

Christianity and Sex Trafficking:
The Role of Faith-Based Service Providers in the United States

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Introduction

Human trafficking, defined as “conduct involved in reducing or holding someone in compelled service,”¹ is generally considered to be one of the worst crimes against humanity.² It is an umbrella term that includes forced labor, sex trafficking of both adults and children, bonded labor, debt bondage among migrant laborers, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, and child soldiering.³ It is widely considered to be the fastest growing crime in the world, and currently second to only the drug trade as the largest criminal operation globally.⁴ Sex trafficking is defined by the United States Department of State as a situation in which an adult is “coerced, forced, or deceived into prostitution” or maintained in the trade through coercion, or when a child is engaged in prostitution.⁵ It is important to note that the act of sex trafficking does not necessitate transport, and exists simply with the use of force or coercion for adults, and prostitution for minors. A person need not be moved across state or national borders in order to be a victim of trafficking.⁶ Given the clandestine nature of human trafficking, quantifying the magnitude of the problem is a difficult task. The best estimate for the number of women and children trafficked into the United States annually is 50,000.⁷ However, this is not disaggregated by various types of trafficking, and also does not include domestic trafficking.

While there is agreement amongst all but the perpetrators that sex trafficking is a problem- and a particularly repugnant one at that- there are differing conceptions of its causes, the best methods for addressing the issue, and even to some extent what constitutes sex trafficking. An explicitly faith-based, and specifically Christian, approach to addressing sex trafficking has dominated the anti-trafficking movement in the United

States in recent years, and has received a great deal of political support. This approach has been governed by a particular, though not an exclusively Christian, view on the nature of sex trafficking. There is much contention surrounding this viewpoint, which has resulted in debate over the way sex trafficking is perceived and addressed in this country and around the world.

The purpose of my research is to examine how U.S.-based, Christian service providers to survivors of sex trafficking structure their work, and to determine the extent to which their faith dictates the types of services they provide. Particularly of interest is whether or not, and to what degree, these providers evangelize, as well as the types of funding they receive to operate. Furthermore, this paper examines the political rhetoric and activity surrounding the trafficking issue in the past fifteen years, and how it has either helped or hindered the Christian anti-trafficking movement in the United States.

There has been a great deal of contention over the proliferation of Christian organizations in the anti-trafficking movement. Much of the protest is born out of distrust on the part of feminist scholars. They have multiple concerns, including these organizations' evangelization to their clients and the possibility that they may be using public funds to do so. However, some of the disagreement is rooted in fundamentally clashing ideologies regarding the nature of sex trafficking. Christian organizations typically subscribe to the belief that voluntary prostitution is nonexistent, and that all prostitution is trafficking. Certain feminist scholars and organizations accuse Christians of promoting this idea in an effort to uphold their traditional views regarding sex. However, this is a rather myopic analysis, as it fails to acknowledge a feminist viewpoint that aligns with the Christian belief.

As a result of my analysis, I contend that Christian organizations provide important services to a vulnerable population in need. Although their work is informed and supported by their faith, their efforts to evangelize are relatively minimal and are not supported by public funding. Their fundamental goal is to help trafficking victims move beyond the trauma they have experienced, and lead healthy, productive lives. While there is some contention over victims' access to reproductive health care, these organizations do not typically take a hardline approach, and generally respect the rights and decisions of the clients they serve. Ultimately, this is a social problem that an astounding number of women and children are caught up in. People coming out of sexually exploitative circumstances require counseling, medical care, and assistance reintegrating into society, regardless of the religious ideologies of the people providing those services. Therefore, rather than criticizing Christian organization for their influence in the anti-trafficking movement, we, as a society, should seek to augment and supplement their work. This can be achieved with policies that support any qualified organization providing services to sex trafficked individuals, regardless of faith.

Terminology

The focus of this paper is sex trafficking because it is the subcategory of human trafficking that most directly lends itself to a faith-based analysis. There is no official or legal definition of "faith-based," as it pertains to service organizations, recognized by the United States government.⁸ Therefore, the definition I use when speaking of faith-based organizations is any organization whose mission and activities is based on a religious ideology. Furthermore, because my interest is in Christian organizations, for the purposes of this paper, the terms faith-based, religious, and Christian will be used interchangeably.

While it is important to note that there are other kinds of faith groups who are concerned with trafficking, Christianity appears to be the faith that is most actively combating it. Therefore, my particular interest is the rise in power and influence of Christian anti-trafficking organizations in the past decade and a half.

Finally, I acknowledge that “Christian” is a very general term. However, there is virtually no distinction made between different denominations of Christianity in anti-trafficking research. Furthermore, as my methodology reveals, many (though not all) of the Christian organizations providing services to sex trafficking survivors do not subscribe to a particular denomination, but merely base their work on a belief in Christ. Therefore, it is assumed for the purposes of this paper that, at least as far as human trafficking is concerned, there is little difference between the teachings of the various Christian denominations. Christian anti-trafficking organizations are assumed to be any organization with a message centered on Christ and the gospel. The importance of these elements will become clear when the connection between Christian ideology and an anti-trafficking stance is explored later in this paper. A study on the ways in which different denominations of Christianity (and, for that matter, other religions as well) view and treat sex trafficking, would be advisable for future research. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper.

While the primary purpose of this paper is to explore the ideology and services of Christian anti-trafficking organizations in relation to secular organizations, it should be noted that the field is not dichotomous, and is in fact very complex. There is a great deal of ideological opposition between advocates of sex workers’ rights and Christian anti-trafficking organizations, but the anti-trafficking field as a whole is less at odds. For

example, while Polaris Project, a prominent international anti-trafficking organization based out of Washington, DC, is not a Christian organization, its website does speak extensively about the exploitation inherent in pimping, which denotes an opposition to prostitution.⁹ This is not an explicitly religious stance, but rather reflects a societal moral opposition to the control and abuse of human beings. As we will see later, this opposition to prostitution is a hallmark of Christian anti-trafficking groups. Therefore, Christian and secular groups may have similar stances on certain aspects of trafficking, but their *raison d'être* are different, and they therefore may utilize different approaches and provide different services.

This paper will first explore the multiple ideologies surrounding sex trafficking, and will focus particularly on the roots of Christian ideology, which in turn inform the practices of Christian organizations. To provide a broader context for the anti-trafficking movement, it will also detail relevant feminist theory, particularly from the latter part of the 20th Century on. It will then explore how public policy in the United States has addressed sex trafficking, and the implications that has had for the growth of the Christian anti-trafficking movement. Next the paper will offer concrete examples of Christian organizations and the kinds of services they provide to trafficking survivors. Finally, there will be a discussion of policy implications, as well as an exploration of what recent political debates over religious freedom in the United States may mean for the anti-trafficking movement going forward. Due to the fact that Christian groups have come to play an important role in the anti-trafficking movement, I believe it is necessary to explore the consequences that an increasingly Christianized anti-trafficking movement may have for trafficking survivors.

Literature Review

Sex trafficking is not an exclusively Christian issue. However, Christian anti-trafficking organizations are prevalent in this country. Arizona State University provides a listing of sex trafficking service providers from across the United States, and approximately half of these organizations are Christian.¹⁰ Some of the most vocal anti-trafficking organizations, both within and outside the United States espouse Christ as the driving force behind their crusade. Organizations like Shared Hope International¹¹ and International Justice Mission (IJM)¹² are two nationally and internationally recognized, influential groups in the anti-trafficking movement that are explicitly Christian. Smaller groups that provide direct services to trafficking survivors, like Breaking Free¹³ in St. Paul, MN, also take a Christian angle. Likewise, Catholic Charities leads the anti-trafficking task force in the Twin Cities, and provides shelter to trafficking survivors there,¹⁴ while leading similar efforts throughout the United States.¹⁵

Christians have clearly taken up the mantle of the anti-trafficking movement, but there are many evils in this world. So what is it about trafficking- and sex trafficking in particular- that motivates these Christian groups to take such a prominent leadership role in the anti-sex trafficking movement? An examination of Scripture and the basic tenets of the faith may provide the clearest explanation for the fervor over sex trafficking. Central to Christian faith is the belief in the innate dignity of all humans. “Christianity insisted that every single human is loved by the Creator, made in His image, and destined for eternal friendship and communion. Following Judaism, Christianity made human dignity a concept of universal application.”¹⁶ This is nowhere more evident than in the Bible. Genesis speaks of God creating humans, both male and female, in His own image.¹⁷ The

Gospel of John highlights the equality of people, noting that “a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.”¹⁸ Whereas Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato posited that most humans are, by nature, suited merely to slavery, and are not deserving of freedom, Judeo-Christian faith holds that all people are equal, created in the divine image of God, and deserving of freedom and dignity.¹⁹

Bearing Christian discourse on human dignity in mind, it is reasonable that any kind of forced servitude would incite Christian activists. However, Christian groups within the anti-trafficking field appear focused on eradicating sex trafficking specifically. To understand this better, it is necessary to examine Christian ideology regarding sex. The Bible is straightforward on this matter, extolling sexual purity and condemning sexual immorality. Corinthians cautions, “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.”²⁰ Indeed, sexual temptation and lust are repeatedly referred to throughout the Bible as evil, with Colossians, for example, warning, “Put to death what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”²¹ Furthermore, sex is clearly relegated to the institution of marriage. A passage in Hebrews advises, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”²²

While the Bible warns against sexual immorality and promotes sex only within a marital context, Christians are also reminded of their procreative duty. In Genesis, God commands Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and multiply.”²³ Medieval interpretations of scripture regarding sex and marriage resulted in the promotion of complete chastity. St.

Augustine sanctioned marriage for the purpose of procreation alone. Marriage was considered the only appropriate venue for any kind of sexual activity, while any form of extramarital sex was suppressed by the Church.”²⁴ Thus, both the Bible and the early Church were concerned with when and how to condone sexuality, and when to strictly reject sexual acts. Namely, non-procreative and non-marital sex was considered a grave sin. This rhetoric continues to this day, with many Christian churches denouncing extramarital and, to a lesser extent, non-procreative sex as sinful.

This Biblical history sheds light on Christian ideology concerning sex trafficking. The Christian anti-trafficking movement largely equates prostitution and sex trafficking, either denying or diminishing the existence of voluntary prostitution. For example, on their website, Breaking Free lists as one of its goals “exposing prostitution/sex trafficking as violence against women.”²⁵ They make no distinction between prostitution and sex trafficking. Using the terms interchangeably indicates a specific ideology that sees all prostitution- voluntary or involuntary- as inherently exploitative of those being prostituted and therefore inherently wrong. This stance on prostitution, a decidedly extramarital and non-procreative form of sexual activity, reflects a broader Christian ideology on sex. And although prostitution is illegal in most of the United States,²⁶ these Christian groups maintain that all prostitutes are victims of exploitation, specifically at the hands of the pimps and “johns” (those paying for sexual services) involved in the trade. On the other hand, the secular California organization, Children of the Night, which works with minors who have been prostituted, recognizes “a woman’s right to work as a prostitute if she does so without coercion, enticement or force.”²⁷

There is a body of literature that criticizes a Christ-centered approach to combatting trafficking, specifically due to Christianity's conservative stance on sexuality. Ronald Weitzer's research is highly critical of Christian motives in anti-trafficking. Weitzer accuses Christian groups of using the issue of trafficking as a means to push a more generally anti-sex agenda.²⁸ He argues that this action by Christian groups is in response to a neo-liberal conception of sex in America. That is, the advent of the Internet has led to the proliferation of the sale of sex, and therefore Christian activists are compelled to take action.²⁹ Weitzer also calls into question the idea of trafficking being labeled as the global scourge that faith-based groups claim it to be. Specifically, he challenges some of the statistics used in the anti-trafficking movement, citing the fluctuation of data over the years even by the State Department.³⁰ He criticizes Christian groups for citing the high numbers of trafficking victims that they do, when there are clearly disparate statistics even from official sources.

Weitzer belongs to a school of thought that supports sex work as a legitimate career choice, and draws a distinction between prostitution and sex trafficking. This is very much at odds with the Christian anti-trafficking movement, which assumes that prostitution is a form of sex trafficking. Advocates for the rights of sex workers, such as the organizations Global Network of Sex Work Projects and the Sex Workers Outreach Project,³¹ reject the anti-prostitution stance of Christian organizations, and instead choose to support sex workers by providing them with resources like condoms and counseling, empowering them in the work they do, rather than condemning the industry in which they do it.³² This stance counters the notions that prostitution is inherently wrong or immoral; that it is inherently violent, or particularly rife with danger

for those who engage in it; that those who purchase sex are evil; that those who engage in the industry lack any agency; or that there is a direct link between prostitution and sex trafficking.³³ The very use of the term “sex work,” rather than prostitution, deliberately underlines that there can be agency, and that some people do choose to engage in the industry. In this way, it legitimizes prostitution as an actual job, and not merely a crime based in exploitation.³⁴ Critics of the Christian position on prostitution claim that it is in fact only the perpetuation of a moral crusade based on Christian discomfort with sex outside of marriage.³⁵

Taking a broader view of the anti-trafficking field, however, puts Weitzer’s criticisms into perspective. There are other groups in the anti-trafficking arena besides explicitly Christian ones that equate prostitution and sex trafficking, and therefore seek to eradicate both. For example, the Coalition to Abolish Trafficking in Women (CATW) is one of the most prominent U.S. groups combating trafficking today, and their website states unequivocally: “Sexual exploitation includes sexual harassment, rape, incest, battering, pornography, and prostitution. All prostitution exploits women, regardless of women’s consent.”³⁶ Therefore, while the belief in the link between prostitution and sex trafficking is grounded in Christian ideology, some secular organizations agree.

An alliance between feminists and religious groups is particularly useful for Christian organizations combating trafficking, as it offers legitimacy to the claims they make by using research conducted by people who do not have a religious agenda. In fact, they are able to cite scholarly and religiously-unbiased research to support their assertion that prostitution and trafficking are largely, if not entirely, linked. Some of the most cited statistics come from Melissa Farley, a clinical psychologist who researches prostitution

and sex trafficking both in the United States and abroad. According to her research, 89% of those currently engaged in prostitution in the United States wish that they could leave the trade, but are unable to do so.³⁷ This clearly counters the notion of free entry and exit into sex work that those who defend prostitution claim, at least for a vast majority of prostitutes. Indeed, even if a person once entered prostitution voluntarily, if she is unable to leave the trade thereafter, the element of force associated with trafficking certainly exists.

Furthermore, the anti-trafficking movement- religious and secular alike- cites age as supporting evidence for their stance. Using the combined research of Silbert and Pines,³⁸ and Boyer, Chapman, and Marshall,³⁹ the anti-trafficking movement asserts that the average age of entry into prostitution in the United States is 12 to 14.⁴⁰ This adds credence to the link between trafficking and prostitution. A minor cannot consent to becoming a prostitute, and this therefore constitutes child sex trafficking. So it would seem that those in the United States who willingly enter into prostitution as adults are rare, and that eradicating the industry may have negligible effects in terms of voluntary participants. This scholarly research provides for Christian organizations a religiously-unbiased foundation for some of the more moralistic claims they make.

To gain a better understanding of feminist notions regarding prostitution, it is important to examine the history of the framing of prostitution in the United States. The history of feminist theory regarding prostitution is closely linked to social work, which began in the mid-1800's as an Evangelical movement to protect women from men's sexual aggression.⁴¹ In the late 1800's this morphed into the framing of prostitution as "white slavery," which was the foundation for the concept of trafficking in the U.S. The

result of this was the Mann Act of 1910, which outlawed the transport of women and girls across state borders for the purpose of prostitution. Feminists adopted the issue following the lead of Josephine Butler in Great Britain, who railed against a law mandating medical examinations of prostitutes. They argued that such a law unfairly stigmatized prostitutes, rendering blameless the clients they served.⁴²

By the end of the century, Charity Organization Societies (COS) replaced the Evangelical social work movement, and framed their position less as protecting women from male sexuality, and more as aiding women who were incapable of making healthy choices. Both the Evangelical and COS approaches towards prostitution were concerned with sexual immorality.⁴³ The next wave occurred in the early 1900's with settlement workers like Jane Addams and likeminded feminists who asserted that prostitution was a social evil making women unable to save themselves from immoral people and forces. Propaganda during World War I labeled prostitutes as enemies of the state, and for several decades after, the discourse surrounding prostitution was largely influenced by psychiatrists who asserted that women who fell into prostitution possessed a certain pathology.⁴⁴

It was not until the 1960's and 1970's that prostitution began to be framed as an issue of social justice. During this time there emerged a discourse promoting economic injustice as the prime motivator for women "choosing" prostitution. This discourse has largely persisted into the 21st Century.⁴⁵ However, at the same time there are feminists who claim that sex work is a "legitimate profession stigmatized by a sexually repressed society."⁴⁶ This is a feminist position that again reflects the views of scholars like Weitzer, as well as advocates for sex workers' rights.

The propagation of prostitution as a legitimate form of work, which first came about in the 1970's and 1980's, was the result of a feminist social movement, primarily led by the organization COYOTE ("Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics"). According to Valerie Jenness' research on the organization, COYOTE "advocates for the repeal of all existing prostitution laws, the reconstitution of prostitution as a credible service occupation, and the protection of prostitutes' rights as legitimate workers."⁴⁷ By creating a new framework for understanding prostitution, organizations like COYOTE seek to separate prostitution from the stigma traditionally associated with it, choosing instead to establish a new and legitimized image of the industry.

COYOTE's message can be broken down into three key points. The first is that prostitution must be reconstructed to reflect the concept of work rather than criminal behavior. Secondly, they assert that most women involved in prostitution do so voluntarily, despite the fact that it is illegal in almost all of the United States. Finally, they claim that people should have the right to choose prostitution as their work, and should benefit from the same respect and protection that any other type of worker would receive.⁴⁸

Sheila Jeffreys' work, both in the late 1990's and again in 2008 provides a contemporary feminist viewpoint on prostitution that directly counters the likes of COYOTE. Her research was published during a time period in which the pro-sex worker movement appeared to be gaining international salience, particularly in light of successful efforts to legalize prostitution in countries throughout the world.⁴⁹ Simultaneously, however, Jeffreys notes specific instances in which the exact opposite phenomenon

occurred. For example, she points to countries like Sweden, where the act of buying, but not selling, sex was criminalized.⁵⁰

Jeffreys' research condemns the normalization and legitimization of prostitution that the pro-sex work movement had been propagating.⁵¹ Her major critique of this effort is that it denies the concept of violence against women that she and other likeminded feminists consider to be inherent to prostitution.⁵² She also refuses to use either the terms sex worker or prostitute, instead referring to these individuals as "prostituted women."⁵³ In so doing, she eliminates the notion of agency and brings the buyer to the forefront. This is a direct contradiction of the second element of COYOTE's message- that of the voluntary nature of prostitution.

In addition to the theories put forth by feminists like Jeffreys, there are three contemporary feminist critiques of prostitution. One is Marxist feminism, which asserts that prostitution is the product of a society that is based on the ownership of private property. Thus, sex workers, like all workers, are exploited and treated as mere commodities.⁵⁴ A capitalistic society, these proponents assert, commoditizes the capacity to labor, which includes the sexual capacity of women. While the Marxist framework includes classism and the economics of sex work, it excludes concepts such as sexism and agency.

A second position is that of black feminist thought, which looks at the intersectionality of race and sex work, and how the former informs the legal and social experience of sex workers of color. The experience of black sex workers is uniquely affected by a history of societal scorn towards black women.⁵⁵ Social scientists argue that black women have been sexually exploited for economic gain, as a result of their

particular characterization as being sexually immoral. Simultaneously, prostitution has highly racialized legal implications for sex workers of color, who are disproportionately arrested as compared to white sex workers.⁵⁶

The third position is Domination Theory, which claims that sexuality is the foundation for women's oppression. Those who subscribe to this viewpoint reject any notions of agency or desire in explaining why women become involved in prostitution.⁵⁷ Feminists like Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon assert that women's equality and prostitution are inherently opposed.⁵⁸ Specifically, they adamantly oppose both prostitution and pornography, claiming that they are inherently exploitative and the consequences of a patriarchal society. Such a society, they maintain, makes it impossible for women to have agency when entering the sex industry.⁵⁹ To people who subscribe to this brand of feminism (known sometimes as abolitionist feminism⁶⁰), the link between prostitution and sex trafficking is clear. Both represent the systematic oppression of women at the hands of men.

Precisely at the same time as the proliferation of organizations like COYOTE, Kathleen Barry, co-founder of CATW, utilized these multiple perspectives to illuminate the phenomenon of "female sexual slavery." In her seminal book by that title, Barry describes the exploitative nature of trafficking around the world, both contradicting the notion of voluntary prostitution that was simultaneously being propagated by COYOTE, and also bringing to light the multiple forms of oppression that intersect to force women into prostitution.⁶¹ Barry acknowledges the economic exploitation that is inherent in the sexual exploitation of women and children. However, she is also concerned with prostitution as the sexual domination of women. Furthermore, at a time when sex worker

rights groups were becoming vocal about women's agency in participating in prostitution, Barry introduced graphic stories about women all over the world being subjected to horrific forms of abuse in the sex industry.

In response to Kathleen Barry and CATW's stance, Jo Doezema in 2001 criticized the "injured third world prostitute" image.⁶² Her argument is that the "injured identity" forced upon prostitutes in the developing world actually reinforces their powerlessness. By graphically depicting prostitutes as mere sexual objects, Doezema argues, Barry rejects any interpretation of prostitution in which the prostitute is not demeaned. "Prostitution is considered always injurious because the sex in it is dehumanizing. However, the sex takes on this dehumanizing character because it takes place within prostitution."⁶³ Doezema's research, coupled with the works of Sheila Jeffreys, Ronald Weitzer and others, offer varying perspectives on prostitution, all of which came forth during a period of increasing salience surrounding the issue of sex trafficking.

As evidenced by Barry's work, the anti-trafficking movement makes an explicit connection between trafficking (in its many forms) and slavery. "Modern day slavery" is a term used both officially by the State Department,⁶⁴ as well as by feminist and Christian anti-trafficking advocates. The term slavery obviously harkens back to historical perceptions of its occurrence. People in the anti-trafficking movement maintain that there are more slaves in the present day than there were at the height of the slave trade two hundred years ago.⁶⁵ Many Christians in the anti-trafficking movement today point to William Wilberforce, the British abolitionist as a source of inspiration and motivation for their cause and the work they do. Wilberforce, a member of British Parliament who

converted to Christianity as an adult and established politician, believed it was his mission to end the slave trade in the British Empire in the name of Jesus Christ.⁶⁶ To find the link between Wilberforce's abolitionist movement and the anti-trafficking movement in the U.S. today, one need look no further than the 2007 reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which bears his name.⁶⁷

William Wilberforce saw it as his duty to be not just a politician, but a Christian politician. It was his evangelical faith, and not party loyalty, that dictated the way he voted in Parliament, which, incidentally, may have prevented him from advancing in his career.⁶⁸ In the end, Wilberforce was successful when a law that ended the British slave trade in 1807 passed. Ultimately, all slaves in the British Empire were emancipated in 1833, the year that Wilberforce died.⁶⁹ In idolizing William Wilberforce, modeling their work today after the abolition movement of the Nineteenth Century, and using rhetoric like "modern-day slavery" feminists and Christians again align in their messaging, taking a decisive stance on the nature of trafficking and how it should be framed in our modern society.

Gretchen Soderlund examines the way that religious NGOs have employed the rhetoric of abolitionism to incite a sense of urgency surrounding trafficking.⁷⁰ Soderlund analyzes Evangelism's role in sensitizing the public to trafficking as a particularly insidious violation of human rights. She thus draws a connection between trafficking and slavery, and the way that Christian individuals, churches, and groups have been able to reframe the issue and make it their own. Soderlund is highly critical of the rescue rhetoric that is employed by the abolitionist movement, and supported by the United States government during the Bush administration. Her research points out that former

Department of Justice head, John Ashcroft, allocated a yearly average of \$100 million to combat human trafficking both domestically and internationally. She posits that this was an “attempt to assert global moral leadership” on the issue.⁷¹

While the merits may be contentious, it is undeniable that the United States has been a leader in the global anti-trafficking effort, and particularly in combatting cross-border trafficking. The issue came to the forefront in 2000, prior to President Bush’s inauguration, with the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). This bill established minimum (U.S.-based) standards for eliminating trafficking within and across national borders, as well as a tiered ranking scheme measuring the extent to which individual countries are meeting those standards.⁷² As a result of these high standards, it makes sense that U.S. based anti-trafficking NGOs would be leaders in the field, both domestically and internationally. A discussion of the politics surrounding the passage of the TVPA can be found later in the paper.

There is an abundance of research on the way in which federal funding has fueled faith-based groups in their quest to ameliorate all manners of social ills, including, but not limited to, trafficking. This governmental sanction of religious causes came to the forefront in 1996 with welfare reform. Section 104 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) delineates the concept of charitable choice. Charitable choice was the mechanism under which faith-based organizations were included as service providers to welfare recipients, and were therefore eligible to receive public funding. The underlying theme in PRWORA is that of moral judgment. It was not merely aimed at lifting people out of poverty, but reforming their behavior to make them productive members of society.⁷³

It would seem that faith-based organizations would be the perfect administrators of this moral directive. Charitable choice provides the regulation and funding for them to do so. It stipulates that religious groups not be discriminated against in receiving government contracts, that their religious nature not be censored or diminished, that the recipients of their services not be denied services due to their own faith, and that there must be a comparable non-religious alternative for people in need of services.⁷⁴

Mark Chaves has written extensively on the concept of charitable choice. His later work examines whether or not this funding eases the fears of non-religious people by stifling the political advocacy of those religious groups who receive it. However, Chaves finds that this is not the case.⁷⁵ The establishment of charitable choice broke down the separation between church and state, and foreshadowed what would come in the 21st century with regards to religion and the anti-trafficking movement.

While PRWORA was enacted during the Clinton administration, it was embedded into a much larger and more comprehensive plan to fight poverty. However, it was further enforced during the George W. Bush administration, and became a movement in and of itself. The Bush administration created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), which is now known as the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, as well as executive department centers in various federal departments, all with the purpose of ameliorating bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining federal funding for faith-based groups.⁷⁶

The policies toward faith-based organizations during the Bush administration were not exclusive to welfare service providers. Bush's personal faith and ideologies impacted the way his administration viewed trafficking, and the methods it used to

combat it. The rhetoric he used during his tenure was similar to the way Christian anti-trafficking organizations speak about their work every day, citing that human life is a gift from God, which should never be bought and sold.⁷⁷ This proclamation has an overtly religious tone, and suggests that his concern regarding trafficking was grounded in his Christian faith. Furthermore, his assertion about humans not being for sale indicates a fundamental disagreement with prostitution in general, and not just forced prostitution.

As such, the Bush administration heralded a faith-based approach to trafficking in U.S. policy. Funding to faith-based organizations for the purpose of combating trafficking increased significantly, giving these organizations the necessary resources to further an anti-prostitution message. Between 2001 and 2004, the Bush administration granted \$35 million to faith-based anti-trafficking organizations, and increased funding to such groups at a rate of 15% a year.⁷⁸ The OFBCI was instrumental in these efforts, as the Bush administration eliminated previous regulations that restricted federal money from going towards secular activities only, so that faith-based organizations became more freely able to spend federal money on any work they did.⁷⁹ Moreover, the administration cited faith-based groups as necessary partners in the battle against human trafficking.⁸⁰ This shift in federal spending clearly stemmed from a particular ideology, which was the basis for the Bush administration's anti-trafficking policy.

Yvonne Zimmerman argues that funding shifted from qualified secular organizations to less competent religious ones.⁸¹ Her evidence for this is somewhat anecdotal, as she cites a particular grantee's experience. The Crossing the Bridge Project is an anti-sex trafficking program developed by the Concerned Women for America (CWA), a conservative, Christian women's public policy organization. Crossing the

Bridge received \$300,000 in the fiscal years 2004 and 2005 from the federal government. Its leader, Brenda Zurita, took the helm after relatively little training in anti-trafficking work, and has claimed that faith in God and prayer are the best methods for combatting trafficking.⁸²

The constitutionality of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was broached by the Supreme Court in 2007 in *Hein v. Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc.*⁸³ However, little came of it. The respondents in the case brought suit due to their opposition to government endorsement of religion, using the Establishment Clause of the constitution as their basis for opposition. According to the respondents, the Office's organizing of conferences promoting religion and religious activity violated the Establishment Clause.⁸⁴ The petitioners were the directors of the OFBCI. Both the lower courts and the Supreme Court cited *Flast v. Cohen* (1968) as precedent.⁸⁵ The ultimate decision of the Supreme Court was that the OFBCI had not violated the Establishment Clause, because of its location within the Executive Branch. Specifically, because the petitioners were not administering a Congressional program, the respondents did not have the taxpayer standing necessary to sue the OFBCI.⁸⁶ Interestingly, this finding says nothing about the constitutionality of the OFBCI or actions it takes to promote religious programs. The ruling was simply that the respondents lacked standing, because the programs administered through the OFBCI are paid for with general Executive Branch appropriations, and not by money appropriated by Congress.

Much as William Wilberforce did in Parliament two centuries ago, conservative members of Congress have used their religious beliefs as rationale for the social causes they champion today. When the TVPA was enacted in 2000, the United States had a

Democratic White House, but both Congress and the Senate held Republican majorities. Therefore the situation was ripe for a relatively conservative piece of anti-trafficking legislation to pass. Congressman Chris Smith of New Jersey, a conservative, Christian, Republican, sponsored the TVPA.⁸⁷ Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, a progressive, Jewish, Democrat, had also proposed an anti-trafficking bill. However, there were some striking differences between the two pieces of legislation. While Smith's legislation placed a great deal of emphasis on sex trafficking, the Wellstone legislation was broader, addressing forced labor in general, and including sex trafficking as only one aspect within a set of crimes under the umbrella of human trafficking.⁸⁸

Wellstone's bill essentially treated prostitution as a form of labor. In so doing, it legitimized prostitution as work that, though not inherently exploitative, has the potential to be (just as in the case of factories engaged in labor trafficking). Wellstone's bill was favored among sex workers' rights groups and the Clinton administration. However, abolitionist feminists and Christian groups lobbied for Smith's version, which ultimately passed and became the TVPA.⁸⁹ Christian anti-trafficking groups like IJM were instrumental in the passage of the bill, and in organizing campaigns against the Wellstone version.⁹⁰

The reauthorization of the bill that passed in 2003, with the support of the Bush administration, included the Prostitution Loyalty Oath, stating that no anti-trafficking organization could receive federal funds without stating in their grant application and/or grant agreement that they do not support the legalization or practice of prostitution.⁹¹ Again we see evidence of the shift that has taken place over the past decade regarding the espoused connection between prostitution and sex trafficking.

The Prostitution Loyalty Oath, which was mandated both by the TVPA and the Global AIDS Act, was originally intended to apply only to foreign organizations. However, in 2004, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Departments of State and Health and Human Services (HHS) began imposing the rule on U.S.-based organizations as well.⁹² This was in spite of protests by organizations that the government was infringing upon their right to free speech. The methodology section of this paper will shed some light on the Christian perspective of the Prostitution Loyalty Oath, in particular by looking at an organization that has had to sign onto it.

In order to get a complete picture of the anti-trafficking movement it is necessary to look at the policies of the Obama administration thus far and how they have changed since the Bush Administration, as well as to consider what the policy implications are for the future. Recent developments suggest that the current administration is reversing many policies put in place by the previous one, though this may have less to do with prostitution and more to do with fundamentally different views on women's health. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which had overseen services to trafficking survivors since 2006, was recently denied funding from HHS.⁹³ This decision is a result of the fact that the Catholic Bishops refuse to "refer trafficking victims for contraceptives or abortion" and, after the American Civil Liberties Union brought up suit, HHS is instead funding organizations that do provide such referrals.⁹⁴

The actions we are seeing now on the part of the Obama administration indicate a different basis for anti-trafficking policy. While the previous administration seemed to root its stance in anti-prostitution rhetoric, the current one may be shying away from the issue of prostitution, and instead making decisions based on the health services provided

to trafficking survivors. Furthermore, at the end of March 2012, a federal judge ruled that government grants for Catholic-run organizations serving trafficking victims represent an unconstitutional endorsement of the Catholic faith.⁹⁵ This ruling was the result of a suit brought forth by the American Civil Liberties Union a few days prior to President Obama's January 2009 inauguration. It is likely that the USCCB will appeal the decision. The ruling has significant implications, particularly in the current political climate, and may indicate a permanent shift in public funding and support for faith-based anti-trafficking efforts. However, a decrease in public funding may not be so consequential for faith-based organizations. In December 2011, Google announced that it would be funding a new, \$40 million global anti-trafficking initiative. One of its grantors, International Justice Mission, will receive nearly \$10 million to lead a coalition on anti-trafficking initiatives in India, and a trafficking education initiative here in the U.S.⁹⁶

Religious freedom is an issue that is coming to bear in American politics, particularly in relation to federal funding for contraception. Although Title X of the Public Health Service Act, the Population Research and Voluntary Family Planning Programs, was enacted in 1970⁹⁷ (under a Republican president, no less), current political discourse is calling into question the constitutionality of requiring Churches and faith-based organizations to provide employees with birth control under the federal health care bill that was passed in 2010.⁹⁸ As discussed earlier, the Christian stance regarding sex is that it should be both marital and procreative in nature. Therefore, mandating the provision of birth control- the purpose of which is diametrically opposed to Christian social teachings- has sparked considerable dissent among religious (and particularly Catholic) organizations. The current Republican presidential primary, in particular, has

brought the issue to the forefront, with candidates repeatedly asserting that the President's mandate for birth control coverage is a violation of religious freedom, as enshrined in the First Amendment. Furthermore, a Democratic Senate and Republican Congress have created a highly partisan political environment, in which controversial issues like contraception are fodder for heated debate.

The current debates and political climate may have significant implications for faith-based anti-trafficking organizations. If religious employers are required to provide contraceptive access to their employees, will that lead to required access to contraception for the clients of religious service providers as well? More broadly, what will the consequence of federal funding for such organizations be? Of course, much of this depends on the results of the 2012 Presidential and Congressional elections. Current discourse among Republican Primary candidates indicate that a Republican victory may reverse decades-long access to family planning methods for vulnerable populations, including trafficking survivors.⁹⁹

This paper will expand on the existing literature by examining the services provided by actual anti-trafficking organizations, and determining the extent to which their religious affiliation sets them apart from non-religious service providers. Thus, while much of the previous literature has been theoretical in nature, this paper will put that theory into practice through conversations with a small group of Christian organizations.

Methodology

Representatives of Christian anti-trafficking organizations from around the United States were interviewed over the phone to provide information on the values and

ideology of their organization, as well as its funding sources and services. Organizations were chosen based on their provision of social services to victims of sex trafficking. Services that met the criteria for this study included case management, counseling, and housing. While organizations that provided legal services were not excluded from my sample, I was not interested in those that provided legal services exclusively.

I used the Arizona State University Bilsten Handbook (Appendix B) to find organizations, in addition to contacting service providers I knew of through my own work. One service provider- a safe house in Kansas that will soon be opening- was referred to me by a colleague. As I received positive responses, I avoided contacting other organizations within the same state, so as to have a geographically representative sample that would counter any possible regional bias.

The Bilsten handbook, while not comprehensive, lists 94 groups and organizations working in the anti-trafficking field. However, it was necessary to do further screening in order to determine eligibility. There are numerous entities listed that are task forces or coalitions, comprising several groups working in the anti-trafficking field, and these were not pertinent to my research. Furthermore, some of the listed organizations do advocacy and education work surrounding trafficking, and perhaps provide referrals to other agencies that provide services, but do not themselves provide services. These again were outside the scope of my research. I was interested in speaking only with organizations who provided housing, counseling, and/or case management.

While I did also contact fifteen secular organizations to obtain information via both surveys and interviews, I received only one response. Most of these organizations did not respond at all. However, I did speak with some representatives who simply said

they did not have time to help me. My own time constraints prevented me from reaching out to more organizations.

I contacted fifteen Christian organizations, and six interviews were conducted. Organizations that were interviewed represented both coasts and the Midwest. Individuals who responded to interview requests generally held positions of leadership within their organization (i.e. at the executive level). Two of the organizations I interviewed were still in the process of opening a safe house, and were therefore not yet providing services to trafficking victims. However, both had concrete plans for how they planned to operate, and had already secured a property. Another organization also had plans to open a safe house, and is in the meantime providing services through a nonresidential advocacy center. All of the religious organizations were explicitly faith-based, and were identified as such on their websites. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, and the rough outline of the questions asked can be found in Appendix A. All interviewees were asked if their names and the names of their organizations could be used in this paper, and only one declined to be named.

Results

The interviews revealed some common themes among Christian organizations. Most of the interviewees spoke about the presence of God, both in their decision to start their work, as well as in their continued efforts. Deb Kluttz is the Executive Pastor of Westview Community Church in Manhattan, Kansas, which will be opening a residential facility for adult women who have been sexually exploited. It is called The Homestead, and will open in July of 2012. Kluttz commented on God's continual presence in the donations and resources being accumulated. A member of her congregation who had

been involved in the Women's Ministry died suddenly, and her husband- knowing how excited she had been about the transitional home- donated \$25,000 to the project.

Another member of the congregation had a piece of property with a house, and experienced what she described as a vision of the house being used for The Homestead's mission. They also received in-kind donations of furniture and repairs. Kluttz spoke extensively about the power of prayer and her belief that "the Lord laid it on people's hearts" to donate time, money, and other resources to The Homestead.

Likewise, Stephanie Holt, Executive Director of Mission 21, a nondenominational service provider in Minnesota that serves sex-trafficked children aged 15 and below, spoke of the fact that her organization does its work in the name of Jesus. "God was the one that gave me this calling, and through my faith I accepted it." As in the case of The Homestead, Holt attributed Mission 21's rapid growth to God, asserting that "things have happened in the last 2 years that I know were just miracles, because I have no idea how they happened."

As important as faith is to the people operating these organizations, none of the interviewed organizations saw converting clients as part of their mission. The Managing Director of On Eagles Wings Ministry, a parachurch- or cross-denominational- ministry in Asheville, North Carolina affirmed that her organization does not require that its clients be Christian; nor do they preach at them or "Bible thump." On the other hand, when listing measurements of success, she included a client coming to Christ, among other measurements, such as a lack of recidivism or receiving a GED. None of the other interviewed organizations included embracing Christ as a possible measure of success. For example, at Mission 21 it is never an expectation that the clients will be Christians by

the end of their time there. Other organizations emphasized individualized plans for each client, and progress in meeting those goals as being indicative of success. The ability of individual clients to obtain self-sufficiency was an important metric for organizations working with adults.

The level of religious involvement expected of the clients varied somewhat among the organizations interviewed. For example, at On Eagles Wings Ministry's safe house, clients are not expected to attend church services or take part in Bible study. However, the staff and volunteers do hold Bible studies and pray openly, so it is something clients are exposed to. Furthermore, non-Christian faiths are not accommodated for worship. However, this is not the case for all service providers. A Midwestern organization, which declined to be named, hopes to open a safe house in 2012, and religious non-Christian clients' faiths will be accommodated at this facility. At Mission 21 the staff pray together during meetings, but do not do so publicly for clients to see. While the minors they serve are aware that they can request prayer, and the staff ask them if they need prayer, it is voluntary and left up to the clients to decide. At The Homestead, on the other hand, clients will be required to attend weekly services. It is important to note that while most of the interviewed organizations were not any particular denomination of Christianity, The Homestead is an outreach effort by a Wesleyan Church, an offshoot of the Methodist denomination.

World Relief- the only interviewed organization describing itself as Evangelical- provides comprehensive case management services to survivors of sex trafficking at offices in Florida, North Carolina, and Washington State. The organization has an accommodating attitude when it comes to faith. This is perhaps surprising considering its

mission, as stated on its website, is “empowering the local church to serve the most vulnerable.” But according to Amy Hewat, US Anti-Trafficking Specialist at World Relief, their in-take process involves asking clients whether or not they would like to be connected with a faith community, and, if so, what kind. World Relief helps them meet their spiritual needs, regardless of religion. This is at least partly due to the fact that the organization is primarily federally funded, and therefore is prohibited from proselytizing. However, Hewat asserted that even if that were not the case, their general philosophy as an organization is to, “share our faith through our actions.”

The interviewees were asked about their stance concerning the connection between prostitution and sex trafficking. In some cases, the clients served are minors, and so the issue is not particularly relevant. However, even those organizations that serve minors were asked if they have an organizational philosophy regarding prostitution and trafficking as it pertains to adults. None of the interviewed organizations have a formal statement on the issue. However, every interviewee said that her personal belief is that prostitution is a form of sex trafficking or sexual exploitation. A few stated that even in cases where a woman “chose” to engage in prostitution, she could not imagine that that decision was not the result of some type of coercion. World Relief is required to sign onto the Prostitution Loyalty Oath in order to obtain its HHS funding, and while it does not have a written policy on the matter otherwise, it is in no way an issue for them to sign the Oath.

Regarding their approach to sex, all of the organizations stated that they would discourage their clients from engaging in sexual relationships. On Eagles’ Wings Ministry prohibits sex within its safe house, which is likely the case for any other safe

house being operated by interviewed organizations. There was a common theme among the interviewees of wanting clients to focus on their own personal growth, but also of wanting to teach them about healthy relationships. The Homestead has the intent to provide relational mentors to clients. It would be a voluntary program in which a couple from the congregation mentored Homestead clients and their partners on healthy relationship behavior.

Most of the interviewees stated that they would provide referrals for contraception to clients who asked. The only exception was the anonymous Midwestern organization, which had not yet established protocol on this matter, and so the interviewee was unsure. Stephanie Holt of Mission 21 stated that, since her organization works with minors, it is her legal responsibility to ensure there is no danger to her clients in the form of statutory rape. In general, though, none of the organizations have an explicitly negative stance towards contraception.

When it comes to abortion, the stances of the interviewed organizations were less clear. For a couple of organizations, there was no stated policy regarding abortion (either because they were not yet operational, or because it just had not yet proven to be an issue). Those that did have some sort of policy concerning abortion typically would refer clients to a local Crisis Pregnancy Center. While all those interviewed asserted that it would ultimately be left to the client to make that decision, they want to ensure that the client is aware of all of her options in such a situation. It should be noted that Crisis Pregnancy Centers have received extensive criticism from pro-choice groups recently, for allegedly propagating false information about the health effects of abortion, as well as for unduly pressuring clients into carrying their pregnancies to term.¹⁰⁰

Generate Hope is one of only two interviewed organizations that receives federal funding. A Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant was awarded to the County of San Diego, which then distributed the money to various service providers for the homeless. Generate Hope was the only recipient specifically dedicated to serving victims of sex trafficking. Mission 21 also sometimes receives public money, which in their case comes from Olmsted County to represent minors in court.

As mentioned earlier, the other interviewed organization receiving federal funding is World Relief. It is the longest-established organization, having been founded in the 1940's, though it only began to address trafficking in 2003. World Relief is the only interviewed organization that experienced the shift during the Obama administration away from USCCB-funded services. However, according to Amy Hewat, their services have not changed as a result. They have never had a policy against contraception, and while their stance is not now, and never has been, to encourage abortion, their policy is to refer clients to medical facilities that provide "comprehensive services." This calls into question the true nature of the USCCB grant, and the extent to which sub-grantees were actually constrained in the types of medical referrals they provided.

According to Hewat, the only notable difference for World Relief as a result of the funding shift has been logistical in nature. Whereas their HHS funding was formerly granted through one entity, it is now granted through three separate agencies. Because those agencies are divided by region, and World Relief has offices in multiple regions of the United States, they now must maintain three separate reporting mechanisms to fulfill the requirements of the grant.

The other interviewed organizations are deliberate in not pursuing public money.

When asked about this, there were two main reasons that were cited. One was what some see as the bureaucratic nightmare associated with government funding. The second is the centrality of ministry to their mission. The representative from the anonymous Midwestern organization perhaps described it best:

No we're not going for government money. And there's, I suppose, in my opinion, two reasons for that. One is that it adds a layer of bureaucracy. And it's not that we're not going to evaluate, by any means, but we just feel that bureaucracy changes the focus from the girls to reporting. And what we want to concentrate our efforts on is helping the girls effectively. The second reason is- and I don't know if anyone else agrees with me on this- but this is my personal thing- is I do not personally believe that someone can be restored from human trafficking without being restored spiritually.

Her reasoning, though mostly her own opinion and not reflective of a formal organizational policy, sums up the views of most of the interviewed organizations regarding government funding.

Discussion

The results of the interviews provide a far more complex picture of Christian anti-trafficking organizations than much of the previous literature reveals. While these service providers certainly embrace Christ, and cite their faith as the foundation for their work, they are committed to providing the best care possible for the clients they serve. This includes best practices for counseling as determined by licensed counselors. While they believe that spirituality can be an important aspect of recovery for women and girls who have been sexually exploited, none of them promote Christ as the only path for recovery (though some of them do restrict access to other faiths).

However, this is not to say that the clients of these organizations would necessarily feel comfortable in an environment where religion, and specifically Christianity, is so thoroughly embraced. By the same token, the most ardently Christian

of these organizations seem aware of this possibility. For example, Deb Kluttz was forthright about her expectations of the clients that will be served by The Homestead when she read to me a paragraph on who they are and then expanded:

“The Homestead is based on Christian principles. The Homestead will offer a voluntary, short-term transitory care program based on Christian principles of integrity, safety, love and health. As a Homesteader you are not required to share any religious belief, only that you understand the nature of the program offered, are open to allowing God to work in your life while you are with us, and at minimum are not disruptive to the efforts others may be making in various respects including in developing a relationship with Jesus Christ.” So really what we ask is openness. I guess part of this is going to mean training on the front end. Because if they’re really not open to a faith-based ministry, it probably is not a good fit. I’m not going to even pretend that we can help everybody, and that everyone would be a good fit for what we’re offering. But if it’s someone who wants to live in our house that we’re providing everything for them, and giving them this wonderful opportunity. I would hope that the thing they would bring to the table is openness.

Kluttz’s frankness indicates that her organization, and possibly other church-led service providers harbor no illusions that their faith-based approach would be appropriate for everyone. However, it does also bring to the forefront the power dynamic issue involved in providing services to a vulnerable group, such as those who have been sexually exploited. While clients are not expected to convert- and, indeed, Kluttz and others indicated that such an expectation would lead to insincere conversions- they are receiving a lifeline from an explicitly religious organization that expects their openness to ministry.

The interviewed organizations, for the most part, measure success in terms of their clients’ ability to become responsible, productive members of society, who see their self worth beyond just their bodies, and are capable of making healthy life choices. This is arguably what any anti-trafficking service provider would want for its clients and is therefore indicative of a common purpose among faith-based and secular organizations alike. While Christian service providers may value a spiritual recovery in addition to the

accomplishment of other goals, it is a somewhat ancillary benefit to the overarching goal of helping their clients responsibly reintegrate into society. As Amy Hewat of World Relief put it, “We provide the highest quality services that we can and have access to.”

In terms of the medical services provided to trafficking survivors, contraception seems readily available to those clients of Christian organizations who seek it. The interviewed organizations are mostly willing and able to provide access to contraception, usually through a local clinic. The only one for which this is not the case has not yet opened its safe house, and therefore does not yet have a policy. This topic was not very controversial. On the other hand, abortion, as was expected, is a fairly sensitive topic for these organizations. While some were unsure because it was a topic they had yet to face, and they do not have an established policy, others have a policy of referring clients to local Crisis Pregnancy Centers. This indicates a religiously motivated policy towards abortion- one which strongly discourages, though does not necessarily prohibit, abortion among trafficked clients.

The issue of funding provided perhaps the most surprising results of the study. Not only do the interviewed organizations, for the most part, not receive government funding, but they are also not inclined to pursue government funding. The two notable exceptions are a service provider receiving a HUD grant for homelessness and World Relief’s funding through the Department of Justice and HHS. The funding situations of the interviewed organizations have many implications. All of the organizations, with the exception of World Relief, are very new, and some do not even yet provide services. Therefore they are too young to have benefited from Bush administration policies towards faith-based anti-trafficking organizations. This may indicate a turning tide in

funding for faith-based organizations, in which such organizations perceive an unfriendly political environment for their funding.

The religious freedom debates currently being waged may determine the future of the role of religious institutions in social service provision. The Obama administration's approach concerning religious organizations (besides houses of worship) providing insurance coverage to employees for contraception¹⁰¹ is reminiscent of the move HHS made to strip funding from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. As a result, the current administration appears hostile towards religious organizations, especially in comparison to the previous one.

On the other hand, political climate may have had less to do with the proliferation of religious organizations combatting trafficking than legislative agenda. It can hardly be a coincidence that these organizations are now- after the past decade of government action surrounding trafficking- beginning to form. Bearing in mind that none of the interviewed organizations were established more than seven years ago, with the exception of World Relief, which likewise did not begin addressing trafficking until nine years ago, it is clear that trafficking has achieved an enormous amount of salience in recent years. It would be impossible to make a causal inference between the Bush administration's efforts and the propagation of a faith-based anti-trafficking effort, particularly considering the fact that so few faith-based organizations appear to be receiving government funding. However, the attention given to trafficking during the Bush administration- both by the administration itself, as well as by members of Congress at the time- created an awareness about the issue that led people of faith to engage.

As demonstrated by the interviews, Christian anti-trafficking organizations are only growing in numbers. This is evidenced by the fact that nearly all of the interviewed organizations were very young or not even officially open yet. I believe this to be fairly typical of service providers in general, mainly due to the fact that the issue has only gained salience in the last decade or so, and it takes time to establish organizations like these. However, once the issue came to the forefront of social consciousness in the United States, Christians were determined to help, regardless of changing political tides. Moreover, they seem to generally lack interest in public funding for their work, wishing instead to maintain a ministry as part of their services, as well as to bypass the bureaucratic issues associated with obtaining government funding. In general, the people I interviewed are working on this issue because there is a need, and because they were called to do so. Whether or not public funding exists is irrelevant, particularly because they have managed to generate funding and other resources largely with the help of their faith community. As awareness of the issue increases, no doubt more Christian organizations will form to take on the cause in their communities.

It is difficult to place a value judgment, one way or another, on the prevalence of Christian anti-trafficking service providers. On the one hand, there is some differentiation between Christian and secular organizations in terms of health services-abortion referrals in particular. Also, some Christian service providers have a more hardline approach than others regarding their expectations of clients' participation in faith-based activities. However, the differences that exist seem to be dwarfed by the similarities. Fundamentally the services provided by anti-trafficking organizations are the same, regardless of religious affiliation. None of my interviews indicated that a Christian

foundation for service provision in any way precludes organizations from providing high quality case management by licensed counselors. Furthermore, their ultimate goals for their clients are what anyone in the anti-trafficking field would want for people coming out of sexually exploitative situations.

A cursory examination of US-based anti-trafficking service providers shows that the direst situation facing those coming out of trafficking is an overall dearth of services. There are relatively few service providers to begin with, and even fewer that provide housing specifically for sexually exploited individuals. The need- though difficult to quantify- certainly surpasses the resources available. Therefore, I contend that we, as a society, have a responsibility to encourage the proliferation of housing, counseling and other services for trafficking survivors, regardless of the religious affiliation of particular service providers.

Limitations

A major limitation of this study is the fact that no Catholic organizations were interviewed. While, in general, all forms of Christianity were treated the same, I may have encountered greater variability in answers regarding contraception had I spoken to a representative from a Catholic organization. Furthermore, due to the recent defunding controversy involving HHS and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, a Catholic perspective would likely have provided very interesting data. However, because the funding had already been cut once research began, I was prohibited from obtaining the names of USCCB sub-grantees. Additionally, no Catholic sex-trafficking service providers responded to my general inquiries for interviews.

Another limitation is the lack of data from secular sex trafficking service providers. Future research would benefit from a more representative, and larger, sample of sex trafficking service providers in the United States, which would in turn lead to a more thorough comparison of faith-based and secular providers.

Finally, as with any study that relies on self-reporting, there is the possibility that interviewees were less than candid in answering questions. A more reliable form of data gathering would be observations, or perhaps interviews with clients. This again is a possibility for future research, and would add a great deal of depth to the literature concerning Christian service providers.

Conclusion

The issue of sex trafficking is deceptively complex. While it is ostensibly one of the worst crimes that can be committed against a human being, there are different ideologies regarding its nature, its true extent, and how it should be addressed as a social problem. In recent years, as the issue has increased in salience in the United States, Christians have become more powerful in the anti-trafficking movement. Their use of abolitionist language, coupled with a belief in the inextricable link between prostitution and sex trafficking has become the ideology at the forefront of the movement. While their intentions are good, many oppose their general views on sex, and believe it inappropriate for them to receive federal funding. At the same time, faith-based groups have been able to forge impressive coalitions with both secular groups, and abolitionist feminists, employing feminist theory to legitimize the Christian claims. They also have increased in numbers and capacity without relying on government funding, and in doing so have maintained their Christian ministry.

The Bush administration and other conservative politicians in the past decade were able to increase the capacity of faith-based organizations to combat trafficking, and it remains to be seen what the Obama administration and future Presidents will do to either reverse or affirm the Christian stance on sex trafficking. Whatever happens, it may have policy implications for prostitution in the United States, and it will inform U.S. policy on trafficking both domestically and internationally.

Regardless of whether or not faith-based anti-trafficking groups receive public funding, as well as whether or not they provide all of the family planning services that secular organizations might provide, these groups offer important services to survivors of sex trafficking. Concerns about evangelization and provision of reproductive health care, while legitimate, have been exaggerated by much of the literature. Fundamentally, we need more resources and services for sexually exploited individuals, whatever the religious beliefs of service providers might be. If Christian organizations were not so active, the U.S. would be missing a substantial portion of an already inadequate number of sex trafficking service providers.

Appendix A

General Interview Script

- 1) What is your organization's mission and ideology?
- 2) How long have you worked for the organization and in what capacity?
- 3) What types of services does your organization provide to trafficking survivors (e.g.- medical, counseling, housing, job search assistance)?
- 4) How many clients does your organization help every year on average?
- 5) What kind of program completion requirements do you have for your clients?
- 6) Do you have and could you provide data on recidivism rates for the clients you serve (including both those who do and do not complete program requirements)?
- 7) If a client requested a referral for an abortion or contraception, what kind of response would organizational policy dictate?
- 8) Does your organization have an official stance on prostitution in relation to sex trafficking? If so, what was the reasoning behind it?
- 9) At any point in time, have federal/state regulations regarding prostitution, or the prostitution-related regulations of any granting agency, impacted your funding strategy? If so how?
- 10) Does your staff encourage trafficking survivors to embrace a particular religious ideology?
- 11) If you answered yes to the previous question, what does organizational policy dictate you do in the event that a survivor is unwilling to embrace that faith?

Appendix B

Anti-trafficking Organizations¹⁰²

National Level

Stop The Traffik

<http://www.stophetraffik.org/>

Freedom Network USA

www.freedomnetworkusa.org

End Internet Trafficking Coalition

www.eitcoalition.org

Covenant House

www.covenanthouse.org

Chapter 61 Ministries

www.chapter61.net

ASSET

<http://assetcampaign.org/>

National District Attorneys Association

<http://www.ndaa.org>

Abolish Slavery Coalition

<http://www.abolishslavery.org>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

<http://www.missingkids.com>

State Organizations

Arizona

alert

www.traffickingaz.org

Apeca

<http://www.protectchild.org/newsite/>

Streetlight

<http://streetlightphx.com/>

vision abolition

<http://www.visionabolition.org/>

California

THE ACTION NETWORK

<http://absoluteperceptions.com/school/actionnetwork/new/index.html>

A21 CAMPAIGN

www.thea21campaign.org

BILATERAL SAFETY CORRIDOR COALITION

<http://www.bsccoalition.org/>

CAPTIVE DAUGHTERS

<http://www.captive daughters.org>

CHAB DAI USA

<http://www.chabdai.org>

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

<http://www.childrenofthenight.org/index.html>

COALITION TO ABOLISH SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING

<http://www.castla.org>

generatehope

<http://www.generatehope.org/>

los angeles county unity coalition

<http://lahumantrafficking.org>

lotus outreach international

<http://www.lotusoutreach.org>

lydia today foundation

<http://www.lydiatoday.org>

million kids

<http://www.millionkids.org>

missey

<http://www.missey.org>

prostitution research and education

<http://www.prostitutionresearch.com>

the sage project

<http://www.sagesf.org/>

the sold project

<http://www.thesoldproject.com>

tiny stars

<http://www.tinystars.org>

Colorado

PRAX(US)

<http://www.praxus.org>

Connecticut

The barnaba institute

<http://www.barnabainstitute.org>

LOVE 146

www.love146.org

The Paul & Lisa Program, Inc.

www.paulandlisa.org

save the children

<http://www.savethechildren.org>

Florida

Clearwater/tampa bay area task force on human trafficking

www.catfht.org

florida coalition against human trafficking

<http://www.stophumantrafficking.org/>

florida freedom partnership

<http://www.floridafreedom.org>

human trafficking awareness partnerships, inc.

<http://www.humantraffickingawareness.com/>

Georgia

A FUTURE. NOT A PAST.

<http://afuturenotapast.org/>

Atlanta Day Shelter for Women and Children

<http://www.atlantadayshelter.org/>

CEASE (GA)

<http://juvenilejusticefund.org/contactus.aspx>

MEET Justice

<http://meetjustice.org/>

REdeemed, Inc.

<http://redeemedlove.org/>

Street Grace

<http://www.streetgrace.org/>

Tapestri, Inc.

<http://www.tapestri.org/Default.aspx>

Illinois

heartland alliance

<http://www.heartlandalliance.org/>

the international organization for adolescents

<http://www.iofa.org>

PROMISE

www.sapromise.org

TRAFFICKFREE

<http://www.traffickfree.org>

Kansas

VERONICA'S VOICE

<http://www.veronicasvoice.org>

Massachusetts

body and sold

<http://www.bodyandsold.org>

children's advocacy center of suffolk county

<http://www.suffolkcac.org>

Hunt Alternatives Fund

<http://www.huntalternatives.org>

Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.

<http://www.roxburyyouthworks.org>

Michigan

the hope project

<http://www.hopeprojectusa.org/index.cfm>

Minnesota

stop violence against women

<http://www.stopvaw.org/>

the family partnership

<http://www.everyfamilymatters.org/>

Missouri

VERONICA'S VOICE

<http://www.veronicasvoice.org>

Nevada

HOOKERS FOR JESUS

<http://www.hookersforjesus.net>

New York

ENDING CHILD PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING

<http://ecpatusa.org/>

f.r.e.e. international

<http://www.free-international.org>

gems

<http://www.gems-girls.org/>

the human trafficking project

<http://www.traffickingproject.org/>

restore

www.restorenyc.org

safe horizon

<http://www.safehorizon.org>

STOP CHILD TRAFFICKING NOW

<http://sctnow.com/index.aspx?parentnavigationid=5812>

North Carolina

CAROLINA WOMEN'S CENTER

<http://womenscenter.unc.edu/>

NC stop human trafficking

<http://ncstophumantrafficking.wordpress.com/>

Ohio

second chance

<http://www.secondchancetoledo.org>

Transitions global

<http://transitionsglobal.org>

Oklahoma

O.A.T.H.

<http://oathcoalition.org>

Pennsylvania

THE PROJECT TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

<http://www.endhumantrafficking.org>

Rhode Island

rhode island coalition against human trafficking

<http://www.ricw.ri.gov/Human%20Trafficking/index.php>

Tennessee

CEASE (TN)

<http://www.lcs.net/cease/index.htm>

NO SILENCE CAMPAIGN

<http://www.nosilencenow.org>

Texas

Children at risk

<http://childrenatrisk.org>

CTcaht

<http://www.ctcaht.org/>

HOUSTON RESCUE AND RESTORE COALITION

<http://houstonrr.org/>

REDEEMED MINISTRIES

<http://www.redeemedministries.com/>

Virginia

global centurion

<http://www.globalcenturion.org>

INITIATIVE AGAINST SEXUAL TRAFFICKING

<http://www.iast.net>

Washington

faithtrust institute

<http://www.faihttrustinstitute.org/>

Washington D.C.

ayuda

<http://www.ayuda.com>

Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking

<http://usccb.org/mrs/trafficking/coalition.shtml>

Courtney\s House

<http://www.courtneyshouse.org>

fair fund

<http://www.fairfund.org>

the global fund for children

<http://www.globalfundforchildren.org>

innocents at risk

<http://www.innocentsatrisk.org>

international justice mission

<http://www.ijm.org/>

polaris project

<http://www.polarisproject.org>

the protection project

www.protectionproject.org

the rebecca project for human rights

www.rebeccaproject.org

stop modern slavery

<http://www.stopmodernslavery.org/>

Wisconsin

sisters of the divine savior

<http://www.sdssisters.org/slavery/>

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