

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: MORE THAN A MOVEMENT: UNPACKING  
CONTEMPORARY ANTI-HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING EFFORTS IN  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Gina Callahan, Doctor of Philosophy, 2016

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Trafficking in persons has attracted seemingly boundless attention over the last two decades and the work aimed at fighting it is best understood when this cause is contextualized against the backdrop of other social forces—economic, social, and cultural—shaping contemporary nonprofit activities. This project argues that the paid and volunteer labor that takes place in metro Washington, D.C., to combat trafficking in persons can be understood as both a movement and an industry. In addition to arguing that anti-trafficking work is part of a nonprofit industrial complex that situates activist and advocacy work firmly inside state and economic institutions, this project is concerned with the ways in which trafficking work and workers conduct their business collectively. As an organizational study, it identifies the key players in the D.C. region focused on this issue and traces their interactions, collaborations, and cooperation.

Significantly, this project suggests that despite variations in objectives, methods, priorities, and characterizations of trafficking, thirty organizations in metro D.C. working on this issue “get along” because they are bound by the benign common goal of raising awareness. Awareness, in this context, is best

understood as both a cultural anchor facilitating cohesion and as a social currency allowing groups to opt into joint efforts.

The dissertation concludes that organizations centralize awareness in their collective activities over more drastic priorities around which consensus would need to be gained. This is a lost opportunity for making sense of the ways that individual bodies—men, women, and children—experience not just trafficking, but the world around them.

MORE THAN A MOVEMENT: UNPACKING CONTEMPORARY  
ANTI- HUMAN TRAFFICKING EFFORTS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

by

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## Acknowledgements

This project has grown up with me. Thankfully (hopefully) it has become more concise and clear as my life has become more complex. I began studying the anti-trafficking movement as a part-time graduate student and full-time member of the University of Maryland's external relations staff and conclude it as a federal employee and higher education professional living overseas with three small children.

This project and these shifts in my positionality reinforce the stickiness of life and remind me why American Studies, with its commitment to and focus on the everyday and on power, matter. Allegiances, motivations, and hierarchies are not always straightforward, even in our own lives. Despite having to explain what American Studies is and does far more than do students in any other humanities discipline, I cannot imagine my life without this training.

Many individuals have supported me during all the stages of this project. I am grateful for my parents, siblings, and members of my extended family who have been encouraging of my continued studies and expected no less from me. My sisters Andrea and Teresa Callahan, especially, have read, reread, and then proofread many chapter drafts without revealing their fatigue or batting an eyelash when I needed their comments "like yesterday." Cathy Tierney, who drove me to the University of Maryland campus for the very first time in 2006, also played a vital role in the logistics of my defense.

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researcher, Marc Jaffe was always on the lookout for trafficking-related news items and articles to forward along. Patty Wang, no stranger to graduate student stress, has my eternal thanks for her last-minute courier services.

I was lucky, despite my untraditional role as a part-time student, to find a cohort to adopt me, and especially one that was close-knit and encouraging to one another rather than competitive. And as our graduation dates trickle by, I know marvelous things are ahead for each of my classmates and colleagues. Among this cohort, Dr. Douglas Ishii is probably in everyone's acknowledgements. He was a great newsletter co-editor, lunch buddy, 8-k running partner, and friend.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Trafficking as a Cause

This project is a close examination of the collective efforts taking place in metro Washington, D.C., to combat trafficking in persons at the organizational level, and “trafficking as a cause,” rather than trafficking itself, is the object of study. It catalogues a subset of organizations, examines their interactions and collaboration, dissects their signature programs and events, and contextualizes this work against the backdrop of major trends in the non-governmental sector. It asks simply, how does the D.C. anti-trafficking movement work? Who are the leaders and major players? What activities are conducted? How are efforts funded? To whom are organizations accountable? Do groups work together? In interrogating organizations’ approaches and priorities, it asks, what framework(s) do the anti-trafficking organizations in the Washington, D.C., region employ to understand human trafficking?

This type of project is necessitated by an ever-expanding and highly complex discourse surrounding the issue of trafficking in persons and I begin by describing several examples of this discourse from the last five years. These illustrations, simplistic in their depiction of the issue and sensational in their effort to inspire action countering trafficking, are emblematic of what sparked my interest in the subject of human trafficking and the public discourse surrounding this contemporary social cause a decade ago. This project stems from a need to more closely examine how we think about, talk about, and act in service of the anti-trafficking cause.

As part of a United States Customs and Border Protection’s awareness campaign focused on trafficking in persons two public service announcements (PSAs) aired on network television, beginning in the summer of 2011, in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C., markets. The television spots were part of a larger Spanish-language campaign, “No Ye Engañas,” urging individuals, especially those living across the US border in Mexico, not to be fooled by those who might deceive and traffic them.<sup>1</sup> In one, “Masquerade,” a group of individuals descends down a dark staircase and down a dark hallway. A male narrator’s voice booms, “Welcome. Here all your dreams come true,” as a bright curtain appears and, behind it, a tuxedo-clad man throws money in the air. A man and a woman among the group clutch one another and discuss their situation. The man tells the woman in Spanish (there are subtitles), “See, it was money well invested.” The woman replies, “We don’t have anything yet.” The narrator repeats the phrase about dreams until the group passes beyond another curtain. Then the voice and music change. The group is instructed to “empty [their] pockets and put on a mask.” The man who previously exclaimed that his money was well spent dumps his passport and money into a bin with the others in the group and looks straight ahead at what is to be his fate: individuals wearing burlap sacks over their heads working feverishly at sewing machines. The narrator’s voice now bellows, “The dream is over. Get to work.”

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<sup>1</sup> “No Te Enganes.” US Customs and Border Protection Website, accessed July 31, 2015, <http://www.cbp.gov/border-security/human-trafficking/no-te-enganes#>. The individual PSAs can be seen at <http://www.cbp.gov/video/birdcage-60.mp4> and <http://www.cbp.gov/video/masquerade-60.mp4>.

In the other spot, “Birdcage,” a young woman with pigtails sits on a swing inside a human-sized birdcage in a dark, dirty, and empty room. She exclaims in Spanish that she did not “leave her country for this,” as man’s voice booms over a loudspeaker instructing her to “sing.” She retorts desperately, “but I paid you” as a man appears beside her cage. The loudspeaker voice continues to demand that she “sing.” Another woman’s voice humming a series of “la la las” chimes in as the man at the cage proceeds to position her blouse, messily slather lipstick on the young woman’s mouth, and remove her pigtails. The singsong backdrop music continues and the clip concludes with the young woman crying and swinging on a perch inside the cage as her captor locks the door.

These spots depict trafficking with poignant and compelling images and aim to make an emotional appeal to their audiences. They suggest that trafficking is a criminal activity, perpetuated by shadowy and sinister “bad guys,” who have duped the innocent. Though it is impossible to address all aspects of this complex issue in a one-minute PSA, what is missing in both videos is an acknowledgement of the global market demands for both cheaply made products and commercial sex. In neither spot are the identities of the villains clear and in the latter clip, the young woman’s youth and innocence are essentialized through her pigtails and clothing. Neither piece fully explains the fate of the trafficked individuals, and they rely on tropes about sweatshop labor as anonymous and mechanized and about commercial sex as young, violent, and coerced.

Both spots close with another narrator’s voice proclaiming that “Slavery still exists. Only today it’s called human trafficking.” The term slavery, or

“modern day slavery,” has largely become synonymous with trafficking in persons and the ways in which this known referent is evoked to articulate a new social concern is critical to this dissertation project focused on Washington, D.C.

Within the borders of this influential capital city, an exhibit at Lincoln’s Cottage, a national monument commemorating an occasional summer dwelling of President Lincoln and other presidents, asks “Can you Walk Away?: Modern Slavery: Human Trafficking in the United States.” The exhibit explicitly links contemporary human trafficking with the historical practice of slavery examined throughout the rest of the museum. “Can you Walk Away?” centers on a looped media clip playing in the center of an intimate and purposefully dark room. The video features interviews with individuals who have been trafficked and others active in the United States’ movement to combat the issue. A sign on the door warns visitors of the graphic nature of parts of the exhibit, and indeed the video mentions specific sex acts a young teenager was instructed to perform by her trafficker at a truck stop. Behind the elevated video screen are three books on separate pedestals, each with a solid black cover and a bold title: What is Human Trafficking?; Who is Vulnerable?, and How Do We End Human Trafficking?. Inside each book, artistic, edgy, and glossy images are accompanied by pages with minimal words touting bold-typed statistics provided by the exhibit’s partner non-governmental organization, Washington D.C.- based Polaris Project. In these books, visitors learn, for example, that:

A SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIM’S QUOTA IS \$500 PER NIGHT  
SHE IS FORCED TO HAVE SEX 7 NIGHTS A WEEK

AND MAKES \$3,500 FOR HER PIMP

The opposite page concludes:

A PIMP WITH 3 WOMEN MAKES \$588,000 A YEAR

80 PIMPS IN THE DC METRO AREA TOGETHER COULD MAKE UP  
TO \$47,040,000 A YEAR

The exhibit aims to be impactful in its sparseness and to make visitors aware of a “global pandemic” that affects communities, including those close by in Washington, D.C.<sup>2</sup>

This exhibit and the PSAs represent small pieces of a complicated public discussion surrounding contemporary trafficking in persons that has exploded within the last two decades. Trafficking has become a focus not just of government agencies and educational institutions, but also of corporate philanthropists and celebrities. In 2011, technology giant Google committed \$11.5 million to fight human trafficking, with the bulk of the funds going to two organizations—International Justice Mission and Polaris Project—based in Washington, D.C. Again in 2013, Google gave \$3 million to three organizations, again including Polaris Project, which is establishing a Global Human Trafficking Hotline Network, to analyze data from multiple trafficking hotlines.<sup>3</sup> The Body Shop, a beauty products company, made sex trafficking of children the focus of its “values campaign” from 2009-2012, reportedly collecting over 7 million

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<sup>2</sup> President Lincoln’s Cottage. *Can You Walk Away: Modern Slavery: Human Trafficking in the United States*. (Washington, D.C., National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2013)

<sup>3</sup> David Malko and Lisa Cohen. “Google Joins Fight Against Slavery with \$11.5 Million Grant.” CNN. December 14, 2011, accessed August 22, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/12/14/us/google-anti-slavery-grant/>

signatures for a petition against the practice.<sup>4</sup> Ricky Martin, a singer, has established a foundation whose primary concern is “child exploitation as a result of human trafficking.”<sup>5</sup> Ashton Kutcher, an actor, and his ex-wife, actress Demi Moore, continue to work together on a foundation whose focus is digital exploitation of children.<sup>6</sup> And Mira Sorvino, an actress who starred in Lifetime network’s 2005 *Human Trafficking*, has become a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador focused on trafficking and makes speaking appearances on the subject.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, since 2000, blockbuster films like *Taken* (2008), highly circulated documentaries like *Call and Response* (2008), as well as episodes of television dramas like *Law and Order*, have also placed the issue on the cultural front burner.<sup>8</sup>

The multifaceted discourses engendered by all of this attention are complex, in part because trafficking is a phenomenon tied to many coexisting social forces—economics, gender, race, nationhood, crime—with implications for the already contested ways in which we understand gender, bodies, labor, and agency. In other words, it matters who—which bodies—are portrayed as the

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<sup>4</sup> “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People.” The Body Shop Website, accessed August 22, 2015., <http://www.thebodyshop.com/values/trafficking.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> “Our Work.” Rick Martin Foundation Website, accessed, August 22, 2015, <http://www.rickymartinfoundation.org/en/our-work>

<sup>6</sup> “About Us.” Thorn Digital Defenders of Children Website, accessed August 22, 2015, <https://www.wearethorn.org/about-our-fight-against-sexual-exploitation-of-children/>

<sup>7</sup> “Actress Mira Sorvino extends her role as UNODC Goodwill Ambassador.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, February 8, 2013, accessed August 22, 2015, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2013/February/actress-mira-sorvino-extends-her-role-as-unodc-goodwill-ambassador.html?ref=fs2>

<sup>8</sup> I discuss *Taken* further in Chapter 5.

victims and who—which bodies—are portrayed as the villains since there are social and legal consequences for both.

This multi-method American Studies project works to move beyond the loaded language and images, like those in the PSAs and the Lincoln's Cottage exhibit, and works to make sense of the collective efforts taking place in D.C. to mobilize governments, organizations, and individuals against trafficking in persons. In it, I explore the dimensions of power associated with these entwined social forces via close examination of the people and projects—the activism and advocacy—that surrounds trafficking in one major US city. As the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., is both a hub for trafficking discourse and policy and the home to a complex and vibrant anti-trafficking movement. There are at least thirty nonprofit or community groups working exclusively or in part on the issue in the D.C. metro region, and many partner with federal agencies—and each other. These groups, their work, and their collaboration are the focus of this project.<sup>9</sup>

With this abundance of activism and advocacy in place and nearly two decades of public attention to trafficking in persons, has our collective understanding of trafficking—what is and isn't trafficking, what causes it, and what can be done—been clarified? I contend that it has not. Therefore, this dissertation does not advance the search for an empirical definition of trafficking. It does not provide a chronological history of the anti-trafficking movement in one place nor a history of how it emerged. It does not evaluate the impact of trafficking discourse on trafficking itself.

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<sup>9</sup> My process for arriving at the thirty organizations referenced here is described later in the introduction. Despite a deliberate methodology, I leave room for the possibility that I have overlooked groups.

Rather, it is a close analysis of a movement in one place at one moment in time. It stems from a desire to parse and make sense of cultural products associated with trafficking in persons—like the PSAs and museum exhibit—and to examine trafficking as a popular contemporary social cause. Ultimately, the project works (within limitations of scale, access, and time, as described below) to find meaning in the nexus of organizations operating simultaneously in one place to combat a complex and nebulous issue.

I theorize contemporary human trafficking as both a material phenomenon and an idea, and I frame it both as a tangible practice that implicates real bodies marked by race, class, gender, age, nation and status of vulnerability, and as a symbolic “cause” encircling these activities. In interrogating “trafficking as a cause,” I argue that while anti-trafficking efforts in D.C. do comprise a social movement, these activities represent more than a traditional social cause. In classifying anti-trafficking work as a kind of modern and tech-savvy industry, I explore some of the constraints on social activism and advocacy in the contemporary neoliberal era.

This work is part of the lineage of feminist scholarship concerned with trafficking and operates from an understanding that trafficking has been divisive for feminist scholars—even as the project itself seeks to move away from a sole focus on the ongoing debates among feminist and other scholars about this phenomenon. Though trafficking is a political valence issue—unlike other social and political causes like abortion rights or gun control there are not two easily delineated pro and con positions—both within and outside the academy not only



is there no clear consensus on best way to combat it, but, more importantly, there is also a lack of clarity on what counts as trafficking in the first place.<sup>10</sup> This discord largely stems from a conflation of all commercial sex as trafficking and from ideologically opposing positions on commercial sex more generally, with radical and liberal feminists advocating for frameworks that disagree on the inherently exploitive nature of commercial sex.

Competing factions of feminist scholars divided over this point have framed the issue in terms of their ongoing “sex wars.”<sup>11</sup> Radical feminists, including sociologist Donna Hughes and political scientist Sheila Jeffreys, contend that the exchange of sexual services for money is inherently harmful to women, while liberal feminists, like Wendy Chapkis, seek to complicate that position with calls to consider women’s agency and the role that commercial sex can play in disrupting normative gender relations.<sup>12</sup> Aligning with the latter bloc, scholars like Kamala Kempadoo and Laura Agustín employ post-colonial frameworks to critique narrow characterizations of trafficked women—often marked by race and class distinctions—as victims, and they seek to illuminate the

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<sup>10</sup> Nicole Footen. *The Making of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000: Viewed Through the Lens of Advocacy Coalition Framework*. (Doctoral Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> This is loose characterization. There are many more nuances that distinguish individual feminist thinkers and scholars. These will be addressed further in Chapter 1, which reviews existing literature on trafficking.

<sup>12</sup> In discussions about about commercial sex, radical feminists may also be characterized as abolitionist feminists, who seek to end this practice.

global economic conditions that compel women to migrate to take some jobs over others in the first place.<sup>13</sup>

Members of the liberal feminist faction have lamented that the positions of their “opponents” are those given attention and authority in the public and particularly policy-making spheres, and they have critiqued radical feminist alliances with the Religious Right. Radical feminists’ positions also contribute to sociologist Ronald Weitzer’s categorization of the mainstream anti-trafficking movement as a panicked moral crusade.<sup>14</sup> Sociologist Elizabeth Bernstein asserts that cooperation of evangelicals and feminists on this issue is “fueled by a shared commitment to carceral paradigms of social, and in particular gender, justice...and to militarized humanitarianism as the preeminent mode of engagement by the state” and, in her earlier work, Bernstein finds that these seemingly disparate groups also share an interest in neoliberal, market-based solutions to social problems.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Relevant works from these scholars include: Hughes, “Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking” [http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/demand\\_sex\\_trafficking\\_pdf](http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/demand_sex_trafficking_pdf); Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: the Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade*. (New York: Routledge, 2009); Chapkis, “Trafficking, Migration, and the Law: Protecting Innocents Punishing Immigrants,” *Gender and Society*, Volume 17 Number 6, 923-937 (2003); Kempadoo, “Introduction: From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking.” *Trafficking Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*, Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005; and Agustín, *Sex at the Margins, Labour Markets, and the Rescue Industry*. London: Zed Books (2007).

<sup>14</sup> Ronald Weitzer, “The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking and the Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade,” *Politics and Society*, (September 2007): 447-475.

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Bernstein, “Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns,” *Signs*, (Autumn 2010), 45-71. In this work, Bernstein deals with these categories as separate, though they are not mutually exclusive. The earlier work I mention is Bernstein’s *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Though sex trafficking represents only a portion of trafficking in persons, in many instances it serves as the principal focus of trafficking-related dialogue—a fact of which many of those associated with the movement against trafficking in D.C. are aware. The perception and treatment of the relationship between human trafficking and sex trafficking is highlighted by nearly all of the scholars mentioned here and is critical to this project in that it brings a gender-oriented analysis of this phenomenon to the center. As suggested above, some scholars contend that panic associated with “unsanctioned” uses of bodies and labor, particularly women’s bodies and labor, drives public discourse and efforts to combat trafficking. The semantic separation between labor trafficking and sex trafficking, which itself precludes an understanding of sex as a type of labor, is significant for this project as I try to understand the political and material consequences of nuance and diversity of naming and framing within the movement to combat trafficking in persons.

The delineation between sex trafficking and labor trafficking is not the only distinction of note in contemporary conversations about this issue, however. While the US Customs and Border Control PSAs focus on foreign individuals trafficked to the United States, the Lincoln’s Cottage exhibit seeks to highlight trafficking within US borders. As the movement to combat trafficking has grown and evolved, the conversation has shifted to account for both foreign and domestic situations. While some trafficking activists and advocates have always considered trafficking within the United States to be part of their agenda, the shift in scale is often tied to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2005, which first

made federal funds available to domestic victims.<sup>16</sup> This geographic collapsing further complicates any desire to simplify and define trafficking and subsequently to categorize the efforts to combat it. Within the trafficking discourse in D.C., what used to be thought of as local commercial sex is now classified under the human trafficking and slavery umbrella. The semantic shift has consequences that are examined as part of this project.

## **Methodology**

Research for this interdisciplinary project was conducted utilizing participant observation, interviews, and textual analysis. Over a two-year period from January 2012 to December 2013, organizations working on the issue of human trafficking in the D.C region were studied via interviews, personal interactions with staff at events and conferences, and close readings of websites, publications, and publicity materials (hereafter referred to as “materials”).<sup>17</sup>

The first iteration of this project envisioned case studies of three active anti-trafficking organizations, but ultimately, thirty organizations were included in this research, including a combination of tax-exempt nonprofits with paid staffs as well as church groups and volunteer organizations. The original group of three, Polaris Project, Prevent Human Trafficking, and the Prevention Project, were

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<sup>16</sup> Trafficking Victims Protection Act Reauthorization of 2005. Public Law 109-164.  
<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61106.htm>

<sup>17</sup> This window represents the period beginning with my reaching candidacy and ending with relocation away from the D.C. region. Most of the interviews and events that informed this work took place from August 2012-December 2012 during my first concentrated effort to make contact with organizations. However, there were subsequent waves of activity until project conclusion in 2015. Materials include flyers, pamphlets, annual reports, business cards, packets for sponsors, websites and social media pages.

selected through internet searches and with the use of Humantrafficking.org, a website that collects information on trafficking and provides a list of organizations in each state (including the city of Washington, D.C.).<sup>18</sup> Their selection was based on the feasibility of studying them, their distinct missions, activities, and sizes/scopes, and their primary focus on trafficking. I was looking for organizations that were different from one another and would provide a cross-section of the kind of anti-trafficking activities taking place in the city.

Connecting with these original groups for interviews proved difficult. When they were unresponsive, I reached out to additional groups in stages.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, using the aforementioned website, the list of organizations affiliated with the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force, and referrals from groups that granted me interviews, my sample grew to its final size. This snowball sampling approach meant that the number of organizations studied was in flux throughout the project.<sup>20</sup>

Early on, I also intended to focus on organizations whose work was solely directed toward trafficking in persons, but found that this distinction would have meant excluding groups with an important role in the communal activities of the anti-trafficking movement. For example, many of the groups who serve on the

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<sup>18</sup> Public Policy scholar Andrea Bertone is responsible for this resource. I had several brief interactions with Dr. Bertone, when she was a graduate student at the University of Maryland.

<sup>19</sup> The first group of organizations was contacted in early June 2012. The second group of organizations, HIPS and FAIR Girls, was targeted later in June 2012. A few weeks later, in August, I reached out to Innocents at Risk and Courtney's House. Subsequently organizations were contacted via email as I learned about them.

<sup>20</sup> This method is a mainstay in social science research, but is not without its critics. See: [http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic536746.files/Biernacki\\_Waldorf\\_Snowball\\_Sampling.pdf](http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic536746.files/Biernacki_Waldorf_Snowball_Sampling.pdf)

D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force are engaged in anti-trafficking work as part of a larger portfolio of social work or activism. Such groups are part of my data, though they are not the focus. I have less information about this cadre than I do about those organizations whose work is dominated by or exclusively comprised of trafficking programming and activities. I did not actively pursue interviews with all these groups, but I did gather any and all materials available to me at events, and I analyzed the content of their websites, social media pages, and media coverage that the organization received.

### *Interviews*

Nearly all of the groups included in this study were contacted either by mail or email to request a formal interview. As aforementioned, I began by reaching out to three groups, but the project evolved beyond a three-way comparison into a more robust attempt to describe and make sense of the local movement broadly over time.<sup>21</sup> While I had used printed letters in my first round of outreach, email correspondence proved to be a more effective means to connect with the staffs of these organizations. Requests for interviews in either form introduced myself, indicated that I was working on a doctoral dissertation project focused on the anti- human trafficking movement in Washington, D.C., in the last two decades, and explained that potential interviews questions would focus on organizational mission, structure, programs, and activities. I conveyed that my

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<sup>21</sup> In the interest of time, and depending on when in my research period I became aware of particular groups, I did not contact all groups who do anti-trafficking work as part of a more extensive portfolio, but these groups are an important part of the sample because of the role they play on the D.C Human Trafficking Task Force.

research was “intended to establish a greater understanding of the institutional efforts intended to combat human trafficking in the nation’s capital,” and “that among its largest contributions would be an illumination of the processes responsible for creating a pressing social issue.” This language was intentionally broad to account for the variation among groups and their activities.

I had hoped to speak with the directors or leaders of organizations I contacted, but was pleased to attend a meeting with any willing representative. In most cases, I did not interview a top official.<sup>22</sup> I conducted seven in-person and three phone interviews using a standard set of questions to guide, though not script, conversations, and I recorded the discussions. Meetings took place in public places, like coffee shops, as well as at the organizations’ offices. When I was invited to an office setting, I was often given a brief tour and met additional staff members. One meeting took place in the home of an organization’s volunteer, which doubled as a training or meeting space. Additionally, one group answered my list of questions via email, and still another group granted me a tour but not an interview.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The point person offered as an interview subject varied from organization to organization. I did speak to the founders of several of the smaller organizations, but was not always given access to the senior staff members.

<sup>23</sup> International Justice Mission is a large and well-known religious organization focused on trafficking headquartered in D.C. My request for an interview was denied, but the organization gives tours of their headquarters each day under the condition that visitors do not disclose anything that they learn. While my experience on the tour unavoidably had impact on my thinking about this project, any specific information about IMJ included in the work was acquired through other means—their website, news articles, etc. An organizational representative was not asked to sign a consent form, but I identified myself as a researcher to staff members and interns arranging and giving the tour.

Informants were interviewed once and generally were not consulted again as the project evolved.<sup>24</sup> Interviews typically took one hour. In a few cases, additional materials were shared or information was clarified via email. Once they had agreed to an interview, most informants were willing to give me further leads or point me to additional sources or resources. Questions did in fact focus on organizational mission, structure, programming, and activities.

### *Participatory/Experiential Data*

Experiential data—information secured via my participation and presence in and around trafficking-related sites—was obtained at events and activities, including fundraisers, awareness events, training sessions, performances, and conferences. This information was much like that obtained via the anthropological method of participant observation and included observations made during presentations, small talk at conferences (including the 2013 “Justice 4 All Conference” hosted by Courtney’s House and the 2012 “National Human Trafficking Awareness Day Conference” hosted by the Bridge the Freedom Foundation), and conversations at the fundraising events (DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk and Capital City Ball) which are the focus of Chapter 5. In interactions with others at these events, I almost always identified myself as a researcher.

As necessitated by my snowball interview methodology, there were occasions when such exchanges led me to new contacts and organizations. While

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<sup>24</sup> This was not a methodological choice, but a constraint of distance as I moved out of the country in 2014.



attending a performance called “Stolen: From Playgrounds to Streetlights,” at D.C.’s Atlas Performing Arts Center, for example, I sat next to a woman affiliated with the National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation. Our conversations lead to an eventual meeting with a representative from that group.

### *Textual Analysis*

Close examination of the ways in which the organizations doing anti-trafficking work describe, document, and especially promote, their activities in written form is vital for understanding the ways in which this issue is named and framed in Washington, D.C. To that end, publications and publicity materials associated with each organization were collected during interviews and at conferences and events. The 2012 DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk provided one especially useful venue for collecting brochures, pamphlets, and other publicity materials.<sup>25</sup> Prior to the annual walk around the National Mall, there is a resource fair where organizations and groups staff information booths and offer attendees materials explaining more about their work. During that event, I visited each booth, asking those individuals staffing the tables basic questions about their groups, typically, “what is special or unique about your organization?” and gathered the materials for evaluation.<sup>26</sup> I also joined many email lists, which provided me with regular and targeted messages from organizations that could be saved and sorted by date within my email inbox.

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<sup>25</sup> I also attended this event in 2010, before my research had officially begun, and again in 2013.

<sup>26</sup> This simple question was intended to act as an ice breaker.

Organizations' websites, as mentioned above, were critical resources and their social media sites, primarily Facebook and Twitter, were also examined as a way to evaluate groups' priorities and communication strategies. Postings and feeds play a large role in Chapter 5, which looks at the new type of activism situated in the social media sphere. These sites not only provide units of discourse for analysis, but also serve as an archive and depict networks and relationships between and among organizations as well.

My analysis of all these materials, in various formats, consisted of a close reading to evaluate the text and images presented to inform others about trafficking. In examining each of these materials, I focused on how trafficking was presented as a cause, and I worked to pinpoint which issues (gender, race, commercial sex, human rights, poverty, crime, etc.) were associated with the organization's articulation of trafficking in persons. I also looked at whether trafficking was framed as a domestic or transnational issue. Lastly, I tried to determine the goals and aims of the materials: what actions they were trying to get readers or viewers to take.

Produced and distributed by the organizations themselves, these materials provided important insight into the organizations' priorities and the frameworks through which they describe trafficking to the public, which includes potential donors and volunteers. The communication over which they have less control, their media coverage, was also an important resource for this project and constituted another type of source material.

To obtain and sort this information, I used Lexis Nexis Academic to identify media texts that mentioned the groups under study. I ran keyword searches for organizations' names (and directors' names when the organization names included common phrases) within Major World Publications. This strategy excluded blogs and television transcripts, but provided a manageable set of results for each organization. These materials and media reports were also reviewed with the questions above in mind. This effort provided useful perspective about organizations' larger reputations and self-identifications.

Additionally, as is discussed further in Chapter 3, I attempted to identify the social forces each organization considered to be related to trafficking and the ways in which it viewed the issue (as one of gender exploitation, human rights, or immigration, for example). I also looked for information on each organization's business model and the kinds of activities—direct services, activism, advocacy, etc.—in which it engaged as well as their reported sources of funding.<sup>27</sup> I reviewed annual and financial reports, many of which were freely accessible. Lastly, I paid close attention to the way each organization's role in the collective local movement was portrayed. I noted all mentions of partnerships, collaborations, and networks.

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<sup>27</sup> A second look at each organization's website in June of 2014 was conducted to focus more specifically on funding sources since they play a major role in the discussion in Chapter 4. It is possible that information changed between this visit and my original evaluation of these materials a year earlier.

### *Financial Data*

Information about the funding of D.C.-based organizations and individuals working to combat trafficking in persons was procured in two ways. First, during the course of my personal interviews, each of the representatives willing to meet with me was consulted about his or her organization's funding, typically with the direct question: "How is your organization funded?" Additionally, information was amassed through examinations of the thirty organizations' websites.<sup>28</sup>

As already discussed, websites are one of the groups' most comprehensive marketing tools and a way to communicate with their potential clients, supporters, and each other. When examined, many of the websites contained an "About Us" page (or something similar) that often shared financial information. In order to receive their 501c3 status from the US government, designating them as nonprofit and tax exempt, organizations are required to make this kind of data publically available. Many have archived financial reports, which list revenues and expenses, and might use pie charts to illustrate their various funding sources. Some of the organizations that did not have comprehensive data immediately accessible directed those reading their website to Guidestar.org, an organization that compiles and disseminates information about each registered nonprofit in the United States. One can search to find the tax documents of any such organization. Those that may have earned an honorable distinction by a charity-rating organization also list that certification. Polaris Project, for example, is a Charity

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<sup>28</sup> This was the latest of several examinations of these groups' websites. There were cases where sites had changed in the interim between examinations.

Navigator 4-star charity, signifying that it “exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its Cause.”<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, groups whose funding sources included private donations or corporate sponsors sometimes listed these individuals and businesses on their websites in an “honor roll.” This designation, a typical practice in the philanthropic sector, publically recognizes the gift and thanks the donor. Sometimes the amount of support was listed and sometimes it was not.

Together, these methods provided a useful overview of the breadth of funding sources, but they did have limitations. This process provided good understanding of the categories of funding sought out and secured by various organizations—public, private, grants, gifts, annual gifts, capital investments—but it was challenging to draw anything but broad and simplistic conclusions based on this information. This was because, despite having access to some tax documentation, I did not have a standard set of information for each organization. More financial data was not always more helpful, as lists of donor names gave me a sense of the who (i.e. who funded this organization, though corporate sponsors were easier to identify and contextualize than individual donors) but not necessarily the why or how (i.e. how a donor came to learn about this issue and what was his or her motivation for giving). Additionally, organizational representatives whom I interviewed were happy to talk in general terms about their funding, but they rarely gave in-depth answers to my question about support. Most were comfortable sharing the kinds of funding they received, but did not go

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<sup>29</sup> “What Do Our Ratings Mean?” Charity Navigator Website, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=43#.V0Wwl77-Q3I>

beyond categorical answers to describe their donors or the grants they had received. Issues of accountability are also paramount to this conversation about funding, yet I did not develop a clear understanding of the kinds of stipulations that accompanied either public or private support for these groups. Despite these shortcomings, I nonetheless draw on the conclusions I *was* able to make in order to describe some of the key issues and concerns about the financial structure of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. to which I wish to draw attention.

#### *Other Limitations—Scale, Access, and Time*

Overall these methods and strategies provide a thorough, if at times uneven assessment of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. It is important to indicate, however, that my analysis is limited by the scale of the project, by the access I was granted, and by the subsection of activities and organizations reflected, given constraints of time.

#### *Scale*

This project analyzes D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement at the organizational level and as mentioned, focuses on some groups more than others, depending on the group's willingness to be interviewed and the amount of information about the organization that was publically available. I recognize, however, that organizations are run by people, and I understand that an organizational level of analysis risks overlooking the individual agency of leaders and participants involved with those organizations. I also acknowledge that even

within organizations, there may be variations in perspective and approaches to anti-trafficking work.

In order to humanize my assessment of the movement, I would have needed to conduct more interviews with individuals holding varied roles within anti-trafficking organizations and would have needed to focus on their personal motivations and networks rather than those of their groups. Because the idea of collectivity was important in my research questions, I made a strategic choice to focus on organizations as manageable units of analysis.

### *Access*

This project does not purport to represent every anti-trafficking organization in D.C. and, to reiterate, I came to know much more about some organizations than others. Overwhelmingly, the project was informed by which groups I knew about, what access I was granted to their unique and shared anti-trafficking work spaces, and the willingness of organizational representatives to share details about their activities, philosophies, and motivations.

Similarly, it was limited not only by my lacking access, but also by the choices made by individual representatives I met—which stories and materials they chose to share and which they withheld. Those individuals representing their employers, for example, had material investment in portraying their organizations in the best light. Those representing volunteer organizations of which they are a part may have had more autonomy over their answers, but likely also hoped to depict their groups as professional, cooperative, and impactful.

Through my participant observation activities, namely my attendance at conferences, the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk, and the Capital City Ball, I witnessed the anti-trafficking movement in action more so than if had I only read about it or been told about its signature activities as part of an interview. This glimpse into movement mechanics was only that, however—a glimpse. I did not sit in on staff meetings of organizations where disagreements or debates may have surfaced. I did not observe organizations' staff members or representatives interacting with donors or with the public agencies and law enforcement teams with which they partner. I did not witness any client service activities taking place or meet any of the clients availing themselves of these organizations' programs.

In summary, my perspective on how the movement “works” was shaped by my external public vantage point and my analysis is limited to the public face that organizations elected to share with a researcher. A more behind-the-scenes examination might have produced a more nuanced understanding of coordination and collaboration between groups, for example, but would have required a drastic reduction in the scale of the project.

### *Time*

The calendar of anti-trafficking activities scheduled in D.C. during any given month is crowded and I could not and did not attend every conference, meeting, happy hour, fundraiser, movie, training session, winetasting, and performance that took place. I stayed abreast of activities through my contact with organizational representatives and through websites and aforementioned email



mailing lists. I participated as my schedule allowed. As my research period concluded, I especially prioritized events hosted or attended by organizations with whom I had not yet interacted. I also made sure to be present at large events, like the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk and Capital City Ball, where multiple groups would be participating.

Being physically in and around the anti-trafficking movement was a valuable strategy for assessing its tone, energy, scope, and scale, and for spending unscripted time with its participants. Yet since I missed many anti-trafficking-movement moments, even during my short research timeframe, I undoubtedly missed aspects of the movement worthy of analysis.

### *Researcher Positionality*

In addition to these limitations, the project was also shaped by chance. As a visiting participant in D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement, I made connections with many individuals formally through letters and emails and by exchanging business cards, but I also spoke to individuals sitting close by at performances or in line for the rest room. I shared pizza in the coat room of a charity ball with a group of business students from another local university also volunteering at an event. These informal interactions were as significant as many of the formal ones.

There are dimensions of power in all of these exchanges—both formal and informal—and the information secured through them was shaped by their contexts. Additionally, my age, race, class, and status as both a student and researcher from a local institution likely affected these exchanges as well. Because I was often

coming from or going to my workday at a full-time job, I was professionally dressed during many of these meetings and encounters. Some individuals with whom I interacted assumed solidarity and spoke to me like a movement insider; others focused on my status as a student, seeing themselves as helping me with a homework assignment rather than contributing to social science research. Still others worked to portray their organizations in a positive light, sharing little more information than what was available on their websites and in brochures.

It is challenging to report with any certainty the demographics of D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement as a whole, given its size and complexity and the variety of activities that take place within the bounds of a defined movement. It suffices to say, however, that as a young, white woman, I did not stand out. The demographic composition at any conference or larger event I attended as part of this research appeared to be majority white, though there were individuals of other races and ethnicities present as well. In many cases, younger individuals outnumbered older activists, advocates, and professionals. There were usually more female-presenting individuals at trafficking-related functions than male-presenting. The formal interviews conducted for this project were almost entirely with women, and the professional staffs of the organizations examined tended to be mostly women as well. This is not unexpected, given that women make up the majority of workers in the nonprofit sector and given the association of human trafficking with commercial sex, which is generally considered to be a gendered phenomenon or "women's issue."<sup>30</sup> I discuss this further in Chapter 2.

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<sup>30</sup> For some evidence of women's complex dominance in the nonprofit sector, see Nuno Themundo, "Gender and the Nonprofit Sector," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* April

## Washington, D.C.

The selection of the Washington, D.C., region as the site of this research was as analytically strategic as it was convenient. In addition to being the major metropolitan region closest to my university, D.C., as the nation's capital, plays a unique and simultaneously local, federal, and global role in shaping and circulating trafficking discourse. While activism and advocacy around trafficking is taking place in many major US cities, D.C. is a hub for anti-trafficking activism and advocacy.

The city and its surrounding suburbs are home to the government agencies responsible for commonly circulated figures and statistics on trafficking and to the laundry list of federal agencies concerned with trafficking and trafficking-related policies and procedures. These include the Department of Justice, the Department of State, the Department of Labor, the Department of Homeland Security, and its Immigration and Customs Enforcement arm. Many of these governmental offices have representatives on the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force, formed in 2004.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to serving as an epicenter for trafficking data and policy, the Washington, D.C., region also provides a unique and important backdrop for this issue because of its international population, its robust fleet of non-governmental

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17, 2009, accessed August 22, 2015, <http://nvs.sagepub.com/content/early/2009/04/17/0899764009333957.full.pdf>; and Josh Moore and Maria Nardell, *The Women's Sector? Not Quite...* Future Leaders in Philanthropy Website, March 22, 2007, accessed August 22, 2015, <http://www.networkflip.com/the-womens-sector-not-quite/>.

<sup>31</sup> A full list of members is on the Department of Justice's website: [http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/programs/cp/human\\_trafficking.html](http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/programs/cp/human_trafficking.html)

organizations focused on social causes, and its ready populations of college-age interns and volunteers and motivated young professionals.<sup>32</sup>

According to several of the organizations working on the issue locally, D.C. is also a hub of trafficking activity and among their objectives is bringing awareness to the fact that it “happens here too.”<sup>33</sup> In September 2012, when a high-profile, gang-related, commercial sex business was busted in Northern Virginia, and its leader sentenced to 40 years in prison, a series of media reports addressed the situation locally.<sup>34</sup> There are also periodic reports of trafficking cases involving foreign diplomats in the metro D.C. region, an example being an investigation of a property owned by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on suspicion that two Filipino women working there were being “held in circumstances that amounted to human trafficking.”<sup>35</sup>

Again, there are anti-trafficking efforts underway in many US municipalities, but the layers of power and influence unique to Washington, D.C.,

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<sup>32</sup> To the first point, the 2010 Census reported the foreign born population of Washington, D.C., as 13.3 % of the city’s population. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/11000.html>. To the last, the federal government, especially Congress, has long been considered a magnet for recent college graduates. The 2010 census reported 38.6 % of the city’s population to be between the ages of 20 and 40. This does not account for similarly aged, educated, and socially conscious individuals in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs.

<sup>33</sup> This point arose with several organizations. A representative from Restoration Ministries told me in August 2012: “In a lot of cities, they’re fortunate enough if they even have one organization that will work with trafficking survivors, but DC has a lot....One, it draws a lot of organizations anyways because it’s the nation’s capital. And, there is a lot of trafficking that goes on. The police said yesterday they have 22 cases that are active right now.”

<sup>34</sup> Del Quentin Weber, “MS-13 Gang is Branching Into Prostitution, Authorities Say,” *Washington Post*, November 12, 2011, accessed August 22, 2015, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/ms-13-gang-is-branching-into-prostitution-authorities-say/2011/11/04/gIQAAtOyIN\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/ms-13-gang-is-branching-into-prostitution-authorities-say/2011/11/04/gIQAAtOyIN_story.html)

<sup>35</sup> Rebecca Baird Remba, “Feds Investigating a Saudi Compound in Virginia for Possible Human Trafficking,” *Business Insider*, May 2, 2015, accessed August 22, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/possible-human-trafficking-saudi-house-2013-5>.

make it an ideal site for this research.<sup>36</sup> As one NGO representative I spoke with told me:

If you're not in D.C., then you're not playing with the big dogs. That is the reality. It's not that the D.C. task force has a one up on everyone else, that's not it at all, it's just because D.C. is the epicenter of change for a lot of what happens with this issue so we are able to interface with the right groups including the government to make a difference. So, being recognized as a huge contributor to this wouldn't happen if we weren't here.<sup>37</sup>

D.C. is both an urban American metropolis and a powerful and influential city in global political, economic, and social affairs. What happens in Washington has consequences for people and places both locally and far beyond the city's borders.

### **Findings and Project Stakes**

This work argues that despite their various omissions and structures and despite the potential for discord given the complexity of the issue and the theoretical debates that have beleaguered conversations about trafficking at the international and national level, the thirty organizations I examined, largely cooperate and collaborate. Though they are bound by existing social hierarchies, an “awareness infrastructure” helps them to avoid conflict. Additionally, they conduct their work simultaneously against the backdrop of the nonprofit industrial complex, which makes their efforts, paid or volunteer, a professional endeavor.

The anti-trafficking cause is also part of a new kind of passive social activism—

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<sup>36</sup> There are many examples, but see: <http://www.southbayendtrafficking.org/resources/>; <http://www.mass.gov/ago/about-the-attorney-generals-office/community-programs/anti-human-trafficking/human-trafficking-task-force/>; and <http://www.cookcountytaskforce.org/media> all accessed August 22, 2015 for some examples.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International Representative, July 16, 2013.

“slacktivism”—enabled by technology.<sup>38</sup> Overall, this yields a movement that is also an industry, and is bound and shaped by both the market and the state.

One of the project’s largest contributions is its analysis of “awareness” as a tool of—rather than a byproduct of—compromise. Given that trafficking in persons is a valence issue (again, no one is rooting for the practice), and given the related assumption that if members of the wider public knew trafficking was occurring they would be in favor of eradicating it, awareness is one of the most commonly shared objectives of the thirty groups examined as part of this research. It is also one of the most benign objectives and it facilitates cooperation and partnership far more easily than would nuanced positions on the social conditions responsible for trafficking or advocacy around specific trafficking policies.

One might read this cooperation as constituting what public policy scholar Nicole Footen describes as a mega-coalition—a combination of radical or abolitionist feminists, religious organizations, elected officials, and human rights activists who dominate efforts to get some form of legislation against trafficking passed in the United States even if the law does not satisfy their specific agendas. Such a coalition could dominate the anti-trafficking movement and squelch the more radical positions represented by aforementioned scholars like Doezema, Kempadoo, and Agustín.<sup>39</sup> Though this dynamic may partly account for the harmony documented here, it is likely only part of a complicated explanation.

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<sup>38</sup> Slacktivism is the focus of Chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup> Nicole Footen. *The Making of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000: Viewed Through the Lens of Advocacy Coalition Framework*. (Doctoral Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2007).

That one of the most “sex-positive” of the groups studied, Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS), was a beneficiary of the same charity ball fundraiser that later funded Global Centurion (an organization with a demand-focused approach to trafficking that is decidedly more feminist abolitionist) is significant.<sup>40</sup> The organizations also serve on the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force together. If even these groups can be linked through one degree of separation, there is likely something more complex happening in D.C.

Moreover, despite parts of movement making efforts to focus on all forms of trafficking—correcting a perceived focus on sex trafficking at the expense of other forms—and despite awareness of the discursive complexities around “sex vs. labor,” the movement does little to advance our understandings of “immaterial labor” or “emotional labor.”<sup>41</sup> First, because of the framing of sex and labor trafficking as separate and distinct, traditional thinking about what counts as productive (and thus exploitable) work remains intact in the D.C. movement. Secondly, as is discussed in Chapter 3, the majority of organizations studied conduct their activities without firm definitions of the problem they address. By relying on legislative definitions or popular understanding of the terms trafficking and slavery, the D.C. movement only reinforces existing ideas about associated concepts like gender and labor.

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<sup>40</sup> While no one consulted during this project asked for my position on the prostitution and consent issues related to trafficking in persons, this organization did ask for my “position on policy issues globally and nationally [regarding] human trafficking” before agreeing to an interview. Though exchanges were always professional and polite, a meeting did not take place.

<sup>41</sup> Modern thinking about “immaterial labor” comes from Maurizio Lazzarato, an Italian sociologist, who helps to name work that is cultural, social, and aesthetic. The term “emotional labor” originates in work by Arlie Hochschild and has also been used by Wendy Chapkis and Elizabeth Bernstein.

An effort to further understand the range of experiences—both material and immaterial—of individuals whose lives are affected by trafficking and/or the anti-trafficking movement would require more interaction with those individuals than this project allowed. However, the nomenclature of the practice and the individual experiences it references is important to this project as it works to understand the boundaries of a movement. Because I am concerned with the larger issue of trafficking and the nuanced ways of naming and framing this bigger topic, where possible, the project employs the broader term “traffic in persons” rather than “modern day slavery” or “human trafficking.” Likewise, I employ the terms “commercial sex” or “sex work” rather than “prostitution,” which connotes shame and illegality. Focusing on the commercial, market-based, demand-driven aspect of the phenomenon, while acknowledging the range of experiences of those affected, also distinguishes the epistemological positions of the organizations studied from mine as a researcher.

There are holes in our collective knowledge about trafficking in persons because of its clandestine nature, but what is at stake for this project is not simply assessing the success of a “movement.” As an American Studies project, it is invested instead in the structures of power embedded within the movement’s words and actions and the larger social forces shaping what is possible, practical, and expedient for the movement. As anti-trafficking activists, advocates, and organizations raise awareness, lobby legislators, and provide services in Washington, D.C., they also create and reify ideas about gender and oppression, sexuality, labor and the global economy, as well as race, nations, and borders.



Because discourse informs the material world, these ideas have the potential to shape policies, programs, and people. This project emphasizes the need for grounded research to explore how ideas are transmitted among and through organizations.

### **Chapter Outlines**

*Chapter 2* serves as a brief overview of anti-trafficking efforts in the last two decades with an emphasis on the development of discourse(s) surrounding the issue. It then argues for classifying the collective activities taking place in D.C. to combat trafficking both as a social movement, albeit one with a high degree of institutionalization, and as an industry, because of the high degree of professionalism with which it is carried out.

*Chapter 3* seeks to answer the question, “How does the anti-trafficking movement in Washington, D.C., work?” It outlines the work of the thirty groups examined and describes their interactions and collaborations. It looks at the various ways that the issue of trafficking in persons is named and framed, in order to map out commonalities and differences among the groups in Washington, D.C.

*Chapter 4* focuses on the business of anti-trafficking work. It continues to explore the professionalization of activist work and describes the ways the movement is funded. It draws upon and contributes to the emerging canon on the nonprofit industrial complex.

*Chapter 5* looks closely at two fundraising and awareness events, the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk and the Capital City Ball, to analyze the size and scope of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. Through these events, it explores the external social forces acting upon D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement and describes the ways in which contemporary activism and advocacy around this issue have been shaped by technological trends, including "slacktivism."

*Chapter 6* posits that a focus on the non-contentious goal of raising awareness about trafficking has largely functioned as a tool of compromise in D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement. It explores the stakes of that compromise. It concludes by describing the accomplishments of the movement, including and going beyond "awareness," and suggests areas for further analysis.

*Chapter 7* concludes this work with a discussion of the recently passed Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act and the movement's communication about this legislation. It illustrates through this recent development that awareness remains a key objective of D.C.'s collective effort and, echoing previous chapters, concludes that cooperation around more substantive issues is not as high of a priority.

## Chapter 2

### **A Movement and An Industry: Categorizing Anti-Trafficking Work in Washington, D.C.**

This project seeks to illustrate how anti-trafficking work in contemporary Washington, D.C., comprises both a social movement and an industry. Both frameworks connect collective efforts to combat trafficking in persons to larger discourses around historical and contemporary social organization and nonprofit work in the neoliberal era.

This chapter provides background and context for subsequent ones that analyze particular dimensions of the anti-trafficking movement in the Washington, D.C., metro area. Here, I describe characteristics of the larger contemporary discourses on trafficking and highlight concerns scholars have raised about these discourses, briefly introducing ways that these concerns are or are not relevant for Washington, D.C. I then argue that D.C.'s collective anti-trafficking efforts fit the criteria for classification as a movement—albeit a highly institutionalized one—and that with its professional workforce and mainstream mechanics for fundraising and raising awareness, it also deploys a mainstream business model.

#### **Trafficking Discourses: Defining and Discussing**

As noted in Chapter 1, the modern movement to combat traffic in persons began around the turn of the century and, not surprisingly, many of the organizations examined for this study were established after 2000.<sup>42</sup> Within the

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<sup>42</sup> See Appendix I for these dates. Many of those organizations founded before 2000 are organizations with focuses that are broader than trafficking in persons; in many cases trafficking

last 15 years, the boom in popular cultural discourse surrounding trafficking coincided with its rise as a pressing policy objective. Public policy scholar Andrea Bertone explains that “in the early to mid-1990s, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation slowly returned to the international political agenda. . . . The interest in trafficking grew throughout the 1990s and has remained high on the international political agenda.”<sup>43</sup> Both the United States’ Trafficking Victim’s Protection Act (TVPA) and the United Nations’ Protocol to Prevent Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (Trafficking Protocol) were introduced and debated in the late 1990s and established in 2000. Since that time, every US State has passed a trafficking-related law and the TVPA has been reauthorized four times, most recently in 2013.<sup>44</sup> Trafficking was a priority for the federal government under the Bush Administration<sup>45</sup> and with a much-publicized speech at a Clinton

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programming was likely added to existing programming more recently. Many of these organizations serve on the D.C. Anti-Trafficking Task Force.

<sup>43</sup> Andrea Bertone, “Transnational Activism to Combat Trafficking in Persons,” *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, (Winter/Spring 2004). Bertone notes that the issue returned to the agenda since attention to the trafficking was in flux during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and a series of international instruments addressed the issue, including: International Agreement of 18 May 1904 for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, the 1910 International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, the 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Women and Children, International Convention of 11 October 1933 for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age, and the 1949 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

<sup>44</sup> Polaris Project Website, “Wyoming Becomes 50<sup>th</sup> State to Outlaw Human Trafficking,” last modified February 27, 2013, accessed August 29, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Yvonne Zimmerman, “From Bush to Obama: Rethinking Sex and Religion in the United States Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Spring 2010, 79-99. Bush made a point to comment on the global sex trade at his speech before the United Nations in 2004. Full text is available online: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/58/statements/usaeng030923.htm>. Zimmerman offers one account of the ways in which trafficking was a high-profile issue for the Bush administration, how the issue was framed as a religious and moral one during his presidency, and how this paradigm directed funds to religious organizations over others doing anti-trafficking work.

Global Initiative conference in September 2012, President Obama asserted that “the United States will continue to be a leader in this global movement.”<sup>46</sup> His administration also hosted the first White House Forum to Combat Human Trafficking in April 2013 and has held the event annually since. In May 2015, the United States Congress passed a new piece of legislation, the Justice Against Victims of Trafficking Act. This bill addresses and increases the kinds of services those considered victims might utilize. The debate around this law, which was highly partisan in Washington, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

These legislative measures and anti-trafficking-related rhetoric at the highest levels of government may be considered progress for some members of the anti-trafficking movement, including many of the organizations included in this study—but they do not tell the whole story. By many scholarly accounts, there is a decided lack of consensus about not just what to do to stop trafficking in persons, but what trafficking is in the first place. The relationship between trafficking and prostitution/sex work and an individual’s ability to consent to commercial sex, described in my introduction, drives much of the disagreement, divides feminist activists and scholars, and plays a critical role in the policy-making process.

In a review of recent scholarship on human trafficking, Rhacel Parreñas, Maria Hwang, and Heather Lee cite the broad definition of trafficking established

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<sup>46</sup> Full text of Obama’s speech is available online: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-globalinitiative>. One notable component of this address is the emphasis on trafficking/slavery as not just a global or foreign problem, but one that’s occurring in the United States as well. Obama also noted that the United States is being evaluated with other countries in its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report put out by the State Department.

by the UN Protocol as partially to blame for the “competing definitions of human trafficking.”<sup>47</sup> That document, said to be the first commonly “agreed” upon definition of trafficking, defines the phenomenon as:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. . . .

The Protocol deems the consent of “a victim of trafficking” irrelevant if force has been used,<sup>48</sup> which is problematic for scholars like Jo Doezema, who links the modern discourse about trafficking in persons to historical panics around women’s sexuality and contends that “the argument that women cannot consent to sexual interactions coincides all too easily with anti-feminist ideas about female sexuality, and particularly with that of the threat to women’s sexual autonomy,” but critical to scholars such as Donna Hughes, who sees “trafficking and prostitution as parts of an interlocking system.”<sup>49</sup> Kathleen Barry’s classic *Female Sexual Slavery*, also articulates this position, contending that “female sexual

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<sup>47</sup> Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Maria Cecilia Hwang, and Heather Ruth Lee, “What is Human Trafficking? A Review Essay,” *Signs* (Summer 2012): 1016.

<sup>48</sup> Article 3(b) reads: “The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.”

<sup>49</sup> Jo Doezema, “Who gets to choose? Coercion, consent, and the UN Trafficking Protocol” *Gender and Development* Vol. 10 No. 1 (March 2002): 21. Donna Hughes, “Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking,” (August 2004), Accessed August 22, 2015 [http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/demand\\_sex\\_trafficking\\_pdf](http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/demand_sex_trafficking_pdf)

slavery is present in ALL [her emphasis] situations where women or girls cannot change the immediate conditions of their existence; where regardless of how they got into those conditions, they cannot get out and where they are subject to sexual violence and exploitation,” and influenced Hughes and her contemporaries on the abolitionist side of this debate.<sup>50</sup>

According to Parreñas, Hwang, and Lee, this lack of consensus is also related to the fact that “many anti-trafficking pundits . . . reduce their definition of human trafficking to its exploitative component, ignoring the fact that trafficking by definition must also include the transportation of a person, as well as deception or coercion.”<sup>51</sup> Their short work and that of other scholars, Kamala Kempadoo and Wendy Chapkis among them, also raises issues about the intersection of trafficking in persons with globalization, migration, and labor concerns, and it represents an important intervention for trafficking scholars.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike the UN Protocol, the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act offers no explicit statement defining trafficking in persons. The law does however

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<sup>50</sup> Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 1979: 33.

<sup>51</sup>Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Maria Cecilia Hwang, and Heather Ruth Lee, “What is Human Trafficking? A Review Essay, *Signs* (Summer 2012): 1016.

<sup>52</sup> Kempadoo, Kamala. “Introduction: From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking.” *Trafficking Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005). Kempadoo, an anthropologist, is critical of the statistics claiming a drastic increase of transnational sex work, but does acknowledge that the global restructuring of capitalist production and investment initiated in the 1970s (movement of capital from industrial centers to countries with lower cost labor forces, circumvention of unionized labor, and flexibilization of employment policies), have had “wide-scale gendered implications and by association, an impact on sex industries and sex work internationally” (15). For Kempadoo, part of this link lies in the fact that to escape oppressive economic local conditions caused by globalization (poor working conditions, unstable employment, disruption to structures of care for family structures) women migrate (as independent economic agents) and “with all of this dislocation and movement, some migrant women become involved in sex work” (17).

describe trafficking as a “contemporary manifestation of slavery, whose victims are predominantly women and children,” and it does have a special emphasis on sex trafficking, defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.”<sup>53</sup> Though the TVPA acknowledges that trafficking in persons is not limited to the sex industry, a two-tiered definition of the crime distinguishes “severe” forms of trafficking and considers sex trafficking to be a more severe crime.<sup>54</sup>

As with the UN Protocol, factions among the stakeholders lobbying for the TVPA were again divided on the issue of legalized prostitution and whether sex-trafficking and prostitution were the same thing, according to public policy work by Nicole Footen.<sup>55</sup> Most important to the largest, and eventually successful, “mega-coalition” of stakeholders, whose membership included a range of radical or abolitionist feminists, religious organizations, elected officials, and human rights activists, was getting some form of trafficking legislation passed even if it

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<sup>53</sup> Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, Accessed May 25, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61124.htm>. In the act’s “findings” section, the second item listed explains that of the 50,000 individuals trafficked annually, “many” are “trafficked into the international sex trade, often by force, fraud, or coercion.” This paragraph also notes that “the sex industry has rapidly expanded over the past several decades.”

<sup>54</sup> As found in Section (103) (8) and (9). Severe trafficking is “(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” in addition to “(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.”

<sup>55</sup> Nicole Footen. *The Making of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000: Viewed Through the Lens of Advocacy Coalition Framework*. (Doctoral Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2007):114. Footen characterizes three fluid coalitions implicated in the TVPA debate—an ideologically based liberal feminist coalition, concerned with separating sex work from trafficking; a pragmatic coalition, more interested in labor issues and social services than in the prostitution debate; and a left/right mega-coalition, with membership ranging from religious organizations to radical feminists and from elected officials to human rights activists—and chronicles the mega-coalition’s eventual victory regarding the bill’s content.



did not satisfy all their myriad goals and agendas. The legislation that was passed prioritizes sex trafficking over labor trafficking, emphasizes the protection of victims, and is clear on the continued illegality of the exchange of sexual acts for capital.

That both the federal and multi-national policies employ the term slavery is significant. Semantically, this choice intentionally conjures a known referent to describe what is being articulated as a new social concern. President Obama was aware of this when he included in his aforementioned remarks at the Clinton Global Initiative, the phrase, “Now, I do not use that word, ‘slavery’ lightly. It evokes obviously one of the most painful chapters in our nation’s history.”<sup>56</sup> The commingling of the terms trafficking and slavery and the blurring of the associated labor categories—slavery, debt-bondage, indentureship, and forced labor, for example—is “conceptually muddl[ing]” and likely contributes to the lack of reliable statistics on the phenomenon, according to Kempadoo.<sup>57</sup>

In Washington, D.C., however, this lack of specificity may aid in the cohesion of anti-trafficking groups. I discuss this idea in further detail in Chapter 3 and contend that the lack of a formal, movement-wide definition of trafficking actually encourages groups focused on a variety of scenarios to work together under the trafficking umbrella. A broad understanding of this issue permits multiple viewpoints and perspectives and discourages disagreement rooted in

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<sup>56</sup>Full text of this speech is available online: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative>.

<sup>57</sup> Kamala Kempadoo. “Introduction: From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking.” *Trafficking Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005): xx.

details. While trafficking was once thought of as a problem for women in far off places, now what was formally understood as local prostitution is also lumped together with trafficking—as part of a larger global conversation.

In addition to the nuance of policy examinations, scholars focused on trafficking in persons have long been invested in the larger public discourses surrounding this issue. Key areas of concern include not just the conflation of trafficking with prostitution, sex work, and related issues concerning consent, but also the religious paradigms at work within the movement; a Western bias, which views third-world women as already-victims; a complex crime-with-victim framework; and doubts about the most commonly used estimates of trafficking figures. Here I discuss these concerns and briefly address if and how each manifests itself within D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement.

### *Religious Frameworks and Reliance on Justice*

Religious communities' involvement in the trafficking movement—and the moral panic associated with this involvement—is a concern for scholars like Zimmerman, Weitzer, Bernstein. The religious—largely Christian and conservative—component of the coalition responsible for the passage of the TVPA was an important and influential one. One critique of this community's anti-trafficking work focuses on its position on what constitutes acceptable sexual behavior and the allocation of federal funding for trafficking during the Bush administration. The Prostitution Loyalty Oath inserted into the TVPA reauthorization of 2003 (and since deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court

in 2013) made federal funding to organizations contingent on a group's documented anti-prostitution stance. Yvonne Zimmerman argues that this policy invested resources into organizations that may not have been the most qualified to address trafficking and laments that "the general problematization of prostitution in U.S.-American culture functioned as intuitive knowledge that, in turn, permitted the Bush administration to insert a prostitution clause into its anti-trafficking policy that took a particular (and not universally shared) vision of normative of sexual activity as its point of departure."<sup>58</sup>

Institutionalized religious influence on the larger anti-trafficking movement may also result from the hegemonic understanding of the issue within a criminal framework. This is reflected in the facts that the United Nations Trafficking Protocol prioritizes the transnational criminal aspect of trafficking and its execution is managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and that the conversation leading to its creation took place during a convention on transnational organized crime.<sup>59</sup> For sociologist Elizabeth Bernstein, what connects the religious sect of the trafficking movement with the abolitionist feminist organizations (who might otherwise be strange allies) in a collective effort to combat trafficking is a symmetry between what she calls the "militarized

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<sup>58</sup> Yvonne Zimmerman, "From Bush to Obama: Rethinking Sex and Religion in the United States Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, (Spring 2010) 97.

<sup>59</sup> Though criminal aspects of trafficking are paramount and the motivation behind the issue's placement in the Office of Drugs and Crime, within the larger United Nations system, there are additional agencies and offices charged with the issue of human trafficking, separate from the implementation for the Trafficking Protocol. These include the United Nation's Population Fund and the interagency United Nations Women Watch, which compiles a directory of UN resources dealing with women and gender specific topics and programs. This larger convention and a separate resultant protocol addresses smuggling, which is differentiated from trafficking.

humanitarianism” of the religious right, which sees global justice as a moral imperative, and the “carceral feminism,” of the abolitionist feminist left, which seeks to use the punishing tools of the state to achieve its objectives.<sup>60</sup> According to scholars urging a labor and migration approach to the issue, this law-and-order conception of trafficking is a highly unproductive emphasis: “Because the global governance paradigm on trafficking does not address the root causes for the undocumented movement and employment of people around the world, it also fails to significantly reduce ‘trafficking.’”<sup>61</sup>

While they are in the minority within D.C.’s anti-trafficking movement, there are religious organizations, including some of the organizations with the highest profiles like Shared Hope International and International Justice Mission. Though they are all headquartered in D.C., each has a mission scope that is much broader than D.C. The opinion of these groups as well as another much smaller, religious anti-trafficking group Restoration Ministries, is decidedly anti-commercial sex, but religious organizations are not the only D.C. groups that hold this position. Additionally, in interviews with representatives from these organizations, the immorality of commercial sex was not the principal emphasis of their religious underpinnings.

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<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth Bernstein, “Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns,” *Signs*, (Autumn 2010), 45-71.

<sup>61</sup>Kamala Kempadoo, “Introduction: From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking,” *Trafficking Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005): xvi.

For example, a Shared Hope representative I spoke with framed the religious roots of her organization as a preference of its founder and as a motivation for some of the staff, but ultimately just one component of their work:

All of our international programs are faith-based, that's not a requirement, but it's just that they are faith-based. Some of our domestic programs are faith-based, but they are all required to offer some outlet for spiritual care. That's probably the extent of it. I mean, the rest of the time our messaging is not specifically faith-based even though we're not government grantees and stuff, our messaging is not specifically faith-based.<sup>62</sup>

National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation, the only church group that is part of the sample, is obviously religious, but the representative I spoke with also framed her remarks about the religious element not in moral terms, but in a spiritual context. She called trafficking a “heavy issue” and noted that being able to discuss it in religious terms was comforting.<sup>63</sup>

While the overt religious influence on the anti-trafficking movement in Washington, D.C., may be classified as surprisingly minimal then, the law-and-order, state-sponsored justice paradigm Bernstein describes is very much at work within the movement. Organizations' collaboration and cooperation with the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force, administered by the Attorney General's office, is one example of this alliance, as is an emphasis on working alongside law enforcement. Multiple organizations, including Courtney's House and Shared Hope International, conduct trainings with law enforcement agencies. The former sees relationships with law enforcement in multiple jurisdictions as critical to the

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<sup>62</sup>Interview with Shared Hope International Representative, July 16, 2013.

<sup>63</sup>Interview with National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation representative, September 14, 2012.

organization's work. "...because [in metro D.C.] we're multiple counties, multiple states, each jurisdiction is a little bit different. But, we absolutely have contacts at each, in each one."<sup>64</sup> The idea that law enforcement is a necessary ally reinforces the idea that through their state sanctioned power they have the power to determine who is a victim and who is a "bad guy" in trafficking scenarios. The recently-passed Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act also focuses on providing law enforcement with more tools to combat trafficking, its very name reinforcing the paradigm Bernstein critiques.

### *Western Eyes and Melodrama*

Sociologist Laura Agustín advocates for an alternative migration approach for understanding trafficking in persons and employs a post-colonial framework as she studies both migrant workers, including those who engage in commercial sex, and those well-meaning, often feminist identifying "social helpers" who attempt to "rescue" these women from their work. As I address in more detail in my discussion of anti-trafficking work as an industry below, Agustín questions the fervor with which Western feminists work to alternatively protect or empower migrant sex workers (depending on their stance in the feminist sex wars), and argues that an obsession with the commercial aspect of sex work is distracting "helpers" from efforts to assist migrant women with the things like legal status that would be of more assistance.<sup>65</sup> Scholar and activist Jo Doezema is similarly

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Courtney's House representative, August 12, 2012.

<sup>65</sup> Laura Agustín, *Sex at the Margins, Labour Markets, and the Rescue Industry*. (London: Zed Books, 2007) and Laura Agustín, "At Home in the Street: Questioning the Desire to Help and

concerned with the discourses describing “trafficked bodies” and “western feminists’ ‘wounded attachment’ to the ‘third world prostitute’.”<sup>66</sup>

Doezma’s “wounded attachment” is akin to the melodrama of individual narrative, which Carole Vance argues is the dominant form for telling “trafficking stories” and distracts from addressing the structural causes of trafficking: “It focuses instead on individual actors: an innocent female victim crying out for rescue from sexual danger and diabolical male villains intent on her violation.”<sup>67</sup> Melodrama also relies more on anecdote than statistical evidence, which yields a lack of empirical evidence, as highlighted by Parreñas, Hwang, and Lee, and may perpetuate continued utilization of numbers that scholars like Vance and Ronald Weitzer find highly problematic.<sup>68</sup> According to Weitzer, “researchers have criticized the statistics proffered by activists, NGOs, and governments for their ‘lack of methodological transparency’ and source documentation for being extrapolated from a few cases of identified victims (who are unrepresentative of the victim population) and for the lack of a standard definition of ‘victims’ as a basis for estimating the magnitude of the problem.”<sup>69</sup> Vance contends that

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Save” In E. B. Schaffner, *Regulating Sex: The Politics of Intimacy and Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 2005): 67-81.

<sup>66</sup> Jo Doezema. “Ouch!: Western Feminists’ ‘Wounded Attachment’ to the ‘Third World Prostitute.’” *Feminist Review Number 67 Sex Work Reassessed*, (2001): 16-38.

<sup>67</sup> Carole S. Vance, “Thinking Trafficking, Thinking Sex.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, (2011): 136.

<sup>68</sup> Melodrama and sensationalism, in the form of individual narrative are also relevant to this project. Chapters 4 and 6 unpack some of the sensationalist discourses present in the narratives deployed by D.C. anti-trafficking organizations as part of their fundraising appeals. In addition to sexual danger and diabolical male villains, I also draw attention to images and tropes that simplify race, nation, and class in those chapters.

<sup>69</sup> Ronald Weitzer, “The Movement to Criminalize Sex Work in the United States,” *The Journal of*

exaggerated numbers “justify new laws, while obscuring the more accurate figures that eventually emerge,” which creates “a sense of panic and urgency that rebuffs all criticism.”<sup>70</sup> She recounts how the US Congress and other organizations once reported 50,000 women and children were trafficked into the United States annually for sexual exploitation, but later reduced the estimates to between 14,500 and 17,500.

Many of the DC anti-trafficking organizations consulted and examined for this project rely on such government figures to inform their work and use them in their materials. DC Stop Modern Slavery, for example, gets “information from a lot of governmental sources. People who have the resources to make these estimations.”<sup>71</sup> While a few organizations do have research as part of their objectives and missions, it is certainly true that most of the organizations examined for this study are not in the business of generating large-scale statistics about trafficking. Yet many do report on the scope of the phenomenon, likely as a way to garner attention.

Underscoring the relationship between theory and praxis, I have highlighted debates on discourse that circulate within, but by no means drive, D.C.’s anti-trafficking movement. Yet even as organizations prioritize their own mission and the steps needed to accomplish their goals, it does not mean that they are unaware of these theoretical debates. Several groups, for example,

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*Law and Society*, (March 2010): 61-84.

<sup>70</sup> Carole Vance, “Thinking Trafficking, Thinking Sex.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, (2011): 136.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.



acknowledged the greater public attention paid to sex trafficking over labor trafficking and even work to counteract this imbalance.

In the chapters that follow, I describe what is unique and distinctive about these organizations and categorize them based on similarities and shared priorities. No two organizations are identical, however, and they do work together in many ways. I now turn to a discussion of their collective action.

### **Activism to Combat Trafficking: Anti-Trafficking Efforts as a Social Movement**

Just as there are multiple perspectives on what kinds of activities and crimes fall under the rubric of trafficking in persons, scholars' understandings of what "counts" as a social movement are also varied. This project largely employs a colloquial understanding of the term, focusing on the collective action of individuals in pursuit of common purpose, and takes its lead from existing rhetoric and scholarship. Here I argue that the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. is an institutionalized movement, but a movement nonetheless.

Though the thirty anti-trafficking groups studied did not all position their work as part of a local movement, some did use movement-oriented language. A representative from DC Stop Modern Slavery, for example, described her organization as "the citizens' voice of the anti-trafficking movement."<sup>72</sup> The leader of National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation explained how her church has been involved with broader "abolition"

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

movements.<sup>73</sup> The Founder and Director of Courtney’s House, for example, regularly used the term “movement” to describe her organization’s work in remarks she gave at the “Justice 4 All” Conference for legal service providers.”<sup>74</sup>

Additionally, existing scholarship surrounding this issue also tends to refer to an anti-trafficking “movement.” As I mention above, in her discussion of the linkages between the abolitionist feminist left and Christian Right working to combat trafficking in persons, Elizabeth Bernstein employs the term. “Despite the eager embrace of the anti-trafficking movement by activists occupying a wide spectrum of political position,” she argues that, “what has served to unite this coalition of strange bedfellows is not simply a humanitarian concern with individuals trapped in ‘modern day slavery,’ but instead a shared commitment to carceral paradigms of social, and in particular gender, justice and to militarized humanitarianism as the preeminent mode of engagement by the state.”<sup>75</sup>

Throughout a scholarly article on the topic, Bernstein refers to the anti-trafficking “cause” and “campaign” and considers those engaged as “activists” involved with broader movements. Aforementioned sociologist Ronald Weitzer also explicitly deems anti-trafficking efforts to be a movement in his description of trafficking efforts as moral crusade synonymous with the “The Movement to Criminalize Sex

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation representative, September 14, 2012.

<sup>74</sup> I was in attendance at this conference.

<sup>75</sup>Elizabeth Bernstein, “Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns,” *Signs*, (Autumn 2010): 47.

Work in the United States.”<sup>76</sup> Weitzer describes the large scale national effort to combat trafficking in social movement terms, documenting the stages (“*consultation and inclusion* of activists in policy making, official *recognition and endorsement* of crusade ideology, officials’ independent *articulation* of this ideology, and *programmatic and legal changes* in accordance with this ideology” through which the movement and its ideals became institutionalized.<sup>77</sup>

Some social movement theorists, however, might challenge a classification of anti-trafficking efforts as a social movement due to this high degree of institutionalization. In their *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, sociologists David Snow, Sarah Soule and Hanspeter Krieis acknowledge the plethora of available definitions for social movements, but choose to focus on a series of conceptual principles of distinction: “Although the various definitions of movements may differ in terms of what is emphasized or accented, most are based on three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action, change-oriented goals or claims, some extra- or non-institutional collective action, some degree of organization, and some degree of temporal continuity.”<sup>78</sup> This rubric accounts for decades of scholarship rooted in the sociological study of collective behavior.

It is easy to justify a consideration of the anti-trafficking movement in the Washington, D.C., region under four of the five of these criteria. There is clearly

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<sup>76</sup> Ronald Weitzer, “The Movement to Criminalize Sex Work in the United States,” *The Journal of Law and Society*, 61-84.

<sup>77</sup> Ronald Weitzer, “The Movement to Criminalize Sex Work in the United States,” *The Journal of Law and Society*, 61-84.

<sup>78</sup> David Snow, Sarah Soule and Hanspeter Krieis, *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 6.

*collective or joint action* taking place when groups of individuals are gathering—at the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk or during any of the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force meetings, for example. These groups also have *change-oriented goals*. They seek broadly to end trafficking in persons and/or modern slavery and specifically to change the behavior of those who either perpetuate the practice or knowingly or unknowingly allow it to continue based on their inaction. In most cases they are *organized*. As already mentioned, this study focused on both the community groups and the established nonprofits working on this issue within the region, and both represent the organized component of the movement. The longevity or *temporal continuity* of the movement is also apparent. Many of the organizations studied were established after the turn of the century and the passage of the federal and multinational policies addressing trafficking in persons, and they continue to exist.

The hesitation in classifying anti-trafficking efforts as a movement rests then in its lack of activity outside sanctioned institutional channels. Cultural scholar T.V. Reed's work on social movements focuses on progressive movements and his definition—"the unauthorized, unofficial, anti-institutional, collective action of ordinary citizens trying to change their world"—also presupposes working outside existing hierarchies.<sup>79</sup> Describing how anti-trafficking efforts operate within the context of existing economic and state power structures is one of this project's primary concerns. In Chapter 4, which focuses

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<sup>79</sup> T.V. Reed, *The Art of Protest*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005): xiii.

on the funding of the movement, I describe the funding support granted to defined NGOs and nonprofits.

Yet even as I contend that the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. is far from radical, I conclude that “movement” is the most appropriate term to describe the organizations’ parallel and cooperative activities. In examining materials and media of organizations working on this issue and in speaking with those working on this issue, I find collective, change-oriented activities that have been sustained for more than a decade. That these activities are shaped and bound by the same social forces—neoliberal economic conditions, a selectively punitive and selectively protective state, and the carceral feminism and militarized humanitarianism described by Bernstein—that shape many other facets of contemporary social behavior, does not discount the collectivity, orientation toward change, or the longevity of the actions.

In addition to deploying the word “movement,” Samantha King sometimes uses the terms “cause” or “campaign” to describe the mainstream collective effort combatting and raising awareness for breast cancer.<sup>80</sup> These terms are relevant to trafficking in persons as well, but neither sufficiently describes the range of work taking place. Though I focus on trafficking as a “cause” throughout this project, the term does not account fully for the direct services taking place by organizations in D.C. “Campaign” may have an important financial connotation, but it also reflects a limited temporality compared to a long-term and changing social movement.

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<sup>80</sup> Samantha King. *Pink Ribbons, Inc: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

For Snow, Soule, and Kriesi, “as social movements develop over time, they often become more and more institutionalized, with some of them evolving (at least partially) into interest groups or even political parties.”<sup>81</sup> The efforts to combat trafficking in persons in D.C. always had some degree of institutionalization, but as Elizabeth Armstrong contests in work on the LGBT movement in San Francisco, challenging and changing the state need not always be the motivation behind a social movement. Using a “cultural-institutional perspective” and the concept of “field” or “institutionalized arenas of social action” borrowed from organizational psychology, Armstrong shifts social movement scholarship away from privileging action that targets the state: “Everyday action reproduces established fields. Social movements occur when actors engage in collective action geared toward carrying out new arenas or redefining the rules of the game of existing arenas. Social movements can be directed toward establishing new fields, destroying or transforming existing fields, or blocking the efforts of other actors to transform arenas.”<sup>82</sup> For Armstrong, a movement can occur within any area of society (e.g., the state, the economy, or the religious sector). I argue that those working to combat trafficking in persons in the D.C. region—those engaged in the anti-trafficking movement—are working to have impact in multiple arenas, even if that impact is as simple as knowledge creation through awareness, the cultural anchor binding together this movement.

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<sup>81</sup> David Snow, Sarah Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 6.

<sup>82</sup> Elizabeth Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 195.

## Do-Good Labor: Trafficking Work as Nonprofit Work

Another aspect of the institutional nature of the anti-trafficking movement is its connection to the market. This is not unique to anti-trafficking work, but reflective of modern nonprofit work at large. Though there is a certain benevolence or altruism associated with activities that take place within the nonprofit and nongovernmental spheres and the charity or philanthropic social realm, the economic and social contexts surrounding this work are no less complex than those associated with for-profit or governmental activities and programs. As Marion Fremont-Smith notes in her *Governing Nonprofit Organizations: Federal and State Law and Regulation*, there is contestation even as one tries to categorize and make simple delineations among those organizations doing this kind of work:

Nomenclature is further confused by attempts to describe the universe of charities. In recognition that charities comprise that part of the U.S. economy that is not controlled by private business nor by government, this sector is variously called the ‘third sector,’ the ‘independent sector,’ the ‘philanthropic sector,’ the ‘charitable sector,’ and towards the end of the twentieth century, ‘civil’ society.’ In countries other than the United States and Great Britain, nonprofit organizations are commonly referred to as ‘nongovernmental organizations’ or NGOs, and the sector is defined by that term. Each of these titles captures an important characteristic of the sector, but no one title accurately summarizes the entirety of activities carried on by its constituents.<sup>83</sup>

In the United States, the “nonprofit” sector is typically understood to include organizations or legal entities that have been granted tax exempt status by the

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<sup>83</sup> Marion Fremont-Smith, *Governing Nonprofit Organizations: Federal and State Law and Regulation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009):4. I make no effort to tackle the nuances of these definitions here—I focus on all organizations whose work includes efforts to combat human trafficking—but I mention this background of complexity because it reflects the climate for institutional activist, advocacy, and client services work more broadly.

federal government, as well as churches and religious organizations that are not required to file exemption documentation.<sup>84</sup> Approximately 1.58 million nonprofits were registered with the Internal Revenue Service in 2011.<sup>85</sup> The nonprofit sector contributed an estimated \$836.9 billion to the U.S. economy in 2011 and of the nonprofit organizations registered with the IRS, 501(c)(3) public charities accounted for more than three-quarters of the nonprofit sector's revenue and expenses and three-fifths of non-profit assets in 2011.<sup>86</sup> In 2012, total private giving from individuals, foundations, and businesses exceeded \$300 billion.<sup>87</sup> Thus the nonprofit sector is undeniably significant, not just for its impact on communities, but also for its impact on the economy and social order more generally as well.

Despite their nonprofit status, NGOs are closely connected to public and private sector partners and these relationships fuel concerns for scholars interested

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<sup>84</sup> A 2007 Congressional Research Service report on the nonprofit sector clarifies its nomenclature: "For purposes of this report, the term 'nonprofit sector' is generally intended to include all organizations with federal tax-exempt status. The term 'charitable sector' is used to refer to one type of tax-exempt organization, specifically those organizations with 501(c)(3) public charity status. The Internal Revenue Code (IRC) describes approximately 30 types of tax-exempt organizations. Examples include charitable organizations, social welfare organizations, labor unions, trade associations, fraternal societies, and political organizations. The largest category, and the primary focus of this report, are the organizations described in Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Organizations eligible for 501(c)(3) status include charities, religious organizations, hospitals, and educational institutions. The entire universe of these organizations is commonly referred to as 'charitable organizations.'" The full text of the report is available at: <http://www.nonprofitcongress.org/files/crs-overview-nonprofit-charitable-sector.pdf>. See also <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-soi/12databk.pdf>.

<sup>85</sup> Sarah L. Pettijohn. *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Public Charities, Giving, and Volunteering* 2013. Urban Institute Website. <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412923-The-Nonprofit-Sector-in-Brief-Public-Charities-Giving-and-Volunteering-.PDF>

<sup>86</sup> Sarah L. Pettijohn. *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Public Charities, Giving, and Volunteering* 2013. Urban Institute Website. <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412923-The-Nonprofit-Sector-in-Brief-Public-Charities-Giving-and-Volunteering-.PDF>

<sup>87</sup> Sarah L. Pettijohn. *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Public Charities, Giving, and Volunteering* 2013. Urban Institute Website. <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412923-The-Nonprofit-Sector-in-Brief-Public-Charities-Giving-and-Volunteering-.PDF>



in both the “NGOization” of feminist work and the Nonprofit Industrial Complex (NPIC), discussed below. The complexity and multiple interests involved in what I call the “do-good labor” of the NGO and nonprofit sector more broadly are important factors when examining the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. I define do-good labor as work—which might be paid or volunteer, but is typically part of formal economic channels—that is conducted for the sake of others with the goal of bettering a social ill or problem, i.e. in service of a social cause. I also discuss the do-good labor of the trafficking movement in depth in Chapter 4, but address this terminology here to contextualize this nuanced form of work in time and place.

Though there are distinguishing characteristics of 21st century not-for-profit work, the complicated relationship between charity and the politics of institutional power is not unique to the contemporary era. In her aforementioned *Sex at the Margins*, anthropologist Laura Agustín writes of a landmark period for philanthropy and charity work in Europe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. She describes a period characterized by the “rise of the social” during which the recently established bourgeois middle class was empowered to shape society as it saw fit, defining proper social behavior and deviant social behavior: “The social invented not only its objects but the necessity to do something about them and thereby its own need to exit.”<sup>88</sup> According to Agustín, in previous eras, commercial sex was thought of as an unpreventable social ill and “prostitutes”

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<sup>88</sup> Laura Agustín. *Sex at the Margins, Labour Markets, and the Rescue Industry*. (London: Zed Books, 2007): 107.

constituted a hopeless, fixed, and undesirable social category.<sup>89</sup> During the “rise of the social,” however, prostitution came to be understood more as a transitory occupation and its practitioners as victims of their class and gender rather than of tragedy.<sup>90</sup> As attention to the “plight” of the prostitute grew, a corresponding industry of “helpers” developed to assist institutions in managing their care.<sup>91</sup> According to Agustín, a “whole sphere of tasks” emerged that “came to be considered not only appropriate and dignified work, but also particularly suitable and natural to women.”<sup>92</sup> These were jobs belonging to respectable and well-meaning upper-class women who intended to rescue and rehabilitate women working in commercial sex.

Agustín’s is but one account of historical charity work, focused on one social issue, but in tracing some of the roots of the classification of “do-good labor” and social welfare work as “women’s work,” Agustín helps to begin a conversation about the complicated nature of women’s lingering efforts to change social behavior, be it through activism, advocacy, or charity work. This conversation is relevant to the anti-trafficking work taking place in and around Washington, D.C.

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<sup>89</sup> Laura Agustín. *Sex at the Margins, Labour Markets, and the Rescue Industry*. (London: Zed Books, 2007): 107.

<sup>90</sup> Laura Agustín. *Sex at the Margins, Labour Markets, and the Rescue Industry*. (London: Zed Books, 2007): 110.

<sup>91</sup> Laura Agustín. *Sex at the Margins, Labour Markets, and the Rescue Industry*. (London: Zed Books, 2007): 115-122.

<sup>92</sup> Laura Agustín. *Sex at the Margins, Labour Markets, and the Rescue Industry*. (London: Zed Books, 2007): 121.

As was mentioned in the introduction, women make up the majority of workers employed in the nonprofit sector.<sup>93</sup> Given that “women’s issues” and “feminism” are far from synonymous and a singular feminist agenda has never existed, it is not surprising that a unifying call to an agreed-upon feminist ideology does not exist as part of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. Yet, even as multiple organizations vow to focus on more than women and commercial sex, the movement’s involvement, and leadership, on conversations pertaining to the welfare of trafficked women and girls firmly places it within a larger, global, influx of individual NGOs concerned with women and women’s welfare.

Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal focus on this influx, and the institutionalization of feminism more broadly, in their *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. They, summarize that “nongovernmental organizations (NGOS) have become normalized as key players in national and global politics” as a well-established institutional form, “especially in relation to questions of women’s welfare and empowerment.”<sup>94</sup> They note that “NGOs have

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<sup>93</sup> Consequently, the majority of individuals with whom I interacted as part of this research were also women. While I did encounter men, and can confirm that there are certainly men working as part of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. (the directors of several organizations—Free the Slaves, Polaris Project, and Projection Project among them), all of the interviews I conducted were with women. The larger anti-trafficking organizations in D.C. have more diverse staffs, but the smaller groups in this study—including Courtney’s House, Bridge to Freedom Foundation, Shared Hope International, Innocents at Risk, and Global Centurion—tended to be operated by a small group of women. I did not address this imbalance with my informants, but the gender of trafficking movement participants did come up organically in conversation once. Part of Courtney’s House’s direct service role involves weekly “street outreach” where volunteers interact with individuals engaged in commercial sex to share information about the organization’s services. According to the organization’s director of operations, “men are customers,” and thus are not permitted to volunteer for this job.

<sup>94</sup> Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. *Theorizing NGO: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014):1.

come to be strongly associated with women's issues and are themselves heavily populated with by women members, workers, and constituencies."<sup>95</sup>

The NGOization of feminism is driven by several characteristics typical of non-governmental organizations. First, despite their variety, "NGOs are often understood as an alternative to the state as well as to corporations, taking the place of the state in the work of development and welfare and providing services free or at much lower costs than private businesses."<sup>96</sup> Consequently, change-minded individuals working through NGOs can imagine themselves to be operating independently of systems with which they may find fault. However, because the NGO form mimics bureaucratic state forms, "NGOs are easily embraced by donors and states."<sup>97</sup> Additionally, they are less threatening to states than mass movements, and "part of their appeal to donors and states comes from the way the NGO form seems less separate from the state even as it is a site of governmentality."<sup>98</sup> In short, contemporary NGOs exist in a perfect storm whereby they incentivize efforts of benevolent minded workers (and volunteers) who are hoping to make change and fill a gap in service, *and* remain palatable and accountable, often via funding relationships, to existing structures of power in the state and in the market.

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<sup>95</sup> Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. *Theorizing NGO: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014): 309.

<sup>96</sup> Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. *Theorizing NGO: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014):7.

<sup>97</sup> Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. *Theorizing NGO: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014):10.

<sup>98</sup> Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. *Theorizing NGO: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014):10.

For the same reasons that “today feminism as a social movement seems less viable than the plethora of NGOs addressing gender issues and women’s welfare,” activism more generally has taken an institutional turn that shapes the kinds of projects taking place in civil society.<sup>99</sup> An anthology project of an organization called, Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, *The Revolution will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*, defines and tackles various instruments of the NPIC. The phenomenon is described in this work by Dylan Rodríguez as “the industrialized incorporation of pro-state liberal and progressive campaigns and movements into a spectrum of government-procured non-profit organizations” and as “the set of symbiotic relationships that link together political and financial technologies of state and owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse.”<sup>100</sup> This is an assertive way to suggest that when charities or organizations are “doing good,” they are doing good in a way that is mediated by existing systems of power. Given that they are accountable through funding relationships to the state and the market, their behavior is regulated by the expectations of both. One of the formative texts on this still-emerging field of study, this work describes a world in which contemporary activism is channeled through a nexus of publicly funded NGOs. And as public funding for social concerns ebbs and flows, NGOs have come to rely on the market to secure funding for their work. Respectability and a

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<sup>99</sup> Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. *Theorizing NGO: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014):1.

<sup>100</sup> Dylan Rodríguez, “The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex.” *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 21-22.

metrics driven performance record, rather than visions of radical social justice, drive the agendas of nonprofit organizations, as they pursue funding.

In the introduction to the anthology, Andrea Smith chronicles the history of funding of charity work in the United States. “Prior to the Civil War,” she contends, “individuals, not organizations, did most charity work. However, in the face of accelerating industrialization and accompanying social ills, such as increased poverty, community breakdown to facilitate the flow of labor, and violence, local organizations (generally headed by community elites) developed to assist those seen to be ‘deserving’ of assistance, such as widows and children. These charities focused on individual poverty rather than poverty on the systemic level.”<sup>101</sup> Then as megacapitalists’ wealth grew with industrialization of the economy, these individuals set up foundations that allowed them to not only help people, but to shape and engineer their version of an ideal society.<sup>102</sup> Not unlike the situation Agustín describes in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which bourgeois European ladies “rescued” prostitutes with the aid of an institutional system designed to rehabilitate them in hopes of improving society at large, foundations in the United States were able select the people and projects they deemed most worth of help.

Such foundations continue to shape the agenda of “do-good labor” today, and while there are nonprofit organizations on both ends of the political spectrum,

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<sup>101</sup> Andrea Smith, “Introduction,” *The Revolution will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 3.

<sup>102</sup> Andrea Smith, “Introduction,” *The Revolution will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 3-5.

Rodríguez is most critical of those that make up what he calls the “establishment Left” for diluting their ideology with “structural allegiance to state authority that preempts political radicalism.”<sup>103</sup> He explains that “heavily dependent on the funding of such ostensibly liberal and progressive financial bodies like the Mellon, Ford, and Soros Foundations, the very existence of many social justice organizations has often come to rest more on the effectiveness of professional (and amateur) grant-writers than on skilled—much less “radical”—political educators and organizers.”<sup>104</sup> Christine Ahn alternatively focuses on the ways in which she sees the current philanthropic world order favoring a conservative world view and, by funneling money away from the collective tax base, perpetuating an elite agenda:

As federal, state, and local funds dry up, the public turns to philanthropy and charities to pick up where government has left off. Conservatives, for example, slash federal welfare benefits to fund marriage promotion as a poverty-prevention policy targeting poor women, then call on churches, nonprofits, and volunteers without food, home, jobs, or health care under the mantle of ‘compassionate conservatism.’ Many Americans are seduced by the idea that piecemeal voluntary efforts can somehow replace a systematic public approach to eliminating poverty. But this reasoning is based on the inherent falsehood that scarcity—rather than equality—is at the root of these persisting social and economic problems.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Dylan Rodríguez, “The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex.” *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 29.

<sup>104</sup> Dylan Rodríguez, “The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex.” *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 27.

<sup>105</sup> Christine Ahn, “Democratizing Philanthropy.” *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 63.

Acknowledging that foundations and the demand for their funds are not about to “magically disappear,” Ahn stresses the need to hold foundations accountable through regulations and through requiring them to pay out more of their assets to charity.

The work of Rodríguez and Ahn, as well as the rest of the pieces in the *Incite!* anthology, strives to depict the complexity of modern charity work and to uproot the assumption that it is all neutrally benign and good. I highlight this work in my discussion of trafficking, however, because it is foundational for emerging discussions about how “do-good” work is executed and the inherent power dynamics surrounding money that is expended to improve the world.

Not all nonprofits seek funding from mega-foundations, and none of the representatives of anti-trafficking organizations that I interviewed spoke of such potential funders by name. But most do have to fundraise to generate income, and some list their donors on their websites. The pursuit of funding remains significant regardless of which establishment funding source a nonprofit group is seeking. In any case, the organization becomes aligned with any one of several levels of government, with individual donors, with corporate sponsors, or with some combination of these entities. Like foundations and the bourgeois population employed in the “do-good” industry Agustín discusses, each of these funders is investing in their version of an ideal society when they agree to provide resources to an organization.

What Bernal and Grewal call the “NGO form” is complex and includes a variety of kinds of organizations; this, as they argue, is part of the reason for its



proliferation.<sup>106</sup> While Rodríguez is most invested in a critique of the NPIC's influence on progressive NGOs, there are also foundations and NGOs on the conservative side of the political spectrum seeking to influence the social order. As a nonpartisan valence issue, trafficking is of concern for both the Right and Left, but as highlighted above, there is a deep connection between the larger anti-trafficking movement and the Religious Right.<sup>107</sup> Whether or not we deem religious organizations to be nonprofits, they are undeniably in the business of charity and “do-good” work. As is discussed above, religious communities' involvement in the anti-trafficking movement is well-documented and this constituency's particular moral stance on commercial sex helped drive the discourse that led to the so-called and aforementioned Prostitution Loyalty Oath.

Again, the Supreme Court ruled on the Prostitution Loyalty Oath in 2013 and deemed it unconstitutional, but these conversations emphasize the significance of funding and funding relationships at all levels.<sup>108</sup> Rodríguez argues that “the overall bureaucratic formality and hierarchical (frequently elitist) structuring of the NPIC has institutionalized more than just a series of hoops through which aspiring social change activists must jump—the institutional

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<sup>106</sup> Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. *Theorizing NGO: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014):3.

<sup>107</sup> Dylan Rodríguez, “The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex.” *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 27.

<sup>108</sup> Bill Mears, “Court Rejects Anti-Prostitution Pledge in Anti-AIDS program.” CNN Website. June 20, 2013. Accessed December 30, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/06/20/politics/scotus-anti-aids-program/>.

characteristics, in fact, dictate the political vistas of NPIC organizations themselves.”<sup>109</sup>

My interactions with individuals in the anti-trafficking movement were not often about money, yet as I discuss in Chapter 4, the routine process of generating financial support through public and private channels to facilitate the programming goals of an organization was unquestioned. Both professionals and volunteers conducting do-good labor in the nonprofit industry anticipate these activities as required of their work in this industry.

This chapter sketched a handful of the theoretical discussions tied to trafficking in persons generally and presented two broad frameworks through which to view anti-trafficking efforts in Washington, D.C. I now turn away from the theoretical to the mechanical, examining how the anti-trafficking movement works.

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<sup>109</sup> Dylan Rodríguez, “The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex.” *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2009): 29.

### Chapter 3

#### **Nuts and Bolts: How D.C.'s Anti-Trafficking Movement Works**

At the 2012 DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk, I overheard an event participant marveling about the number of organizations represented at booths during the resource fair preceding the main event and asking why groups didn't just "work together." Certainly, she had a point. On the plush green grass surrounding the Washington Monument, at least 20 organizations had tables staffed by volunteers ready to share materials and talk. These included large, well-established nonprofit groups, as well as student organizations and branches of local and federal agencies. The volunteer to whom the woman was speaking responded that there was a great deal of collaboration among the groups and that the event itself was an example of the groups' "working together."

Given the challenges I had faced in compiling a complete list of groups focused on the issue of trafficking in persons in the region, and the fact that my list of groups continued to grow well after my original data collection period, I shared this observer's sentiment about the large number of organizations active on this issue. Why the need for so many separate organizations in one city? Additionally, given what I knew about the ideological complexities of trafficking in persons as a cause, I did not anticipate that everyone could or should just "work together."

Yet, there is collaboration among the diverse anti-trafficking organizations working in the D.C. area. In this chapter, I work to elucidate in greater detail the

structures under which this collaboration takes place. I describe and group the major players and trace the specific connections and partnerships in which organizations are engaged. I look for the roots of interaction and cooperation in both the organizations' *articulation of the problem they are addressing* and in their *articulation of their mission and goals*, ultimately concluding that variations in both do not impede collaboration. With regard to the former—essentially the naming of the cause in question—I explore organizations' use of the terms “human trafficking” and “slavery.” Nomenclature is important because to name a cause is to establish a referent around which like-minded or like-motivated individuals or groups can coalesce and organize. I then highlight and describe the multiple lenses through which these groups understand trafficking in persons, and compare their respective foci on sex and/or labor trafficking and the geographic boundaries of their work.

My analysis suggests that several factors—defined roles, interconnectedness, and activities around the common goal of raising awareness—contribute to peaceful coexistence and nuanced collaboration among groups. Furthermore, setting the stage for Chapter 4, I suggest that while the substantive movement dynamics are important, ideology or shared perspectives about trafficking are secondary to practical matters like resources and professional relationships.

I emphasize again that my understanding of movement mechanics—how things work—is shaped by my organizational level of analysis, and that my methodology privileges organizations' public portrayals of their efforts and

activities. When I define the players below, I describe groups and organizations rather than their leaders or members.

### **Identifying and Categorizing the Players**

The thirty organizations located in the D.C. metro area that focus on combatting trafficking in persons are varied in almost every possible way. Appendix I illustrates this diversity and provides a snapshot of this project's sample in its entirety. Here I work to further segment the larger group by date founded, by size, and by the programmatic activities of each organization.

Anti-trafficking activities in D.C. are conducted both by organizations solely focused on trafficking *and* by groups who engage in anti-trafficking work as part of a larger portfolio. There are nineteen groups in the first category, which were established within a sixteen-year period from 1997 to 2013 with nearly a third (six of nineteen) beginning work in 2007 and 2008.<sup>110</sup> This chronology is significant, as it reinforces the aforementioned notion that the turn of the century witnessed an explosion of anti-trafficking activities, with anti-trafficking legislation implemented at the multinational and federal levels in 2000 and with a notable increase in trafficking-related media and popular culture.

While multiple groups were established in Washington, D.C., within a short period time, my interviews suggest that organizational founders were not

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<sup>110</sup> These organizations are: ATEST, Amara Legal Clinic, Break the Chain Campaign, Bridge to Freedom Foundation, Capital City Ball, Courtney's House, End Slavery Now, Free the Slaves, Global Centurion, Global Rescue Relief, Innocents at Risk, International Justice Mission, National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation, Polaris Project, Prevent Human Trafficking, Protection Project, Restoration Ministries, Shared Hope International, and DC Stop Modern Slavery. Their founded dates are listed in Appendix 1.

operating in vacuums and were aware of their colleagues' efforts as they plotted their young organizations' goals and missions. The portion of my interviews with organizational representatives that focused on groups' geneses and origin stories suggests that as new groups focused on trafficking were forming over the last decade, they often sought to determine what existing work was already taking place locally prior to establishing their own mission and activities, with the goal of maximizing efforts and not duplicating services. Founders of groups, including National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation, Innocents at Risk, Global Rescue Relief, and the Bridge to Freedom Foundation, referenced such conversations in interviews, with the founder of the latter organization explicitly citing a void in services that her organization sought to fill:

I founded the organization based on what I had researched and evaluated was a need and a missing gap within the human trafficking service sector and field after a number of years working in it volunteering with different organizations, attending as a writer activist and so forth. Once I noticed this specific gap in need, I then conferred with my colleagues across the board—those within law enforcement, direct services, legal aid, and so forth . . . survivors as well.<sup>111</sup>

This is one answer to the question of why there are so many organizations at work in the city: they each feel that their group contributes something novel to the anti-trafficking landscape in Washington, D.C.

There are a handful of organizations included in this research for whom trafficking is not the central concern, but rather an issue related to other types of mission-oriented programming, including immigrants' rights and youth development. These are the groups who incorporate anti-trafficking work into a

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<sup>111</sup> Interview with Bridge to Freedom Foundation representative, August 16, 2012.

larger portfolio.<sup>112</sup> These organizations were established over a longer period from 1974-2003 and presumably added anti-trafficking work to existing programming as the issue gained attention, possibly around the turn of the century. Organizations such as Casa De Maryland, Ayuda, Boat People SOS, Latin American Youth Center, and Sasha Bruce Youth Works participate in D.C.'s Human Trafficking Task Force, a critical venue for collective activity, because they consider the populations they serve to be vulnerable to trafficking. Boat People SOS, for example, explains its shifting role and transition in programming on its website:

Since the end of the Vietnamese boat people saga in 1997 we have expanded our services to assist victims of persecution, torture, violence and exploitation in building their new life in America. While we continue to rescue and protect Vietnamese victims of human trafficking and of persecution in Vietnam, Southeast Asia, and many other countries, we are taking equally bold initiatives to empower, organize and equip the Vietnamese community in America.<sup>113</sup>

In the case of this organization, trafficking was not the primary focus when the group was founded, nor is it the central focus now, but it is among the issues shaping the reality of the community it seeks to serve. This fact serves as an additional response to the question of why there are so many organizations working on trafficking issues in Washington, D.C., some of them do other things too.

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<sup>112</sup> These are Asian Pacific Resource Center, Ayuda, Beyond Borders, Boat People SOS, Casa De Maryland, FAIR Girls, HIPS, Latin American Youth Center, Sasha Bruce Youthworks, Seraphm Global, and Vital Voices. Their founded dates are listed in Appendix I.

<sup>113</sup> Boat People SOS Website. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.bpsos.org/#!/ceo-message/cipy>

One of the more recently established organizations in this latter group, FAIR Girls, is a unique case within this latter group since while it focuses on other issues besides trafficking affecting girls, the group is very visible within the trafficking community.<sup>114</sup> According to their website, the organization “offers compassionate care to prevent the exploitation of all girls, with a special emphasis on girls who have experienced homelessness, life inside the foster care system, sexual abuse, and trafficking,” but the bulk of their programs have a connection to trafficking or trafficking prevention.<sup>115</sup>

Aside from their founded dates and the percentage of time they devote to trafficking, anti-trafficking organizations may be further categorized by their size. There are several large, high-profile anti-trafficking organizations headquartered in D.C. with multiple office locations and more than a handful of staff members. Though their characterization as large is partially subjective, these organizations—Free the Slaves, Polaris Project, and International Justice Mission—represent the highest-profile groups within the trafficking movement. All were established between 1997 and 2002; these organizations also conduct the most comprehensive suite of activities, including both client services and advocacy work, which is likely directly related to their size. Each has a global scope and all but Polaris have offices overseas. I have included International

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<sup>114</sup> I pursued an interview with this organization, but was not granted one.

<sup>115</sup> FAIR Girls Website. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.fairgirls.org/about-us/about-us/programs>



Justice Mission in this group because of its notoriety, though trafficking is not its sole concern.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to participating in D.C.-based collaborations, these groups, regularly cited in the media, are also involved in wider networks. Polaris Project, Free the Slaves, and International Justice Mission are also part of the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST), a national network of anti-trafficking organizations.

Among those organizations that solely focus on trafficking, there are also several small organizations that operate in metro D.C.: Amara Legal Clinic, Beyond Borders, Break the Chain Campaign, Bridge to Freedom Foundation, Courtney's House, Global Centurion, Global Rescue Relief, End Slavery Now, Innocents at Risk, National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation, Prevent Human Trafficking, Protection Project, Restoration Ministries, and Shared Hope International.<sup>117</sup> These groups have fewer individuals on staff, or, as with volunteer organizations like DC Stop Modern Slavery and Capital City Ball, a small group of volunteers.

These organizations do not necessarily define themselves by their small size, but some recognize the boundaries of their work based on the scale of their operations. Courtney's House, for example, has made a concentrated effort to focus on client services. "We, in the history of our organization, have spread

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<sup>116</sup> None of these organizations granted me interviews—a fact that might be considered in light of their high profile status. International Justice Mission allowed me to attend a regularly scheduled tour for visitors. Free the Slaves answered a list of questions in writing citing limited staff time. Polaris Project declined an interview and informed me that staff time was limited.

<sup>117</sup> Here I do not include organizations for whom trafficking is not the primary focus, except for FAIR Girls since this organization is well-known for their work in this area.

ourselves thin trying to concentrate on more things and it does such a disservice to our clients. Because we are such a small staff, we have to stay focused. We don't have the option not to. Unapologetically, we don't deal with the buyers and we don't do legislation."<sup>118</sup> This focus reinforces the notion that groups consider themselves to be highly specialized and filling a niche other groups are not, and it suggests that this accounts for the large number of small organizations rather than a small number of large organizations.

Their small size doesn't necessarily mean that these organizations' reputations are small, however. A small organization with a high-profile creator, Shared Hope International, was founded in 1998 by Republican Congresswoman Linda Smith. This organization is self-reflexive about the attention it receives in relation to its size and the impact of its work:

Our organization is small and has always been very small and maybe that's why we don't make a big splash in like a household name per se. We don't spend a lot of money on marketing and getting ourselves into your living room. You're not going to see us on TV; you're not going to see us on college campuses and stuff. It's not because we don't want to be there, it's just that we don't have the capacity to get there at this point. So, most of our work, I feel like it's recognized at a governmental level or at an NGO level; or at an inner-circle level.<sup>119</sup>

Shared Hope and other organizations place varying levels of importance on their profile and on the media coverage they receive. This project did not have a systematic approach to measuring which groups were most often featured in media outlets, but it is important to note that some feature their coverage on their websites and see media attention as a way to raise awareness for the trafficking

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with Courtney's House representative, August 12, 2012.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International representative, July 16, 2013.

cause more broadly. Courtney's House, for example, is one group that, despite its small size, has used media attention strategically:

We've generally received media coverage; *Washington Times* has done quite a few pieces that are in connection or relation to us. We've had some in the *Post*... Whether it's us or focusing on other people, from the standpoint of wanting to eradicate domestic sex trafficking, there needs to be even more awareness and there needs to be even more shame brought upon the buyers themselves. If that could be done through a media outlet, I'm fine with that.<sup>120</sup>

As mentioned below, the organization's founder, a self-identified survivor of sex trafficking, is a well-known fixture in the anti-trafficking community and is often profiled.

Organizations' sizes help to contextualize the amount of programming they conduct, but for the sake of this project, the most useful way to categorize anti-trafficking organizations may be by the nature of their activities. These activities largely consist of education/advocacy/awareness work and/or direct work with clients. Client services involves providing basic needs like shelter and clothing as well as higher order assistance like job training and legal counseling for trafficked individuals, while advocacy/education/awareness work involves tracking and petitioning for policies around trafficking, training law enforcement or students, or engaging with the general public about this issue. The latter might take place through social media campaigns, film screenings, talks, social events, and fundraisers. Nearly all of the groups engage in communication and fundraising activities to facilitate the rest of their programming (as will be discussed in Chapter 4).

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<sup>120</sup> Interview with Courtney's House representative, August 12, 2012.

Critical for this research is the fact that many groups that provide direct services also engage in advocacy, education, and awareness work.<sup>121</sup> This overlap is likely strategic. While, as mentioned above, organizations each feel that they have something unique to contribute to anti-trafficking work, perhaps so much so that they created a new NGO rather than working within an existing group, there is a general consensus that awareness work is important for everyone and that awareness is maximized when conducted in cooperation. The founder of Bridge to Freedom Foundation shared, “If we don’t all continue to educate we will have a much bigger problem. It’s an unsigned law that you will participate in some community activism and help to raise awareness for the cause.”<sup>122</sup> The founder of Innocents at Risk also recognized this obligation as she shared her thoughts on the group’s early awareness activities: “We would have events where we would also have people from the State Department, the Department of Justice, from the FBI, from Polaris, from Shared Hope that would come and speak also. It was never just us. From the beginning, we would have other speakers as well . . . we partnered that way.”<sup>123</sup>

There is also, as will be discussed below in the context of the anti-trafficking movement’s signature events, the belief that participation in the significant shared spaces for collaboration is important and fruitful even if it is not always seamless. With regard to her organization’s role on D.C.’s Human

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<sup>121</sup> The chart in Appendix I describes the activities conducted by each of the thirty organizations included in this research.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Bridge to Freedom Foundation representative, August 16, 2012.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Innocents at Risk representative, October 11, 2012.

Trafficking Task Force, a representative from Courtney's House sang the praises of the group's organizer for his work to create positive connections among a disparate group of organizations:

It's a very large group so what I appreciate about . . . his leadership . . . is his desire just to seek people out and know how best can we actually work with you. . . . That's actually been a beautiful relationship because if we have something sticky going on or a client has disclosed information that is very sensitive and we don't exactly know what to do with it, [he] is probably one of the first people I'm calling . . . saying, this is our situation, this is our client, who do we talk to?<sup>124</sup>

This Task Force is one of the critical junctions for interaction between anti-trafficking organizations of all sizes and all programmatic foci. I turn now to a discussion of this space and others like it where the collective work of the movement occurs.

### **Cooperation, Partnerships, and Roles**

If we begin from the premise that D.C.'s anti-trafficking organizations comprise a movement and an industry, it is important to note that not all of the groups examined explicitly self-identified as part of a collective. Most, including all those interviewed, however, referred to some interaction with other anti-trafficking groups in the region. To determine what formal and informal collaboration existed within the movement, I looked for instances of common organizational materials, and asked organizational representatives with whom I spoke, "who do you consider partners in your work?" Much of this interaction

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<sup>124</sup> Interview with Courtney's House representative, August 12, 2012.

takes place around three major sites of intersection: The D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force, the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk, and the Capital City Ball.<sup>125</sup>

The Task Force was created in 2004 during a round of Department of Justice grants that allocated \$7 million for 42 locally based task forces on the subject of human trafficking.<sup>126</sup> D.C.'s group includes members from local and federal law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations.<sup>127</sup> The task force has been meeting monthly for nearly a decade and has subcommittees focused on law enforcement, direct services, outreach, and training. The monthly general task force meeting is large—more than forty or fifty individuals attend each meeting—and the subgroups gather on individual schedules. The organization's goal is to serve as a bridge linking two communities—law enforcement and NGOs—in their parallel efforts to combat trafficking locally.<sup>128</sup>

The Capital City Ball and DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk are awareness-centered events that encourage and facilitate interaction between anti-trafficking organizations. Many groups conduct their own awareness programming, but the Walk is an annual mass participation community-awareness event that takes place in a central location in downtown, D.C. It has a festive atmosphere and includes the aforementioned resource fair in addition to a formal program of speakers and performances. The DC Stop Modern Slavery organization, run by volunteers,

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<sup>125</sup> Appendix II lists all of the partnerships identified.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Task Force coordinator, 2012, but verifiable elsewhere.

<sup>127</sup> D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force Website. Accessed December 5, 2015. <http://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/human-trafficking>. See website for complete and regularly updated list.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Task Force coordinator, 2012, but verifiable elsewhere.

holds additional awareness activities throughout the year, but the Walk is their signature event. While this event is an outdoor, inclusive, family-friendly activity, another important awareness event, the Capital City Ball, is an evening fundraiser and operates in the more exclusive space of a downtown hotel.<sup>129</sup> The organization's members and volunteer board plan and execute the event, which benefits smaller NGOs.

Among these small groups, Courtney's House, more than any other organization, attracts a large number of partnerships within the D.C. region's anti-trafficking movement. At least six other organizations consider this group to be a partner. Focusing its effort on domestic minor sex trafficking, Courtney's House provides direct services to clients, and is led by a nationally recognized self-identified survivor. The organization has three full-time staff members and several interns, to run a drop-in center and street outreach program, and a well-developed volunteer program, with regular training and activities. The preference by other groups, particularly volunteer groups, to collaborate with Courtney's House is likely, in part, the result of its visibility. Its founder is active in national conversations about domestic minor sex trafficking, having been profiled by multiple local and national news outlets and received high-profile awards and nominations for her work.<sup>130</sup> She gave a TED Talk recounting her experiences in

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<sup>129</sup> In 2011, the year I attended, it was at the Jefferson Hotel in Dupont Circle.

<sup>130</sup> Hayde Adams Fitzpatrick. "FTS Award Winner Tina Frundt in the Media Spotlight." February 26, 2013. Accessed November 13, 2015, <http://www.freetheslaves.net/fts-freedom-award-winner-tina-frundt-in-the-media-spotlight/>

December 2012.<sup>131</sup> The organization's street outreach program was also featured on journalist Lisa Ling's *Our America* program on celebrity mogul Oprah Winfrey's television network (this feature was cited by one individual at a volunteer session organized by Courtney's House as her motivation for getting involved in the issue and with the organization).<sup>132</sup> Additionally, Courtney's House's needs are tangible (for example, they need individuals to drive clients to and from activities), and the population served (teenagers from D.C. and surrounding suburbs) is relatable.

The group also receives funding from two organizations focused on raising money, Capital City Ball and DC Stop Modern Slavery, and from Shared Hope International. These financial links are critical and help organizations to determine their specific and unique role within the movement:

...then we have our partners who are funders. We have Shared Hope International that's a significant funder for us. I absolutely appreciate some of the other groups out there who do much more of the legislative side so we'll do intern sharing events and other things like that with them. We don't treat the same client demographic. We definitely work obviously with Polaris [who] does the national hotline and so you know we're working with them. Each person needs to really serve this area, there needs to be all these different organizations. Everyone has such an important role and it's important for all of us to be able to recognize each other's roles because we need to, bottom line, in our case, help these kids.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Tina Frundt at TEDxAdamsMorganWomen 2012. December 12, 2012. Accessed November 13, 2015. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFu58WPELgY>

<sup>132</sup> 3 AM Girls: Lisa Ling Goes Undercover, *Our America with Lisa Ling*, Oprah Winfrey Network, October 31, 2011, Accessed November 13, 2015. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H\\_P95qJHpHY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_P95qJHpHY). During this coverage, Ling, accompanied the Courtney's House street outreach team as they worked to approach individuals working "the track" in a D.C. neighborhood and share information about the drop-in center.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Courtney's House representative, August 12, 2012.



The roles to which this representative refers are important and should be understood as complex and shaped by existing social hierarchies. Well-defined roles likely help to avoid some territorial conflicts, but also mean that issues around class and race exist even within a collective effort. For example, I could not help but notice that when I spent time with volunteers or charity fundraising organizers it was often in nice office buildings and coffee shops, sometimes in the city's poshest neighborhoods, but my interaction with direct-service providers took place in less privileged neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. Distinctions based on class and resources were not directly addressed in interviews, but groups did share many ways in which these distinctions do define the groups' roles in relation to one another.

The meetings with established groups were also critical for other organizations focused on fundraising during their fledging years. Both DC Stop Modern Slavery and Capital City Ball expressed that their role is to enhance the activities of existing organizations. DC Stop Modern Slavery gives ninety percent of the funds secured through their walk to beneficiary organizations. Capital City Ball works to fundraise because its organizers see themselves as better fit for that role in the movement than the smaller direct services NGOs with which they partner: "We do the events. I think that's the most important part because nobody wants to. . . . Those organizations don't have the financial support. To take the burden off their shoulders they don't have to worry about the money because we are supporting them. They can focus on things that they really can do well like

saving those people or . . . working with all those forces.”<sup>134</sup> Representatives from Capital City Ball do not see themselves as content experts on trafficking, and they shared how they’ve learned about the issue from the organizations supported by their funding:

Polaris was wonderful. Absolutely awesome. All of the charities I’ve gone to . . . I’m on the board of Courtney’s House now. All the charities actually offer different little peeks into the different aspects. Like Polaris has an absolutely amazing learning and teaching program. I went on the ride-alongs with them late at night. I spent one night, from midnight until four thirty in the morning, touring around DC here. It was shocking to see what goes on just here. FAIR Fund, which is now FAIR Girls, they work quite hard to work with the survivors of human trafficking. I’ve gotten to sit in on their different meetings. Courtney’s House itself, I’ve gone to their different events. After six years, you learn a lot.<sup>135</sup>

A representative demurred on questions about the organization’s view on the causes of trafficking, because she did not see herself as an authority on this type of information. This again highlights the boundaries around roles within the movement.

Another example of cooperation within the anti-trafficking community also illustrates that the role of fundraiser has challenges and that not all shared efforts are instant successes. Tip Top Boutique, a joint project between Innocents at Risk and Global Centurion, was a high-end thrift store in Georgetown, whose profits benefited the organizations’ anti-trafficking work. It also served as a venue for fundraisers held by other organizations (including Beyond Borders and Courtney’s House). This boutique operated for a brief period of time, but does not

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012.

appear to be in business as of this project's conclusion. In 2013, the project's point person for Innocents at Risk told me that they were looking for new space.

Another halted project, Survivors Organization for Legal Empowerment (SOLE), also illustrates movement participants ongoing assessment of how they fit into larger efforts taking place in the region. In 2013, I spoke to a young lawyer in the process of founding a new organization who was seeking out knowledge and guidance from existing NGOs.<sup>136</sup> The group is not in my official sample since this representative and her co-founder did not yet have a website or materials when I compiled my data, but also because they ultimately decided not to proceed with SOLE. My informant's co-founder instead went on to establish Amara Legal Clinic.<sup>137</sup>

The vision for SOLE was focused on helping trafficked individuals employ a so-far sparsely utilized civil suit provision in the 2003 reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act allowing victims to "bring a civil action against the perpetrator" or in other words sue those who exploit them.<sup>138</sup> SOLE's founder held meetings and established relationships with the existing service-provider organizations as she determined the mission and function of her work (which had not yet begun during the time of our interview). Rather than creating "yet another NGO," her vision for the organization was more like a specialty service. SOLE would have partnered with Courtney's House, FAIR Girls, Polaris

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with SOLE representative, April 17, 2013.

<sup>137</sup> Email communication, May 20, 2015.

<sup>138</sup> Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003. January 7, 2003. Accessed November 13, 2015.  
<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61130.htm>

Project, the Bridge to Freedom Foundation, and Turn Around (which is in Baltimore and outside of the geographic scope of this project, but does collaborate with groups in the D.C. region and has a presence at events) and arrange for lawyers to visit centers during existing drop in hours. As with the fundraising experts, who see their role as adding value to existing programming, SOLE saw itself as filling a gap. The logic was that no one was “taking advantage” of this legal provision—let alone in a coordinated way—and that a lawyer with specific experience in trafficking in persons would be better equipped to assist NGO clients than a pro bono attorney whose specialty was unrelated.

While formally documented partnerships—with shared investments of resources and shared stakes in success—are significant, there are also several instances of less formal collaboration worth noting. The willingness to speak on a panel organized by a colleague, for example, illustrates a collaborative spirit. During that National Human Trafficking Awareness Day Conference, hosted by the Bridge to Freedom Foundation, remarks by the founder of the host organization included a comment about how groups in the region focused on this issue were doing more collaboration than ever and representatives from several other organizations examined as part of this project served on panels during the conference.<sup>139</sup>

In this project, all interactions between organizations and their representatives—large and small, formal and informal, spontaneous and planned—are important. But as I have mapped the players and their intersections

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<sup>139</sup> Included among the panelists were representatives from Courtney’s House and Seraphim Global.

thus far, I have focused on the practical end results and conceptualized cooperation as individuals working in a room together. I now explore some of the intangible aspects of collaboration and look for roots of teamwork and collectivity in the ideologies that drive individual organizations. I focus on the ways in which groups communicate about trafficking and the ways they understand the problem they are seeking to address and eliminate.

### **Articulating the Problem**

In this project, I have elected to refer to anti-trafficking efforts generally, employing the term “trafficking in persons,” to refer to the phenomenon organizations and individuals seek to address. It is critical, however, to interrogate how the groups name this issue themselves and, in thinking about their work collectively, how any variation in this identification shapes collaboration.

Organizations in the Washington, D.C., area working on the issue of trafficking in persons generally use the terms “human trafficking” and “modern (day) slavery” to describe the issue they are addressing.<sup>140</sup> Some have a clear distinction in naming preference. Free the Slaves, for example, does make a point to distinguish between the two terms:

Slavery is when one person completely controls another person, using violence to maintain that control, exploits them economically, pays them nothing and they cannot walk away. Human trafficking is the modern day slave trade—the process of enslaving a person. It happens when someone is tricked or kidnapped or coerced, and then taken into slavery. If moving a person from one place to another does not result in slavery, then it is not

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<sup>140</sup> Appendix II reports on organizations’ definition of slavery and/or human trafficking and illustrates the lack of specificity employed by these groups in describing the issue(s) or cause(s) they are addressing.

human trafficking. The term “human trafficking” often has a specific legal definition based on the laws of countries or states or the conventions of international organizations, and those official definitions differ slightly from place to place. For example, under US law, anyone under 18 who is in prostitution is considered a trafficking victim.<sup>141</sup>

On their websites and in their publicity materials, however, the majority of organizations use “human trafficking” and “slavery” interchangeably and without specificity. When asked, “When would you use “human trafficking” versus “modern day slavery?” Which do you feel is your focus?” an executive at Innocents at Risks responded, “Human trafficking is modern day slavery. They’re one in the same.”

This synonymy may not be without strategy, however. “Modern slavery” might be understood as the newer term in the NGO community, though it has always been employed by Free the Slaves, one of the oldest organizations focused solely on trafficking in the sample. One volunteer affiliated with a church group recounted the debate her organization went through before settling on the name “National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation.” She contended that the organization does consider trafficking to be slavery, but that trafficking sounds less “human.” She also expressed that since the “larger movement” has begun to favor the word slavery, her group is aligning with that trend.<sup>142</sup> The term slavery is also clearer, according to another group employing the term. A volunteer organizer from DC Stop Modern Slavery contends: “we use that term [slavery] because human trafficking can also be confused quite easily with human

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<sup>141</sup> “Slavery Questions and Answers.” Free the Slaves Website.  
<http://www.freetheslaves.net/about-slavery/faqs-glossary/>

<sup>142</sup> Interview with National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation representative, September 14, 2012.

smuggling. We found that a lot . . . that people don't actually know what the term human trafficking means. So when you say slavery or modern day slavery, people generally know right off the bat what you're referring to."<sup>143</sup>

The idea that people know about slavery, but not trafficking, reinforces the notion that this rhetorical choice intentionally conjures a known referent to describe what is being articulated as a new social concern and that this is a strategic semantic shortcut. President Obama was likely aware of this when he included in his remarks at a 2012 Clinton Global Initiative event the phrase “Now, I do not use that word, ‘slavery’ lightly. It evokes obviously one of the most painful chapters in our nation’s history.”<sup>144</sup> Kevin Bales, the sociologist who founded Free the Slaves, and the source for the often cited statistic that there are twenty-seven million slaves in the world today makes a point of distinguishing “old slavery” from today’s “new slavery”:

In the past, slavery entailed one person legally owning another person, but modern Slavery is different. Today, slavery is illegal everywhere, and there is no more *legal* ownership of human beings. When people buy slaves today, they don't ask for a receipt or ownership papers, but they do gain *control*—and they use violence to maintain this control. Slaveholders have all the benefits of ownership without the legalities. Indeed, for slaveholders, not having legal ownership is an improvement because they get total control without any responsibility for what they own.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>144</sup> Barack Obama. “Remarks by the President to the Clinton Global Initiative.” (September 25, 2012). <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/09/25/remarks-president-clinton-global-initiative>.

<sup>145</sup> Kevin Bales. *Disposable People*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012): 5. This figure is used by other NGOs as well as the government. According to Bales’ organization, to arrive at this figure, Bales’ research team “collected information on slavery from official sources, the media, non-governmental organizations, and any other source they could find, and then sorted that information by country. Each report was assessed and given a ranking as to its perceived reliability, and then country totals were aggregated. These country totals were then passed for review to independent scholars and officials knowledgeable about that country or region and adjusted according to the suggestions of these experts. Bales’ country totals added together

Bales' work, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*, describes multiple forms of new slavery: forced commercial sex in brothels in Thailand, forced physical labor in Mauritania and in the Brazilian rainforest, child labor in Pakistan, and farm laborers in debt bondage in India.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, scholars critical of the larger discourse around trafficking in persons largely critique the conflation of a variety of nuanced situations with trafficking—as some may contend that Bales has done. For Kamala Kempadoo, the commingling of the terms trafficking and slavery and the blurring of the associated labor categories—slavery, debt bondage, indentureship, and forced labor, for example—is “conceptually muddl[ing]” and likely contributes to the lack of reliable statistics on the phenomenon.<sup>146</sup> Kempadoo focuses on this sensationalization and lack of specificity in the introduction to an anthology featuring works of activists and scholars stressing the need for alternative frameworks for understanding trafficking:

“slavery” is often used to name instances of trafficking. It is a condition that is held up as the worst possible that humankind knows and immediately summons to mind the Atlantic slave trade with the capture and enslavement of Africans, the horrors of crowded vessels with men and women in chains and squalor, human markets and auction blocks with captive bodies on parade or for sale as merchandise, the whip and hanging-noose, rape, and torturous labor conditions. However, despite the violent and brutal history that the term invokes, most researches in the field of contemporary trafficking, even those who wish to incite moral indignation, acknowledge that debt bondage, indentureship, and

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suggested that 27 million people were in slavery around the globe.”  
<http://www.freetheslaves.net/Document.Doc?id=21>

<sup>146</sup> Kamala Kempadoo. “Introduction: From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking.” *Trafficking Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005): xx.



hyperexploitive contractual agreements are the most common form of contemporary forced labor practices.<sup>147</sup>

The scholars in this anthology, as well as those like Parreñas, Agustín, and other post-colonialists, advocate a labor and migration framework as a means for conceptualizing trafficking in persons.

It is unclear as to whether D.C. organizations working on trafficking in persons are aware of this particular scholarly conversation as they select whether and when to employ the terms “human trafficking” or “modern slavery” and, perhaps more importantly, how they define these terms. A representative from Shared Hope International told me that she felt that those serious about the subject used the term trafficking over the term slavery (especially in policy arenas) because it is a more “Hollywood” and “glamorized” word.<sup>148</sup> Yet, information collected largely suggests that explicitly defining and delineating what constitutes trafficking in persons or slavery is not a priority for many of the groups studied and that there is no commonly agreed upon formal definition repeatedly used cooperatively among groups. In other words, the majority of organizations working on this issue do not offer their own firm and specific definition of the issue. Those that do sometimes refer to existing policy definitions (Shared Hope International), circularly employ the term slavery to define trafficking and vice versa (Ayuda, Global Rescue Relief, Innocents at Risk, Polaris Project, DC Stop

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<sup>147</sup> Kamala Kempadoo. “Introduction: From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking.” *Trafficking Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005): xix.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International Representative, July 16, 2013.

Modern Slavery), or refer to it generally as a crime (ATEST and Capital City Ball).

In a 2012 review of some of the latest scholarship on human trafficking, Rhacel Parreñas, Maria Hwang, and Heather Lee cite the broad definition of trafficking established by the United Nations Protocol as partially to blame for the “competing definitions of human trafficking.”<sup>149</sup> This variation found among D.C. organizations does reflect a lack of consensus, but it does not appear that the local movement suffers from competing definitions at odds with each other, as described by Parreñas, Hwang, and Lee, so much as it operates without much need or regard for a universal definition. Those organizations that actively assert a formal definition of trafficking or cite an existing one do *not* use these definitions to shape their role within the movement or differentiate themselves from one another. Those who use the terms “trafficking” or “slavery” without a formal and/or unique articulation of what they mean are tacitly relying on the existing discourse surrounding these terms to make meaning for members of their groups and the public with which they engage.

### **Articulating Their Mission**

In addition to the lack of a well-defined universal definition, there is variation in the organizations’ descriptions of related issues contributing to or contextualizing trafficking in persons. An analysis of the additional keywords (aside from “trafficking” and “slavery”) used in the organizations’ articulation of

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<sup>149</sup> Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Maria Cecilia Hwang, and Heather Ruth Lee. “What is Human Trafficking? A Review Essay.” *Signs*. (Summer 2012): 1016.

their missions and the problems they see themselves as addressing suggests that the groups examined understand a range of themes to be related to trafficking and slavery. Websites and print materials were the primary source for this analysis.

The most common related theme was *Exploitation*, a concept cited by six groups as part of their mission: Boat People SOS, Break the Chain, Courtney's House, FAIR Girls, Innocents at Risk, and International Justice Mission. As with "trafficking" and "slavery," there is no commonly agreed upon definition of "exploitation" readily available in organizations' materials. However, some groups do work to offer more targeted explanations of their conceptions of the term.

FAIR Girls and Courtney's House focus their efforts on young people—FAIR Girls emphasizing girls and Courtney's House including both boys and girls in their direct-service programming. The term "exploitation" is pivotal to the way both describe the treatment of minors involved with trafficking. For FAIR Girls, exploitation is an umbrella category employed to link a variety of statistics, facts, and risk factors associated with trafficking. The organization's web page has a section entitled "Exploitation Defined," which enumerates cited data points and factoids.<sup>150</sup> This section of the website emphasizes that all children involved in commercial sex are exploited, as it highlights the phrase: "There is no such thing as a 'juvenile prostitute' or 'child prostitute.'" Courtney's House acknowledges its founder's experience with commercial sex as a child and semantically links trafficking and exploitation: "A survivor of domestic sex trafficking herself, Tina

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<sup>150</sup> "Exploitation Defined," FAIR Girls website, Accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.fairgirls.org/page/exploitation-define>

is relentless in her fight to protect children from sexual exploitation and the devastation that comes from it.”<sup>151</sup>

The other five organizations use the term exploitation without devoting as much time or space to nuances. Innocents at Risks is also focused on children and in its materials “trafficking” and “exploitation” are employed as near-synonyms.

This group’s website includes the paragraph:

Innocents at Risk is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded to fight child exploitation and human trafficking. Our mission is to educate citizens about the grave issue of global and local human trafficking. We are dedicated to protecting children from all forms of abuse, and work to end child exploitation and child trafficking everywhere.<sup>152</sup>

Other parts of the site describe some specific instances of trafficking, but generally the organization relies on readers’ existing experience with terms and concepts to achieve its objective of raising awareness about this issue. The same may be said for the African Tourism Association, Boat People SOS, Break the Chain, and International Justice Mission, though each are focused on different kinds of exploitation and populations from various places and social strata.

Beyond *Exploitation*, the terms *Justice*, *Empowerment*, *Legal Issues*, *Immigration and Migration*, *Abuse*, *Demand for Prostitution*, *Safer Communities*, *Sex Work*, *AIDS*, *Youth*, *Marginalized Communities*, *Rural Communities*, *Community Action*, *Human Rights*, and *Healing* are also utilized to describe issues related to trafficking and to help shape a frame for conducting work around trafficking. This spectrum of terms reflects the variation among the groups studied.

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<sup>151</sup> Courtney’s House website, Accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.courtneyshouse.org/>

<sup>152</sup> Innocents at Risk website, Accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.innocentsatrisk.org/>.

For the most part, however, it does not present thematic issues readily at odds with each other, suggesting that simultaneous pursuit of objectives related to these areas is possible. Ayuda can focus on low-income migrants in urban areas without interfacing or interfering with Seraphim Global's work on rural communities, for example.

The one outlier to this tacit and laissez-faire cooperation is linked (not surprisingly) to the division around the exploitive nature of commercial sex. Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS), which uses neither "slavery" nor "trafficking" in their materials, but which has been a beneficiary organization of the Capital City Ball and is a member of the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force, employs a harm-reduction model in its work with commercial sex workers, rather than assuming a position that condemns the practice of sex work as inherently exploitive. This viewpoint could present an obstacle for the work of organizations like Global Centurion, for example, whose philosophy is more abolitionist-oriented as it focuses on curtailing demand for "sex trafficking, sex tourism, trafficking for labor and servitude, and commercial sexual exploitation."<sup>153</sup> That organization's website makes a point of emphasizing in its definition of sex trafficking that "a person's initial consent to participate in prostitution is not legally determinative; if an individual is thereafter held in service through

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<sup>153</sup> Global Centurion website, Accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.globalcenturion.org/programs/theproblem/>

psychological manipulation or physical force, that person is a trafficking victim.”<sup>154</sup>

Even still, HIPS’ programming and focus are at the local level whereas Global Centurion conducts research and programming domestically and abroad; they are active in several projects in Haiti, for example. Despite their common membership on the D.C. Human Trafficking task force and shared home-base city, these groups may not have ample opportunity for conflict—given the differing sizes, scopes, and goals of their work—though they are both connected to the same movement. This simultaneous proximity of work and distance of focus reinforces the idea that the organizations’ roles within the movement are distinct.

I conclude this section by more closely examining two major discursive delineations among organizations conducting anti-trafficking work in Washington, D.C. Both organizations’ geographic scope and understanding of commercial sex play an important role in shaping their affiliations. I have chosen to highlight these particular aspects of organizations’ work because they represent areas where rifts might be expected to occur.

### *Geography*

The HIPS and Global Centurion comparison illustrates how the geographic scopes of the organizations’ missions and work are also relevant for understanding how the groups form a nexus or collective movement. Among the thirty organizations studied, there are six with an international focus, twelve with

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<sup>154</sup> Global Centurion website, Accessed December 5, 2015, <http://www.globalcenturion.org/programs/theproblem/>

a domestic focus, and twelve whose work is focused both in the United States and abroad.<sup>155</sup> Membership in the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force links many of those with a domestic (and domestic and international) focus.

Two of the internationally-focused groups contacted made a point of highlighting a distinction between those working on domestic trafficking in persons and those whose work is focused elsewhere in the world. Free the Slaves, for example, “though headquartered in Washington, DC - is an internationally based anti-trafficking organization” and International Justice Missions is “not taking on casework in the United States, but focusing [their] work in the developing world.” Their field offices are located in Latin America, Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia and although their headquarters are located in Washington, DC, “[they] are not currently working to “combat human trafficking in the nation’s capital.”<sup>156</sup>

The conceptual split between domestic and international trafficking is also connected to a documented rift in discourse surrounding trafficking more broadly and the notion that “America Condemns Sex-Trafficking Abroad, But Ignores Problems at Home,” as proclaimed by the headline of a television news story on

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<sup>155</sup> Those with a domestic focus are: Amara Legal Clinic, Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center, Ayuda, Break the Chain Campaign, Bridge to Freedom Foundation, Casa De Maryland, Courtney’s House, HIPS, National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation, Latin American Youth Center, Restoration Ministries, and Sasha Bruce Youthworks. Those with an international focus are: Beyond Borders, Free the Slaves, International Justice Mission, Prevent Human Trafficking, Protection Project, and Vital Voices. Those who focus on both are: ATEST, Boat People SOS, Capital City Ball, End Slavery Now, FAIR Girls, Global Centurion, Global Rescue Relief, Innocents at Risk, Polaris Project, Shared Hope International, Seraphim Global, and DC Stop Modern Slavery.

<sup>156</sup> The organizations shared these sentiments by email during my requests for interviews. Free the Slaves filled out my survey questions in writing. International Justice Mission permitted me to take their public tour, but did not grant me an interview.

RT (formerly Russia Today), which featured an interview with the founder of Courtney's House in the District.<sup>157</sup> A shift from thinking about trafficking as an international issue to a domestic one, which those on the abolitionist side of the trafficking movement have long advocated, occurred within the last decade. This shift is evident in the inclusion of domestic victims in trafficking laws—the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2005 made funds available for individuals trafficked domestically, for example—and the influx of headlines like the one above.

At a 2013 conference hosted by Courtney's House, "Justice 4 All," this point was critical for panelist Kristy Childs, who runs an organization called Veronica's Place in Kansas City. Childs articulated that she was disappointed to still see two camps within the trafficking movement—an abolitionist camp who sees prostitution as wrong and as slavery and a trafficking camp who sees that does not—and went on to lament the lack of attention to the issue domestically. "Women die," she told the audience. "This is America. We've been real good at looking at Cambodia... We need to look at ourselves." Childs was among a group of several presenters who described an uphill battle in running a direct-services organization for women engaged in commercial sex (or what they generally called trafficking or slavery during this conference) particularly when working with local law enforcement. A takeaway theme of the conference was

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<sup>157</sup> Courtney's House website, Accessed December 5, 2015. A clip from this story is embedded on the organization's website.



that every jurisdiction is different and that place matters in the conversation about trafficking.<sup>158</sup>

In D.C., the majority of anti-trafficking organizations have both a domestic and international scope. This fact which may serve to ameliorate potential discord among groups and with law enforcement (local and federal) who are closely engaged with NGOs through task forces. Though International Justice Mission and Free the Slaves may not see themselves as closely connected with the groups working to eliminate the trafficking that takes place on the streets of the city, for example, there are a host of groups who care equally about the K Street Corridor within city limits and foreign cities like Mumbai and Bangkok, and have already integrated the domestic focus into their mission. That variant geography is logistically more difficult for groups providing service programs, but if, as I have argued, awareness is the critical and connective force within the movement, such geographic inclusiveness is possible.

The case of Shared Hope International is a useful example since this group started as an international organization and has since shifted its focus domestically—even taking credit for the research and advocacy that resulted in the aforementioned reorienting of the trafficking movement domestically. This group, with headquarters on the west coast and a second office in Arlington, Virginia ( a Washington, D.C., suburb), was founded by former Republican Congresswoman Linda Smith, who is now a national spokesperson on the issue of human trafficking. According to Shared Hope’s origin story, Smith, while still in Congress, traveled to one of Mumbai’s red light districts and was so deeply

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<sup>158</sup> I was in attendance at this conference held at George Washington University.

affected that she established an NGO, which began by funding shelter and direct services abroad. The majority of their work today, however, is focused on domestic trafficking. The organization was given a grant by the Department of State to conduct a comparative study of sex trafficking in five countries, including the United States.<sup>159</sup> According to the organization, the research revealed that the issue of trafficking was more severe domestically than anyone had imagined and thus the research was a catalyst for a change in focus by this group. Shared Hope still has programs in Fiji, Nepal, India, and Jamaica, but the bulk of their work is focused domestically, with policy and advocacy being primary concerns.

### *Sex vs. Labor*

While Shared Hope and Courtney's House are two groups with clear delineations around the specific varieties of trafficking with which they are concerned—strictly sex trafficking in the first case and domestic minor sex trafficking in the latter—a clean categorization of all of the organizations in the Washington, D.C., region working on the issue around the type of trafficking addressed is a challenge. Many of the activists and volunteers encountered during the course of this research were aware of the perceived prioritization of sex over labor trafficking in general discourse around this issue (mentioned above) and some saw their work as intentionally addressing that flaw. This was a repeated theme, for example, during a “National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

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<sup>159</sup> This report was entitled “Demand: A Comparative Examination of Sex Tourism and Trafficking in Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States (2007)” and was followed up by subsequent research in “The National Report on Domestic Sex Trafficking: America's Prostituted Children (2009).” Both are available on the organization's website.

Conference” hosted by the Bridge to Freedom Foundation in 2013. The day was divided into domestic and international panels, and the international panel focused on broadening the conception of trafficking beyond sex. DC Stop Modern Slavery in also invested in a wider understanding of the issue:

We tend to know as an organization that sex trafficking gets more attention in the media just because people will pay more attention to anything with the word sex in it. So labor trafficking seems to get pushed to the side more so we’ve made the decision that as an organization, we want to raise awareness about not only sex trafficking but labor trafficking as well. So as an organization, we are fighting all types of modern slavery.<sup>160</sup>

Again there are groups for whom sex trafficking is the primary concern, but most organizations in and around Washington, D.C., see their work as broader.

It is also worth noting an important distinction between the terms “victim” and “survivor,” which are both employed to refer to trafficked individuals. While many groups use the legal term, casting trafficked individuals as victims who are acted upon, others (Courtney’s House and Bridge to Freedom Foundation) prefer to elevate the trafficked individual’s agency and signify the trafficking as a past experience which the individual has moved beyond.<sup>161</sup> Still others use both terms situationally. Strands of feminist thought have long sought to extinguish a woman-as-already-victim framework and this semantic turn is likely in the feminist tradition of acknowledging strength where the mainstream may not see it.

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<sup>160</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>161</sup> Courtney’s House operates a survivors’ hotline that is staffed by other survivors. A rhetorical preference for this word is evident in much of the organizations materials.

However, it is possible that, as with the compulsory breast cancer “survivor” label and persona highlighted by Samantha King in her work on the cultural movement around that disease (what she calls a “tyranny of cheerfulness”),<sup>162</sup> this identifier may not be as inclusive as organizations envision. Likewise, another buzz word within the movement—present both within materials and in verbal rhetoric, in relation to both sex and labor trafficking—is the term “empowerment.” Organizations like the Bridge to Freedom Foundation, which focuses on developing sustainable life-skills and plans for its clients, seek to empower “survivors,” but then there are other subsets of the movement that aim to “empower” the general population they seek to inform about the issue. This particular utilization of the term is significant if we think about awareness as a central theme and “cultural anchor.”<sup>163</sup> When End Slavery Now asserts that half of their mission is to empower every person who is willing to help end modern slavery and human trafficking with the best possible tools, information, and opportunities, so that they can make a meaningful contribution, the group centralizes a vague concept over concrete action and places critical value on the simple participation of those who are “aware” and informed. In addressing a problem as complex as trafficking in persons, these priorities are what the movement has defined as success.

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<sup>162</sup> Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press (2006):122.

<sup>163</sup> Amin Ghaziania and Delia Baladassari. “Cultural Anchors and the Organization of Differences: A Multi-method Analysis of LGBT Marches on Washington.” *American Sociological Review* 76(2) 2011: 179-206.

### **Further Implications**

Above I have described a nexus of cooperation and interaction among D.C.'s anti-trafficking organizations who each feel that their group conducts a unique and vital program of activities. Their interactions are anchored by regular awareness events and the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force. Significantly, however, this collaboration does not align with the categorical articulations of the problem that groups are addressing or with their expressions of the themes and issues that relate to trafficking in persons.

In other words, groups are not allied based on their mission foci or ideological approach to trafficking. Differences and similarities revealed in organizations' articulations of both trafficking as a problem and their work to eliminate it, do not dictate the collaboration and cooperation of the organizations in the Washington, D.C., region. This leads me to argue that cohesion may instead be attributed to well-defined roles, particularly between fundraisers and beneficiaries, strategic relationships, and the dominant role of awareness within trafficking activities. Each of these factors contributes to an overall conclusion that the characteristics of collaborative trafficking work that make these activities more like an industry trump those that make it more like a social movement.

In Chapter 4, I look more closely at anti-trafficking work as a professional endeavor shaped by the market. As I further consider movement mechanics and work to make sense of the ways in which groups interact, I reiterate that organizations are careful not to duplicate the kinds of programs and activities already in existence. Having a unique identity on the trafficking scene lessens

competition all around—for funding, for publicity, for clients. Additionally, it makes partnerships more feasible and creates a division of labor that avoids redundancy. Above I explained how awareness and fundraising organizations work closely with and support those providing direct services. By augmenting and propping up the work of existing front-line programs (Courtney’s House being one of the most popular), groups like DC Stop Modern Slavery and the Capital City Ball inject efficiency into the movement and raise the bar for raising awareness.

As I articulate throughout this project, the role of awareness is paramount. It transcends a semantic choice to use “slavery” over “trafficking,” a focus on domestic or international trafficking, and any delineations between sex and labor trafficking. Groups raise awareness together in various settings with minimal conflict because each knows its role within the trafficking landscape and because there are professional incentives for cooperation. The financial aspect of these incentives is the focus of Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### The Business of Fighting Trafficking

This chapter is about money. More specifically, it is about the ways that the institutionalized anti-trafficking movement is shaped by the market and the state. Here, I look at the funding sources of movement organizations and the mechanisms in place to secure these resources. I further develop my argument that in addition to understanding the anti-trafficking movement in metro Washington, D.C., as a social movement, we ought also to frame these collective efforts as an industry or group of businesses providing the same product or service.<sup>164</sup>

Organizations in D.C. focused on trafficking in persons are not in search of profit—in fact they are not-for-profit organizations—but they are in search of money to conduct their programming. Organizations have largely avoided conflict about funding by distinguishing themselves from one another (as is shown in Chapter 3), but they are competing with other causes and issues for the public’s attention as well as a market share of both the public and private funds available for social causes. As they employ industry professionals—in anti-trafficking, in nonprofit management, in fundraising, etc.—to conduct what I have referred to in Chapter 1 as “do-good labor,” and as they work on strategic plans, engage in partnerships, and work to secure funding to facilitate their programs, there are instances where the behaviors of these organizations very much mirrors those of businesses. In this chapter, I describe what I have come to know about the funding

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<sup>164</sup> This is the general dictionary definition of the word “industry.”

situations of the thirty organizations working on trafficking in the D.C. area and conjecture about possible implications of these financial arrangements.

This chapter addresses the question of resources against the backdrop of two major and related features of contemporary nonprofit and non-governmental work—the NGOization of activist work (introduced in Chapter 2) and the Nonprofit Industrial Complex. Despite their “independent” label, many nonprofit groups are intricately intertwined with governments and businesses, and it is the politics of these relationships that are of principal concern for scholars drawing attention to NGOization and the NPIC.<sup>165</sup> The undeniable linkages between businesses, governments, and charities must be accounted for, and we ought to recognize the possibility that what is “charitable,” “good,” “right,” or “helping” may be situational, relative, and political.

The chapter concludes with a close examination of some of the fundraising strategies employed by organizations within this movement and a textual analysis of some of their fundraising appeals, with a critical eye towards their invocation of melodramatic stories. In this final section, I caution that in their deployment of certain images and narratives about trafficked individuals, organizations can walk a perilous line, threatening to re Commodify the bodies they seek to liberate.

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<sup>165</sup> Here I am referring to work from Laura Agustín, Samantha King, Sarah Moore, and the contributors to *The Revolution will Not be Funded* among others.



### **The Checkbook: Where Funding Comes From**

An examination of the funding sources of D.C. anti-trafficking organizations reveals a highly professionalized movement whose funding comes from a variety of sources.<sup>166</sup> Groups report a combination of public support, private donations, individual gifts, sponsorships, and support from volunteers. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 3, there is a cross pollination of funding whereby some groups (DC Stop Modern Slavery and the Capital City Ball, for example) exist for the purpose of funding others.

Anti-trafficking organizations in D.C. are both publicly and privately funded. Pursuit of public funds is secured through the submission of grants and pursuit of private funds means seeking out corporate donors and sponsors and individual donors and sponsors. Many groups have multiple income streams and are thus beholden in some ratio to both the market and the state. While all of the organizations studied receive some kind of private support, government funding is less common. By my count, fourteen organizations of the thirty receive some form of public support.<sup>167</sup>

In Chapter 3, I grouped the thirty organizations that are part of this research into several overlapping categories—large versus small organizations, client services versus advocacy/education/awareness-focused organizations, and organizations focused solely on trafficking versus those with a related portfolio. Within these loose delineations, there do not appear to be any dramatic trends related to funding sources. The large groups—Polaris, IJM, and Free the Slaves—

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<sup>166</sup> See Chapter 1 for a description of methodology used to secure financial information.

<sup>167</sup> See Appendix II.

each receive funding from a combination of public and private sources. Polaris doesn't list their individual donors, but recognizes on its website a list of more than 50 foundations and corporations, including big companies like Southwest Airlines and Choice Hotels, government offices including the Departments of State, Health and Human Services, and Justice, and small foundations like The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation. The religious organizations, IJM and Shared Hope, receive some funding from churches, but that is the only immediate difference among this group.<sup>168</sup>

The same might be said for the smaller nonprofits, though within this subset there is a contingent that relies more heavily on private donations than on a public-private combination. An illustrative example is Prevent Human Trafficking, whose website thanks sponsors including foundations like the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego, the Irvin Stern Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, GE Foundation, the Grantsmith Center, the Lura Brandfield Foundation, and corporate entities like Truston Technologies, Amodeus, Equitem Capital, and Cathay Pacific, but no public entities.<sup>169</sup> Not all of the organizations list their supporters in this way, but many others suggest that they rely on the generosity of sponsors, partners, and individual donors.

Among the organizations that are not primarily focused on trafficking, which tend also to be small nonprofits, funding structures tend to combine public

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<sup>168</sup> Appendix II provides a more detailed snapshot of funding sources for all thirty organizations.

<sup>169</sup> Prevent Human Trafficking. "Our Sponsors." Accessed December 18, 2015. <http://preventhumantrafficking.org/our-team/>

and private monies. Many of these groups (for example, Sasha Bruce Youthworks, founded in 1974, and Casa De Maryland, founded in 1985) are well-established groups—which may make them better candidates for public support—but they have also embraced newer (neoliberal) models of garnering operating support and many take online donations and have fundraisers on staff.<sup>170</sup> Casa de Maryland, for example, lists a development staff of four on its website.

When examined at this macro level, it is challenging to isolate influence and ascertain exactly who and what interests are bankrolling the anti-human trafficking movement and why, but gauging from the diversity of funding sources and percentage of individual private supporters, the best answer is likely a broad swath of interests and individuals. This logic is in sync with the “strange bedfellow” theory described in the introduction, whereby the Religious Right and abolitionist feminists share a commitment to this cause. The above lists of donors to Polaris Project and Prevent Human Trafficking are just two examples of the range of organizations and individuals invested in this issue or with motivation to show support for anti-trafficking as a cause. These lists suggest that organizations see a value or a need in diversifying their fundraising targets. I turn now to a more in-depth discussion of fundraising mechanics.

### **How Fundraising Works**

Though the bodies of literature focused on both the NGOization of activism and the NPIC are still emerging, existing work highlighted in Chapter 2

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<sup>170</sup> Many anti-trafficking organizations in Washington, D.C., use Network for Good, an organization that works with charities to process online payments for a fee. <http://www.networkforgood.com/>

describes a nonprofit landscape where activism is a professional endeavor and the need for funding heavily dictates not just the amount of work, but also the kinds of work, that organizations perform. As mentioned in Chapter 3, organizations working on this issue in metro D.C. typically have distinct roles within the movement and do not, at least outwardly, struggle over resources.

Yet, fundraising, also known in the nonprofit field as “development,” is an activity wrought with uncertainty as it depends on the dynamic budgets of government agencies and foundations as well as unpredictable contributions of private donors. Despite this broad uncertainty, the organizational representatives with whom I spoke seemed to voice the most anxiety around the subject of government funding. The founder of Bridge to Freedom Foundation, for example, described the challenges of starting an organization from scratch, including building the reputation and track record necessary to secure government grants: “We haven’t focused as much on government funding from the very beginning stages due to if you don’t have a history of government spending, it’s very difficult to get any government funding. So unless you’re being written into a grant with someone who does have a history, it’s almost impossible.”<sup>171</sup> This was the only topic of conversations where a hint of competition around resources was revealed—only to reinforce that organizations tend to do different things so that they aren’t in competition with each other. When discussing her congenial interactions with other members of the professional anti-trafficking movement, a representative from Shared Hope International told me that “if you’re all applying

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<sup>171</sup> Interview with Bridge to Freedom Foundation representative, August 16, 2012.

for the same three grants then you're never not in competition with each other," and that "resources are so few and you don't want to reinvent the wheel . . . you don't want to do the exact same thing that someone else is already doing. It's not based on funding; it's just based on practicality."<sup>172</sup>

While Jennifer Musto's work on the "NGO-ification" of trafficking emphasizes the link between trafficking programs that support state policies and the government's support of those programs, the idea that their work must subscribe to a set of state-sanctioned policies did not surface in my interactions with anti-trafficking organizations in D.C.<sup>173</sup> There are several potential explanations for this scenario. The first and most probable is that organizations that survive and thrive—those in my sample—are those that are mainstream enough to fit the government's mold. Related is my larger argument (expounded upon in Chapter 6) that generating awareness of trafficking is a larger priority for these organizations than is generating support for policies around trafficking (though some groups, like Shared Hope International and Polaris Project, do have an advocacy component to their work).

Musto explains that "though an in-depth exploration of the ways in which NGOs reproduce, re-invent, and resist governmental practices" is beyond the scope of her article, "it seems important to point out the obvious: not all NGOs are 'good,' progressive, nor inherently invested in struggling toward social justice with the individuals for whom they work." She continues: "Moreover, since

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<sup>172</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International representative, July 16, 2013.

<sup>173</sup> Jennifer Musto. "The NGO-ification of the Anti-Trafficking Movement in the United States: A Case Study of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking." *Sex Trafficking, Human Rights, and Social Justice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010): 23-36

NGOs in the United States increasingly function as an extension or dislocated arm of state-sponsored policies, it behooves scholars, policy makers, and community stakeholders alike to critically interrogate the role that they play in ameliorating trafficking on the one hand, and whether they help, hinder, complicate, and/or facilitate trafficked persons' empowerment on the other."<sup>174</sup> It is not my intention to judge which anti-trafficking NGOs in Washington, D.C., are 'good,' but rather to illustrate that in securing public funding, organizations become linked to both federal and local government entities.

How much or how little they critically examine the consequences for these relationships varies from organization to organization. Overall, the groups I engaged with seemed to speak of public (and private) support as the means to end—a way to bring their programs to life. No one suggested that they shaped programming to fit with government goals, nor did they feel that their programming goals prohibited them from competing for funding. The concern with public funding most commonly voiced to me was the hope that there would be more of it to go around.

And while the attainment of public funding was seen as a challenging, albeit necessary, part of the “do-good” labor of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C., those organizations that rely more on corporate or private generosity more often spoke of the funding support they had received as a generous gift or as a way to facilitate a partnership. DC Stop Modern Slavery received a sponsorship in

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<sup>174</sup> Jennifer Musto. “The NGO-ification of the Anti-Trafficking Movement in the United States: A Case Study of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking.” *Sex Trafficking, Human Rights, and Social Justice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010): 26.

2010 from technology giant Google as a result of their volunteer development team's effort. A representative explained:

We had some folks interested in contacting Google because . . . so, I think earlier this year, Google gave a huge donation to the human trafficking cause. So our walk team, someone who is over in development on the walk team, got in touch with the folks with Google and proposed that they sponsor us and they agreed to give us sponsorship.<sup>175</sup>

There is collateral benefit for a company like Google to be associated with an issue like trafficking. It is advertising and promotion of the company brand, in addition to good publicity, to be associated with a poignant social cause. Smaller companies were interested in helping to market the Walk as well. The Stop Modern Slavery representative continued. "So like retailers will get in touch with us and say 'hey what can we do?' Pop Chips [a snack company] got in touch with us last year and wanted to provide snacks for folks after the walk. So it's great to see other people trying to get involved in the anti-slavery walk."<sup>176</sup>

Corporate sponsorship and the donation of gifts-in-kind is essential to functioning and success of another large annual anti-trafficking event, the Capital City Ball, known on the social circuit as the "young person's ball."<sup>177</sup> The organization solicits donated items for a silent auction and secures sponsors at various levels from \$750-\$25,000, each level of sponsorship named with a trafficking-related term like "freedom," "liberty," or "hope." For \$5,000, for

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<sup>175</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International representative, July 16, 2013.

<sup>176</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012. During a discussion of how her organization has been portrayed in the media, a representative from Capital City Ball noted that *Washington Life*, a society publication, has often dubbed the event the "young person's ball." She contested that nomenclature a bit and noted that their guests range in age from twenty-something to eighty.

example, a business can be a “dignity” sponsor. Those with this designation receive six tickets to the ball, six tickets to the honorary reception, a quarter page ad in the event program, have their logo appear on the event website and invitations, and gain access to the sponsor lounge area, admission to the private “after party,” and reserved valet parking.<sup>178</sup>

As is the case with many charity organizations, the daily operations of anti-trafficking groups in the D.C. area include work to generate the funds to keep up with programmatic needs. In this way, Dylan Rodríguez, cited in Chapter 3, is correct that the NPIC shapes the conceptual work of organizations. Because they must be actively working to secure funds, fundraising becomes part of the work. While the larger organizations, including Polaris project and Free the Slaves, have staff dedicated to development, many of the smaller groups fold fundraising into other job descriptions. Courtney’s House’s director is responsible for “fundraising and grants,” for example, and the founder of Shared Hope International is a “killer fundraiser” according to a member of her staff.<sup>179</sup> The founder of Bridge to Freedom Foundation is intimately involved with securing funding for her organization as well, given that she has only volunteer workers to augment her work running the organization. She told me: “The number one thing that gets in our way is funding. It’s unquestionable that it will always be on that list. It’s a bit greater now than it should be. Hopefully it will always be just because of our

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<sup>178</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012. My informant shared the brochures they give prospective sponsors with these prices and benefits enumerated.

<sup>179</sup> Interview with Courtney’s House representative, August 20, 2012 and Interview with Shared Hope International representative, July 16, 2013.



newness and our capacity from smaller and not larger funding coming in. Our inability to have staff does limit our ability to help survivors.”<sup>180</sup>

Yet, despite their structures, and low numbers of full-time staff, even these small organizations exhibit tendencies towards professionalization, with the characteristics being the most striking among organizations that rely on volunteer efforts. Though they do think of their members as activists, for example, DC Stop Modern Slavery organizes its volunteers based on their existing professional abilities:

The action teams basically look at certain skill sets like communications, for example, and we try to plug in community members into those action teams so they can use whatever skills...so they can use whatever skills they have to fight trafficking. I mentioned the communication team. I can give you an example. We have folks on that team who maybe work during the day in public relations or journalism and in their spare time they write press releases for our organization or you know work on social media for us.<sup>181</sup>

Bridge to Freedom Foundation also seeks out volunteers or interns to fulfill specific tasks to which they are suited, rather than passively accepting volunteers solely based on their desire to be involved with the “cause.”

It’s definitely not everyone helping out with everything. There are some more general interns and volunteers that will have a more generalized role and help out with what needs to be done in the office or on random projects as they come. But, there are people tasked with specific roles. Obviously, we have specific needs and if we’re looking to address the need for a grant writer or a graphic designer then a volunteer will come on in and fill that specific role.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Interview with Bridge to Freedom Foundation representative, August 16, 2012.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Bridge to Freedom Foundation representative, August 16, 2012.

This way of doing business has clear benefits. It's efficient, for one, and to employ the language of capitalist operations, it helps to maximize and streamline productivity. Specialization and utilization of existing skills means less time is required to train people, fewer mistakes are made by individuals new to a task, and, potentially, fewer conflicts arise within organizations since everyone has a defined role. This system also makes volunteer work rewarding in multiple ways, including resume building. In a city like D.C., with its large and transient professional and young-professional populations, the experience to be gained from volunteering as part of a well-oiled NGO machine has tangible value on the job market.

Yet it is also important to consider how this NGOization shapes membership and participation in the anti-trafficking movement. Musto, who focuses on anti-trafficking service providers in California, worries that the “current funding pressures and professionalization” limit the involvement of trafficked individuals in the trafficking movement.<sup>183</sup> She contends:

since the anti-trafficking movement in the U.S. is overwhelmingly led by a group of educated female professionals who have the ability to legally work in the United States, questions abound as to whether such a professionalized environment is capable of creating an inclusive space in which trafficked persons can voice their needs, concerns and visions of what an anti-trafficking movement looks like based on their experiences and perspectives.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Jennifer Musto. “The NGO-ification of the Anti-Trafficking Movement in the United States: A Case Study of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking.” *Sex Trafficking, Human Rights, and Social Justice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010): 33.

<sup>184</sup> Jennifer Musto. “The NGO-ification of the Anti-Trafficking Movement in the United States: A Case Study of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking.” *Sex Trafficking, Human Rights, and Social Justice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010): 32.

In D.C.'s movement, there is a space for individuals who have experienced trafficking and while their contingent is small, it comprises an influential thread within the anti-trafficking movement. These individuals are regulars on conference panels, for example. I discussed one such conference in Chapter 3. That I did not witness much discord or variance in the message of these speakers may be attributable to chance—this was but one conference. It might also be that the founder of Courtney's House, the conference's host, is a highly visible spokesperson whose organization has a multitude of partners—with reciprocal relationships (some financial in nature). If individuals' experiences with trafficking do not jibe with the dominant survivor story, perhaps they are not comfortable speaking out.

### **Other Strategies and Tactics**

In my conversations with organizational representatives, neither the professional nature of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. nor the necessity of fundraising from both private and public sources ever surfaced as points for deep analysis. Reflections on the macro-level, structural forces shaping the trafficking movement were secondary to self-reflexivity about collaboration and coexistence among groups. While groups were quick to emphasize what distinguishes them from one another, they shared assumptions that that they would have to generate income to facilitate their organization's work and that their work was a factor in their personal career trajectory and success

This point underscores both the institutionalized character of the movement and the neoliberal dimension of modern nonprofit and charity work as

a whole. Anti-trafficking organizations' entrenchment in state and, especially, market infrastructures and the significance of their regular pursuit of operating funds, do shape the strategies and tactics they use to conduct business and the urgency with which they must generate the capital required to execute their programs. In addition to the grant writing, proposal submitting, and sponsorship seeking done by these organizations to secure operating budgets, there is also small scale, grassroots fundraising that takes place through projects, events, and initiatives intended to raise money in small amounts via participatory donations from individuals. Courtney's House reportedly enjoyed a boost in this kind of small scale fundraising after it received media attention on a popular television channel:

Like any small nonprofit, we have an incredible private source of funding. It really helped last year when Lisa Ling on the Oprah Network did a special *3 a.m. Girls* with us that gave a huge boost to our individual giving. Which is probably not surprising, but we're absolutely grateful for it. . . . So yes, grants, different foundations, large individual donors and then also small donors. A lot of our funds come from small donation tracks but it just all adds up. That's the beauty of our donor base. It's just people who give—normal Americans who just give and I love it. Again, that's a large percentage of our base.<sup>185</sup>

Many organizations use technological tools like Amazon Smile, which permits shoppers to donate a small percentage of their purchases on the online super-retailer's website to a charity. Organizations also place online-giving links prominently on their websites' homepages, but many groups also reach out to potential supporters directly. Here I closely examine appeals made to potential

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<sup>185</sup> Interview with Courtney's House representative, August 20, 2012.

supporters through email blasts, to explore the ways in which trafficking stories are appropriated in hopes of securing additional support for the cause.<sup>186</sup>

Nonprofit organizations, including the anti-trafficking groups working in D.C., often use email lists to define constituencies and communicate with their supporters, potential supporters, and others interested in their work. Those enrolled in these lists are typically self-selected. When I added my name and email address to every list offered to me at the 2012 DC Stop Modern Slavery event, I was immediately looped into the activities and priorities of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. and became witness to regular and robust virtual messaging.

From my steady receipt of communication materials from twelve organizations during 2012 and 2013, I conclude that email blasts sent to members of organizations' email lists serve several functions: 1) to alert and inform constituencies of trafficking-related news and/or organizational successes and priorities, 2) to ask supporters to take action on behalf of the organization or the cause (e.g. sign a letter to a member of Congress), 3) to invite recipients to an event or activity, and 4) to solicit financial support, sometimes by encouraging supporters to buy a product whose sale would benefit the organization. Chapter 5 will address digital communication within the trafficking movement more broadly. I introduce the email blast here to contextualize the electronic fundraising appeals I now intend to analyze more closely.

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<sup>186</sup> The success of these fundraising strategies—how much money was raised through these campaigns—was not determined as part of this project. Future work might look at the efficacy and cost-benefit calculus of this type of fundraising.

Email solicitations sent by organizations that are part of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. utilize several strategies to motivate potential donors to give, and many are timed to coincide with a date or milestone that creates urgency for their intended audience. Sometimes this is a holiday or commemorative date. The subject of a 2013 Bridge to Freedom Foundation email encouraged potential funders to “Support a Survivor this International Women’s Day.” Free the Slaves’ messages encouraged recipients to “Send a Holiday E-Card and Help Spread Freedom” on December 19, 2012, and “Send a Valentine’s Day e-card and help end slavery” on February 6, 2013.

Other times, there is a special program that provides additional incentive for donors to give right away. This was the case with an International Justice Mission’s communication from September 13, 2013. Its messaging prioritized the impending conclusion of a special initiative in which larger donors had agreed to match the support of others procured by a set date, a September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline: “Just two weeks left—become an IJM Freedom Partner by September 30, and your entire first year's giving will be matched, dollar for dollar, by a supporter in Seattle and other generous friends of IJM, up to \$225,000.” The message included a colorful link, labeled “Get my gift doubled,” that readers could click to travel to the organization’s website.

The immediacy of these kinds of communication contributes to a panicked tone of the overall messaging that can be characteristic of the anti-trafficking movement and is a contributing factor in scholars like Ronald Weitzman’s

classification of the anti-trafficking movement as a moral crusade<sup>187</sup>. For Weitzman, the primary characteristics of moral crusades include inflation of the magnitude of the problem, horror stories describing the most shocking cases in gruesome detail, and categorical conviction or dismissal of gray areas.<sup>188</sup> The email messages from D.C. anti-trafficking organizations do not unequivocally meet these criteria, but many of them utilize strong and sensational language to persuade readers of the scope and urgency of trafficking and to highlight suffering where possible in order to solicit action—financial or otherwise—on the part of their audience.

Personal stories of trafficked individuals, for example, are regularly deployed in these email messages.<sup>189</sup> These narratives do complex work as they strive to humanize and personalize trafficking while motivating individuals to offer immediate financial support. Invoking Carole Vance’s argument that “with its compelling narrative of sexual danger, drama, sensation, furious action, wild applause, and most important, clearly identifiable victims, villains, and heroes, the anti-trafficking melodrama remains highly effective in mobilizing public opinion,” I contend that through these oftentimes sensational personal narratives,

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<sup>187</sup> Ronald Weitzer “The Movement to Criminalize Sex Work in the United States.” *The Journal of Law and Society*, (March 2010): 61-84.

<sup>188</sup> Ronald Weitzer, “The Movement to Criminalize Sex Work in the United States.” *The Journal of Law and Society*, (March 2010): 63.

<sup>189</sup> Elsewhere in this work, I have noted that the religious strand in the DC anti-trafficking movement is subdued and comingled with myriad components and players in the D.C. area. The religious organizations in my sample that use email blasts—Shared Hope International and International Justice Mission—do employ this personal narrative method vigorously in their solicitations, but so do organizations without a documented religious affiliation including Free the Slaves and Polaris Project.

organizations can re Commodify the bodies that anti-trafficking organizations seek to liberate in the first place.<sup>190</sup>

A Polaris Project email from December 5, 2012 asked potential supporters to “light the way” for survivors and shared the story of a woman named Jolene who was seduced by an older man after a fight with her foster mother and then forced to “dance at the local go-go club and perform commercial sex acts.”

Recipients learned that Jolene was arrested in New Jersey, but:

The officers were trained to identify human trafficking indicators and recognized Jolene as a victim, not a criminal. They called our New Jersey Crisis Response Team who met Jolene that night and began to help her transform her life.

Working with our staff, Jolene is now living in her own apartment, and submitting applications to fashion design schools to attain a long forgotten dream of becoming a fashion designer.

For Polaris, Jolene’s success was the organization’s success, as the email touted

Polaris’ role in her fate and her future:

Every day, we light the way to a brighter future for people like Jolene. Her story shows us that we are making progress in the fight against modern-day slavery. Please join our Light the Way campaign and help us raise \$150,000 online by January 1, 2012 – exactly 150 years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

In the 19th Century, families on the Underground Railroad hoisted lanterns on flag-poles to indicate it was safe to cross the Ohio River, lighting the way toward a brighter future.

Donate to Polaris Project today and become part of this century's underground railroad that provides assistance and hope to thousands of human trafficking survivors across America.

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<sup>190</sup> Carole Vance, “Thinking Trafficking, Thinking Sex.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, (2011): 139.



We are creating a future where any victim of human trafficking can immediately connect to help. A future where law enforcement officials have the laws and training to hold traffickers accountable for their crimes. A future where all survivors can fulfill their long forgotten dreams.

Readers of this message were not learning about Jolene simply to gain knowledge about trafficking. Polaris packaged her experience—albeit most likely with her consent—to do work for them. The message highlighted their involvement in her life and held her up as a successful example of their efforts.

A December 5, 2013 email from Shared Hope International was not solicitation, but an invitation to listen to a trafficking survivor’s story on a radio program.<sup>191</sup> The subject line of the email read, “TODAY! Hear Brianna's Miraculous Story of Escape from Traffickers | December 5 & 6 on Focus on the Family,” and the invocation of a personal, and “miraculous,” story likely motivated some recipients to click and read more. In addition to providing the details about this radio show where the story of an “all-American girl who escaped traffickers” was to be shared along with a picture of a young white woman talking to Linda Smith (the former Congresswoman who founded Shared Hope International), this message also contained a subtle fundraising pitch in the right corner of the message. Beneath the image of a smiling brown-skinned young woman in a sparkly shirt jumping and exuberant with laughter, was the message: “Year end match will Double your gift” and a box where readers could click to give to Shared Hope. Unlike in the Polaris solicitation, this message did not employ a personal narrative to highlight organizational success. Instead it included this narrative in conjunction with an organizational fundraising appeal.

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<sup>191</sup> Focus on the Family is a Christian organization with a radio show. This program aired December 5 and 6, 2013.

Since some recipients would have been compelled to open the email by the announcement in the subject line, the organization elected to make this communication do double duty as a solicitation too.

The imagery associated with these fundraising appeals is also notable. The visuals helped to tangibly depict the suffering and triumph that the text of these messages sought to convey and illuminated the hopeful possibilities with which the potential donor could become associated. In their work on the cultural appropriation of suffering, anthropologists Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman recognize that there is a tension between using an image to convey meaning and exploiting and commodifying someone else's pain—even for a noble purpose. They share the story of a Pulitzer Prize winning photographer whose experience capturing poignant images of suffering for a Western audience—including a famous image of a Sudanese child and a vulture—eventually drove him to suicide. Though it is difficult, they recommend that we “draw upon the images of human suffering in order to identify human need and to craft humane responses. . . . Yet, to do so, to develop valid appropriations, we must first make sure that the biases of commercial emphasis on profit making, the partisan agendas of political ideologies, and the narrow technical interests that serve primarily professional groups are understood and their influence controlled.”<sup>192</sup> This is easier said than done.

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<sup>192</sup> Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman. “The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images; Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times.” *Social Suffering*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997): 18.

The email describing the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for doubling gifts from International Justice Mission described above, for example, was illustrated by the image of a small girl in a doorway. She has dark skin and is wearing a bindi. Her hair is neatly tied and she's colorfully dressed. There is no caption and nothing about the photo itself that suggests trafficking or tragedy. Thus readers had to rely on existing tropes about children, brown bodies, and South Asia to contextualize the image. Of course, an alternate depiction of a child being trafficked, if such an image were even attainable, would also draw considerable critique. Why was the photographer not helping the child? What is the authenticity of such an image? But even with a seemingly benign image of "girl in far-off, disadvantaged land," even moderately critical viewers should be left with questions about this child. Where is she? What is her life like? How has trafficking impacted her, if at all? Is this an image of suffering? Or not?

Free the Slaves' various holiday-themed fundraising appeals were also accompanied by images and its Mother's Day solicitation included a picture of a woman and child smiling at one another with no caption. It was representative of the card that would be sent to one's mother (or another designated individual) if one donated to the organization. The picture appeared at the bottom of a letter highlighting ways that the organization had helped mothers and reunited families, and it was framed by text bar stating: "Dream of a World without Slavery. Mother's Day gift has been made in your honor. Thank you for helping Free the Slaves ensure that mothers everywhere can protect and provide for their families, as you have done for yours." As with the image of the child described above,

there is no obvious connection to trafficking in the photograph itself—except that the brown skin, dress, and nose-piercing of the mother might suggest “another part of the world.” The expressions on the woman and child’s faces are full of joy and this is an image that conjures warmth—not suffering. Yet it is complicated first by its assumptive link to trafficking and secondly by the deployment of a particular understanding of women’s roles as mothers, providers, and protectors.

There is no question that the stories of Jolene and Brianna, and the images of the nameless individuals depicted in the email solicitations, were being “used.” To what end, and whether their owners support this as a means to an end, are other questions. The child with the bindi did not likely consent to the use of her image (though her parents may have), but Jolene and Brianna mostly likely did agree to share details of their lives. As charities vie for even their most dedicated supporters’ attention and support, they must be strategic in their storytelling and marketing. The deployment of experience is one tool in their toolkit for connecting with potential donors and convincing them to give.

We see the extent to which the commodification of personal narrative is both attractive and potentially risky, however, in the example of Somaly Mam, a high-profile Cambodian human rights and sex trafficking activist, whose efforts and motivations were questioned after a 2014 story in *Newsweek* debunked some of the details of her life story.<sup>193</sup> Often calling on her own experiences as a trafficked girl in Cambodia, Mam’s narrative is deeply intertwined with the

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<sup>193</sup> Simon Marks. “Somaly Mam Holy Saint and Sinner.” *Newsweek*. March 5, 2014. Accessed December 18, 2015. <http://www.newsweek.com/2014/05/30/somaly-mam-holy-saint-and-sinner-sex-trafficking-251642.html>

mission of her organization. With the narrative in question, her organization is at risk.

One of Mam's organization's programs tasks individuals living in her shelters with creating jewelry that is sold on her organization's website. A version of this also takes place in D.C. through an organization called FAIR Girls. Described as part fundraiser, part economic empowerment, and part therapy, FAIR Girls' JewelGirls program works with approximately 200 teenage girls in Washington, D.C., Serbia, Uganda, Bosnia, and Russia. Each piece of jewelry the young women create is sold on the organization's website for between \$25 and \$60, and profits are split between the artisan and the organization.<sup>194</sup> Buyers can click through the various products for sale and pay by credit card as they would on any other commercial website.

There are mutual benefits to the artist, the organization, and the customer in this scenario, yet it is important to recognize the layers of this economic and social transaction. The value of art is typically what someone will pay for it. The cultural significance of art created by individuals affected by human trafficking—or at risk for human trafficking—is complex. Is it worth more to a buyer/wearer because of the experiences signified in this exchange? Is someone who is really looking to aid the anti-trafficking movement more charitable if they give funds rather than exchange funds for a good? In what ways is this jewelry art, or a commodity, or both? How is the meaning of activism or charity altered when one gets something in return for it?

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<sup>194</sup> Fair Girls. Accessed December 28, 2015. <http://www.fairgirls.org/shop>

There are other instances in which individuals can make purchases to benefit trafficking organizations rather than making straightforward donations, and these are no less complicated. Big companies like the Body Shop, a cosmetics and bath products retailer, have had campaigns where a percentage of the profit on certain products benefits anti-trafficking organizations, and organizations based in D.C. have subscribed to this model as well.<sup>195</sup> Another example (highlighted in Chapter 3) is Tip Top Boutique, a second-hand store for designer-brand clothing and accessories in Georgetown, one of D.C.'s poshest neighborhoods. And on December 14, 2013, Polaris Project sent its listserv members the following email about t-shirts with anti-slavery messages for sale:

If you're looking for a purchase with a purpose, \$7 of every item purchased on Sevely.com—including shirts, bags, and jewelry—goes to support our clients. Sevely is a cause activation platform that raises funding and awareness. You might remember these shirts from last spring and this is the last chance to get these designs. The sale ends Sunday at 1 p.m.!

These shirts also spread awareness that we must work together to end human trafficking. Please help us spread the word that America is indeed the Land of the Free for all—just as these shirts proudly proclaim.

We have been directly serving survivors of human trafficking for 10 years, and supporters like you are why nearly 200 men, women, and children received our help and support in 2013. Every dollar matters and your purchase will make a difference in the lives of our clients.

In this hectic holiday season, take a moment to give a gift that makes a change.

These fundraisers—which it is important to note are also awareness campaigns—have broad appeal, arguably, in part, because they require very little effort or

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<sup>195</sup> The Body Shop. Accessed December 28, 2015.  
<http://www.thebodyshop.com/values/trafficking.aspx>

energy on the part of the participant. Buying jewelry or a t-shirt or a designer dress for a good cause might make an anti-trafficking supporter feel like they've done something good—and they have helped an organization's bottom line and possibly learned something about this social cause—but that altruism took very little self-sacrifice. Images are important in this communication too as the models donning the Polaris sponsored t-shirts are young and “cool,” with slouching postures and tattoos. Supporting anti-trafficking efforts is conveyed as something easy and hip—if you just buy this shirt.

This kind of passive activism, part of the “slacktivism” trend others have highlighted, will be discussed further in Chapter 5. The key for the discussion here is how the marketplace is playing a role in activism in new ways. I have likely raised more questions than I have answered in highlighting the complex, but close, relationship between the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. and the market. But they are important questions to consider for the chapters that follow. A socially conscious t-shirt company is not a large megacorporation, but its role in combating trafficking does illustrate how comfortably this movement operates within the marketplace of a capitalist economy.

### **The State, the Market, and Anti-Trafficking Labor**

As highlighted by Laura Agustín's work, discussed in Chapter 2, the relationship between the market, the state, and charity work is not new. What I have attempted to bring to light in this chapter, however, are some of the financial linkages that solidify these connections within the anti-trafficking movement and

some of the particular ways that contemporary “do-good labor”—a highly professional and institutional endeavor—sets the tone for discourse, dialogue, and action around trafficking, at least in D.C.

Anti-trafficking organizations are savvy about their fundraising efforts and strategic about using fundraising campaigns and programs that work best for them and their base of supporters. Perhaps they would rather spend less time and energy on these activities and more on their programming, but of those with whom I spoke, all seemed to acknowledge the realities of nonprofit and social sector funding scenarios and were resigned that development was part and parcel of generating awareness and wider support for the cause.

Government and the economic sector are seen as partners within D.C.’s anti-trafficking movement. The Human Trafficking Task Force run by the Department of Justice provides a forum for collaboration, law enforcement agencies are seen as clients for training programs, and a variety of federal and local governmental entities are seen as potential sources for funding. Supporters getting behind trafficking causes with their wallets are most welcome, and it is easy and convenient for them to become involved through social media and e-commerce. They can contribute to organizations with only the expectation of a “thank you,” or they can avail themselves of product purchases or attendance at events that both link them to an anti-trafficking community and give them something in return.

It is easy to conclude that the anti-trafficking movement is not a radical one and its participants and programs are very much in cooperation with existing



hierarchies and traditional structures of power. Yet, despite this conventional, with its “Land of the Free” t-shirts, email blasts, and “young person’s ball” there are aspects of this anti-trafficking movement that are less traditional and very modern. In the next chapter, I look closely at two of the movement’s largest events, the Capital City Ball and the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk, to analyze the size and scope of the trafficking movement in D.C. and to discuss ways in which contemporary activism and advocacy around this issue have been shaped by technological trends.

## Chapter 5

### **A Cause for Our Time: “Slacktivism” and the Anti-Trafficking Movement**

In this chapter, I discuss the ways that technological trends and the shifting social conditions they have engendered have impacted activism broadly and in the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. specifically. While the last chapter honed in on individuals working for and with nonprofits associated with trafficking as part of the nonprofit industrial complex, here I focus on more casual movement participants. Those whose involvement in the anti-trafficking movement may be motivated less by passion, commitment, and/or employment, and more by convenience, social pressure, and/or a self-interested desire to be part of something bigger than themselves, play a critical role in contextualizing contemporary conversations about the legitimacy of activism that takes place through social media channels, in close cooperation with the market, and/or as a way to participate in a trend.

Though dialogues on the subject of “slacktivism”—a melding of the terms “slacker” and “activism”—are new, and academic research concerning the subject is still very much emerging, I deploy this concept to frame this chapter because of its prevalence in popular (non-academic) debates about modern charity and activist work. I do not begin from the premise that the anti-trafficking movement *is* slacktivist, nor do I endorse the term as providing a fully accurate characterization of contemporary activism. Recognizing that an embrace of this terms dismisses the significance of digital space and small scale interactions as

meaning-making, I deploy slacktivism as an organizing thematic in hopes that discussion of its applicability to this cause, and the particular form it takes in conjunction with anti-trafficking efforts, will help to elucidate heretofore unexamined qualities and nuances of the movement.

After an attempt to define the term “slacktivism,” and a brief discussion of other issues and causes that have been called “slacktivist,” I turn to a short overview of the ways in which technology, particularly social media, facilitates activities and connections for and within the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. Because of the immediate and fleeting nature of social media, this review is not a close read of the vast amount of content—invitations, news items, stories, etc.—communicated through this medium, but instead it is an introduction to the mechanics of communication and a presentation of the type of information consumed and disseminated in this way. Lastly, I conduct close analysis of two large, participation-oriented events that take place annually as part of D.C.’s anti-trafficking movement, to assess the “slacktivism” present in these efforts and “slacktivist” forces impacting this cause.

### **What is “Slacktivism”?**

Much has been written about the impact of digital political activism and social media’s ability to change the course of history and politics. Text messages and other technology platforms played a famous role in the Arab Spring revolutions in 2011 and were critical as early as 2001 when a protest motivated by

a helped Filipinos expel a corrupt president.<sup>196</sup> In these cases, technology served as a communication tool that coordinated more traditional forms of activism—like protests in the street. This is important and revolutionary, but different from technological interventions characteristic of the cause-based activism and advocacy taking place in the United States. Here the link between communication and action is far less direct.

Biting one-liners that critique emergent forms of digital activism abound. Headlines in the mainstream press and in the “blogosphere” malign “slacktivism” and the closely related “clicktivism” as forms of social engagement that don’t require you to “get out of your chair.”<sup>197</sup> The term’s etymology is debated, but it has come to suggest that there is something cheap, inauthentic, and ultimately lazy about digital social activism and organizing.<sup>198</sup> Tech journalist and commentator Evgeny Morozov, when defining the term, notes that “our digital efforts make us feel very useful and important, but have zero social impact.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>Rebecca Rosen, “So Was Facebook Responsible for the Arab Spring After All,” *The Atlantic*. September 3, 2011. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/09/so-was-facebook-responsible-for-the-arab-spring-after-all/244314/>. The debate on exactly what role social media played in these cases is inconclusive, but Rosen’s piece offers some points of discussion. Clay Shirky. “The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 90. No. 1 (January 2011): 28. Shirky discusses the Philippines example and other case studies as well.

<sup>197</sup> Barnaby Feder, “They Weren’t Careful What They Hoped For,” *New York Times*. May 29, 2002. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/29/nyregion/they-weren-t-careful-what-they-hoped-for.html>. The article, though dated, illustrates one usage of this phrase.

<sup>198</sup>Many blogs (and Wikipedia) cite Dwight Ozark and Fred Clark in 1995 and note that the term at first had a positive connotation, but this information is hard to substantiate.

<sup>199</sup> Evgeny Morozov, “From Slacktivism to Activism,” *Foreign Policy*, September 5, 2009. Accessed October 30, 2009. [http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/09/05/from\\_slacktivism\\_to\\_activism](http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/09/05/from_slacktivism_to_activism). Much of Morozov’s work accounts for the complexities of modern social activism, but his indictment of these forms as largely ineffective is at the heart of his argument.

Harsher analyses also note that the public proclamation of one's goodness and usefulness provides more value to the digital activist than to his or her cause.

Yet there are proponents of digital activism who argue that critics and NGOs slow to adopt technology just don't understand the potential of this new form of social action. They contend that organizations will be negatively impacted if they do not get on board with modern communication methods. Often these defenses highlight the age discrepancy between those who are used to traditional social participation and younger people, who are more accustomed to using technology in all aspects of their lives. Lee Fox, a blogger and consultant on youth and activism argues on her blog:

We have before us a new generation of activists who are mashing up philanthropy in ways that most organizations have yet to understand or empower. Unfortunately, "activism 2.0" tends to be mistaken as "slacktivism"—a derogatory and damaging label, particularly when associated with youth. The term suggests that their efforts are less consequential and therefore, not as meaningful. Simple actions such as signing an online petition, changing the appearance of an avatar, and social sharing may be signatures of a "slacktivist," but they're also the first powerful steps of a cause champion.<sup>200</sup>

Fox extolls findings from the Millennial Impact Report, a research project funded by the Case Foundation focused on philanthropic and cause-related activism in the workplace by those born later than 1979, which paints young people as motivated to do good.<sup>201</sup> According to the 2013 report, seventy-five percent of respondents like to "retweet" or "share" cause-related content. Additionally, of

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<sup>200</sup> Youth Advocacy Advocates, "Stop Calling Them Slacktivists," Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://koodooz.com/advocacy/stop-calling-them-slacktivists/>. This is Fox's blog.

<sup>201</sup> This is the foundation of Steve Case, former, co-founder, chairman, and CEO of America Online.

the 2012 respondents, “75% . . . gave a financial gift (albeit micro-sized donations averaging ~\$100 dollars), and 71% raised money for a cause they cared about.”<sup>202</sup> She holds these figures up as evidence that young people are not slacker activists at all.

If we are to parse this debate any further, it is important to more fully define slacktivism, though it is likely easier to describe it. Certainly, there is no shortage of recent phenomena to serve as examples. There are countless awareness campaigns that involve supporters changing their Facebook profile photos to publicly proclaim affinity for an issue or cause, including a 2013 effort in which proponents of marriage-equality legislation adopted a temporary Facebook profile image featuring a symbol—two parallel pink lines against a red background—designed by an organization called Human Rights Campaign.<sup>203</sup> In 2012, a thirty-minute video produced by a an organization called Invisible Children featuring Joseph Kony, the head of Ugandan rebel group called the Lord’s Resistance, was viewed over 100 million times, spawning a host of public debates as to whether this awareness campaign and others like it had any real impact.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Youth Advocacy Advocates, “Stop Calling Them Slacktivists,” Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://koodooz.com/advocacy/stop-calling-them-slacktivism/>. This is Fox’s blog. See the 2013 Millennial Impact Report for further statistics. <http://casefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/MillennialImpactReport-2013.pdf>

<sup>203</sup> Chris Gayomali, “The Story Behind the Gay Marriage Symbol Taking Over Facebook” *The Week*, March 23, 2013. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://theweek.com/article/index/242043/the-story-behind-the-gay-marriage-symbol-taking-over-facebook>.

<sup>204</sup> Invisible Children Website. Accessed October 30, 2015, <http://invisiblechildren.com/kony-2012/>. The site explains: “The KONY 2012 campaign started as an experiment. Could an online video make an obscure war criminal famous? And if he was famous, would the world work together to stop him? The experiment yielded the fastest growing viral video of all time. The KONY 2012 film reached 100 million views in 6 days, and 3.7 million people pledged their

Another recent example, the “Ice Bucket Challenge,” raised funds and awareness for the ALS Association, an organization that focused on fighting the neurodegenerative disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. The summertime campaign, which dared individuals to douse themselves with buckets of ice water, post a video of their escapade on social media, and task others to do the same or else make a donation to an ALS charity, struck a chord. As the campaign and the accompanying videos went viral, the ALS Association raised more than \$100 million in a thirty-day period. Whether the individuals who participated in this challenge did so for amusement, out of guilt, in the spirit of competition, or as a way to participate in a sweeping social trend, the organization, in securing this outstanding amount of money, accomplished something that will be challenging to repeat. Such a phenomenon is hard to duplicate because it is dependent entirely on the whim of the public. A campaign like this would have been possible in earlier eras, but its popularity, scope, and scale relied on the immediacy of social media.

Scholarly research has only just started to address the long-term impact of this flash activity. While Fox, the aforementioned consultant, contends that “their penchant for knowledge-sharing makes youth—52% of the world’s population—a powerful broadcast force for awareness-building. And awareness building is a huge part of how nonprofits earn donors and volunteers!,” the link between

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support for efforts to arrest Joseph Kony. It proved our theory that if people only knew what Kony had been getting away with, they would be as outraged as we were. But knowing is only half the battle - Joseph Kony is still out there.”

awareness and subsequent action is not entirely clear.<sup>205</sup> A 2014 study by Kirk Kristofferson, Katherine White, and John Peloza, consumer behavior scholars, in fact, suggests exactly the opposite. The team divides categories of support for a cause or organization into *token* and *meaningful* categories. Their study, which involved three tests of individuals' likelihood to make a larger commitment to a cause after making either a public or private show of token support, found that public token support, like the activism that takes place on social media, does not lead to increased meaningful support of social causes. "Specifically, we find that engaging in these forms of public support activates a desire to present the self in a positive light, and once this desire is satisfied the token act may not lead to increased support for the cause."<sup>206</sup> In other words, there is motivation for the activist to get involved for his or her self-interest, but only in order to broadcast his or her own altruism.

So far, we have discussed slacktivism as a digital phenomenon.<sup>207</sup> The term might also be employed more broadly to account for additional types of passive activism, particularly passive activism that is deeply connected to consumption, as well. Slacktivism, for the sake of this project, then also encompasses *goods-based activism*, which involves purchasing a product for the sake of doing good for a cause associated with it, and *symbolic activism*, which

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<sup>205</sup> Youth Advocacy Advocates, "Stop Calling Them Slacktivists," Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://koodooz.com/advocacy/stop-calling-them-slacktivists/>.

<sup>206</sup> Kirk Kristofferson, Katherine White, and John Peloza, "The Nature of Slacktivism: How the Social Observability of an Initial Act of Token Support Affects Subsequent Prosocial Action," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 40, No. 6 (April 2014): 1163.

<sup>207</sup> The Kristofferson, White, and Peloza study, however, used offline scenarios to explore the notion of token support.



involves the public display of one's allegiance to a cause, be it on or offline. Examples of these closely related categories are easy to find and likely share roots with the contemporary "ribbon culture" of the late 1990s examined by Sarah Moore. Her work argues that ribbon wearing "has more to do with self-presentation than political engagement" (and will be discussed further in Chapter 6).<sup>208</sup>

In a more recent example that illustrates the complexities of goods-based and symbolic activism, after the 2013 bombings at the Boston Marathon, the slogan "Boston Strong" enveloped the New England city. The phrase was the brainchild of two Northeastern University students who slapped it on t-shirts several hours after the incident and sold 37,000 in the first week following the bombing. The proceeds from the sale of their shirts were donated to the on Marathon's main charity. But since the phrase, which is not trademarked, was also put onto merchandise whose proceeds were not donated to charity, consumers "buying" into the Boston Strong movement may or may not have been doing much "good." Either way, the appearance of being altruistic, and in this case, part of a unifying trend, is part of what drives participation and qualifies this example as symbolic activism. There may, of course, be individuals who care more about the donation than the shirt or the slogan, but given the ubiquity of "Boston Strong"—which some argue is now more like a tourist catchphrase than a call to charity—there is likely something more compelling at play.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness*. New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, (2010).

The anti-trafficking movement in D.C. has several examples of non-digital passive activism as well. When Polaris Project advertises t-shirts promoting the anti-trafficking cause, as discussed in Chapter 4, their approach to fundraising and awareness is both goods-based and symbolic. There is the profit, even if it is small, to be made for the company selling the shirt, and an easy, transactional way for the supporter to get involved by purchasing the shirt. He or she did not have to get out of the chair to click through and purchase this shirt, and could, simultaneously, be “doing good.” Later when donning the piece of clothing, he or she again broadcasts a spirit of altruism.

Yet, there are also goods-based examples where a symbolic public display is not the primary underlying intention. As discussed in Chapter 4, within the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. there are projects in which trafficking survivors create art or jewelry that can be sold to cause supporters. These goods do not broadcast themselves as “survivor made,” and the buyer may or may not tell others that the earrings he or she is wearing were purchased from FAIR Girls, or on tothemarket.com (a vendor of “survivor made goods” advertised on ATEST’s Facebook page), or any other nonprofit organization that focuses on trafficking. There may be cases where the status as a cause-related good motivates a consumer to purchase a product, and there may be cases where the purchaser just fancies the product. Either way, the transactional nature of this support shapes it as a passive form of activism. There is little self-sacrifice involved in online jewelry shopping.

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<sup>209</sup> Tovia Smith, “A Year After Bombings, Some Say Boston Strong Has Gone Overboard,” NPR. April 10, 2014 Accessed October 30, 2014. <http://www.npr.org/2014/04/10/300989561/a-year-after-bombings-some-say-boston-strong-has-gone-overboard>

There are also examples of events where organizations partner with retailers, like boutiques, that might otherwise be considered luxurious or extravagant. In conjunction with the anti-trafficking cause, boutique shopping becomes more purposeful. In addition to the aforementioned Tip Top Boutique, which was dedicated to anti-trafficking causes, other elite Georgetown boutiques have served as venues for anti-trafficking fundraisers. While, arguably, one's attendance at such events conveys charitable and altruistic character, this activity is less about public display and more about the goods acquired and funds exchanged—a kind of shopping that takes place in these stores anyway. The Amara Legal Center—which was featured as one of the 2014 Capital City Ball's recipient charities—partnered with Coterie Boutique for an “Afternoon of Tea, Wine, and Shopping at Coterie Boutique” in advance of the ball. Nowhere did the invitation—sent via email blast—mention trafficking or Amara's work, which the organization describes as “free legal services to individuals whose rights have been violated through commercial sex.”<sup>210</sup> The bulk of the invitation, instead, described the inventory selection at Coterie Boutique:

What you'll find at COTERIE:

1. Coterie offers style savvy, modern yet classic looks from London, Paris, and Far East. The styles are hand-picked with attention to detail and quality in mind.
2. You will only see 2 small, 2 medium, and 2 large sizes of any fashion item at the boutique. They also carry only one of a kind of many new unforgettable styles.
3. New unique outfits are sourced and brought straight from runway shows. You'll definitely find an outfit you'll fall in love with and will want to wear every chance you get!

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<sup>210</sup> Amara Legal Clinic Website. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.amaralegal.org/#!about-us/cjg9>

The cute graphics and light tone also suggested a fun event focused on things to buy. The organization's Facebook page had a post with a similar tone:

“SHOPPING! WINE! CUPCAKES! FUN! Join us at Coterie today from 3-8 pm for shopping to support the Amara Legal Center! See you there!”

My conception of goods-based and symbolic activism is related to, but slightly different from, the cause-related marketing typically employed by big corporations. These kinds of relationships, wherein a retailer funnels proceeds from a particular product or product line to a philanthropic partner, are theoretically mutually beneficial, though Samantha King notes that “companies and brands associate themselves with a cause as a means to build the reputation of a brand, increase profit, develop employee loyalty to the company and add to their reputation as good corporate citizens.”<sup>211</sup> Often described in conjunction with the “pinkwashing” of the ubiquitous breast cancer campaign, cause-related marketing has also come under scrutiny since it can be a way for companies to cash in on other people's misfortunes.

There is an irony, of course, in an over-saturation of the market. You would be hard-pressed to find an American who does not know that pink paraphernalia represents the fight against breast cancer, but since “breast cancer research has been used to sell products ranging from Hallmark cards to automobiles,” the relationship between the supporter/consumer and the do-good

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<sup>211</sup> Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press (2006): 9.

product he or she is buying is unclear.<sup>212</sup> Is the focus on funding research, on raising awareness, or on broadcasting one's participation in a good, high-profile cause? Is it a combination? All three?

What at times seems like the elephant in the room as we discuss these efforts and their real impact is the value of the intangible objective of raising awareness, likely in the hope that this awareness will lead to change. But is a focus on awareness as an outcome—or *the* outcome—inherently slacktivist? This project works to make clear that for the anti-trafficking movement in D.C., awareness is a worthwhile outcome. This is likely the case for many other movements and organizations associated with many other causes as well. But the ideas that knowledge is, in itself, progress and that sharing knowledge about a target social concern or problem is similar to, or the same as, changing, improving, or solving that issue or problem, are under-examined. I begin to examine them here and in Chapter 6.

As we look more closely at technology and the modern techniques of fundraising and awareness raising that shape D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement, it is important to consider this broader context. How do these technologies facilitate the work of the movement? Do they make a difference?

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<sup>212</sup> Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press (2006):14.

## Technology and Slacktivism

In 2013, D.C.-based Polaris Project, one of the largest mainstream anti-trafficking organizations in the United States, received a Google Global Impact Grant to partner with an organization in Asia and an organization in South America to combine data from their trafficking hotlines and “identify illicit patterns and provide victims anywhere in the world with more effective support.”<sup>213</sup> Google makes such grants, this one for \$3 million, to nonprofits who use technology to innovate within their field. This program acknowledges that Polaris understands the importance that data plays in their work and is part of a larger conversation regarding the ways in which technology can be used to fight trafficking.<sup>214</sup> Because traffickers use social media to recruit, for example, interventions seeking to interrupt their communication circuit are being developed and implemented.<sup>215</sup>

These initiatives are useful examples of emerging programmatic approaches that are tech-savvy, but, as with many organizations in both the public and private sectors, the groups fighting trafficking in persons in Washington, D.C., tend to use technology primarily as a communication platform. Technology is

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<sup>213</sup>Chloe Albanesius, “Google Awards \$3 Million to Fight Human Trafficking.” *PC Mag*. April 9, 2013. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2417594,0i0.asp>

<sup>214</sup> US State Department, “Technology as a Tool in the Fight Against Human Trafficking.” July 24, 2013. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/pl/cwa/212411.htm>. This is a transcript of a radio program in which government officials and NGOs discussed the ways that technology helps with efforts to combat trafficking.

<sup>215</sup> USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, “The Rise of Mobile and the Diffusion of Technology-Facilitated Trafficking (2012),” Accessed October 30, 2015, <http://technologyandtrafficking.usc.edu/report/human-trafficking-online-the-role-of-social-networking-sites-and-online-classifieds/#.VJJQyys7xyU>. This project is focused especially on the relationship between trafficking and technology.

used to interface with a network of clients, potential clients, and supporters and to define or brand an organization's work and public persona. Organizations' regular use of websites, emails blasts, and social media—though varied in frequency and sophistication—is unremarkable given the ubiquity of these communication channels in contemporary life, but it is important to examine as a means for understanding the tools of the movement. Though one needs to opt in to become a member of D.C.'s virtual anti-trafficking community (by joining email lists, liking organizations on Facebook, or electing to follow them on Twitter), once one has done so, it is easy to be a passive participant.

DC Stop Modern Slavery, the organization responsible for the Stop Modern Slavery Walk, counts its official membership using the website Meetup.com, which allows users to search for organizations and groups in their area based on their interests. The organizational representative with whom I spoke, noted the tension between the number of “members” and those who attend meetings:

Since we organize ourselves through the website Meetup.com, we use that as our count of how many people are in the organization—that subscribe to us and get all the information about the meetings. That's about twelve hundred. We are a pretty large organization. For the yearly walks that we do, we have pretty much all of our members come out to that and additional people who are just in the anti-trafficking community. Last year at the walk we had about two thousand people, this year we are hoping for four thousand, but as far as our monthly meetings go, those can range from forty to eighty people.<sup>216</sup>

I subsequently asked how the group “[makes] sense of who is a passive member versus an active member and what role social media plays”:

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<sup>216</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

That's something actually we've been talking about a lot and that's something we still trying to figure out. . . . But we are trying to determine how to use our data about our members . . . how to figure out how to get people more engaged. I mentioned that we plan everything through Meetup.com, but we are also quite active on Facebook and Twitter with thousands of members or people who follow us. So . . . yeah, that's something that we're still trying to figure out ourselves.<sup>217</sup>

This response suggests that while this organization understands the utility and power of social media, and is, in fact, self-reflexive about the unique characteristics and limitations it can place on social organization, the organization does not have all of the answers and sees this aspect of its organizing mission as a work in progress.

While technology is central to the operation of DC Stop Modern Slavery and the execution of its events and meetings, there are varying degrees of reliance on of technology and social media among other organizations in the movement. While only a few other groups use Meetup.com,<sup>218</sup> nearly all of the groups examined have websites, which they employ to articulate their missions, histories, and goals, as well as to display information on organizational leadership. The extent of information and interactivity of each site, however, varies from organization to organization—likely depending on budget, staffing, target audience, and founding date. For example, Polaris Project, one of the largest anti-trafficking organizations, and one with a national reputation, has high visibility and a highly professional site. It has an accompanying blog, links to social media and YouTube, interactive maps and charts, and a communication feature in its

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<sup>217</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>218</sup> These include Amara Legal Center and the Capital City Ball.



“Action Center” where visitors can sign petitions lobbying Congress or state legislatures.<sup>219</sup> By contrast, Restoration Ministries, a small organization that relies on volunteers, and whose executive director was going to graduate school part-time at the time of our interview, has a simpler, less interactive, and less information-rich website. Its several subpages typically have some text and one photo. Visitors are still linked into social media, however, and are able to make gifts on the website. Restoration Ministries even links to Amazon Smile.

Twenty-eight of the thirty anti-trafficking groups in the Washington, D.C., region have confirmed Facebook pages and, not surprisingly, the larger, high-profile organizations have larger social media presences.<sup>220</sup> Similarly to the websites, these pages are used to brand organizations and communicate about missions, programs, and objectives, but this medium is inherently more interactive. Groups often advertise events on Facebook and share information about recent accomplishments or projects. When Courtney’s House is running a drive for items they need for clients returning to school or in advance of their holiday gatherings, for example, they make a request on Facebook for these kinds of supplies. Facebook is also frequently used to share news stories or articles concerning trafficking that are relevant, but not necessarily directly related to the organization’s work. On any given day FAIR Girls might post about a man

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<sup>219</sup> One such action was a petition urging no changes to the federal TVPA legislation around trafficking, in light of the law’s impact on a much publicized situation where unaccompanied children were attempting to emigrate from Central America.

<sup>220</sup> I identified these by using Facebook’s search tool. When these searches were inconclusive, I went to the organization’s website and followed a link from there directly to advertised Facebook pages. There may be cases of organizations with Facebook pages that I simply couldn’t locate. Appendix III lists the number of followers and likes held by each organization at the time of this analysis.

arrested on human trafficking charges in Louisville, Kentucky; a Chinese investigation into a trafficking ring targeting Burmese girls; or the release of Hungarian gay men trafficked to Miami, as they did in October and November of 2014. Global Centurion similarly shared news stories about trafficking stings in New York and St. Paul, Minnesota in July 2014. Such articles are meant to keep trafficking issues on the forefront of social media followers' minds and to allow organizations to editorialize and comment on such events in real time. In 2014, when comedian Bill Cosby was frequently in the news for a series of rape accusations against him, FAIR Girls, exclaimed on Facebook and Twitter: "Many victims of #rape are silent out of fear & shame. Is #BillCosby guilty of using silence as a power grab? [@time.](http://ow.ly/EHDBc)"<sup>221</sup>

As part of the Facebook model, the number of other Facebook users who have "liked" a given page are displayed prominently. The number of "likes" received by the groups in this project allow us to conclude that some are more active on social media than others and may consequently have a wider reach. The Facebook page of International Justice Mission, a Christian organization with a large staff, nationwide reputation, and worldwide programming, has 189,471 likes, for example, but Innocents at Risk, an organization focused primarily on education and awareness with just one full-time staff member, has only 46 likes.

The Twitter feeds of organizations sampled for this project often contain similar posts to those on Facebook—though they are necessarily condensed to

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<sup>221</sup> FAIR Girls Facebook Page, Post November 23, 2014, Accessed May 27, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/fairgirls.org/?fref=nf>

abide by the social media site's limit of 140 characters per "tweet."<sup>222</sup>

Organizations use Twitter much in the same way that they use Facebook: to update supporters and donors about activities, events, and accomplishments as well as to ask them to take action in some way. Bridge to Freedom Foundation's Twitter feed shares information and solicits support for its women's self-defense program. A tweets from February 27 2014 ask followers to:

Donate even \$10 and support a survivor through @BTFF's Violence Prevention / Self-Defense Workshops  
<http://www.razoo.com/story/Violence-Prevention-Self-Defense-Workshops> ... via @razoo.<sup>223</sup>

Twitter also serves as a medium to share news and articles, and its "hashtag" feature groups all messages with similar flags or keywords indicated by a # symbol. When you search "#capitalcityball," for example, you will get a list of tweets about the gala from individuals and organizations across D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement.<sup>224</sup>

As mentioned earlier, participation in these modern forms of interconnected communication, along with email blasts, which serve the function of directing recipients to websites, Facebook, and Twitter, is in large part automatic and effortless once an individual has opted in. It can be assumed that movement participants are consuming updates from the anti-trafficking

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<sup>222</sup> I identified these by using Twitter's search tool. When these searches were inconclusive, I went to the organization's website and followed a link from it to the advertised Twitter pages.

<sup>223</sup> Bridge to Freedom Foundation, Twitter post, February 27, 2014, <https://twitter.com/BTFF>

<sup>224</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012. This includes many tweets by individuals who were at the event, but one did not have to be in attendance to use the hashtag. The training session I attended prior to the 2012 Ball included a few moments on encouraging guests to use the hashtag to identify themselves as participating in the event.

organizations they like and following along with updates from many other individuals and organizations that interest them. They need not make special efforts to check Facebook, Twitter, or email solely to consume information about these groups.

These tools provide organizations with a way to measure the success of their outreach by followers, fans, retweets, and likes. I spend time summarizing these activities because they are essential for understanding the context of modern activism and important representations of the way that anti-trafficking organizations in Washington, D.C., do business and spend their time.

Like DC Stop Modern Slavery, other organizations are also cognizant of the tensions between the relative impact of their communications work versus their programmatic work. Global Rescue Relief's website contains a blog with an entry that explicitly asks "can social media bring out social justice?" Its author structures the entry around three questions: "What makes a social media campaign successful? Can non-profits use social media campaigns to address emotionally fraught issues in a positive way? and What makes a campaign 'go viral?'" Though, by his own admission, the author seeks to discuss rather than answer these questions, the focus is largely on the efforts of the group to communicate a message effectively—a discursive emphasis—rather than on the impact of programming on a target population's lives—a material emphasis. The headline question remains unanswered.

Technology has likely increased the size of the anti-trafficking movement in the Washington, D.C., area and has contributed to the amount of dialogue—

much of it digital—that takes place around this issue. This is in line with the direction of activism and advocacy more broadly, though nuanced conversations about the best way to use digital tools, and the social implications of digital civic participation, are still underway. While academic scholarship is still emerging on this subject, the *Chronicle for Philanthropy*, a respected nonprofit publication, often contains articles like “How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media to Spark Change” and “How to Seek Volunteers Using Social Media.”<sup>225</sup> The blog *Nonprofit Tech for Good* summarizes recent consultant studies about social media and philanthropy in its “12 Must-Know Stats About Social Media, Fundraising, and Cause Awareness” and its arguments include:

- 41% of nonprofits attribute their social media success to having developed a detailed social media strategy.
- 47% of Americans learn about causes via social media and online channels.
- 55% of those who engage with nonprofits via social media have been inspired to take further action.<sup>226</sup>

The methodologies for these studies are not readily apparent, but they illustrate the direction of the tide. Nonprofits must engage with these technologies or they are missing the boat.

In that case, whether these tools foster slacktivism or not, it is difficult to criticize any particular movement for over-utilizing them or being too successful

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<sup>225</sup> Maureen West, “How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media to Spark Change,” *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, February 20, 2011, Accessed October 30, 2015, <https://philanthropy.com/article/How-Nonprofits-Can-Use-Social/158943>; Allison Fine, “How to Seek Volunteers Using Social Media” *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, October 6, 2011 <https://philanthropy.com/article/how-to-seek-volunteers-using/157703>.

<sup>226</sup> Nonprofit Tech for Social Good. “12 Must-Know Stats About Social Media, Fundraising, and Cause Awareness” April 22, 2013, Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.nptechforgood.com/2013/04/22/12-must-know-stats-about-social-media-fundraising-and-cause-awareness/>

at getting the word out about its organizations and its work. To that point, I suggest that problematic tendencies in the movement arise more from an emphasis on the innocuous concept of awareness than from an over-reliance on technology.

### **Come One, Come all**

Within the anti-trafficking movement in D.C., awareness and mass participation are related objectives. Social media communication helps to initiate awareness, and organizations expend time and effort creating online communities to discuss issues and news stories and to promote events. In the “real world,” two such events serve as highlights of the movement’s calendar and have become traditions in D.C.’s anti-trafficking circle. I was present for both of these events—at one as an observer and at one as a volunteer—in the fall of 2012. I use these experiences to provide an overview of these gatherings, and then I analyze 1) the planning and publicizing of these events and 2) the messaging about trafficking that occurs at the events. In this section, I argue that a focus on awareness exacerbates slacktivist tendencies in this social movement. I also raise questions about the delineation between activism and charity work and then consider whether social justice work is allowed to be fun.

The Capital City Ball and DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk might be considered cases in contrasts—one is an evening charity gala at a swanky hotel where guests are dapperly dressed and photographed for the pages of Washington’s social papers; the other is a daytime trek around the grassy lawns of

tourist-filled downtown D.C., its participants outfitted in jeans, sneakers, and t-shirts and carrying hand painted signs.<sup>227</sup> Yet both are targeted at increasing awareness about trafficking, raising money for other organizations, and getting as many people involved with the anti-trafficking movement as possible. The kind of do-good labor required to prepare for and publicize both events, as I will discuss, was very similar. The ways that each organization addressed their common cause—fighting human trafficking and modern day slavery—during the events, however, revealed important distinctions.

DC Stop Modern Slavery spends a full year preparing for its one signature event. It has monthly meetings, which include regular updates from its “Walk Action Team,” and it publicizes the Walk at other events throughout the year. These additional activities—sometimes involving a speaker or documentary film—are secondary to the Walk, and the group tries not to take on more than their volunteers can handle. “Success for us is not doing a million things,” a representative told me, “but doing a few things and being really impactful with those few things.”<sup>228</sup> The organization’s Walk Action Team works with the NGO partners who are benefiting from the funds raised and engages them as speakers at the primary event or at other gatherings leading up to the Walk. The team uses electronic communications and social media to encourage individuals to

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<sup>227</sup> I attended both of these events in 2012 and use that year’s events primarily in this discussion. I again note the change in venue and name for the 2013 event and another name change for the 2014 event.

<sup>228</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

participate, and they have a dynamic system on the organization’s website where individuals can register to do so.<sup>229</sup>

The Walk itself takes place on a Saturday in September or October and rather than an athletic contest, it is more like a fair, a protest, and a parade, rolled into one. According to Samantha King, “in contrast to the elitist charity galas of the upper classes, *thons* are commonly represented in media discourse as ‘athletic grassroots events’ that are accessible and affordable.”<sup>230</sup> Referring to the multitude of walking and running events targeted at breast cancer charities, King argues that such health-oriented fundraisers, which gained popularity in the last twenty-five years, typically gauge success by the ability of an individual to raise or donate money:

Given that the success of any particular thon is measured by its capacity to gain individual promises to donate money, it is not surprising that the thon emerged as a new site for mass public participation in the 1990s, a decade that witnessed the production of a constant flow of techniques, tools, and strategies designed to elicit individual accountability and responsibility to others mediated not through the state but through freedom of personal philanthropy and volunteerism.<sup>231</sup>

Though there is the expectation that participants raise money to support the Walk, “walkers” are typically part of teams and the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk is not terribly invested in the personal achievement of its walkers—how far or how fast they travel. The predetermined Walk route is short and largely symbolic, and the physical movement of the event allows participants to draw more attention to

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<sup>229</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>230</sup> Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press (2006): 50.

<sup>231</sup> Samantha King, *Pink Ribbons, Inc: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press (2006): 52.



their gathering, not entirely like a protest and not entirely like a parade. Team names are posted on the organization's website. The appeal of camaraderie in social engagement, rather than personal success, is evident, as team names typically refer to other anti-trafficking groups or inspirational phrases (including "A Mile in My Shoes" and "Abolitionist Mamas"), not individuals.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the four-hour Walk day begins with a resource fair, wherein anti-trafficking groups occupy information booths showcasing materials and pamphlets and speak to Walk attendees, many of whom are connected to other anti-trafficking organizations. As all registered participants are given t-shirts commemorating the event, there is a commonality in dress among those on the information-seeking and information-providing sides of the resource fair tables. In 2012, nearly everyone in attendance was clad in a unifying t-shirt proclaiming the organization's name—"STOP MODERN SLAVERY"—and symbol, a handprint making a stop gesture, laid over a globe. The piece of clothing itself, produced by a fair trade company, Free Set, was a political statement. A tag told wearers that "more than a stitched piece of fabric, this tee tells a story of freedom. For hundreds of women who were trapped in India's sex trade it brings freedom from a life that robbed them from dignity and hope."<sup>232</sup>

The shared experience signified by the t-shirt was significant as well because it suggested that very few movement outsiders participated in the Walk. There may have been passers-by who stopped to inquire about the event taking place, but because Stop Modern Slavery is such a large organization and because,

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<sup>232</sup> I am in possession of one of these shirts.

as suggested by the representative I interviewed, most of the organization's members participated in the Walk, one might understand the event as a large gathering of those already in the know about slavery—a party put on both by and for those already passionate about the issue.

There is no typical member of the organization, and no demographic group is more represented than others.<sup>233</sup> I observed many young adults in small groups, but there were also teenagers, middle-aged individuals, and some children present. The event included a designated play area for kids where they could, according to the event program, “meet Abraham Lincoln.”

After the resource fair, but before the Walk part of the day, was a formal program meant to inform, inspire, and “warm up” participants. Since the audience was largely comprised of individuals already sympathetic to the anti-trafficking cause, efforts to persuade them of the issue's importance were likely superfluous. There were remarks from trafficking survivors, heads of other NGOs, and law enforcement as well as a monologue, musical performance, and fashion show. A marching band set the tone for the “walking” part of the event. This festival-like atmosphere was undeniably upbeat and fun, but the purpose of the day was never lost on event participants, as dialogue and discourse about trafficking was a constant throughout the Walk.

Also taking place in the fall, on the Saturday evening before Thanksgiving, the Capital City Ball aims to be as egalitarian as one could expect a charity ball to be. Its organizers, which included a publisher, a neuroanesthesiologist, and a

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<sup>233</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012 and personal observation.

high-end real estate agent, and its board, which included a variety of politicians and celebrities, could be safely categorized as members of a more elite Washington society, and its volunteer trainings are held in a pricey Woodley Park townhouse.<sup>234</sup> Yet, because of their desire to raise awareness broadly, the group emphasized that they were working to get the masses, rather than high society, to attend the Ball. According to one organizer:

We keep tickets reasonable so that anyone from a teacher to a police officer that's actually working directly with people could afford. At \$125, they can afford to go. We bump up the tickets for VIPs to \$250 which is still actually less than what most of the events around here are. It's something that somebody could splurge on. It is open bar, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and an amazing dessert bar.

The affordability of \$125 for an evening on the town may be relative in a city with one of the largest wealth gaps in the county, where the top fifth of income earners obtain salaries twenty-nine times greater than those of the bottom fifth, but a version of accessibility remains a core value of the organization.<sup>235</sup>

I served as a volunteer for the 2012 event and attended one volunteer training session the week prior to the event. I did not attend any lead-up events, but I emphasize that these are an important part of the Capital City Ball's model.

While many of these gatherings are happy-hour fundraisers open to a broader

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<sup>234</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012 and website. The 2012 Host Committee included Paula Dobriansky, former Under Secretary of State, Carolyn Maloney, a Democratic Congressperson from New York, Charles Mann, a former National Football League player, and actor Erik Estrada, for example.

<sup>235</sup> Carol Morello, "Income Inequality Gap in DC one of the Nation's Widest." *Washington Post*, March 8, 2012, Accessed October 30, 2015. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/income-inequality-gap-in-dc-one-of-nations-widest/2012/03/07/gIQA0dsByR\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/income-inequality-gap-in-dc-one-of-nations-widest/2012/03/07/gIQA0dsByR_story.html)

public, there is at least one more content oriented event a week before the ball that has a more elite guest list.

We normally have an embassy that holds the event a week before. At that one, there's usually speaking done by each of the charities. We usually have some head of the government or state or something come over and speak about human trafficking. . . . It's specific invitational. Our host, our honorary host, had been Queen Silvia [of Sweden]. Our past people have been pretty . . . anyone with a big name that we can tie in there that has a big interest and works in human trafficking.<sup>236</sup>

The lead-up events serve to generate conversation about the Ball and to build anticipation for the main event. The event at a foreign embassy the week prior to the Ball, especially, allows for a preselected group of elite Ball-goers to receive a more formal briefing about the issue before—not during—the charity gala.

The 2012 Ball was held at the Washington Club, a hotel on Dupont Circle, and volunteers arrived at the hotel approximately an hour before the other guests. The composition of volunteers, approximately sixty of whom were expected throughout the course of the night, included many college students or recent graduates, some of whom told me they were involved at friends' encouragement. There was also a group of students from Georgetown Business School who were participating in a service-oriented “volunteer month” competition with their classmates (and they actively discussed how many hours this evening would earn them).

Guests arrived steadily from just after 8:00 p.m., when the event officially began. My post, as a greeter at a grand staircase, allowed me to observe the party building. Attendees were mostly white and middle aged, but there were many

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<sup>236</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012

younger people and some people of color present. With an untrained eye, I observed varying degrees of glamour and wealth on display. Some women had fur coats, but other carried modest-brand handbags. Despite organizers' note to me that "it's black tie and people are expected to dress accordingly," there were some short dresses and varying levels of male formal dress.<sup>237</sup> Most everyone was smiling and friendly. Many guests knew each other, and I recognized faces from other events. There were long lines to take pictures on a long fabric carpet leading to the coat room.

Upon putting their coats away, guests traveled up the staircase to the event space. There they found an elegant cluster of dark rooms where drinking, gathering, eating, and dancing would take place. In a hallway was an intern from Courtney's House, whom I had met at a volunteer training from that organization. She appeared slightly out of place, stationed by a homemade poster board sharing information about trafficking. In one better-lit room was a silent auction that included trips, artwork, jewelry, and a skateboard signed by celebrity skateboarder Tony Hawk. According to the event organizers I spoke with, the auction serves as a lucrative fundraiser, without being disruptive to the festive atmosphere of the evening: "The silent auction raises a huge amount of money for [the beneficiary organizations]. . . . We don't stop the party, we kind of invite people to come and have a great time. We don't have a live auction it's just a silent auction that seems to do very well." The end of the silent auction, at 1:00 a.m., concludes the formal part of the evening and precedes the preplanned after-party.

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<sup>237</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012

The small group of event organizers I observed or interacted with treated the planning and execution of the Capital City Ball as a labor of love, in addition to do-good labor. They also seemed to enjoy both each other's company and the revelry of the Ball itself. They invited volunteers to a suite in a nearby hotel where they could apply makeup before the event, and they spoke with nostalgia about memories of previous balls, after-parties, and after-after-parties.

I left the Ball at approximately 10:00 p.m., long before its conclusion, but despite my early exit, I am comfortable characterizing it as a party above all. The organization's website proclaims that their objectives are straightforward, and the Ball's organizers would not be likely to argue with this assessment. As a Capital City Ball representative told me, "Our goals are simple: host a top notch party, make sure our guests have a good time, and raise money and awareness for an important charitable cause. We also are committed to attracting a diverse group of fun and friendly people."<sup>238</sup> As I departed, I waited outside for a ride home near a group of security guards and Ball guests smoking. Their conversations topics ranged from the venue, to their jobs, to their outfits.

In an often-cited *New Yorker* commentary on slacktivism, author Malcolm Gladwell uses the notions of risk, hierarchy, and strategy to make distinctions between traditional activism and modern activities that utilize technology. Using the civil rights movement as a principle example, he notes:

Boycotts and sit-ins and nonviolent confrontations—which were the weapons of choice for the civil-rights movement—are high-risk strategies. They leave little room for conflict and error. The moment even one protester deviates from the script and responds to provocation, the moral legitimacy of the entire protest is compromised. Enthusiasts for social

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<sup>238</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012.

media would no doubt have us believe that King's task in Birmingham would have been made infinitely easier had he been able to communicate with his followers through Facebook, and contented himself with tweets from a Birmingham jail. But networks are messy: think of the ceaseless pattern of correction and revision, amendment and debate, that characterizes Wikipedia. If Martin Luther King, Jr., had tried to do a wiki-boycott in Montgomery, he would have been steamrolled by the white power structure. And of what use would a digital communication tool be in a town where ninety-eight per cent of the black community could be reached every Sunday morning at church? The things that King needed in Birmingham—discipline and strategy—were things that online social media cannot provide.<sup>239</sup>

Unlike online shopping for socially responsible jewelry, the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk and Capital City Ball require anti-trafficking movement participants to be physically present. The executions of these gatherings are impacted by social media, as I describe below, and are not slacktivist in the sense that participants must get out of their chair to be a part of them. But being physically present at a low-risk, socially enjoyable occasion requires considerably less sacrifice than more traditional forms of social activism.

If we understand slacktivism to be about passive, easy participation and public display of altruism, there is a case for classifying both of these participation-oriented events by this rubric. Despite the direct action taking place to plan and carry out both, the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk and Capital City Ball, through methods used to secure participants and raise awareness about trafficking, exhibit some slacktivist tendencies.

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<sup>239</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the Revolution will Not be Tweeted," *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010, Accessed October 30, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell>

## **Getting Attention and Attendance**

Chapter 2 examined some of the criteria for classifying activities as a social movement, one of which was collective or joint action. In acquiring new members for their organizations and participants at their events, and in building the movement, DC Stop Modern Slavery and Capital City Ball use some traditional collective action and some modern social media methods to publicize their work. Overall, their methods, whether utilizing social media or not, make participation simple and low-risk, and rely greatly on the established network of individuals who identify with this cause.

To join the DC Stop Modern Slavery Meetup group, one must visit the Meetup.com site and click “join us”—which does require intent, though one might already be on the site looking for other groups of which to be a part—or one may elect to join via Facebook. Members are allowed to be as involved in discussions as they would like and attend whatever events they would like—or to participate in none of these activities. Becoming a part of this group symbolically places one against trafficking, but does not signify anything more.

The Walk is advertised and promoted through the Meetup site, but there are a host of other approaches used to encourage participation. These include old-school advertisements in newspapers as well as promotion on Facebook and Twitter, and email. Significantly, traditional networking and word of mouth are still vital, even as these dated concepts have been altered by technology.

Getting people to participate in the Stop Modern Slavery Walk is a project undertaken not just by the namesake organization, but by the movement more



broadly. The Walk has several partner NGOs, and each works to publicize the event to its supporters, using email blasts and social media. Technology is employed to increase word of mouth and interest, and an existing network of NGOs discuss the event prior to and after the Walk. Following the 2012 event, Polaris Project directed its Facebook friends to photos of the event. On October 2, they posted: “This year's SMS Walk was an inspiring day of offline activism. Here's some of one of our best shots--you can see the rest of them in our album.”<sup>240</sup> The irony of this posting is that it allowed and encouraged those who might not have participated in the live event to share in it online. This voyeuristic participation was encouraged, not as a replacement for going to the event, but as a different way to share in the experience. It is both easy and low-risk to scroll through photos of others at a rally.

Networking activity is also key for the Capital City Ball. When asked how her group promoted the event and drafted attendees, the Ball representative I spoke with noted that “Between our board members, past events, the other charities and stuff, people who’ve heard about us . . . it’s not just the lead-up events. It’s all through the organizations. They just keep sending out information and, Lord knows, we [email] blast a lot of people.”<sup>241</sup> These blasts, which take place throughout the year around the lead-up events, and not just weeks before the big event, keep the Ball on potential guests’ radars. Individuals are probably most likely to attend an event like the Capital City Ball if they know their friends are

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<sup>240</sup> Polaris Project Facebook page, Post October 2, 2014, Accessed May 27, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/polarisproject/>

<sup>241</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012.

participating, and the more chatter about the evening the organization can garner, the more likely it is that the event will sell out.

The lead-up events serve a similar social purpose. Individuals are encouraged to bring friends to happy hours and parties, so that rooms full of people can connect and dialogue. The events facilitate networking in a city where charities rely on a “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours” mentality. The Capital City Ball organizer I spoke with noted:

[It’s] mostly just social. It’s a way for the charity, each individual charity, to have some information out about their charity and talk to...we encourage them with their boards to actually come and socially mix with people. That, we see truthfully, is how people...it’s all a friendship relations game here. You know me, I know you. I’ll give to your charity, you give to my charity...you come to our event.<sup>242</sup>

Washington D.C. is a hub for wealth and a hub for social causes. To keep anti-trafficking efforts competitive with other charities, Ball organizers utilize word of mouth and social media to keep their event relevant to potential guests. Still, not much is expected of those individuals beyond attendance at a party and, at maximum, some conversation with friends and individuals in their social network about the event.

### **Trafficking Messaging**

Neither the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk nor the Capital City Ball have client-oriented programming, and they self-admittedly exist to promote, champion, and support the work of groups that do. Both consider spreading awareness about

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<sup>242</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012.

trafficking to be a primary objective, but each executes this objective quite differently. Again, they are cases in contrast: the Walk is an information extravaganza with representatives of nearly all local trafficking-related organizations as well as local and federal agencies involved with the issue present and ready to talk about trafficking and share facts, figures, data, and pamphlets, while the Ball is a fancy party with an underlying connection to this social issue. There is little formally said during the event about trafficking, and though the issue is not exactly hidden or forbidden at the party, there are efforts made to separate the beneficiary cause from the event. I am not interested in evaluating if either extreme is effective in garnering attention for this social issue or if one method is superior, but I explore these approaches to “messaging trafficking” here to illustrate that both facilitate easy participation in the movement and consequently fortify its slacktivist inclinations.

As noted in Chapter 2, awareness serves as a cultural anchor for organizations within the trafficking movement, and this characteristic is on display at the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk more than at any other event. Again, groups with dramatically different conceptions of trafficking—even different names for the issue that they are addressing—come together at this event on a yearly basis. There is some central messaging about the issue provided by the host organization, but it is broad. In 2012, at the time of the Walk I attended, there were notes on the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk website that explained:

Today, there are an estimated 27 million slaves around the world, including within our DC Area communities. This new form of modern slavery, also known as human trafficking, has become the fastest growing and second largest criminal industry in the world. Its perpetrators use

powerful methods of force, fraud and coercion to exploit men, women and children through labor and sex trafficking operations.

The website had sections that also described, in broad terms, characteristics of traffickers and the causes of the phenomenon. It broke down several myths associated with trafficking, but articulated nothing partisan or controversial. The Walk program pamphlet also provided some facts and figures on trafficking and a narrative about the issue, but it took no stance on specific policies, laws, or business practices that would need to change in order to impact the lives of trafficked individuals. The organizations and speakers present at the Walk then provided some of the nuanced positions as they spoke for themselves, their programs, and priorities.

What this means is that it is cognitively easy to be a member of this movement. Members of the Meetup group and casual Walk participants alike need not drill too far into the issue to get involved. There are unlimited combinations of talking points they might hear or not hear. They can consume only the information that suits them—what they already agree with—or they can consume everything, even contradictory sentiments, and need not make a determination on the “truth” about trafficking in order to participate in the festivities of the day. This strategy is ideal for getting high numbers of Walk participants, but it may be facilitating only surface-level awareness about trafficking in some participants. Attendees reap the social benefits of being part of a cause and recognized for their altruism, without having to commit to anything further.

Walk participants are bombarded with so much information that there is a danger of it becoming white noise, but Ball guests are exposed to information about trafficking only as a backdrop to a social evening. Representatives from beneficiary organizations are present for the event, and guests can and do interact with them, but aside from the aforementioned intern and poster board, there is not much formal education taking place at the Ball. The idea is to make connections between possible supporters and organizations in this social space that can be grown into something larger later. The lead-up events are intended to play some role in educating possible groups of prospective donors, but aside from the one annual event hosted by a foreign embassy, there is more of a focus on socializing and less of a focus on facts and figures.

It is unclear whether Ball guests should be considered members of the anti-trafficking movement or merely philanthropists, illustrating a key distinction between activism and charity. Like Walk participants, Ball attendees only need to be against trafficking to participate in the event. But Walk participants do some grassroots legwork to fundraise for their team and exert some physical energy moving around to “share information” about the cause they support; it is more involved than putting down a credit card to attend a party. If you are of a particular social status and can afford a \$125 night on the town, you can participate in the fight against trafficking. It is easy and fun to do. And if you tweet about the event using #capitalcityball, others can observe and validate your altruistic act.

Perhaps there is logic in turning a bummer of a social cause into an enjoyable social occasion, as a way to increase dialogue and discussion. The Capital City Ball representative I interviewed articulated how awareness happens through their work and how anti-trafficking is a more challenging cause than some others one might support:

I think we raise awareness most definitely because we get the word out there. It's not a very popular subject and it makes people rather uncomfortable; it's not sexy, it's not fun. If anything, it's anti-fun. We do get people aware of the names of the charities because we have them tied to the Ball itself. Even if someone's just coming to the Ball, hopefully they will see the name of the charity that's on there and they'll recognize that we're doing this for a charitable cause.<sup>243</sup>

But if this dialogue and discussion is only at a surface level, then there is low risk for getting involved, and a high reward for the organization whose other concern is raising funds. And there is little incentive to alter this arrangement since the Ball is sold out every year.

This kind of social activity, including some low-risk and fun experiences that take place as part of DC's anti-trafficking movement, is not unique to this cause, and these two events and organizations I have featured here do not speak for the entire movement. But the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk and Capital City Ball are occasions that bring the movement together and illustrate the mechanics of the movement in action. Existing offline and online networks promote the events and circulate some discourse and dialogue about trafficking, thereby raising awareness. The lack of a central, vetted, and agreed-upon definition of the problem and clear path to its eradication, as I have mentioned earlier in this project, are not on display—nor may they be entirely possible. But in sharing

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<sup>243</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012.

information and having fun together, the movement operates like a well-oiled machine. By engaging in some slacktivism, groups are effectively achieving their awareness goals, which I discuss further in Chapter 6.

## Chapter 6

### Awareness, Getting Along, and the Success of D.C.'s Anti-Trafficking Movement

According to sociologist Sarah Moore, “Awareness consists of neither knowledge nor experience of a particular cause. It does not require any concerted action, or any relationship with the sufferer.”<sup>244</sup> This characterization highlights the problem with awareness campaigns and social action based solely on the concept of awareness. This chapter examines the role of awareness within anti-trafficking efforts taking place in Washington, D.C.

As it pertains to social issues and causes, awareness is a commonplace, but under-examined, concept in contemporary culture. The wearing of colored ribbons and wristbands to symbolize affinity for a particular social cause exploded into popularity in the late 1990s, for example, but the impact of this kind of collective awareness raising has not often been debated or scrutinized. In her examination and critique of ribbon and wristband culture, Moore, begins to unpack the practice of “showing awareness”: “The range of causes for which people can ‘show awareness’ is staggering: people can wear a ribbon to ‘show awareness’ for the Oklahoma bombing, male violence, censorship, bullying, autism, racial abuse, childhood disability, and mouth cancer.” Moore’s work concludes that, in many instances, “showing awareness” is “more about the ribbon wearer than the sufferers of any given disease,” and she asserts that imprecision of the ribbon’s meaning is connected to the vagueness of this term.

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<sup>244</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan/St. Martin’s Press, 2010), 3.



In examining D.C.'s anti-trafficking cause, I too have been struck by the fuzziness of the concept of awareness, yet its importance is undeniable. Over time, I have come to see awareness, perhaps because of its vagueness, serving as an organizational glue that binds disparate groups together. In this chapter, I work through this assessment and theorize awareness as a tool utilized by NGOs that represents a clear mission objective for some, but also a form of currency within the movement for others. Building on my discussion of collaboration in Chapter 3, here I focus on awareness as a “cultural anchor,” a small collection of ideas within a movement that remains fixed, while allowing activists to address their internal diversity.<sup>245</sup> By participating in the collective awareness-building of D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement and in an awareness infrastructure, which includes the signature events discussed in Chapter 5 as well as the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force, groups earn a seat at the table. In other words, despite differences in missions and programs, the thirty organizations focused on trafficking in the D.C. metro area work together to raise awareness. This awareness infrastructure—regular events and meetings—facilitates cooperation and collaboration around this shared objective.

I also theorize awareness as an essentially limitless form of organizational output within the framework of the Nonprofit Industrial Complex, discussed in Chapters 2 and 4. Because trafficking is a multifaceted and challenging problem to solve, and because awareness is hard to measure, the demand or opportunity for organizations to raise awareness is inexhaustible.

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<sup>245</sup> Amin Ghaziania and Delia Baladassari. “Cultural Anchors and the Organization of Differences: A Multi-method Analysis of LGBT Marches on Washington.” *American Sociological Review* 76(2) 2011: 179-206.

My previous chapters have focused on how the anti-trafficking movement in Washington, D.C., works. Here I offer one explanation for why it works this way; why, despite their differences and despite the concentration of anti-trafficking organizations in one metropolitan area, there is collaboration and cooperation among D.C. anti-trafficking organizations. In Chapter 5, I established how communication technology and social media help organizations promote and advertise their work while creating buzz and awareness about trafficking. This chapter builds on that understanding of the strategies and mechanics of awareness raising. After more detailed discussion of awareness as a concept, this chapter presents close readings of anti-trafficking movement materials to illustrate the importance that organizations—even those primarily working on direct services and policy—place on awareness and describes what I call the “awareness infrastructure” of the movement. It concludes with a brief discussion of the movement’s success and explores several broad questions about the results of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. How do organizations understand the impact of their work? What do they consider successful? In what ways is awareness integral to this understanding?

### **Thinking about Awareness . . .**

#### *. . . As a Vague Goal*

It is hard to argue that the seemingly benign cultural practice of raising awareness is a bad thing; instead I argue that it is a complicated thing. I join a counter-narrative that has slowly emerged with works like Moore’s cited above,

with critiques of slacktivism, highlighted in Chapter 5, and with analysis of the capitalist mechanics of the ubiquitous breast cancer mega-campaign, including Samantha King's aforementioned work.<sup>246</sup>

The counter-narrative against health-oriented awareness campaigns, like breast cancer, has a particularly daunting task, as “there are nearly 200 health awareness days, weeks, or months on the US Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) National Health Observances (NHO) calendar” and “data suggests that health awareness days have proliferated over the last four decades.”<sup>247</sup> In a June 2015 article in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Jonathan Purtle and Leah Roman argue that “the craze of awareness days observed in the United States has not been driven by evidence of their effectiveness, which highlights the need for guidance about evaluation strategies and raises questions about the extent to which awareness days represent a theoretically sound model of public health practice.”<sup>248</sup> Their commentary, based upon a literature review of the scarce number of existing articles about awareness days, challenges the idea that awareness is inherently a “meaningful public health outcome in and of itself,” and they posit potential drawbacks, including a phenomenon called “narcotic dysfunction,” in which people conflate being aware of a health concern with “actually doing something about it,” and more general

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<sup>246</sup> Samantha King. *Pink Ribbons, Inc: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

<sup>247</sup> Jonathan Purtle and Leah Roman. “Health Awareness Days: Sufficient Evidence to Support the Craze?” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 105 No 6 (July 2015): 1061.

<sup>248</sup> Jonathan Purtle and Leah Roman. “Health Awareness Days: Sufficient Evidence to Support the Craze?” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 105 No 6 (July 2015): 1062.

overexposure, such as the “pink fatigue” associated with the breast cancer movement<sup>249</sup>. The authors do not advocate for an abandonment of these campaigns, but instead caution that without more critical attention to campaigns, “public health awareness days might do little more than reinforce ideologies of individual responsibility and the false notion that adverse health outcomes are simply the product of misinformed behaviors.”<sup>250</sup>

Purtle and Roman’s observation reflects a concern about the paramount role of awareness in the anti-trafficking movement as well, and with this chapter, I argue that there is a need to direct critical attention to the dominance of awareness within the anti-trafficking movement. Getting people talking about trafficking or any other cause, the logic goes, is the first step in generating action. Many of the organizations in this study publish pamphlets with facts and figures about this issue and, as I discuss further below, conclude with a call to action. Trafficking also has its own designated prevention month established by presidential proclamation:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 2013 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, culminating in the annual celebration of National Freedom Day on February 1. I call upon businesses, organizations, faith-based groups, families, and all Americans to recognize the vital role we can play in ending all forms of slavery and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Jonathan Purtle and Leah Roman. “Health Awareness Days: Sufficient Evidence to Support the Craze?” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 105 No 6 (July 2015): 1065.

<sup>250</sup> Jonathan Purtle and Leah Roman. “Health Awareness Days: Sufficient Evidence to Support the Craze?” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 105 No 6 (July 2015): 1065.

<sup>251</sup> Barack Obama. “Presidential Proclamation-- National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, 2013.” (December 30, 2012). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press->

This rhetoric encourages and empowers individuals to participate in the eradication of trafficking, but it is imprecise in describing exactly what is to be done and how programs and activities can affect cases of trafficking in persons. Awareness is presented as a key to solving the trafficking “problem,” but just how the link between knowledge, discourse, and real change is forged is ambiguous in the President’s remarks and the link is no clearer among the individual NGOs in this study.

. . . *As Boundless*

As discussed in Chapter 4, there are financial concerns for organizations focused on anti-trafficking work in D.C., and groups conduct fundraising campaigns and write grants to cover the costs of working with clients, hiring staff, etc. But, as noted in Chapter 5, spreading the word about trafficking through social media and other technological campaigns is also an important part of the do-good labor being conducted to fight trafficking—even for those groups that do not primarily prioritize awareness as a mission critical goal. In these cases, awareness raising is not as costly.

I raise this point, not to suggest that anti-trafficking organizations do awareness work simply because it is cheaper than other kinds of activist or social work, but because I wish to recognize that the labor associated with raising awareness about an issue, especially in the technologically advanced slacktivist

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office/2012/12/31/presidential-proclamation-national-slavery-and-human-trafficking-prevent. This is the proclamation from 2013, but there is one every year.

era, may require fewer resources than are required to work with clients, for example. If awareness raising utilizes social media or other technology, it is labor that can be easily tacked onto existing programs.

Groups may also work to raise awareness because there is always awareness to raise. It is a perpetual product of the anti-trafficking industry. If there is always more awareness to raise, then there is always more work to do. And if that is the case, then these organizations, in the context of a competitive NGO marketplace, will continue to have a role and an impetus to exist. As a representative from Shared Hope shared with me:

Obstacles are always, I would say, like community perception and awareness never changes. There's always somebody who's learning about this for the first time even though you feel like it's been in the news all of the time. I feel like I'm telling you stuff you already know and it's not. It's first time knowledge.<sup>252</sup>

Of course, this is not to say that the individuals or organizations they represent want to stay “in business,” or that groups don't come and go, or that money is the motivation for activists and advocates doing this work—especially since many are volunteering. But as they navigate a complex and macro-level phenomenon like trafficking, groups can approach their programming with the mindset that their work will never be done.

We can also think of the limitlessness of awareness in the context of organizational growth. When I interviewed a representative in 2012, DC Stop Modern Slavery was not immediately thinking of expanding, but they recognized their capacity to do so, given the “market” for programming about trafficking in persons around the country:

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<sup>252</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International Representative, July 16, 2013.

We've had interest in people starting other chapters so that's something we'll likely be looking at more for next year. As I mentioned, D.C. is a very transitional city, so you get people coming in and they'll leave for other job somewhere. A lot of times when they move, they want to take us with them. A way for them to do that is to start a chapter in their city. Eventually, we'll start more chapters. We're trying to make sure we know how to brand ourselves so we can consistently have effective groups started in other cities...that we're not just haphazardly starting other chapters for the sake of it.<sup>253</sup>

Most groups I interviewed had goals for future programming or other expansion, pending the availability of future funding. The realization of these objectives depends not just on the needs determined by NGOs but also on sustained interest in trafficking from funders—both private donors and public sources. In this way, there is a conscious self-preservation element to the limitless anti-trafficking work taking place in Washington, D.C. Continuous awareness raising may be necessary to generate funding sources that sustain the movement overall.

*. . . As Self-Presentation*

Though it is unlikely that anyone wants trafficking to exist for the sake of their ability to work to combat it, the idea that activism and advocacy work have anything but altruistic dimensions should not be ignored as we examine how and why public support—financial and otherwise—garnered through awareness-raising activities is important to the anti-trafficking cause in D.C.

Moore's work on ribbon culture offers a useful assessment of the relationship between charity and compassion as we think about more complex factors motivating groups and individuals to promote awareness of social issues. She traces the cultural significance of compassion from the same mid-eighteenth/

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<sup>253</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

early-nineteenth century period that Laura Agustín describes, during which upper-to-middle class “ladies” were responsible for social reform as a “morally virtuous pastime” to a post-World War II era wherein “civic equality, a central principle of modern, democratic societies, [helped to] engender a sense of shared humanity, and, in turn, a recognition of others suffering” to a modern neoliberal moment when the altruistic individual rather than the welfare state is responsible for the well-being of those in need of charity.<sup>254</sup> In this context, Moore and others she cites cast charity as fashionable, and they contend that wearing one’s charitableness on one’s sleeve (or lapel or wrist) is an overt display of empathy.<sup>255</sup>

It is hard to measure the “popularity” of charity in statistical terms, but in the contemporary United States, there is a value placed on contributing one’s time and resources for the benefit of others. Commonly cited statistics about the philanthropic sector in the United States explain that “total giving to charitable organizations was \$358.38 billion in 2014 (about 2% of GDP) and that this is an increase of 7.1% in current dollars and 5.4% in inflation-adjusted dollars from 2013.”<sup>256</sup> Government figures also suggest that the number of adults who have

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<sup>254</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, “Ribbon Wearing: Towards a Theoretical Framework,” *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillian/St. Martin’s Press, 2010): 10-42.

<sup>255</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, “Ribbon Wearing: Towards a Theoretical Framework,” *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillian/St. Martin’s Press, 2010): 36.

<sup>256</sup> Charity Navigator. “Giving Statistics.” Accessed October 12, 2015. <http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm/bay/content.view/cpid/42#.VhtPDCtmJz9>. These statistics are originally the product of Giving USA’s annual study and commonly cited by philanthropic think tanks and other organizations.



volunteered through an organization ranged between twenty-five and thirty percent between 2002 and 2013.<sup>257</sup>

In this context, why individuals align themselves with a specific issue—given the many causes and issues vying for attention and support—matters. Among those working at NGOs or volunteer organizations, reasons for working on the anti-trafficking cause varied. There is an individual working on this issue, specifically to raise awareness, because she was horrified to learn about trafficking and want to educate others, an individual hoping to see children healed so they can contribute themselves to bettering the world, a writer activist who wanted to create her own organization after volunteering for those that she felt were lacking in key areas of support for trafficked individuals, and a staff motivated by the “stories of victims.”<sup>258</sup>

In addition to these professed objectives, Moore might argue that these individuals also benefit from the social currency earned from do-good labor or charitableness, in a culture that reflects positively on compassionate individuals. She also encourages us to see not just the charitable act as important, but also the context of that act as an expression of individual identity as well. She speaks in terms of those who offer financial support to a cause, but her argument is also applicable to paid do-good laborers who, of course, opt into this type of labor:

The point I wish to emphasize here is that analyses of charitableness should not be limited to ‘weighing up’ donors’ motives, but should attempt to provide nuanced accounts of this behavior. In depth accounts are crucial if sociologists are to gain a deeper understanding of this aspect

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<sup>257</sup> Corporation for National and Community Service. “Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2014.” Accessed October 12, 2015. <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/>

<sup>258</sup> These summaries are all paraphrased from personal interviews.

of social life. Indeed in some instances, compassion does not simply involve one's relations to others, but it also constitutes an integral aspect of one's identity. Assertions that "Yes, I'm the kind of person who cares," as an American *Save the Children* advert puts it (Moeller, 1999, p.53), are clearly more directed toward self-identification than recognition of others' suffering.<sup>259</sup>

The type of collectivity associated with working for an organization that focuses on a social issue, rather than tackling it alone, may be another benefit. As a representative from DC Stop Modern Slavery shared:

I think obviously when they come to us they've been motivated by the issue at some level, but I think what keeps people going is that you kind of gain strength from having a community there. You know that there are other people working with you to end trafficking. It's a huge problem, but when you have a community of people volunteering with you it feels much more manageable and you can encourage each other.<sup>260</sup>

The social aspect of this work means that the public aspect of do-good labor is emphasized. Individuals participating in the anti-trafficking cause have an audience of peers to view and reinforce their behaviors.

In addition to those individuals employed or formally volunteering with anti-trafficking organizations, each of the groups has a real and virtual following of donors and supporters.<sup>261</sup> These individuals may attend events, but mostly they are members of mailing or email lists and follow these organizations on social media. They may or may not support the organizations financially. The passive

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<sup>259</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 2010), 33.

<sup>260</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>261</sup> I interacted with, but did not formally interview, those adjacent to the anti-trafficking cause so I cannot make solid assertions about the motivations of this group. As mentioned in Chapter 4, I spent time with other event-specific, potentially one-time volunteers, like me, who were working at the Capital City Ball. I also sat among the larger crowd at DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk(s) and chatted with individuals at conferences and theatre presentations. See Chapter 4 for a breakdown of the number of social media followers and fans committed to each organization.

ribbon wearers in Moore's book, researched in the late 1990s, are likely the precursors to the Twitter followers and Facebook fans of today. Her study, rooted in interviews with individuals donning ribbons or wristbands in support of charitable causes, contends that those who wear these passive displays of support "aren't activists" and have a notable "lack of interest in organizational or political objectives."<sup>262</sup> Moore contends that the discrepancy between the number of donors to a cause and the number of wristbands supporting it "might also be seen as evidence of [a wearer's] wish to be seen to support a cause, regardless of the finer details of the campaign."<sup>263</sup> She argues throughout her book that instead ribbon and wristband wearing "has more to do with self-presentation than political engagement."<sup>264</sup> Like buying a wristband, simply liking, or even commenting on, an organization's social media page requires minimal effort, while outwardly indicating participation in, and generating awareness for, the anti-trafficking cause.

The behavior of both the formally engaged (and employed) and passively supportive members of the anti-trafficking cause is influenced by the paramount role of awareness in the movement. If this kind of attention-generating discourse was not valued, there would be far fewer participants in the modern anti-trafficking movement.

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<sup>262</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillian/St. Martin's Press, 2010), 7.

<sup>263</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillian/St. Martin's Press, 2010), 7.

<sup>264</sup> Sarah E. H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillian/St. Martin's Press, 2010), 7.

Heretofore, I have simply asserted that awareness is important to the thirty organizations in this study. In the next section, I exert more effort to show how the organizations themselves prioritize awareness activities in their work and programming.

### **Prioritizing Awareness**

*“The awareness and education part happens naturally.”*

*“. . . there is a tremendous need to create awareness.”*

*“To date, most anti-trafficking efforts have been centered on public awareness and victim services. While this work is important, the key to stopping trafficking is to target those who are fueling the market . . .”*

*“. . . there needs to be even more awareness and there needs to be even more shame brought upon the buyers themselves.”*

*“So success for us is you know it’s...I don’t know how to quantitatively analyze that. Success is that we’re staying true to our mission in that we are educating our community . . .”*

These quotes, excerpted from my 2012 interviews and pamphlets promoting the work of organizations in the D.C. anti-trafficking movement, suggest that groups are self-reflective about “awareness” as a significant concept and important goal for the collective movement. The quotes may also indicate that at least some of the organizations recognize the complexities associated with awareness: it can overshadow other forms of anti-trafficking work and its impact is difficult to measure. To this list of challenges, I also add the possibility of sensationalism for the sake of awareness-generation, which I discuss in more detail below.

While there is broader swirling discourse surrounding this issue, it is essential to begin by looking at the kind of information dissemination that NGOs control: their own publicity materials. In examining the language anti-trafficking organizations use to raise awareness, I am interested in explanations that seek to plainly inform, in addition to language intended to dispel myths about trafficking and recruit potential supporters or movement participants. Typically, the publicity and outreach pamphlets produced by anti-trafficking organizations, which I procured mainly at events and meetings, include a small paragraph describing the organization, its contact information, and instructions for donating funds. As these documents define organizations' work and assert what sets them apart from each other, many of them refer to their goal of creating or raising awareness. An Innocents at Risk pamphlet plainly explains, "Today, we have reached hundreds and we are continuing to work on a major awareness campaign," and a Protection Project pamphlet shares, "[We] work in the United States and abroad to bring the public's attention to human rights violations."

As mentioned above, information dissemination—sharing of facts and figures—is central to the awareness-generating goal, and thus the very pamphlets about awareness also do awareness work. The publicity materials gathered for this project share information about trafficking that seeks to 1) inform the reader about the issue and 2) dispel myths about trafficking. The first objective is accomplished with basic, declarative, and authoritative statements, such as:

Human trafficking, like drug trafficking involves a triangle of activity: supply, demand, and distribution. . . . Street gangs have turned to human trafficking as a way to generate profits. . . . Prior to the earthquake, Haiti

was already a country of origin for both labor and sex trafficking. (Global Centurion)

Human trafficking is modern day slavery and is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world. Each year, millions of people around the world are trafficked for commercial sex and forced labor, generating billions in profits for human traffickers. (Polaris Project)

Many corporations in the tourist and tourism industries are now training their employees on identifying victims of trafficking and child sex tourism. (Protection Project)

These excerpts assume that readers know little about trafficking. In presenting these factoids, the NGOs seek to teach, inform, and create knowledge.

In other cases, however, the groups assume the target audience reading their pamphlets to have some knowledge about trafficking, and they directly tackle myths in order to assert their nuanced positions on the topic. Polaris Project begins a pamphlet with the phrase, “Myth: Slavery ended hundreds of years ago. Reality: Human trafficking and modern day slavery is the third largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world.” An Innocents at Risk’s pamphlet has a whole page devoted to facts and fiction regarding human trafficking, which aims to dispel myths that “human trafficking happens only in poor countries” and that it “does not happen to American women and girls.” It challenges readers’ presumed assumptions that human trafficking “does not affect me” and that “there is nothing I can do” since “the problem is too big.”

In these latter circumstances, awareness is about challenging ideas already held by a reader and asserting an organization’s position in their place. Innocents at Risk, with its selection of myths to challenge, is clearly focused on generating a personal and emotional response among its audience, and it aims not only to

convince readers that they are affected by trafficking, but also to empower them to believe that they can—and must—work to eradicate trafficking. The organization explains: “Human trafficking is a health, security, and moral issue. It erodes our political systems. It harms our communities. It endangers the lives and wellbeing of those who become victims. It could be taking place right next door to you. Since it thrives on secrecy, the more you know, the more you can do to prevent it.”

Awareness, then, is centrally about information, but it is also about movement recruitment. A baseline of knowledge is needed to become involved—financially or with time or advocacy—and that is ultimately the goal of organizations’ pamphlets. Though I have highlighted a tenuous link between awareness and action, many of the organizations’ documents do include information about how interested readers might get involved. This might require as little as knowing warning signs of trafficking so as to be prepared if one sees a suspicious situation, or as much as becoming a regular volunteer or donor.

### **Awareness and Sensationalism**

The Executive Director of Global Rescue Relief talks about the trafficking movement in pre- and post-*Taken* terms.<sup>265</sup> The 2008 Hollywood thriller, now a franchise, follows the plight of a teenaged white girl whose father is a former government operative. On a vacation to Paris, she is kidnapped by sex traffickers, and the film chronicles the action-packed journey to save her. Sensational and

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<sup>265</sup> Interview with Global Rescue Relief representative, February 2, 2015.

cinematic, *Taken* is often cited within the anti-trafficking community as what trafficking is *not*, but this film is also credited with generating interest and attention to the subject in popular culture.<sup>266</sup> *Taken* is one example of the ways in which awareness can be a double-edged sword, and it illustrates how trends in broader public discourse contribute to the work of NGOs, whether they like it or not.

As organizations recruit members and supporters, the language they deploy in their materials to communicate the need is often empowering, but it is also often dire. A Shared Hope International pamphlet emphasizes the kind of victim their services target, with their supporters' help: "From all over the world, we have heard her cry, listened to her story. It is the same story. She is betrayed by those she trusts the most. Then is brutalized, dehumanized, and advertised as the product she has now become . . . her body is cash until her body is trash. We seek her out on the streets." An International Justice Mission pamphlet emphasizes that: "Freedom doesn't just happen. But together we can make it happen. . . . The power is in your hands to help stop traffickers, slaver owners and other criminals." While such word choice may be effective in convincing or cajoling prospective supporters and volunteers, it also has the potential to create the same kind of sensational, dramatic aura around trafficking that *Taken* does.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the broader anti-trafficking movement has been criticized for the moral panic it creates around sex work, a rescue

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<sup>266</sup> I have been to countless events and activities where this film is mentioned in the context of its influence on trafficking related dialogue and discourse. Most of the time the academics, activists, and professionals presenting raise the subject of the film to highlight what trafficking is not, yet acknowledge it as an important cultural referent.



narrative that assumes that poor women of color are best classified as victims, and justice and order framework.<sup>267</sup> The calamitous language some anti-trafficking organizations in Washington, D.C., use to raise awareness contributes to these problematic discourses, rife with sensationalism. In this category, International Justice Mission, a large Christian organization, for example, uses the same image of the young girl with a bindi described in Chapter 4 in a paper flier. A larger version of the image this time, this print allows the viewer to see dark shadows in the forefront of the page—perhaps the shadows of another child. It is unclear what is happening to him or her. The text of the flier reads, “Waiting for Freedom. This minute, innocent people are being beaten, abused, raped and enslaved. As a freedom partner, you can send rescue and justice right now. Give \$24 or more a month, and make it possible for International Justice Mission to show up, 24 hours a day.” This language and image, taken together, construct a crisis—one happening to nameless individuals, like the child or children pictured, in a nameless location—that can be ameliorated by immediate action, framed as justice and rescue.

There are examples of more nuanced approaches to generating support.

The “about us” section of Amara Legal Clinic’s website, for example, explains:

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<sup>267</sup>Ronald Weitzer, “The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking and the Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade.” *Politics and Society* (September 2007): 447-475 and Ronald Weitzer, R. The Movement to Criminalize Sex Work in the United States. *The Journal of Law and Society*, (March 2010): 61-84; Kamala, Kempadoo, “Introduction: From Moral Panic to Global Justice: Changing Perspectives on Trafficking.” *Trafficking Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005) and Kamala Kempadoo, *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance and Redefinition*. (NY and London: Routledge, 1998); and Elizabeth, Bernstein, “Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns.” *Signs*, (Autumn 2010): 45-71.

Amara recognizes that while different paths lead a person into commercial sex, many individuals face a common set of legal issues. Amara serves survivors of sex trafficking and any other individual harmed by commercial sex in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. We fight tirelessly to provide excellent legal representation to our clients, to connect survivors with vital social services, and to raise public awareness of the legal issues facing our clients. Amara works tirelessly for the dignity of our clients. Join Us!”<sup>268</sup>

This call to action is an acknowledgement that there are a variety of experiences among their clients, and it focuses more directly on the type of services they offer within the legal system. It is an appeal to supporters, but it utilizes a much different tone and sets a much different scene.

I show the contrast between International Justice Mission’s strategy and Amara’s to highlight the range of positions that exists among organizations working on the same issue in one metropolitan area. And to point to the potentially surprising phenomenon wherein these groups operate in tandem.

### **Awareness Infrastructure**

I have suggested in this chapter that, in metro Washington, D.C., anti-trafficking organizations whose priorities, philosophies, and approaches may vary still “get along.” Here, I look more closely at what I call the movement’s *awareness infrastructure*—the hierarchy and mechanics of the movement that help to facilitate both awareness as a common goal and conflict mediation as an inherent need in movement operations. In the context of an awareness infrastructure, cooperative activities, targeted at raising social consciousness about trafficking, are a kind of social currency within the movement. Participating

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<sup>268</sup> Amara Legal Clinic Website. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://www.amaralegal.org/#!about-us/cjg9>

in the movement's signature awareness activities, the Stop Modern Slavery Walk and the Capitol City Ball, buys NGOs working on this issue, if not status within the network, then certainly a kind of membership or belonging that helps to maintain harmony among these groups.

Groups can set up booths next to each other at the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk, or be common beneficiaries of a fundraiser like the Capital City Ball, without butting heads over nuanced positions. These annual events are inherently cooperative spaces, and inclusivity is part of their mission. It is probable that such regular outlets for low-risk collaboration have helped to lessen the likelihood of conflict.

The D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force, which meets once a month, also provides a built-in venue for interaction. Approximately, forty to fifty individuals attend the Task Force's general monthly meeting, and there are breakout groups that are more issue specific. There are debates about how effective this group manages to be given its size, but I argue that this entity's significance rests not only with its efficiency or execution, but also with its continuity as a forum.

The task force is operated out of the US Attorney General's office, so enforcement and prosecution are its principle priorities, but it is also a venue for collaboration over awareness issues and activities. Lamenting the shifts occurring as the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. has grown, the Restoration Ministries' director contended: "I think it's more of awareness. The whole the issue. It has grown . . . I mean there are hundreds of people on it. And so, really what can you accomplish? You can't talk about any cases. You know, they might do some

awareness campaigns and that sort of thing . . .”<sup>269</sup> Awareness here is framed as the lowest common denominator and as logistically expedient. It is harder to mobilize disparate organizations around specific policy objectives, particularly in the context of an ideologically complex issue like trafficking, but it is feasible to collaborate in the safe space of awareness raising.

I also read one instance where real conflict was revealed to me during interactions with organizations as supportive of the thesis that awareness mediates conflict, as the dispute in question largely centered on bureaucracy and logistics rather than ideology. Though there was an occasional reference to the challenges of playing in the same “sandbox” together, Restoration Ministries was the only organization interviewed that expressed anything but polite and diplomatic sentiments about fellow NGOs.<sup>270</sup> Yet despite the hearty dissatisfaction its director expressed to me, this organization is also part of the larger awareness infrastructure.

In a phone interview, the director of Restoration Ministries shared with me her disappointment that other anti-trafficking organizations were beginning to work with clients at the jail where her group had been doing counseling sessions with underage girls picked up on prostitution charges. She contended that as the anti-trafficking movement had grown, there was more bureaucracy and what she felt was unfair assignment of clients to providers. “You’ve been working with a girl maybe for a couple of years and all of a sudden the PO [parole officer] or the social worker will make the decision, or the judge, and take a girl away from

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<sup>269</sup> Interview with Restoration Ministries representative, August 28, 2012.

<sup>270</sup> Interview with Restoration Ministries representative, August 28, 2012.

you . . . and give her to another organization.” Restoration Ministries is a Christian organization, and with its religious affiliation it is in the minority among D.C.’s anti-trafficking organizations, but there was the acknowledgment that even as the groups “compete[d]” for “girls,” these clients were being given a singular message about trafficking.<sup>271</sup> “If you have two or sometimes even three groups into the same facility and bombarding girls with the same anti-trafficking message but trying to pull each one into their programming, it’s confusing for the girl.”<sup>272</sup> Given the complexity of trafficking and possible approaches, it is important that the director highlighted that clients were getting the same messaging about trafficking from multiple organizations, even if their programs were different. The Restoration Ministries director was not vocalizing concern about an ideological clash with other anti-trafficking groups, but about an administrative process.

I was unable to pinpoint with certainty the groups with whom Restoration Ministries was in conflict, but I reiterate that there is probably interaction between this group and its rivals at events like the DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk. What this instance conveys isn’t exactly seamless cooperation, but rather a version of tempered—if not peaceful—coexistence.

This analysis should not be interpreted to mean that conflict would be inherently better for either the anti-trafficking movement or the population of individuals it seeks to help, but I will assert that it is worth conjecturing how the anti-trafficking movement might function differently with real—rather than

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<sup>271</sup> Other religious groups include International Justice Mission, Beyond Borders, and Shared Hope International.

<sup>272</sup> Interview with Restoration Ministries representative, August 28, 2012.

mediated—conflict. As described in Chapter 1, many feminist scholars emphasize the theoretical division between those who view commercial sex as inherently exploitive and those who prioritize sex trafficking in a larger discussion of exploitation. On the ground in Washington, such distinctions—and the divisions among organizations that result—are not openly addressed. While this may suggest that the praxis surrounding trafficking, at least in Washington, D.C., has moved beyond the often debilitating gridlock associated with theoretical debates, it may also suggest missed opportunities to advance our understanding of agency, vulnerability, and immaterial labor.

Scholars like Elizabeth Bernstein, Kamala Kempadoo, and Laura Agustín provide nuanced accounts of the real lives of individuals involved in commercial sex.<sup>273</sup> Perhaps a result of the loose and amorphous naming and understanding of trafficking as a cause in discussed in Chapter 3, or because of the cultural anchor of awareness, which emphasizes basic knowledge and information rather than complex and controversial ideas that are harder to rally around, I did not encounter this kind of subtlety or specificity from the organizations working on this issue in D.C. Complexities may also be absent because to reveal distinctions would pose a challenge to the infrastructure that facilitates cooperation among the thirty organizations in Washington, D.C., working on trafficking issues.

Which leads me to the question: is cooperation success? Is that part of the goal? Is awareness success? Is that part of the goal? In the final section of this chapter, I explore what success means for several anti-trafficking organizations and offer final thoughts on the complicated nature of awareness.

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<sup>273</sup> All of this work is discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

### **Awareness, Impact, and Defining Success**

While generating awareness is a key objective for several organizations examined as part of this study (including DC Stop Modern Slavery, Capital City Ball, Innocents at Risk), for others (including Global Centurion, Courtney's House, and Beyond Borders), awareness is one in a suite of objectives that also includes concrete direct service and policy goals. I asked nearly all the organization representatives that I interviewed for thoughts on their success in achieving their stated objectives. Acknowledging that the groups interviewed do not precisely represent the totality of anti-trafficking groups, and that other sources, like annual reports, are brimming with more concrete deliverables and accomplishments, I assert that the responses about success procured as part of my interviews are significant for their vague and anecdotal natures. Interviewees could have shared news of D.C.'s local trafficking legislation passed in 2006. They might have focused on numbers of clients served or shared anecdotes of individuals whose lives were impacted by their work.

But, when describing success, they almost all emphasized, at least in part, getting the word out, recounting their efforts to spread and shape awareness among the public and describing their cooperation with law enforcement, whom many of them train to work with individuals impacted by trafficking. When they did speak about interactions with clients, it was to note that progress does not happen instantaneously. In short, these responses reinforce the notion that awareness is both hard to measure and mission-critical as a goal for the anti-

trafficking movement in Washington, D.C. They also suggest that the content—the meat, the crux—of the information shared or generated about trafficking as part of the consciousness-and-education campaign is secondary to the conversation itself. In other words, what people are saying about trafficking might be considered less important than the fact that they are talking about it at all.

Direct service providers and advocacy groups have an easier time tracking the impact of their work than those groups focused exclusively on awareness and education. They interact with a measurable quantity of individuals and see the legislation they favor either pass or fail. Measuring awareness is not as straightforward, particularly in the age of digital media where, as discussed in Chapter 5, passive interactions with issues and causes may be the selected route of involvement for certain supporters.

There are some metrics an organization might use to gauge the impact of its work based on the sheer quantity of trafficking-related dialogue and debate. It can track its social media followers and the appearances of its name in social and traditional media. It can count the attendees at their events, the calls to its phone number, and its volunteers. Many groups do these things. But assessing real influence of such activities on both the volume of trafficking-related dialogue and/or the shape of its content is a challenge. And more challenging still are efforts to determine whether these awareness activities translate into a reduction or shift in the practice of trafficking in persons itself.

Organizations whose primary work is focused on awareness tend to see awareness and success as co-constituted. For DC Stop Modern Slavery, they are



one in the same. The group intends for all their grassroots, community activities to increase and add to the dialogue about trafficking in persons. Its representative noted, “it’s easy for us to look at this big issue of slavery and say wow this is huge, this is a global problem, and try to focus too globally. But as DC Stop Modern Slavery it’s our job to be in our community. As long as we are in our communities educating people and taking action in our communities, we consider that success.”<sup>274</sup> Notably, the focus here is not on any particular message about trafficking or aspect of the phenomenon, but on communication, discourse, and awareness.

Those whose work is centered on awareness are also apt to share credit. DC Stop Modern Slavery’s signature walk could not take place without the cooperation and participation of other groups, for example. In describing its success, another organization, Innocents at Risk, whose work is also centered on awareness, contended that it had been “successful in educating the public and spreading the word” but also emphasized that impactful programs were happening because of collaboration: “what Polaris does with working with victims and running the hotline is tremendous. We began our flight attendant initiative by referring flight attendants to the hotline. It was Polaris who named it the flight attendant initiative. They had tons of stories about it. They would give us feedback from what was happening.”<sup>275</sup> The flight attendant initiative, which

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<sup>274</sup> Interview with DC Stop Modern Slavery representative, August 13, 2012.

<sup>275</sup> Interview with Innocents at Risk representative, October 11, 2012.

involves the training of airline staff to recognize signs of trafficking, also hinges on awareness and education of this targeted group of professionals.

For the fundraising group that executes the Capital City Ball, awareness and philanthropy are related. If awareness leads to financial support, then it considers its work a success: “We’re pretty happy when someone comes to the Ball and afterwards that they actually still give money to the charities aside from the Ball. We’ve achieved that and the charities are able to get a dedicated, constant sponsor to their organization that was directly related because we raised awareness and got them to join up.” It leaves substantive issues to the charities benefitted by its event, and it names participation and sustained involvement as its metrics: “Like people from our Ball have joined boards of different charities that we’ve had. They’ve gone on to volunteer whereas before they were just doing things for the Humane Society or for the Kidney Foundation. We feel like we’ve actually helped promote them.”<sup>276</sup>

Shared Hope International conducts awareness and education oriented programming, but it also focuses on policy initiatives and direct services. In gauging the success of its work, it understands that systemic changes take time. The staff member I spoke with mentioned that the policy part of her organization’s work could require some patience: “Once you make the change like on a policy scale, then you’re waiting for the implementation change and how does that play out. . . . It is a long-haul.” For this representative, training was rewarding because she could see the impact of her efforts on one individual with

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<sup>276</sup> Interview with Capital City Ball representative, October 22, 2012.

whom she was interacting: “you get the ‘ah ha’ and you get the ‘Oh, I’m doing what you told me to do.’ Those are immediate gratifications.”<sup>277</sup>

Organizations whose focus is client services are also apt to measure success at the individual level, but acknowledge that there are challenges associated with gauging impact this way. Bridge to Freedom Foundation focuses on helping clients establish long-term, strategic career and life plans, and moving them beyond surviving to “thriving”: “No one really sets long-term goals in other programs that’s where we really fill the gap in . . . the long-term planning. It could be a survivor who wants to be an advocate even though they have a regular job, they’re married, they have two kids, they have a seemingly okay life but now they want to be a public speaker or write a book and they don’t know how to go about it then they can come to us as a client . . . that’s what we’re here for.”<sup>278</sup> Also employing the individualist framework, a representative from Courtney’s House explained that because it was funded by grants that dictated “concrete deliverables,” it had to track measurable components of its work. The staff member noted that, “the thing with social services when you’re talking about deliverables . . . they’re not as concrete as if you’re working in the finance world. As well as emotional healing, it’s a continuation. You never just arrive and are fully healed . . . you can’t just suddenly be like, ‘I’m healed, yes!’ but you can help people along in that healing process.”<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International representative, July 16, 2013.

<sup>278</sup> Interview with Bridge to Freedom Foundation representative, August 16, 2012.

<sup>279</sup> Interview with Courtney’s House representative, August 20, 2012.

No matter how organizations think about the impact of their work—in terms of policy, client progress, and/or providing education—there may be gaps in an organization’s ability to report results. But since the quantifiable expectations of awareness raising may be the least concrete, awareness may be the most pleasurable and collective way to think about impact within the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. Even groups who do not consider awareness to be their primary goal see it as necessary, and perhaps an obligatory aspect of their participation in the anti-trafficking movement. According to the Director of the Bridge to Freedom Foundation:

I do believe no matter what you do, if you’re working for any human rights field or any social service sector there is always a level of advocacy and activism that comes in naturally . . . you’re always having to educate. We’re not an emergency rescue, restore organization. So, we don’t do a lot of what the public might find the most shocking/interesting side of things. Taking them to the grocery store or helping them find jobs doesn’t sound that exciting. Some of our programs don’t seem to have that big of an appeal so we have to do a little more explanation on our programming. However, if nobody understands the cause of the problem at all we always have to educate any of our supporters or potential supporters in order to actually be good at our jobs. I think everybody’s role has been that.<sup>280</sup>

Because of the awareness infrastructure in D.C., there are established mechanisms and spaces for this kind of collective activism surrounding trafficking. And because of the strength of this infrastructure, the goal of awareness likely drowns out intra-movement conflict.

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<sup>280</sup> Interview with Bridge to Freedom Foundation representative, August 16, 2012.

## Awareness and Compromise

While the NGOs working around metro D.C. peacefully coexist, Capitol Hill still represents a space of conflict with regard to trafficking in persons. Passage of trafficking-related legislation has typically been far from expeditious, despite the fact that trafficking is a valence issue.<sup>281</sup> Debates and conflict that surrounded initial federal level anti-trafficking legislation fifteen years ago (discussed in Chapter 2), hinged upon the issue of consent, but, in renewed conflict, trafficking has been the backdrop for disputes over partisan issues like immigration and abortion as well.

In the spring of 2015, the Senate squabbled for six weeks about a proposed bill increasing the number of law enforcement authorities devoted to trafficking investigations and creating a fund to support those deemed victims of trafficking, because of language that prohibited using criminal fines from those convicted of trafficking to pay for abortions for victims and an amendment limiting citizenship benefits to those victims whose parents were already US citizens. Media coverage of the conflict was intensified by the fact that the confirmation of President Obama's candidate for US Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, was delayed until a decision on the trafficking bill was reached.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Nicole Footen, *The Making of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000: Viewed Through the Lens of Advocacy Coalition Framework*. Diss. Virginia Commonwealth University. Richmond, Virginia: UMI 3294829. (2007): 10.

<sup>282</sup> Emmarie Huettelman, "Senate Approves Stalled Human Trafficking Bill, Clearing the Way for Lynch Vote," *New York Times*, April 22, 2015, Accessed October 30, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/23/us/politics/senate-vote-on-human-trafficking-bill.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/23/us/politics/senate-vote-on-human-trafficking-bill.html?_r=0).

Eventually the bill was passed with a compromise that created two pools of money for victim services, one from the fines of traffickers, which may be used for abortions, and one from federal money already allocated to community health, which may not.<sup>283</sup> But given the potential for stalemate over the multitude of related variables impacting anti-trafficking efforts, a focus on awareness as a tool of compromise and inclusiveness is a critical lens for understanding the mechanics of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. As articulated in Chapter 2, groups tend to know their roles within the movement and to define their places in the social order based on the unique services they provide or the populations they serve. New organizations have created their roles after identifying gaps within the existing movement. The development of the collective movement in this way suggests, not selective denial or conflict avoidance, but compromise for the sake of a common goal: increasing awareness.

The compromise has drawbacks. Throughout this project, I have suggested that the focus on awareness may overshadow more robust efforts to describe the complexities of those individuals impacted by trafficking and to interrupt the social and economic systems that contribute to those individuals' choices. I have also described an awareness infrastructure that is largely compulsory. I addressed in my introduction the challenges of attempting to account for all anti-trafficking work taking place and the possibility that related groups, existing entirely outside of the anti-trafficking movement, may be operating in the metro region. There are

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<sup>283</sup> Emmarie Huetteman and Jennifer Steinhauer, "Senate, Clearing Hurdle, Sets Vote for Thursday" *New York Times*, April 21, 2015, Accessed October 30, 2015. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/22/us/senate-loretta-lynch-confirmation-vote-to-replace-eric-holder.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/22/us/senate-loretta-lynch-confirmation-vote-to-replace-eric-holder.html?_r=1)

organizations, including Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS) and the Amara Legal Center, that provide a nuanced counter-narrative to sensational accounts of exploitation. These groups operate in the same realm and participate in some of the same activities as other groups, though perhaps with the logic that they must cooperate, at least at a basic level, to be heard at all.

This issue is not straightforward. While many more people know about trafficking now than did in 2000 when the initial federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act was passed, little progress has been made (as described in Chapter 3) to reach consensus around what counts as trafficking and what services those who have been trafficked need. As has been noted throughout this project, radical interventions to interrupt the systems—economic, racial, and gendered—that drive trafficking have not been the focus of D.C.’s anti-trafficking movement.

But groups focused on this issue have certainly been busy. And even if awareness is not an individual group’s central goal, as described above, it can always be “done” (executed) without ever being “done” (finalized or finished). I conclude, then, that awareness, a key feature and goal of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C., is a compromise and it is a tool. Activists and advocates work within the constraints of the market and the state, and partner with both, to advance their work. And as they do this in collaboration with one another in one significant American city, they do so peacefully.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion: Final Thoughts on a Lingering Cause

I could have rewritten the introduction and conclusion to this project ten times. It seems that every day there is something new to include and consider. Headlines involving trafficking—mass graves in Thailand and Malaysia, the connection between trafficking laws and undocumented migrant children fleeing Central America, Cambodian anti-trafficking activist Somaly Mam’s fall from grace, the connection between trafficking and blockbuster sporting events— are commonplace.<sup>284</sup> Bathroom stalls at rest stops on major highways in the United States contain flyers with information for potential victims.<sup>285</sup> Scholars, feminist and otherwise, continue to publish articles and books on the subject at a rapid clip. Trafficking in persons, “the cause,” is not going away.

Those of us interested in responding—not just to trafficking itself, but to the complex discourse that surrounds this issue, sorting through the noisiness and making sense of a significant social movement of the twenty-first century—have a challenging task. When news reports discuss mass graves at the sites of what are thought to be hastily abandoned trafficking camps in Southeast Asia, and when

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<sup>284</sup> Mullen, Jethro, “Malaysia Find Human Trafficking Mass Graves Near Thai Border,” CNN, May 25, 2015, Accessed November 7, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/24/asia/malaysia-migrants-mass-graves/>; Hulse, Carl, “Immigrant Surge Rooted in Law to Curb Child Trafficking,” NY York Times, July 7, 2014, Accessed November 7, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/08/us/immigrant-surge-rooted-in-law-to-curb-child-trafficking.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/08/us/immigrant-surge-rooted-in-law-to-curb-child-trafficking.html?_r=0); Kate Mogelescu, “The Super Bowl and Sex Trafficking,” January 31, 2014, Accessed November 7, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/01/opinion/the-super-bowl-of-sex-trafficking.html>; and Stav Ziv, “Cambodia Won’t Let Somali Man Start a New NGO,” October 3, 2014, Accessed November 7, 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/cambodia-wont-let-somaly-mam-start-new-ngo-275218>. These articles are just a handful of headlines involving trafficking in recent years.

<sup>285</sup> Personal observation, June 2011. I saw one of these myself in rest stop in Maryland.



we hear stories of about the high percentage of domestic LGBT youth who are homeless and vulnerable to traffickers, are we talking about the same things? Despite a decade of increasing public attention for this complex social phenomenon, our collective understanding of trafficking in persons is no clearer. While I have not gotten closer to an empirical definition in this project, I have tried to make sense of trafficking-related work in one place at one time.

A recent example aptly illustrates many of this project's arguments' about collectivity and awareness and to conclude, I describe it here. As mentioned in Chapter 6, new federal legislation around human trafficking—the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA)—gained public attention in 2015 as lawmakers in the Senate were locked in a stalemate over ideological components of the proposed law, particularly the spending of public money on abortions.<sup>286</sup> The bill was characterized as providing more tools for law enforcement to combat trafficking, including an expanded use of wiretapping.<sup>287</sup>

This instance illustrates that trafficking remains a heated subject, but also reinforces the dominance of justice rhetoric that Elizabeth Bernstein highlights in her characterization of anti-trafficking as part of a “militarized humanitarianism” and showcases further investments in law enforcement as the front lines of the

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<sup>286</sup> Emmarie Huetteman, “Senate Approves Stalled Human Trafficking Bill, Clearing the Way for Lynch Vote,” *New York Times*, April 22, 2015, Accessed October 30, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/23/us/politics/senate-vote-on-human-trafficking-bill.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/23/us/politics/senate-vote-on-human-trafficking-bill.html?_r=0).

<sup>287</sup> Shared Hope International, “Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act: Section by Section Analysis”, March 2015, Accessed November 7, 2015, [http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Justice-for-Victims-of-Trafficking-Act-2015\\_Section-by-Section\\_Reported-....pdf](http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Justice-for-Victims-of-Trafficking-Act-2015_Section-by-Section_Reported-....pdf)

trafficking fight.<sup>288</sup> It also illustrates ways in which anti-trafficking provides an umbrella for discourse on regulation of vulnerable bodies. An amendment limiting citizenship benefits to those victims whose parents were already US citizens was discussed but did not make it into the bill.

In addition to the widely discussed abortion and less publicized immigration debates associated with this bill, there was also a connection to the LGBTQ community associated with the legislation. Another amendment that would have reauthorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Prevention Act, and prevented organizations that received federal money to provide services for homeless youth (a population considered vulnerable to trafficking) from discriminating against gay, lesbian, and transgender youth (who can make up a high percentage of homeless youth) had momentum and some bipartisan support. But in the end, when the JVTA passed, the bill's component on homeless and runaway youth did not. Some contend that the latter failed because "some faith groups were worried the provision would allow the government to intervene in their hiring practices," illustrating the ongoing cultural clash between religion and rights for members of LGBTQ communities.<sup>289</sup>

Media coverage of this complex situation tended to focus on the political stalemate as an example of dysfunction in Washington, but, despite the hullabaloo,

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<sup>288</sup> Elizabeth Bernstein, "Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns," *Signs*, (Autumn 2010), 45-71.

<sup>289</sup> Tierney Sneed. "Senate Comes Together on Trafficking Bill, but not Without One Last Fight," <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/04/22/anti-human-trafficking-bill-passes-senate-after-weeks-of-partisan-bickering> April 22, 2015, Accessed November 7, 2015. This a quote from Senator John Coryn, Republican from Texas.

some NGOs working on this issue in the same city spoke of it in a mostly bolstering tone—if they communicated about the JVTa at all.<sup>290</sup> During the time the law was being debated in 2015, Polaris Project, one of the D.C. anti-trafficking movement’s largest organizations, reached out to its email listserv and asked its supporters to reach out to Congress and to “stand up and act”:

Congress has been extremely busy introducing legislation addressing human trafficking, as we called on them to do last month. Under Senator Grassley's (R-IA) leadership, the Judiciary Committee unanimously passed two critical human trafficking bills. First, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, sponsored by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), improves victim services while also enabling law enforcement to crack down on human trafficking. Also, the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act, sponsored by Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), would protect minors involved in commercial sex and provides additional support for the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline.

In addition, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed Senator Bob Corker's (R-TN) bold End Modern Slavery Act. This bill would help increase funding for global human trafficking efforts by establishing a \$1.5 billion public-private fund.

We applaud the Senate for moving this legislation forward. **But today, we need you to tell the Senate to support the Runaway and Homeless Youth Trafficking Prevention Act, sponsored by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT).** [their emphasis] This bill has stood for 40 years to help the most vulnerable children find shelter, food, and other necessary services. The programs funded under this bill are critical to preventing human trafficking. Please take action now by urging your Senator to support this bill.

This message from February of 2015 predates the passage of the Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking Act and the failed reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Trafficking Prevention Act. A follow up email was sent to

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<sup>290</sup> Tierney Sneed. “Senate Comes Together on Trafficking Bill, but not Without One Last Fight,” April 22, 2015, Accessed November 7, 2015. <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/04/22/anti-human-trafficking-bill-passes-senate-after-weeks-of-partisan-bickering>; “Another Senate Stalemate,” March 16, 2015, Accessed November 7, 2015, <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-trafficking-20150316-story.html>. These are just a handful of headlines from media coverage of the JVTa.

the organization's listserv on May 22, framing the latter bill—which failed by just four votes—as part of a campaign focused on LGBTQ youth and a pride campaign fundraiser.

During this same period, Shared Hope International's email blasts included Mother's-Day-themed fundraising appeals, a campaign aiding individuals in Nepal's recent earthquake, a new study contracted by the organization focused on Arizona's laws aimed at deterring demand for commercial sex, as well as a message proclaiming "We Did it! Congress Passes Historic Trafficking Bill." Within the text of the message the organization thanks "Congressman Judge Poe, Senator John Cornyn and all legislative leaders who worked to pass this historic bill to hold buyers accountable for abusing children and provide critical services for victims." It also links to a full summary of the bill. The group's Facebook page also proudly broadcast news of the trafficking law. On May 19, Shared Hope posted a version of the email message above, plus a special note of appreciation to its supporters: "More importantly, THANK YOU to the over 875 Shared Hope supporters who visited our Legislative Action Center and let their representatives know that this bill needed to be passed!" The organization gives supporters credit for what they see as a victory.

Courtney's House also celebrated the trafficking bill on its website and on social media, though with caveats. Its Director of Operations authored a blog post summarizing the Act, directing readers to a *New York Times* article about it, and emphasizing the compromise that was necessary to get it passed. "Great news: the Senate has reached a compromise on the trafficking bill, the Justice for Victims of

Trafficking Act (JVTA), so it can pass now! Wahoo!,” the blog post begins.

“There’s complicated news, too: it’s a compromise. It’s not quite what we’d hoped for, but it’ll do.” The post goes on to describe the debate about funding for abortions and the solution including two pots of money. The post wraps up with overall support for the bill:

So even though this limits the options survivors will have for making decisions about their medical care, we’re happy that the bill will finally pass, because there’s a lot of other good stuff in it, such as training for law enforcement, steps to hold both buyers and traffickers culpable, and money allocated directly for survivors. It’s a compromise. That’s politics. Now it’s time to pass it and get survivors the help they need.

Beside the text of this post is a photo of the organization’s founder at a press conference about the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Taken together, the post and photo indicate that Courtney’s House is involved in discussions about trafficking laws on a national level and has a firm position on what they advocate.

But Polaris, Shared Hope, and Courtney’s House were in the minority in communicating information to their followers and supporters about this Act. Of course, not all of the organizations studied as a part of this project are focused on advocacy or policy, nor do they all focus on trafficking domestically. But it is valuable to note the content of other organizations’ communication materials around that time.

When Shared Hope and Polaris were highlighting this law, other organizations were emphasizing other priorities in their communications materials. Like Shared Hope, Free the Slaves, Beyond Borders, and International Justice Mission all used Mother’s Day as a hook for a donation campaign. Beyond

Borders, for example, pitched its “1 in 3 Women in Haiti Campaign” with an email message explaining that “Moms in Haiti are like moms everywhere - they love their children and will do everything they can to ensure they grow up happy, healthy, and safe. But the reality is that **one in three Haitian women and girls will experience sexual or domestic violence in her lifetime**” [their emphasis].

During this same window, Amara Legal Center posted one article about the trafficking bill debate on its Facebook page on April 22, but then mostly promoted a yoga fundraiser through email and social media in the hours and days after that date. Capital City Ball’s June newsletter did not mention the trafficking bill, but did mention several other news stories about trafficking (e.g. “Russia plans to use prison labor for 2018 World Cup,” “How A Hong-Kong Not-For-Profit Is Helping The Private Sector Fight Human Trafficking”), publicized an upcoming happy-hour event, and reported on the success of an April 2015 “Rock Against Trafficking Party.” Other groups were silent in these virtual spaces.

This silence speaks volumes. In the broader anti-trafficking movement, these emails and postings may be minutia. But they are important representations of what’s important to these groups and how they communicate about their priorities. Of course, organizations may have played a role in these policy debates in ways not as obvious to the public—conversations, meeting, hearings, petitions—and elected not to share them with their constituents. I describe these pieces of mail and social media posts here because this external communication represents a snippet of discourse that is part of an organization’s larger public relations strategy.

As I discuss in Chapter 3, anti-trafficking organizations in D.C. operate without a shared definition of trafficking in persons. The communication, or lack of communication, with supporters around the JVTa also illustrates that they operate without a shared position on this policy or policies in general. While anti-trafficking efforts in D.C. might be thought of as a movement, they comprise a movement whose collectivity is not bound by an agreed-upon set of talking points and demands. What is consistent is the common rhetoric about a fight against trafficking and a shared commitment to recruit others to fight along.

This may help keep the peace and keep organizations busy, but how valuable is peace and perpetual motion among NGOs in the larger pursuit of social justice and social change? When groups eschew concrete policy objectives or approaches to client services, in order to keep the peace, they give up more meaningful contributions to the cause around which they are galvanized.

### **Project Summary**

This research grew out of an interest in the complex and enduring discourses surrounding trafficking in persons and exploitation of bodies. Because of the real ways that discourse shapes material realities, by this project's completion, it has become a close examination of how the modern anti-trafficking movement operates at the organizational level in one significant US city, a review of the movement's mechanics and players, and an interrogation of the larger social trends that are helping to shape this operation.

Social movements aspire to affect change, and the anti-trafficking movement in D.C., despite lacking a set of compulsory talking points and a mandatory policy agenda, does work to change reality for trafficked individuals. This project did not set out to assess the collective efforts' success in ending trafficking, but rather to examine the considerable amount of effort and labor dedicated to this cause in one place at one time.

I have argued that, in contemporary Washington, D.C., anti-trafficking efforts may be framed as an institutionalized social movement, with passionate activists, advocates, and volunteers operating within sanctioned state and economic channels to advance their cause. The project's focus on labor (at an institutional/organizational level), however, also leads me to characterize this social movement as an industry, a specialized field with its own sort of career track through which professionals make a living. When organization members fight trafficking in D.C., they are *working*—if not in paid positions, then in professional volunteer capacities that sometimes mirror formal jobs and often benefit from individuals' formal job skills. In theorizing this collective work as an industry and relying on the emerging language describing a nonprofit industrial complex, I have revealed ways in which the market influences organizations' activities and programming and their pursuits of funding from private and public sources. I have also complicated the idea that labor that seeks to do good is always, in fact, doing good.

Most importantly, however, I have suggested that the anti-trafficking movement and industry's most noteworthy deliverable, its primary product, is



awareness. In this scenario, the product is limitless and boundless. There will always be more awareness to raise. At the same time, awareness and its impact are particularly hard to measure. These characteristics have led me to question the efficacy of awareness both as a means to an end in the pursuit of social change and *as* social change in itself.

A conception of awareness as social change is flawed because it presumes that awareness leads to impact and, from a collective standpoint, it allows the anti-trafficking movement to avoid confronting the challenging issues—economic, racial, and gender inequality—that contribute to trafficking in the first place. In other words, a collective focus on awareness distracts from material and structural dimensions of this issue.

Awareness as, rather than as a catalyst for, social change also gives advocates a false sense of accomplishment for all of the effort they expend and the labor they exert. Critics of “slacktivism” lament the surface-level commitments to social change associated with the term. Certainly many of the awareness-inducing efforts of the anti-trafficking movement in D.C. require more than a click. Yet so long as melodramatic and sensationalistic narratives dominate discursive “traffic” involving trafficking in persons and so long as the presumption that this phenomenon exists because not enough people know about it endures, it will be hard to separate anti-trafficking work from the slacktivist elements of contemporary activism and advocacy.

These are the primary reasons we should care about how the anti-trafficking movement and efforts around other social causes work. In capitalist

terms, labor should yield a measurable output. Limitless and boundless awareness production is possible for a while, but how much attention can be sustained long-term for this cause is dependent on the marketplace for social causes. It would be unfortunate for trafficking in person's moment in the spotlight to produce, or rather reproduce, conservative representations of victims and nothing long-lasting enough to permanently improve the lives and conditions of vulnerable populations.

This project has not been about trafficking, but is focused instead on trafficking as a cause. The merger of these disparate ideas—activists pushing for social change and professional NGO advocates working within the confines of the market and the state for economic gain—is not unique to trafficking as a cause, but instead reflects the current state of social organization and NGO management in the neoliberal 21st century. Given the direction of modern social engagement, it is hard to imagine a social movement that does not operate in digital space. The line between activism and “slacktivism” in this space is blurry, however. So while a focus on the discourse surrounding trafficking in persons is important because discourse has the potential to impact the material, further work is needed to interrogate the impact of a vague and hard-to-measure result like awareness.

### **Conclusion: Lost Opportunity**

The conclusions of this project can be cast in both a negative and positive light. On the plus side, this work reveals a considerable number of individuals invested in helping others—individuals who work for organizations whose objective is not profit and individuals who spend their leisure time altruistically.

Unfortunately, on the down side, the effect of all of this effort, this do-good labor, is inconclusive at best.

My final characterization of the anti-trafficking movement/industry is as a lost opportunity. Despite their immense people-power and relative resources, the organizations in D.C. devoted to fighting trafficking in persons fail to have the full impact they intend on the social issue/phenomenon/problem they combat. A focus on awareness distracts from a focus on structural causes of trafficking and from an interrogation of the dimensions of power at the root of this practice (no matter how you define it) and other forms of inequality worldwide. The presumption that if everyone knew that trafficking was taking place, it would cease, cannot sustain real change. It is wasted effort to position baseline knowledge and familiarity with the issue as solutions. All the awareness in the world won't stop all war, famine, and disease. Nor will all of the money.

I conclude that, without a clear and shared articulation of the problem it is addressing, an acknowledgement of individual, circumstantial, cultural, and geographic nuances impacting trafficking at multiple levels, and an action plan that situates this issue among economic and political factors as it advocates for specific policies, D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement will find it challenging to move beyond awareness. In light of the aforementioned divisiveness around commercial sex, and given the movement's propensity toward melodrama, it is hard to imagine attaining this checklist. If awareness is the best an anti-trafficking organization can hope to accomplish for this complex cause, though, then perhaps activists and organizers might be better suited to advocating around it—for labor

and gender policies that would help vulnerable populations avoid trafficking in the first place.

Existing scholarship around anti-trafficking includes considerable work identifying and/or participating in the heated feminist debates about trafficking. I don't advocate for more divisiveness or infighting, per se, but I do suggest that a movement that productively engages with the tougher, stickier issues encircling trafficking is a movement that would ultimately be more beneficial to trafficked individuals and other vulnerable populations at large.

It is, of course, possible that there is plenty of conflict among the organizations that are part of the D.C. anti-trafficking movement and that the NGO professionals whom I encountered were just diplomatic when speaking to me. But if debates and dialogues do exist, they are not impeding cooperation or groups' participation in the awareness infrastructure, nor have they produced novel approaches to shaping the tone of either D.C.'s anti-trafficking movement discourse or the larger conversations about this issue in mainstream culture.

One of the biggest critiques of contemporary anti-trafficking work focuses on the ways it deploys conservative and traditional tropes about vulnerable bodies worldwide—the rescue narrative and moral panic. There are some radical voices affiliated with the anti-trafficking cause, but both the international outcry surrounding this issue (which has only increased in the last 15 years), and the conversations taking place within metro D.C. are deeply embedded in existing ideas about race, gender, and labor. Certain bodies, as described in my discussions of marketing materials in Chapter 4, continue to be understood as already victims,

and, within the anti-trafficking community located in metro D.C., long-standing debates about agency, consent, and the exploitation inherent in commercial sex practices linger, but are largely overlooked in favor of nuanced cooperation. By relying on legislative definitions or popular understandings of the terms trafficking and slavery, the D.C. movement only reinforces existing ideas about associated concepts like gender and labor.

Yet, while they have not provided new or novel ways to see vulnerable bodies—at times relying on traditional and problematic tropes and images, straddling the border of sensationalism (what we might call the “*Taken Line*”)—and while their immense potential for effecting change may be misspent on awareness, the anti-trafficking organizations in Washington, D.C., have created something significant and worthy of study. Once understood a foreign issue, affecting women and girls in far-flung cities around the globe, trafficking has become more of a commonplace discussion topic in the five years it took to conduct this research. Hundreds of dissertations in the last year alone address this topic.<sup>291</sup> Today there is a focus on domestic youth that was not always part of the conversation, and this focus has further complicated debates about consent. Additionally, the ongoing shift to discussing trafficked individuals in terms of survival rather than victimization is a major development in the larger discourse surrounding trafficking and is one for which Washington, D.C. organizations claim credit.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Searches for “trafficking” and “human trafficking” among digital dissertations in “Dissertations and Theses Global” database confirms this point.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with Shared Hope International Representative, July 16, 2013.

Though it has ancestors in historical movements, we can think of trafficking in persons as a dynamic cause and a young cause.<sup>293</sup> Activists and advocates have been attracted to campaigns to combat trafficking for many reasons, as it implicates a range of issues, including economic development and poverty, gender and agency, race and nation, and crime and immigration. As the modern movement matures, it is bound to morph and change further depending on resources, competition from other causes and campaigns, and unpredictable global events and shifts.

But as long as inequality and vulnerability remain and are accompanied by the threat of exploitation such as trafficking in persons, it is likely that there will be a non-governmental response in Washington, D.C. Whether as many as thirty organizations within one city will continue to combat this issue remains to be seen. Trafficking might have been considered a “trendy” cause at one time, but after over a decade in the spotlight, it has become another lingering cause of our time.

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<sup>293</sup> See discussion in Chapter 1.

### Appendix I: Overview of Anti-Trafficking Organizations in Washington, D.C.

Organization	Reported Mission/Issue Addressed	Definition of Trafficking/Slavery	Primarily Trafficking	Scope	Activities	Founded	Connections/Partnerships
The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-end modern slavery and human trafficking</li> <li>-prevent labor and sex trafficking</li> <li>-hold perpetrators accountable</li> <li>-justice for victims</li> <li>-empower survivors</li> </ul>	Refer to as a criminal enterprise, but no firm definition	Yes	International and Domestic	-advocacy around policy priorities	—	ATEST is a coalition; D.C. based members include: Free the Slaves, International Justice Mission, Polaris Project, and Vital Voices Global Partnership
Amara Legal Clinic	-provides free legal services to individuals whose rights have been violated through commercial sex.	Nuanced; acknowledge TVPA legal definition, but use term only when beneficial to clients	Yes	Domestic	-direct legal services	2013	Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair  Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk
Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-legal assistance for low-income and limited-English proficient Asian Americans</li> <li>-trafficking victims are one potential population served</li> </ul>	No firm definition	No	Domestic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-direct legal services</li> <li>-advocacy</li> </ul>	1998	Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force

Ayuda	<p>-protect the rights of low-income immigrants in the DC metropolitan area</p> <p>-anti-trafficking is one program area (human trafficking and modern slavery)</p>	Human trafficking is when someone is forced into prostitution, slavery, debt bondage or involuntary servitude. Human trafficking is also referred to as modern day slavery.	No	Domestic	<p>-legal services</p> <p>-social services</p> <p>-outreach</p>	Trafficking Program began in 2003	Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair
Beyond Borders	<p>-end child slavery,</p> <p>-guarantee universal access to education,</p> <p>-end violence against women and girls,</p> <p>-replace systems that oppress the poor with systems that support dignified work and sustainable livelihoods.</p>	No firm definition, but note that Restavèk (n.) : A modern form of slavery affecting 250,000 Haitian children.	No	International	-direct services in conjunction with partners in Haiti		Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery Resource Fair
Boat People SOS	<p>-community organizing and capacity building in the Vietnamese community</p> <p>-advocacy and direct services around human trafficking and labor exploitation (form of modern day slavery)</p>	No firm definition, but link together labor trafficking, forced labor, domestic servitude, wage theft and sex trafficking	No	Domestic and International	<p>-advocacy</p> <p>-direct services</p> <p>-leadership development</p> <p>-research</p>	1980	<p>Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force</p> <p>Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery Resource Fair</p> <p>Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk</p>
Break the Chain Campaign  (part of Institute for Policy Studies and member of	<p>-prevent and address the abuse and exploitation of migrant women workers</p> <p>-focus on women living in virtual</p>	No firm definition	Yes	Domestic	<p>- holistic direct services</p> <p>-leadership training</p> <p>-community</p>	1997	<p>Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force</p> <p>Serves on</p>



Freedom Network USA)	slavery -partner with anti-trafficking organizations				engagement -survivor-driven outreach and training		Freedom Network USA with Ayuda
Bridge to Freedom Foundation	-ensure that all survivors of modern day slavery are able to build the skills and resources needed to escape the cycle of modern slavery and abuse while attaining and achieve lives they choose	No firm definition.	Yes	Domestic	-bridge gaps in information and services -research - program development and evaluations -services linking the for-profit, academic, and public worlds to the anti-slavery movement	2008	Hosted conference featuring speakers from Courtney's House and Seraphim Global  Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk  Charity beneficiary of Capital City Ball  Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force
Capital City Ball	-raise money to benefit human trafficking and modern day slavery	Refer to as a crime, but no firm definition. Defer to the charities they support for factual information.	Yes	International and Domestic	-fundraising	2007	D.C. charity recipients have included: Bridget to Freedom Foundation, Courtney's House, Global Centurion Foundation, HIPS, Innocents at Risk, and Polaris Project

Casa De Maryland	<p>-create strong, economically and ethnically diverse communities in which all people - especially women, low-income people, and workers - can participate fully benefit, regardless of their immigration status</p> <p>-focus on Central American population</p>	No firm definition; trafficking only mentioned in related documents, not directly	No	Domestic	<p>-direct services: employment placement, workforce development and training, financial literacy, adult ESOL and Spanish literacy instruction</p>	1985	<p>Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force</p> <p>Listed on Polaris Project's website as a resource in Maryland</p>
Courtney's House	-helping women and children heal from domestic sex trafficking and commercial exploitation	No firm definition.	Yes	Domestic	<p>-searches for children working in sex trafficking</p> <p>-recovery programs</p> <p>-trains community officials</p> <p>-creates awareness</p>	2008	<p>Charity beneficiary of Capital City Ball</p> <p>National Community Church Against Slavery members volunteer at Courtney's House</p> <p>Director served on panel at Bridge to Freedom Foundation conference</p> <p>Beneficiary of funds raised a event held at Tip Top Boutique (a project of Global Centurion and Innocents at Risk)</p> <p>Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's</p>

							Resource Fair  Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk
End Slavery Now (The Free Project)	-end slavery in our lifetime  -empower people willing to fight slavery  -help anti-slavery organizations increase efficiency	Link to other organizations' definitions	Yes	International and Domestic	-developing a comprehensive platform for growing and advancing anti-slavery movement  -vet and connect other organizations	2008	DC partner organizations: Free the Slaves, International Justice Mission, Polaris Project, Shared Hope International, Stop Modern Slavery, Vital Voices  Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair
FAIR Girls	-prevents exploitation, with a special emphasis on girls who have experienced homelessness, life inside the foster care system, sexual abuse, and trafficking	No firm definition	No	International and Domestic	-prevention -education  -compassionate care  -survivor inclusive advocacy	2003	Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force  Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair
Free the Slaves	-end slavery worldwide	People held against their will, forced to work and paid nothing.	Yes	International	-direct services  -awareness  -research	2000	Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair  Part of End it Movement with Polaris Project and International Justice

							Mission  Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk
Global Centurion	- eradicating world slavery by focusing on the demand side of the equation – the perpetrators, exploiters, buyers, and end-users of human beings who fuel the market for commercial sex and forced labor	Sex trafficking, sex tourism, trafficking for labor and servitude, and commercial sexual exploitation are all part of a growing global phenomenon of modern slavery– one of the most serious human rights abuses we face in the 21st century	Yes	International and Domestic	-demand focused research and activities  -education, awareness, and advocacy training  -partnerships and collaborative networks	2008	Member of the D.C. Anti-trafficking Task Force  Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery’s Resource Fair  Charity beneficiary of Capital City Ball  Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk
Global Rescue Relief	-promote community service and social welfare by providing relief to victims of human trafficking  -combat trafficking, promote safer communities, protect children, and offer hope	Human trafficking is slavery. Men, women, and children of every race, nationality, and religion are sold, stolen, and bought.	Yes	International and Domestic	-direct victim impact and support	—	Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force
HIPS	-assist female, male, and transgender individuals engaging in sex work in Washington, DC in leading healthy lives. Using a harm reduction model, HIPS’ programs strive to address the impact that HIV/AIDS,	Terms trafficking and slavery not used.	No	Domestic	-outreach  -education  -peer education  -client advocacy  -community	1993	Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force  Charity beneficiary of Capital City Ball

	sexually transmitted infections, discrimination, poverty, violence and drug use have on the lives of individuals engaging in sex work						
Innocents at Risk	<p>- fight child exploitation and human trafficking</p> <p>-educate citizens about the grave issue of global and local human trafficking</p> <p>-protecting children from all forms of abuse, and work to end child exploitation and child trafficking everywhere</p>	Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery...victims are deceived into accepting a job offer that promises them a better life. Instead, they find themselves trapped in a cycle of physical and psychological abuse.	Yes	International and Domestic	<p>-Airline initiative</p> <p>-partnerships with other organizations</p> <p>-orphanage mission</p> <p>-awareness</p> <p>-speaking engagement</p>	2002	<p>Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force</p> <p>Charity beneficiary of Capital City Ball</p> <p>Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair</p> <p>Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk</p>
International Justice Mission	-bring rescue to victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression	Refer to as injustice, bondage, characterized by force and deception, but no firm definition	Yes	International	<p>-collaborative casework:</p> <p>Victim relief</p> <p>Perpetrator accountability</p> <p>Survivor aftercare</p> <p>Structural transformation</p>	1997	Member of End it Movement with Free the Slaves and International Justice Mission
National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation	-raise awareness and educate people about sexual exploitation in the D.C. metro area	No firm definition.	Yes	Domestic	<p>-awareness</p> <p>-education</p> <p>-connection</p>	2011	<p>Group volunteers with Courtney's House</p> <p>Advertise events with DC Stop Modern Slavery meet up group</p>

Latin American Youth Center	- empower a diverse population of underserved youth to achieve a successful transition to adulthood, through multi-cultural, comprehensive, and innovative programs that address youth's social, academic, and career needs	No firm definition; trafficking only mentioned in related documents, not directly	No	Domestic	-educational enhancement -social services -workforce development -community wellness -art and media -advocacy	1974	Member of the D.C. Anti-trafficking Task Force
Polaris Project	-combat the scourge of trafficking  -for a world without slavery	Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others. As defined under US federal law, victims of human trafficking include children involved in the sex trade, adults age 18 or over who are coerced or deceived into commercial sex acts, and anyone forced into different forms of "labor or services," such as domestic workers held in a home, or farm-workers forced to labor against their will.	Yes	International and Domestic	-hotline -advocacy -client services -training and technical assistance -public outreach and communication -fellowship program	2002	Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force  Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair  Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk  Member of End it Movement with Free the Slaves and International Justice Mission  Lists other local organizations on its website as a resource  Charity beneficiary of Capital City Ball
Prevent Human	-build a bridge between South East Asia and the	Human trafficking is the act of	Yes	International	-direct support -technical	1999	—

Trafficking	United States to prevent human trafficking  -empower individuals, organizations, and governments	recruiting, transferring, harboring or receiving a person through the act of coercion, fraud, or another means for the purpose of exploiting them			assistance  -promote best practices and sustainable solutions  -advocacy  -summer programs  -rapid report and response		
Protection Project  (Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies)	-to address trafficking in persons as a human rights violation,  - emphasis is the protection of human security, especially in women's and children's rights; fostering civil society and NGO development through capacity & coalition building; enhancing the rule of law by encouraging citizen participation; advancing human rights education	No firm definition.	Yes	International	-conferences and seminars  -advocacy  -capacity building  -international human rights clinic  -field programs	1994	Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair  Hosts annual conference featuring speakers from other organizations (Laura Lederer from Global Centurion participated in 2012 and was published in The Protection Project Journal)
Restoration Ministries	-to bring healing to men, women and children who are caught in the trap of sex trafficking and lead them to the freedom of Jesus Christ	No firm definition.	Yes	Domestic	-direct services  -ambassadors program focused on advocacy  -collaboration with other organizations	2003	Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force  Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair  Lists several other organizations as partners website: Shared Hope International and DC Stop Modern

							Slavery  Beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk
Sasha Bruce Youthwork	-meets the urgent needs of at-risk youth and their families in Washington	Terms trafficking and slavery are not used	No	Domestic	-direct services	1974	Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force
Shared Hope International	-eradicate sex trafficking	<p>The federal <u>Trafficking Victims Protection Act</u> defines the crime of human trafficking as:</p> <p><b>A.</b> The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, <b>or</b> in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age, or</p> <p><b>B.</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,</p>	Yes	Domestic and International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-training</li> <li>-research</li> <li>-awareness</li> <li>-collaboration</li> <li>-services to victims w/partner organizations</li> <li>-policy development</li> <li>-legislative action center</li> <li>-bill tracking</li> </ul>	1998	<p>Member of D.C. Human Trafficking task force</p> <p>Had booth at DC Stop Modern Slavery's Resource Fair</p> <p>Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk</p>



		peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.”					
Seraphim Global	- provides health care, community development, social services, clean water and sanitation to marginalized and hard-to-reach rural communities	No firm definition	No  (but human trafficking and exploitation has become an increasingly large focus)	International and Domestic	-direct services— primary care delivery  -integrated care and treatment interventions	—	Charity beneficiary of DC Stop Modern Slavery Walk  Participated in conference hosted by Bridge to Freedom Foundation
Stop Modern Slavery	-a world without slavery  -to end modern slavery through community education and action	This new form of modern slavery, also known as human trafficking, has become the fastest growing and second largest criminal industry in the world.  Reports to use US Department of State’s definition	Yes	International and Domestic	-community-based model  -fundraising	2004	Hosts many organizations as part of Resource Fair  Charity beneficiaries include: Boat People SOS, Courtney’s House, Free the Slaves, Innocents at Risk, Polaris Project, Restoration Ministries, and Shared Hope International  First organizer was then co-director of Polaris Project
Vital Voices	-identify, invest in and bring visibility to extraordinary women around the world by unleashing their leadership potential to transform lives and accelerate peace and prosperity in their	No firm definition	No	International	(human rights program)  - international public awareness campaigns  -collaborate with civil society, government and business  -promote	2000	Member of ATEST (Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking)

	communities  -initiative to combat human trafficking is part of human rights program				effective policies		
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## Appendix II: Known Funding Sources of Anti-Trafficking Organizations

<b>Known Funding Sources of Large Anti-Trafficking Organizations</b>	
<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Known Funding Sources</b>
Free the Slaves	Foundations, individuals, United States Government
International Justice Mission	Individual donations (72%), foundations (16%), partner offices (4%), churches (3%), government grants (2%)
Polaris Project	Individual (31%), government (27%), in kind goods (25%), foundation (11%), corporation (3%)

<b>Known Funding Sources of Smaller Anti-Trafficking Organizations</b>	
<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Known Funding Sources</b>
The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST)	Humanity United (a private foundation with ties to Ebay)
Amara Legal Center	Private donations, but nothing else indicated
Beyond Borders	Foundations, individuals, nonprofits, churches
Break the Chain Campaign (part of Institute for Policy Studies and member of Freedom Network USA)	75% of its income from private / family foundations, about 20% from individual donors, and the remaining 5% from "earned" income
Bridge to Freedom Foundation	Corporate sponsors
Capital City Ball	Corporate sponsors, individual donors
Courtney's House	Grants, fundraising events, donations, corporate sponsors
End Slavery Now (The Free Project)	Self-funded and volunteer based
FAIR Girls	Individuals, private and public foundations, corporate sponsors, and in-kind support.
Global Centurion	Private donations
Global Rescue Relief	Private donations
HIPS	Public and private grant funds and individuals donors
Innocents at Risk	Private donations
National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation	Contributions of volunteer members
Prevent Human Trafficking	Private donations and sponsors, including foundations
Protection Project (Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies)	Public grants and private donations
Restoration Ministries	Private donations
Seraphim Global	Fundraising events
Shared Hope International	Individuals, foundations, corporate, churches, educational organizations (two grants from federal government)
Stop Modern Slavery	Corporate sponsors, volunteer labor

<b>Known Funding Sources of Organizations in Washington D.C. with Trafficking as Part of a Larger Portfolio</b>	
<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Known Funding Sources</b>
Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center	Combination of public and private (corporate and foundation) funding and individual donors; website lists them
Ayuda	Combination of public and private (corporate and foundation) funding and individual donors; website lists them
Boat People SOS	Combination of public and private (corporate and foundation) funding and individual donors; website lists them
Casa De Maryland	Combination of public and private (corporate and foundation) funding and individual donors; annual report lists them;
Latin American Youth Center	Private contributions, rental income, government grants, foundation grants
Sasha Bruce Youthwork	Government, foundation, corporate, special events, private support
Vital Voices	Combination of public and private (corporate and foundation) funding and individual donors

**Appendix III: Social Media Presence of D.C.  
Anti-Trafficking Organizations**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Number of Facebook Likes as of 11/23/14</b>	<b>Number of Twitter Followers as of 11/23/2014</b>
International Justice Mission	189,471	136,932
Polaris Project	49,014	32,905
Free the Slaves	29,978	20,826
Shared Hope International	29,114	10,936
Global Centurion	9572	1373
End Slavery Now (The Free Project)	7717	17,650
FAIR Girls	6720	17,037
Casa De Maryland	6571	2916
HIPS	3000	
Latin American Youth Center	2931	1775
Stop Modern Slavery	2797	11669
Courtney's House	2624	3553
The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST)	2001	1016
Bridge to Freedom Foundation	1912	3565
Amara Legal Center	1407	576
Prevent Human Trafficking	1378	789
Protection Project (Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies)	953	
Capital City Ball	716	40
Boat People SOS	531	168
Global Rescue Relief	514	31
Restoration Ministries	503	72

Break the Chain Campaign (part of Institute for Policy Studies and member of Freedom Network USA)	292	
Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center	281	5594
National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation	247	282
Seraphim Global	153	32
Vital Voices	118	53175
Innocents at Risk	46	406
Sasha Bruce Youthwork	43	1509
Ayuda		
Beyond Borders		

## **Appendix IV: Readers' Guide to Anti-Trafficking Organizations in Washington, D.C.**

This project examines the work of thirty organizations in the Washington, D.C., region that consider fighting trafficking in persons to be part of their mission and portfolio. Due to the large size of the movement and the phased method I used to reach out the organizations for participation in the project, there is a subset of organizations around whom more of the project revolves and a secondary group that informed the work, but did not provide as much primary data. Organizations whose primary focus is not trafficking, but who are nonetheless involved with the cause due to related foci and/or a role on the city's Human Trafficking Task Force, are more likely to be in the latter category. The blurbs below are intended to serve as a resource for readers, helping them to keep track of the groups as they read. Starred organizations granted me interviews.

### **Primary Organizations**

#### **Bridge to Freedom Foundation\***

Provides evidence-based programming that focuses on next steps for trafficking survivors; violence prevention, personal development, educational development, and professional development. Small organization run by executive director/founder, interns, and volunteers.  
Founded in 2008. Located: Merrifield, Virginia

#### **Capital City Ball\***

Fundraising organization that plans and executes annual gala event to benefit to fight human trafficking and modern day slavery. Partners with a different group of beneficiary NGOs each year. Board of D.C. professionals, but no paid staff.  
Founded in 2007. Located: Washington, D.C.

**Courtney's House\***

Direct service provider working with domestic minor sex trafficking survivors to provide intensive holistic support. Does outreach and training with law enforcement to increase awareness. Small organization with a growing, paid staff (three to five during the course of my research) and team of volunteers. Founded in 2008 by trafficking survivor. Located: Washington, D.C.

**FAIR Girls**

Focus on preventing the exploitation of girls worldwide with empowerment and education. Programs include prevention education, compassionate care, and survivor inclusive advocacy. Fewer than twenty paid employees. Founded in 2003. Located: Washington, D.C., with branches in Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, Russia, Uganda.

**Free the Slaves\***

International organization that partners with frontline anti-slavery groups in several countries, spreads awareness, and conducts research on the issue. Thirty-person staff. Ten-person board of directors. Founded in 2000 by frequently cited trafficking scholar. Located: Washington, D.C., with programs in Haiti, India, Nepal, Ghana, Brazil, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Global Rescue Relief\***

Direct service projects locally and globally. Run by an unpaid executive director and volunteers. Founded: 2008. Located: Washington, D.C.

**Innocents at Risk\***

Hosts fundraising and awareness events. Manages a flight attendant initiative which works with airlines to train staff to recognize trafficking. Founder/executive director works with interns and volunteers. Founded in 2002. Located: Washington, D.C.

**National Community Church Against Slavery and Exploitation\***

Awareness and education focus in partnership with other D.C.-based organizations. Associated with interdenominational church. No paid staff. Founded in 2011. Located: Washington, D.C.



### **Polaris Project**

Advocacy, direct services, and research-oriented programming. One of the nation's leading trafficking organizations. Forty-person staff plus additional National Trafficking Hotline staff and Board of Directors.  
Founded 2002. Located: Washington, D.C., with additional office in New Jersey.

### **Projection Project**

Research and training oriented institute associated with Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Eight-person staff plus fifteen Human Rights Research Associates, two Legal Research Associates, and one Fellow.  
Founded in 1994. Located: Washington, D.C., with a field office in Egypt.

### **Restoration Ministries\***

Direct service support and educational and awareness programming. Religious organization. Executive director works with team of volunteers.  
Founded in 2003. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Shared Hope International \***

Works to eradicate sex trafficking through prevention, restoration, and legislative action. Involved with advocacy, awareness, and training.  
Founded in 1998 by former Congresswoman. Located: Washington, D.C., and Vancouver, Washington; programming in Fiji, India, Jamaica, Nepal.

### **DC Stop Modern Slavery\***

Grassroots community organization that plans and executes annual Walk to raise money for other anti-trafficking groups in addition to other awareness programming. Volunteer run.  
Founded: 2004. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Additional Groups**

#### **The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking**

Coalition of US-based human rights organizations with anti-slavery programs that does advocacy work. ATEST member organizations include several in the D.C. area: Free the Slaves, International Justice Mission, Polaris, and Vital Voices Global Partnership.  
Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Amara Legal Center**

Provides free legal services to clients and conducts awareness and advocacy work. Small full-time staff works with interns and fellows. Founded 2013. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center**

Legal services organization working on the needs of the low-income Asian immigrant community in metro D.C. Eleven board members, five full-time staff and a number of bilingual legal interns and volunteers, and more than fifty trained/qualified legal interpreters, who collectively speak more than twenty-five different Asian languages and dialects. Founded 1998. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Ayuda**

Provides a wide range of immigration and family law assistance, as well as social services support, for all immigrants, including men, women and children. Specialized services for immigrant children and for immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Approximately thirty staff members, including many lawyers. Founded 1973. Located: Washington, D.C., and Falls Church, Virginia

### **Beyond Borders**

Works in Haiti and the United States. Focuses on child slavery, universal education, violence against women and girls, and sustainable livelihoods. Direct services, grassroots and community programming, and grant programs. Religious organization. Twenty-person staff (in Haiti and the United States) and twelve-person Board of Directors. Located: Washington, D.C., headquarters, with staff in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Iowa and Haiti.

### **Boat People SOS**

Originally founded to assist Vietnamese refugees fleeing the country by boat, the organization now assists Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian victims of persecution, torture, violence, and exploitation (including trafficking), and provides various services to the Vietnamese American community. Hundreds of staff and volunteers in eight regions domestically. Three overseas offices as well. Founded: 1980. Located: Falls Church (Virginia), California, Atlanta, Gulf Coast, Delaware Valley, Thailand, Malaysia, and Taiwan.

### **Break the Chain**

Works to prevent and address the abuse and exploitation of migrant women workers through holistic direct services, leadership training, community engagement and survivor-driven outreach and training. Project of the Institute for Policy Studies.

Founded: 1997. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Casa De Maryland**

Latino and immigration advocacy-and-assistance organization. Provides employment placement; workforce development and training; health education; citizenship and legal services; and financial, language, and literacy training to Latino and immigrant communities throughout the state of Maryland.

Founded 1985. Located: Various centers in Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and Baltimore, Maryland.

### **Global Centurion**

Focuses on fighting human trafficking by emphasizing demand; has demand-focused research and programs, provides awareness and advocacy training, and establishes partnerships and collaborative networks. Director and five-person board of visitors.

Founded 2010. Located: Arlington, Virginia

### **HIPS**

Promotes the health, rights, and dignity of individuals and communities impacted by sexual exchange and/or drug use due to choice, coercion, or circumstance. Mobile services, enhanced harm reduction, and technical assistance and capacity building. Staff of fifteen with over 100 volunteers.

Founded in 1993. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **International Justice Mission**

Religious organization working in twenty communities globally. Focuses on slavery, sexual exploitation, and other forms of violence. Advocacy and legal and direct services. Many partner and collaborator organizations. Large staff with over twenty executives. Fifteen board members.

Founded in 1997. Located: Headquarters in Northern, Virginia

### **Latin American Youth Center**

Works on empowering a diverse population of youth. Focuses on transition to adulthood through programs that address youths' social, academic, and career needs. Programs in D.C. and Maryland.

Founded in 1974. Located: Headquartered in Washington, D.C.

### **Prevent Human Trafficking**

Focus on child exploitation in South East Asia. Direct support and technical assistance to organizations and governments. Concerned with trafficking's root causes. Small team of experts (with other full-time jobs) and a team of advisors. Summer program to Thailand every year.

Founded in 1999. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Sasha Bruce Youthwork**

Focuses on homeless, runaway, abused, and neglected youth in Washington, D.C. About twenty staff members and a board of twenty. Operates eighteen programs throughout the city.

Founded 1974. Located: Washington, D.C.

### **Seraphim Global**

Provides health, education and social support for the world's most vulnerable populations. Promotes awareness, creates legislation, provides advocacy training, technical support, medical and psychosocial services. Small staff. Affiliated with Medical Service Corporation International. Research collaborative.

Founded: 1996. Located: Arlington, Virginia

### **Vital Voices**

High profile organization. Staff of forty plus a board. Networks worldwide NGOs focused on women's leadership. Grew out of the US government's *Vital Voices Democracy Initiative* established by then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright after the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing to promote the advancement of women as a US foreign policy goal.

Founded: 1997. Located: Washington, D.C.

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