how many events are held, and how many people attend educational and awareness events.

Under the umbrella of prosecution, activists work with law enforcement to help “rescue” trafficking victims. Activists may meet with a survivor after being recovered by law enforcement or go on a “rescue” operation with law enforcement to meet with several potential survivors to determine if services are needed. This allows activists to differentiate themselves from law enforcement and be able to get victims to open up about their trafficking situations. Furthermore, ASMOs may help survivors in finding legal services and/or support survivors during the legal process. Activists help prepare survivors for court and witness testimony. Activists also work with law enforcement to increase the education and awareness of trafficking in the area. Prosecution activities are the least commonly worked on and are rarely discussed.

Activists motivate potential activists by emphasizing the severity of sex trafficking. They frame trafficking as occurring “in our own backyards,” that the problem is urgent and life threatening, and victims need ‘rescue.’ Due to the nature of human trafficking, many evangelicals utilize rescue language and develop a white savior complex, where they can imagine themselves in a violent raid-like scenario rescuing girls and women from the ‘bad guys.’ This results in their identification as the ‘good guys.’ They believe that removing trafficking survivors from a trafficking situation ends all abuse. However, trafficking survivors often leave antitrafficking programs, much like survivors of intimate partner violence, and return to their

trafficker or end up in another abusive relationship due to the cyclical nature of victimization and violence.

Evangelical activists educate potential activists about the work that the organization is engaged in to encourage action. Evangelical activists suggest that potential activists can educate themselves about trafficking to identify trafficking victims, donate to the cause, volunteer their time, or contact their representative to push for passage of harsher penalties of traffickers and clients. Activists in this sample are open to accepting volunteer work but Hope and Church Ladies restrict the roles that non-Christians can perform.

Antitrafficking work is particularly attractive for evangelicals, who are horrified by the intersections of sex and abuse. Evangelicals feel called to antitrafficking work by God and utilize scripture to justify their work in ‘freeing’ sex trafficking survivors. I find that evangelical Christianity influences the organizations through services for survivors, training for staff and the public, the recruitment of staff and volunteers at church, and the practice of Christianity in front of and with survivors. Activists and survivors reported that Christianity is encouraged, but not forced. Most survivors understood that Hope and Church Ladies were Christian and were satisfied with services. When dissatisfied with activists pushing Christianity, survivors ignored or pushed back against these ideas. Break the Cycle is influenced by evangelical Christianity, but to a much lesser degree. Furthermore, conservative Christians in Hope and the Church Ladies report conservative ideas regarding gender and sexuality, such as their views of sexuality, women’s dress, abortion, non-marital sex, cohabitation, and same-sex relationships. Many pointed to their Christian beliefs as the reason for their view.

The ASMOs experience successes and challenges in the work they do. Successes are influenced by political opportunities (Rojas and King 2018), resources allocation (Edwards et al.

2018), effective leadership (Ganz and McKenna 2018), and cultural context (Jasper and Polletta 2018). In terms of political opportunities, the TVPA provides funding and guidance for service organizations to provide victim services and educate the public. The creation of the TVPA not only provided monetary benefit, but also significantly increased the awareness of trafficking within the United States, which has influenced the antitrafficking field and the organizations specifically. Furthermore, without significant resources, organizations would not be able to conduct the work they do. Break the Cycle was awarded federal funding, which significantly aids in the work they do. They are also able to have small fundraisers and collect necessities for survivors. Hope and Church Ladies utilize their church networks to provide funds and resources. Hope is much more effective at this by holding several fundraisers a year and having church members donate to the organization. The Church Ladies does not hold fundraisers and instead raises funds through a consignment bridal shop and individual donations. Although the Church Ladies operates off a much smaller budget, all individuals are volunteers, and they are successful in providing services to survivors.

The ASMOs also had various levels of effective leadership (Ganz and McKenna 2018). Hope and Church Ladies leadership built relationships; told stories; strategized; structured their organization effectively; and engaged in action. Leaders built relationships with activists, other organizations, business leaders, law enforcement, and government officials. In doing so, they were often able to find several types of support for the work they do and spread their message. Organizational leadership also told stories about survivor's experiences in trafficking, which galvanizes support for the cause. These stories were sometimes shared online, through social media, and highlighted the more violent and brutal nature of trafficking. Leadership strategized ways to combat trafficking from multiple angles, including planning ways to train boys and men

to see girls and women differently. Organizational leaders also structured their organizations differently. Break the Cycle has the least autonomy in doing so but Hope and Church Ladies were able to structure their organizations differently based on their needs. Hope structured their organization in a more hierarchical model, whereas the Church Ladies structured the organization in a franchise model, allowing chapters to be created throughout the churches in the area. Hope and Church Ladies leadership was also heavily involved in action, they worked with volunteers, attended meetings and trainings, met with law enforcement and government officials. The extent that Break the Cycle leadership was involved in action is unknown.

Antitrafficking work is also made successful through the reframing of grievances, primarily through who is considered a victim and where trafficking is likely to happen. When trafficking was reframed into a domestic issue, that could happen to white, suburban teens, activists became mobilized. Prior to this, trafficking was considered an overseas problem, which primarily occurs to foreign brown and black women. By reframing trafficking as an American problem, activists became concerned that sex trafficking could happen to their own children and in their own neighborhoods. Activists focused on the injustice of trafficking victims to motivate potential activists,

Finally, the external and internal cultural context of the antitrafficking movement influences their success. External cultural factors which influence the antitrafficking movement include the feminist movement, the anti-violence movement, economic challenges, post-9/11 policies and treatment of migrants, a general shift towards conservatism since the 1970s, and religious activism. Antitrafficking activists built their movement based off the antislavery movement, feminist movement, and the antiviolen movements of past generations. They argue that trafficking is morally wrong and compare it to slavery. The antitrafficking movement is also

influenced by the economic challenges, treatment of migrants, conservatism, and religious activism. Antitrafficking activists have become increasingly concerned after the delay in the passage of the 2011 and 2017 TVPRA. Trafficking activists are increasingly concerned about the treatment of migrants, and the corresponding racist and nationalist sentiments. Finally, antitrafficking activism is highly influenced by evangelical ideologies, in part because of the return of evangelicals to American politics since the 1970s.

The internal cultural context is also important to understand the success of the organizations. There is crossover of beliefs, language, images, artifacts, rules, and norms between the evangelical churches in the area and the organizations, which mobilizes many evangelical activists. Evangelical activists engage in antitrafficking work to serve God, including the proselytizing of survivors. They believe that God is healing for survivors, despite survivors having experienced religious trauma. Church Ladies and Hope services are influenced by their faith in four primary ways: the services for survivors, training for staff and the public, the recruitment of staff and volunteers at church, and the practice of Christianity in front of and with survivors. Christian language, images, artifacts, rules, and norms are throughout the context within Hope and the Church Ladies. Meetings are begun or ended in prayer, and Christian language is used throughout conversation. Furthermore, there are Christian norms which survivors are encouraged to develop over time, such as attending church and specific ideas regarding gender and sexuality. Yet, challenges in antitrafficking work focus on the difficulty of funding and providing all the services survivors request, measuring and defining success, and the relapse cycle. Next, I turn to the future of the antitrafficking movement.

Antitrafficking activists state that they would like to see boys and men view women differently. To accomplish this, Church Ladies activists developed a men's program which

focuses on education and mentorship. The Church Ladies specifically connected these services to anti-pornography services and included web-based programming that is meant to steer men away from viewing pornography. This program was abandoned, but Hope would like to create a men's program. These services are based on an addiction model, despite the lack of peer-reviewed research which suggest pornography is an addiction. However, by using the addiction model, activist can medicalize the problem and feel sympathy for men who are seen as 'sick' instead of sexual predators.

Activists would also like for prostitution to remain illegal but shift the focus in criminalization from sex workers to buyers and traffickers. Evangelicals believe that all sex workers are victims. Activists argue that many adult sex workers started before the age of majority (which would be defined as trafficking), and/or experienced abuse as part of their sex work. Evangelicals also believe that sex workers would not choose the sex industry given other options. Certainly, that might be the case for many, there are others that would choose sex work, given all the options. Sex workers can make a lot more money than many legal work options, particularly for poor and minority women who face challenges in education and the job market. Furthermore, low-paying jobs are degrading in many ways, supervisors are controlling in when and how work gets done, and there are high levels of harassment and abuse that occur in all low-paying legal jobs for girls and women. By conflating sex work and sex trafficking, antitrafficking activists are stripping sex workers of their voice and autonomy.

Antitrafficking activists would also like to increase the level of education and awareness of trafficking generally, so that more victims may be identified. Hope is working on targeting specific industries that are most likely to encounter trafficking survivors, such as front-line workers, health care workers, truckers, and those working in hospitality. Increasing education



and spreading awareness will certainly lead to an increase in the identification of trafficking survivors, which increases the chance that trafficking survivors will access services that can assist them in leaving a trafficking situation. Activists also reported that they would like for survivors to become more involved and provide leadership in the services that are offered. Of all the future goals discussed, survivor involvement and leadership were the least discussed, and were not being planned.

Finally, antitrafficking organizations have their own individual future goals. For, Hope this includes opening a transitional home for adult women who graduated from the Care House or those that could not be served by the Care House. This goal was met in 2020. The Church Ladies would like to eventually open a shelter for women who have children. Activists report that many survivors are unable to enter healing programs because they have children and do not have anyone else that they can care for them. Finally, Break the Cycle did not have any major future plans, but intends to remain survivor focused, meaning they try to let the feedback of survivors guide the services they provide. Next, I turn to recommendations for future research.

### **Contributions to the Research**

This research adds to the literature in a couple of different ways. First, this research adds to findings on victimology, antitrafficking services, the rescue industry and carceral feminism utilizing a new context with a new sample. This research adds to the victimology literature on victim services. Specifically, this research finds that antitrafficking services are dominated by evangelical activists, which leads to evangelical ideologies influencing victim services, their activism, and how they frame the problem of trafficking (Houston 2015; Clark 2019). Many of the findings in this research confirm previous findings in Shih (2016); Bernstein (2007, 2010, 2012); and Agustín (2007). My findings also confirm previous findings on types of services,

successes and challenges in services, and how the criminal justice system handles trafficking cases (Nichols 2016; Fehrenbacher et al 2020). This research compares organizations and their differences based on religious and political views. The more liberal activists tended to critique the rescue model but still participated in rescue operations with police. While more conservative Christian activists support and employ rescue and carceral tactics, targeting women who are gender deviant (wearing revealing clothing) and immigrant communities. This research also finds different ways evangelical activists employ rescue tactics, such as developing relationships with women in the legal sex industry and their managers. Previous research by Shih (2016) shows that activists would covertly surveil suspected trafficking spots, and report to police. However, activists in Church Ladies made efforts to develop relationships with the women believed to sell sex, to encourage them to leave the industry and to convert to Christianity.

This research adds to the research on white saviorism, which have mostly focused on white saviors within film (Hughey 2014; Schultz 2014). I apply white saviorism to the antitrafficking field. I argue that antitrafficking efforts are white savior projects, in which racially and economically privileged women seek to rescue racially and economically marginalized women. In doing so, activists suggest that white evangelical culture is superior, which maintains the racial order. Furthermore, white savior projects focus on individualistic solutions to larger systemic problems, which masks the sociological features of the problem. Although relieving the pain and suffering of victims should be an important part of antitrafficking work, without working towards structural solutions trafficking victims will be vulnerable to trafficking and traffickers will be incentivized. Further, antitrafficking activists can cross the color line, and enter a sex-filled culture without losing their status as sexually modest women (Bernstein 2007).

Furthermore, my research extends the model of the rescue model (Bernstein 2007; Agustín 2007), which demonstrates that white evangelical women attempt to rescue their racially and economically marginalized sisters. I extend the rescue model by arguing that evangelical activists attempt to ‘rescue’ trafficking survivors by trying to convert them to Christianity, which is their secondary goal. This research demonstrates that Church Ladies activists are engaged in outreach within their own privileged communities but still target immigrant businesses, specifically Asian themed spas. Education and awareness events are held in privileged communities, although marginalized communities are most at risk.

### **Limitations**

This research is limited because it is not generalizable to other contexts, and I was restricted in the data I was able to collect. I was not able to access many spaces within the field, including a secular antitrafficking program because it was too small to take on volunteers. I also was limited in the spaces I was able to access within the organizations, I was not able to collect data in the drop-in center of Break the Cycle, nor was I able to work with survivors in Hope or Church Ladies due to me not being Christian. This limited my ability to develop a rapport with survivors from Hope and Church Ladies. I was still able to interview survivors from all three organizations, but responses were much shorter which is likely due to the lack of rapport in comparison to the rapport I was able to develop with activists. I was also unable to speak to survivors who resided at Hope’s Care House because many were under the age of 18. Having a Christian-identified researcher would have improved access to these spaces.

## **Future Research**

Part of the criticism of the trafficking discourse is the methodological flaws in estimations of trafficking incidents. There is a lot of great qualitative research on trafficking victims and their experiences, yet reliable statistics on trafficking incidents is still a problem. This is because of two reasons not all trafficking victims meet the strict legal definition of trafficking, and sex workers (who are considered high risk) are conflated with sex trafficking victims in services. Official police reports are an underestimate of trafficking incidence because survivors are unlikely to report the crimes to law enforcement for several reasons. One way to get better estimates of trafficking is to add questions to the National Crime and Victimization Survey (NCVS), which samples American residents every six months on prior victimizations. The NCVS previously allowed researchers, activists, and lawmakers to better understand the true extent of rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. Because the NCVS is already funded and operational, including these questions would be efficient and cost effective. Furthermore, because the NCVS uses a national sample, the results would be generalizable and inferences to the population can be made.

Future research should also include the perspective of survivors. Survivor voices have been limited in much of the research on trafficking, which is a huge failing on the part of trafficking research, activism, and policymaking. This is beginning to change, and researchers should continue to move in this direction. When they are excluded from research, evaluations, and policymaking they become powerless in directing their own lives. Instead, activists assume they know what is best for survivors, and implement policies which may not be very effective. For example, evangelical activists assume that faith will assist all victims in healing, and do not consider the impact of religious exposure after religious trauma. Only when we understand the

perspective of those that we are trying to assist can we adequately assist them. I suspect that when survivors' perspectives are taken seriously, there would be a reduction in survivors leaving antitrafficking programs.

Future research should also examine the extent to which survivors have choice in the services they receive. Although in a very large Midwestern city, there were few secular services for survivors, particularly ones that offered more comprehensive services. While Christian services may be beneficial in assisting Christian survivors, not all survivors are Christian. Evangelical services were dominant, which may deter Agnostics, Atheist, Hindus, Buddhist, Muslims, Jewish, and survivors of other faiths from seeking services. If there are limited choices nationwide, then the structure of the antitrafficking field is limited and does not allow choice. Furthermore, future research should consider the extent to which survivors are coerced into Christianity. Although the organizations in this sample did not force Christianity onto survivors, (but did heavily encourage it), survivors reported another organization in the area who did. Furthermore, there are news reports of U.S. organizations forcing Christianity, including forcing survivors to attend church, complete Christian homework, and restrictions from reading secular sources (Lynch 2020).

Trafficking research should evaluate antitrafficking organizations. There is little oversight of these organizations, and the quality and quantity of services varies tremendously by area. Evaluations of antitrafficking organizations should include survivors' outcomes and consider the perspective of activists and survivors. Survivors reported dissatisfaction with several other organizations in the area, which resulted in trafficking survivors not committing to antitrafficking services and healing. When survivors are happy with the services, they will be more likely to stay in those services and get the healing they deserve and need.

Research should also focus on traffickers and clients, particularly the outcomes of their increased criminalization. Given that punishment is ineffective in preventing recidivism and most offenders do leave prison, researchers should focus on finding appropriate rehabilitative methods for both clients and traffickers. Next, I turn to policy implications

### **Policy Implications**

Trafficking policy and practice should distinguish between sex work and sex trafficking. Conflating sex work and sex trafficking muddles the research, services, and policy work, and leads to ineffective policy and services. Conflating sex work and sex trafficking is also disingenuous and wrong. Research should evaluate outcomes of decriminalization and the legalization of sex work and consider the perspectives of the sex workers rights movement. Researchers, policy makers, and legislatures should consider decriminalization or legalization of sex work. Research on sex workers and their advocates demonstrates that they believe much of the harm they experience is due to the illegality of the work, which leads to stigmatization, marginalization, and criminalization (Jackson 2016). Sex workers believe that conflating sex work and sex trafficking is wrong and impacts their ability to define their own legal, economic, and social needs. Sex workers and advocates want to discuss working conditions and the impact of criminalization. Distinguishing between sex work and sex trafficking would ensure that research, services, and policies are built for those who are forced or coerced into sex work, thereby improving the truthfulness and effectiveness of those policies and services.

Activists, researchers, policy makers, and legislators should consider the implications of the increased criminalization and punishments for clients and traffickers. In recent decades, the American population has moved towards a more rehabilitative approach due to failed criminal justice policies, such as the War on Drugs. Because incarceration is ineffective at reducing

recidivism and most offenders leave prison at some point, investments in rehabilitation of traffickers and clients would be the better moral option, as well as more effective and cost saving.

Finally, activists, policy makers, and legislators should work towards lessening the factors which contribute to trafficking, namely sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and other systems of oppression. When society and its leaders do not demean women, racial/ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+, and others who are marginalized, individuals are less likely to marginalize, harass, or abuse these groups. By creating a society that is more equitable, there is less abuse and crime overall, including trafficking; and less reason to engage in sex work (if other jobs are paying more). Equitable societies tend to be happier, healthier, trust others, and more productive. Although there is substantially more to be done, activists, policy makers, and legislators could work to increase the minimum wage to a livable wage; increase workers benefits, including federal paid parental leave policies; increase welfare benefits, including food stamps; pass Medicare for All, which will create a single-payer, national health insurance program for all in America; reform our immigration system to welcome refugees and increase caps on immigration; dismantle immigration detention centers and deportation programs; free college for all and cancel all student loan debt; strengthen union protections to grow union membership; expand and increase social security benefits; invest in affordable and public housing to end the housing crisis and make rent affordable through Section 8 vouchers (without a waitlist); reform the criminal justice system by cutting the prison population, banning for-profit prisons and services within prisons, and increasing prisoner rights and funding for public defenders; end the criminalization of addiction, mental illness and homelessness by utilizing a healthcare approach; provide free child care and pre-k for all; eliminate all medical debt; reinvest

in public education; increase support of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) to eliminate racial disparities in college education; tax the wealthy; increase the corporate tax rate; provide high speed internet for all; remove corporate money from politics and implement free and fair elections; adopt Equal Pay for Equal Work legislation; fully fund Planned Parenthood, to increase access to women's health, contraception and the availability of safe and legal abortions; pass legislation to protect LGBTQ+ from discrimination, particularly in health care, and work to reduce school bullying and suicide; expand and protect Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs; end subminimum wage for workers with disabilities; rewrite trade deals to increase labor, environmental and human rights standards; enact a federal jobs guarantee, so that every person is paid a livable wage, create 20 million jobs as part of the Green New Deal, give reparations to decedents of slaves, honor treaties and further protect indigenous people and implement a universal basic income for families in poverty. Activists, researchers, policy makers and legislators can support these efforts by voting for candidates who support this platform, organize around these causes or run for office on a similar platform. There is much work to be done to create a society in which sex trafficking will decrease over time.



## **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup>Reference on file with author to prevent identification of subjects or location.

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APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WORKERS



**Interview Guide for workers.** These are the kinds of questions I may ask, but I may ask further questions which may emerge during the interviews.

**I'm going to first ask you some questions about how you got here, general questions about human trafficking, about the organization, about your work with survivors, and a little bit about who you are, and your beliefs and motivations in the work you do. There are no right or wrong answers. Again, any questions you feel uncomfortable answering, you can choose not to answer. At any point during the interview, you may choose to quit for any reason. Do you have any questions before we get started?**

**1. Choose a nickname or pseudonym?**

**2. What drew you into this line of work?**

- a. **PROBE:** How did you learn about the organization?
- b. **PROBE:** How does your volunteer work relate to your professional work or job? If so, how?
- c. **PROBE:** How long have you worked for the organization?
- d. **PROBE:** What drew you to apply to this organization?
- e. **PROBE:** What is your role at the organization?
  - i. What sort of training has prepared you for this job? Include on the job training, and formal training experiences, like education.
- f. **PROBE:** Do you have friends/family in the field?
- g. What are your goals in working for the organization?
- h. What does this job mean to you? **PROBE:** What costs and other sacrifices have you made for this volunteer position? For example, some people pay for specific training.
- i. What types of benefits and challenges do you experience on the job?
- j. What are your plans in this field?

**3. What services are offered to victims by the organization?**

- a. What services are you not able to provide? What needs are you unable to meet? Are you planning to expand services to meet the needs? If so, how?
- b. What is the mission and goal of the organization?
  - i. **PROBE:** How do you think the organization is doing in accomplishing its mission and goals?
  - ii. **PROBE:** How do you think the organization is doing in meeting the needs of trafficked persons?
- c. Have you seen new policies or procedures implemented?
  - i. **PROBE:** What are the benefits and consequences to these new policies and procedures? Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness? And, why?
- d. What are some of the challenges for the organization?
  - i. **PROBE:** How does the organization meet these challenges?
- e. What are some of the successes?
- f. Can you explain the treatment/rehabilitative process?

- i. **PROBE:** Do you receive feedback from victims/clients? If so, can you describe the feedback process?
- ii. **PROBE:** What impact are the services supposed to have on the victim? What do survivors appreciate most about the organization's services? What do victims enjoy least?
- iii. **PROBE:** What follow up is conducted after services are successfully completed?
- g. Are direct services evaluated? If so, how?
  - i. **PROBE:** Who provides oversight of the organization/facility?
  - ii. **PROBE:** Have you ever seen an inspection of the facility?
- h. Do you tailor services for minority and/or vulnerable groups? For instance, the poor, racial/ethnic minorities, adults vs. minors, and LGBTQ victims. If yes, how?
- i. Do you work with other organizations? If yes, explain the relationship/contact?
- j. **PROBE:** Aside from direct services to victims, what other services does the organization provide? For instance, education/prevention of children, and community outreach/awareness, etc.
  - i. **PROBE:** What are the goals of these services? How are these goals evaluated? Do you think these goals are appropriate? If no, how would you think resources and time should be distributed between these different goals?
  - ii. **PROBE:** What are some of the best practices of the organization? What are some practices that could be improved?

**4. What role does religion play in the organization?**

- a. **PROBE:** What formal religious services are offered to survivors?
- b. **PROBE:** What informal religious services are offered to survivors?
- c. **PROBE:** What religious services are offered to non-Christian survivors, such as Muslims?
- d. **PROBE:** Are the staff Christian? Are staff encouraged to talk about religion/their faith? What does that look like?
- e. **PROBE:** How does your own faith influence your decision to work with the organization?
- f. **PROBE:** How are services shaped by the religious foundations of the organization?
- g. **PROBE:** Are services concluded with a prayer?
- h. **PROBE:** In what other ways does religion come up?
- i. **PROBE:** Do survivors typically share the religious beliefs of the organization?

**5. Without giving away any private, medical or identifying information. What kind of background and experiences do victims typically come from?**

- a. What are the requirements for services?
  - i. **PROBE:** How are victims identified?

- ii. **PROBE:** How do you reach victims?
- b. In what ways do victims contribute to their own treatment? Are there obligations or responsibilities they are expected to meet?
- c. What kinds of contacts do survivors typically have with loved ones while receiving services?
  - i. **PROBE:** What is the procedure for victims calling a loved one?
  - ii. **PROBE:** What is the procedure for a victim to visit a loved one? A loved one visiting a victim?
  - iii. **PROBE:** What is the procedure for victims to leave, or if they leave/run from the program?
  - iv. **PROBE:** What is the policy/stance if a survivor is interested in services unavailable at your organization? Or controversial, such as abortion services?

**Next, I'm going to ask you some questions about your personal perceptions of trafficking.**

**6. Where do you learn about trafficking?**

- a. **PROBE:** How accurate do you consider the media representations of trafficking you've seen? What are the similarities and differences between media representations and your experience and expertise?
- b. **PROBE:** Are there any misrepresentations that are harmful for trafficking victims?

**7. Some people believe that sex work and prostitution should be legalized and regulated as a means to tackle some of the trafficking; some believe sex work should be deregulated and decriminalized; and others believe that all prostitutes are trafficked. Do you think trafficking survivors should be defined differently from adult prostitutes and other adults in the sex industry?**

- a. **PROBE:** Should law enforcement enforce prostitution laws? Do you think law enforcement is effective at curbing prostitution? Elaborate why you think so.
- b. **PROBE:** How does the organization determine differences between prostitution and trafficking victims?

**8. What is law enforcement doing well? Where do you think law enforcement could improve?**

- a. **PROBE:** How would you rate law enforcement efforts to curb trafficking? First, in the United States and, second, in the Chicago area specifically?

**9. What additional steps do you think need to be taken to reduce trafficking?**

**10. What factors contribute to trafficking?**

**11. What is one thing that you wished more people knew about trafficking?**

**Next, I'm going to ask you some questions about your personal beliefs.**

**12. How would you describe your religious and spiritual beliefs?**

- a. **PROBE:** Describe your church involvement?
- b. **PROBE:** What role does faith play in your day-to-day life?

**13. Do you feel that minority groups (including women, racial/ethnic minorities, LGBT, etc.) have achieved social, economic, and political equity in the United States?**

**PROBE:** If yes, explain and elaborate, please. If no, how would you assess inequality in the United States today? What do you feel needs to occur to achieve equality?

**14. What are your thoughts concerning social and political issues like:**

- a. Abortion?
- b. Affirmative Action?
- c. Death Penalty?
- d. Sex before marriage?
- e. Cohabitation prior to marriage?
- f. Sex-education? (Abstinence only, abstinence plus, and comprehensive sex-ed.)
- g. Same-sex marriage?
- h. Immigration?
- i. Welfare?

**15. These next questions are about demographics.**

- a. What year were you born? Gender? Racial and/or ethnic background?
- b. What is your relationship status? Are you single, in a relationship, cohabitating, married, divorced, or widowed?
- c. How many people are in your households? How many work? Who makes the decisions? Do you have children? If so, how many and how old are they?
- d. Highest level of education?
- e. Briefly describe your occupational history?

**16. Is there anything else that you'd like for me to know about you, or your experiences in the work you do?**

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

**Interview Guide for Service Participants.** These are the kinds of questions I may ask, but I may ask further questions which may emerge during the interviews.

I'm going to first ask you some questions about how your experiences receiving services from the organization, a little bit about who you are, and what your plans/goals are. There are no right or wrong answers. Any questions you feel uncomfortable answering, you can choose not to answer. At any point during the interview you may choose to quit for any reason. Do you have any questions before we get started?

1. **Can you pick a nickname or pseudonym, to keep your identity confidential?**
2. **How did you learn about the organization?**
  - a. **PROBE:** Did someone from the organization reach out to you, or did you seek out services?
  - b. **PROBE:** How long have you been receiving services from the organization?
  - c. **PROBE:** What was your initial impression of the organization? Was the staff friendly and welcoming?
  - d. **PROBE:** What drew you to seek services from this organization versus others?
  - e. **PROBE:** Is there any staff person that you connect with? Dislike? Explain.
  - f. **PROBE:** How does staff treat you? Do staff treat you respectfully? Explain.
  - g. **PROBE:** In what ways are the staff similar to you? Do you feel connected to staff through these similarities?
  - h. **PROBE:** In what ways are the staff dissimilar to you? Do you feel alienated from the staff due to the dissimilarities?
  - i. **PROBE:** Do you feel that the organization cares about your well-being?
  - j. **PROBE:** Have you received services from another organization?
    - i. How would you compare and contrast the two organizations?
3. **What services do you receive by the organization?**
  - a. **PROBE:** How would you evaluate/rate the services you've received from 1 to 10 (with 1 being poor and 10 being fantastic)?
    - i. What are some positive experiences you've had with the organization?
      1. In what ways do you think the organization has helped you achieve your own goals?
    - ii. What are some negative experiences you've had with the organization?
      1. Is there a person, process, or procedure for your complaints to be heard? If yes, explain. Did you complain to the organization?
  - b. How long does it typically take to receive a service, once you've requested it?
  - c. What services is the organization not able to provide?
  - d. What services do you feel were beneficial for you?
  - e. In what ways could the services be improved?
  - f. Would you recommend this organization to anyone else seeking services?
4. **What role does religion play in the organization?**
  - a. **PROBE:** Is participation in religious services required to receive services?
  - b. **PROBE:** What formal religious services are offered?

- c. **PROBE:** What informal religious services are offered?
  - d. **PROBE:** What religious services are offered to non-Christian survivors, such as Muslims?
  - e. **PROBE:** Are the staff Christian? Do staff talk about their faith with you?
  - f. **PROBE:** How does your own faith influence your decision to receive services?
  - g. **PROBE:** Are services concluded with a prayer?
  - h. **PROBE:** In what other ways does religion come up?
- 5. In what ways do you contribute to your own treatment/plan with the organization? Are there obligations or responsibilities you are expected to meet?**
- a. Do you have contact with loved ones while receiving services?
  - b. **PROBE:** What is the procedure for calling a loved one?
  - c. **PROBE:** What is the procedure to visit a loved one? A loved one visiting?
  - d. **PROBE:** What is the procedure to leave the program?
  - e. **PROBE:** Are you forced to participate in any activities that you do not want?
  - f. **PROBE:** What behaviors are encouraged by the organization? Discouraged?

Next, I'm going to ask you some questions about your personal perceptions of trafficking.

- 6. What factors contribute to trafficking?**
- 7. Some people believe that sex work and prostitution should be legalized and regulated as a means to tackle some of the trafficking; some believe sex work should be deregulated and decriminalized; and others believe that all prostitutes are trafficked. Do you think trafficking survivors should be defined differently from adult prostitutes and other adults in the sex industry?**
- a. **PROBE:** Should law enforcement enforce prostitution laws? Do you think law enforcement is effective at curbing prostitution? Elaborate why you think so.
  - b. **PROBE:** How does the organization determine differences between prostitution and trafficking victims?
- 8. What is law enforcement doing well? Where do you think law enforcement could improve?**
- c. **PROBE:** How would you rate law enforcement efforts to curb trafficking? First, in the United States and, second, in the Chicago area specifically?
- 9. What additional steps do you think need to be taken to reduce trafficking?**

**10. What is one thing that you wished more people knew about trafficking?**

Next, I'm going to ask you some questions more about your personal beliefs.

**11. How would you describe your religious and spiritual beliefs?**

- d. **PROBE:** Describe your church involvement?
- e. **PROBE:** What role does faith play in your day-to-day life?

**12. Do you feel that minority groups (including women, racial/ethnic minorities, LGBT, etc.) have achieved social, economic, and political equity in the United States?**

- f. **PROBE:** If yes, explain and elaborate, please. If no, how would you assess inequality in the United States today?
- g. **PROBE:** What do you feel needs to occur to achieve equality?
- h. **PROBE:** Do you feel that minority groups are being treated fairly in the organization?
  - i. Please explain or provide examples.

**13. What messages do you receive from the organization, or its staff about:**

- i. Abortion?
- j. Affirmative Action?
- k. Death Penalty?
- l. Sex before marriage?
- m. Cohabitation prior to marriage?
- n. Sex-education? (abstinence only, abstinence plus, and comprehensive sex-ed.)
- o. Same-sex marriage?
- p. Immigration?
- q. Prostitution?
- r. Welfare?
- s. Racial/ethnic minorities?
- t. LGBTQIAA?
- u. Masculinity and femininity?
- v. Religion?

**14. These next questions are about demographics.**

- w. What year were you born? Gender? Racial and/or ethnic background?
- x. What is your relationship status? Are you single, in a relationship, cohabitating, married, divorced, or widowed?
- y. How many people are in your households? How many work? Who makes the decisions? Do you have children? If so, how many and how old are they?
- z. Highest level of education?
- aa. Briefly describe your occupational history?



**15. Is there anything else that you'd like for me to know about you, or your experiences in the organization?**