AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SPRINGFIELD:

A REAL OR PERCEIVED PROBLEM?

A Masters Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate College of
Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science, Applied Anthropology

By
Melissa Sowers
December 2013
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SPRINGFIELD:
A REAL OR PERCEIVED PROBLEM?

Sociology and Anthropology Department
Missouri State University, December 2013
Master of Science
Melissa J. Sowers

ABSTRACT

Human trafficking research has noted the effects of local context on interpretations of trafficking protocol. In the Springfield community, religious and secular organizations and groups are currently shaping the human trafficking movement. With so many groups interested in human trafficking, there are many definitions of trafficking and perceptions of trafficking that are in conflict with each other. Human trafficking is routinely conflated with prostitution and other forms of sex-work, particularly by faith based groups. Sex trafficking dominates the trafficking discourse, likely as a result of the training sessions and conferences held by religious organizations that are focused primarily on sex trafficking. Anti human trafficking advocated in Springfield are inadvertently prioritizing real and perceived sex trafficking victims over labor trafficking victims. By discerning real victims of trafficking from perceived victims of trafficking, Springfield agencies can improve the availability of resources to people who have indeed been trafficked.

KEYWORDS: human trafficking, sex-trafficking discourse, prostitution, sex-work, anti trafficking rhetoric, victimization

This abstract is approved as to form and content

Dr. Margaret Buckner
Chairperson, Advisory Committee
Missouri State University
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SPRINGFIELD:

A REAL OR PERCEIVED PROBLEM?

By

Melissa J. Sowers

A Masters Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College
Of Missouri State University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Science, Applied Anthropology

December 2013

Approved:

Dr. Margaret Buckner

Dr. William Wedenoja

Dr. Timothy Knapp

Dr. Thomas Tomasi, PhD, Associate Dean Graduate College
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my pleasure and honor to acknowledge the time, suggestions, and patience of the people who made this document possible. Specifically, I would like to thank the professors who served on the thesis committee: Dr. Wedenoja, Dr. Knapp, and especially Dr. Buckner. Thank you all for guiding me through this project. I would also like to thank the women I interviewed who allowed me to use the most personal details from their lives in my research, as well as the organizations and the people I interviewed who work for those organizations. Dr. Buckner, you provided me with so many opportunities to succeed at Missouri State, I have no way of repaying you, but I hope that I can someday pay it forward. Thank you for believing in me.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Introduction
- 1

## Problem
- 1

## Objectives
- 2

## Background
- 4
  - Numbers and Statistics
    - 4
  - Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)
    - 6
  - Prostitution
    - 9
  - Trafficking Victims
    - 11
  - The Sex-worker
    - 14
  - Pornography
    - 19

## Methods
- 21

## Study Sites and Population
- 24
  - Populations
    - 24
  - Locations of Trafficking Meetings
    - 27

## Findings
- 28
  - Vulnerable populations
    - 28
  - Encounters with Trafficking
    - 29
  - Local Service Agencies
    - 31
  - Church Involvement
    - 34
  - Local Media
    - 35
  - Individual Perceptions (personal documentation)
    - 36
  - Perceived Trafficking Victims
    - 40
  - Anti-Trafficking Advocates
    - 52

## Discussion
- 57
  - Conferences
    - 57
  - Local News Stories
    - 58
  - Victimization of Sex-workers
    - 60
  - The Prioritization of Sex-trafficking Victims
    - 64

## Conclusion
- 68

## Bibliography
- 70

## Appendices
- 73
  - Stand Against Trafficking Handouts
    - 73
  - Personal Documentation Responses to First Question
    - 78
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Displays the types of sex work and businesses associated with regions in the United States.................................................................11
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Graph showing the trafficking in person worldwide estimates 1997-2009. From UNESCO Trafficking Statistics Project.................................................................5
Figure 2. Sex-worker rights awareness campaign art...............................................................16

Figure 3 Sex-worker rights awareness campaign art...............................................................16

Figure 4. French sex-worker protests. Image from Global Post article.................................17

Figure 5. Advertisement for International Day to End Violence Against Sex-workers with the international red umbrella symbol for sex-worker rights.................................18
INTRODUCTION

Problem

Human trafficking, according to the United Nations trafficking protocol (2001:2), is defined as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, or fraud, of deceptions, 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 purposes of exploitation.” Trafficking is not a new phenomenon, but awareness of the issue has increased in the last few decades. There has been a perceived increase in trafficking activity around the world fueled by social dislocations, increasing poverty, gender imbalances, bureaucratic chaos, and failing governments (United Nations Treaty Collection 2003).

Human trafficking is a lucrative business; people, and unlike drugs and weapons, have the advantage of being not only reusable and re-sellable, but also expendable (Haynes 2004:227). Human beings are considered less risky to traffic than drugs and weapons because traffickers are less likely to be prosecuted for this offense. Estimates of the number of women who are trafficked per year range from 700,000 to four million; such a wide estimate is an example of the immeasurability and furtive nature of trafficking in humans (Haynes 2004:223-224). As a less risky business venture, trafficking is a pervasive problem around the world, in every country, and throughout the United States.

The United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) was passed by Congress in 2000 and reauthorized in 2003, 2005, and 2008. In 2008 the reauthorization
also added tools to combat trafficking in persons worldwide, as well as in the United States. The purpose of the TVPA is “to combat trafficking in persons, a contemporary manifestation of slavery whose victims are predominantly women and children, to ensure just and effective punishment of traffickers and to protect their victims” (US Department of State).

United Nations protocol and the TVPA have set parameters by which trafficking can be understood; however, the interpretation of human trafficking is influenced by local contexts and dialogues that shape movements against trafficking in communities. Institutional responses to trafficking are influenced by subtle differences in interpretation, as well as diverse beliefs about the causes and effects of trafficking (Soderlund 2005:71).

**Objectives**

Trafficking is a global issue, often cited as the third largest illegal moneymaking trade in the world, behind only illegal weapons and drugs (Stone 2005:32). As awareness about human trafficking grows, more and more social service agencies are trying to identify the trafficking cases in their area. In Springfield, Missouri, human trafficking cases are being identified by local agencies that work with at-risk populations.

With the interest in human trafficking being relatively new, knowledge of trafficking locally is limited. Research has focused primarily on nationally and internationally trafficked persons and policy, with little research based on local contexts. Locally, there has been a push toward educating more social service agencies, police agencies, faith-based organizations, and other not-for-profits. Among these social service agencies and independent, usually religious-affiliated, activists in the Springfield area,
there is confusion about what circumstances should be considered trafficking, particularly in cases of sex-trafficking. Over the course of my research, it became apparent that there are many levels of inconsistencies and disagreements about human trafficking among practitioners, professionals, and academics on international, federal, and local levels.

Human trafficking research has noted the effects of local context on interpretations of trafficking protocol; my research both builds on the conclusion that local context is important and adds to the relative paucity of information about local discourses on trafficking by exploring the definitions of human trafficking victims in the area. I hope to provide a better understanding of the perceptions of human trafficking from the various groups and activists involved in the movement in Springfield, as well as identify how these interest groups are influencing one another. I also hope to provide a better understanding of real and perceived victims of trafficking, in order to improve the availability of resources to people who have been trafficked. Defining “human trafficking” in the area is vital in the process of moving forward to combat the problem effectively.

By comparing the anti-trafficking rhetoric used by members of social service agencies, programs, and groups who work with trafficking cases, with how real or perceived victims of trafficking are talking about the same situations, I hope to provide valuable information necessary to assess realistically the scope of the trafficking problem in the Springfield area. By discerning “real” victims of trafficking from “perceived” victims of trafficking, I hope that Springfield agencies can improve the availability of resources to people who have indeed been trafficked.
BACKGROUND

Number and Statistics

There is great variation in the estimates of human trafficking within and between U.S. government agencies. The U.S. State Department, in 2002, estimated that domestically there were between 45,000 and 50,000 trafficked persons, but by 2004 drastically reduced the estimate to between 14,500 and 17,500; the Department of Justice criticized even those drastically reduced numbers in a report in 2005, noting a substantial discrepancy in comparison to the mere 611 victims who were discovered. None of these statistics are based on representative samples, yet the anti-sex-trafficking texts claim that reported statistics are underestimated (Soderlund 2011:4).

Statistics about trafficking from NGOs and government organizations about trafficking that vary drastically; in order to address this the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) compiled a database that compares these statistics on trafficking. UNESCO explains the effect that these statistics have:

When it comes to statistics, trafficking of girls and women is one of several highly emotive issues which seem to overwhelm critical faculties. Numbers take on a life of their own, gaining acceptance through repetition, often with little inquiry into their derivations. Journalists, bowing to the pressures of editors, demand numbers, any number. Organizations feel compelled to supply them, lending false precisions and spurious authority to many reports.

With so much conflicting information on such a controversial topic comparing this data is the first step in clarifying the information and statistics that exist about trafficking.

The project has produced several data sheets and graphs comparing statistics on such things as trafficking worldwide (1997-2009), price of a trafficking victim, profits from the trafficking industry, trafficker earnings per person, sex-worker earnings, and the
overall value of trafficking industry according estimates of trafficking victims worldwide, between 1997 and 2009, have varied according to different organizations reaching a high of more than 12 million in 2009 (see figure 1).

![Graph showing the trafficking in person worldwide estimates 1997-2009. From UNESCO Trafficking Statistics Project.](image)

There are only a few methods listed for estimating the number of trafficked people worldwide; they include Monte Carlo simulation and the Capture/Recapture method. The Monte Carlo simulation depends on quantitative criteria such as age and sex, while neglecting other criteria like “knowledge of migration network” and “cultural factors.” The Capture/Recapture method uses reported cases to estimate the total number of trafficking cases; the reliability of this estimation depends on the quality and quantity of case data. Agencies sometimes report statistics on trafficking that are combinations of
different governmental statistics; this is referred to as the “fragmented approach.”

Meanwhile other agencies and NGOs reported merely that a real number was difficult to assess. There are widely varying estimates on trafficking because there are different beliefs about what qualifies as trafficking, such as prostitution and migrant labor (UNESCO).

**Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)**

The TVPA is the United States legislation on trafficking and it was put in place specifically to help “severe” trafficking victims. The current definition of “severe” trafficking victims in the TVPA 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; or

B) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (U.S. Department of State, TVPA 2013:127, stat. 62).

The TVPA only protects the rights of victims who qualify under this definition, and who are willing to help the federal government prosecute traffickers.

The process of developing anti-trafficking legislation was underway when President Clinton was in office; however, Clinton left office before the TVPA was drafted and his administration was only able to oversee the most basic components before the end of his last term. The anti-trafficking legislation was overseen almost entirely by the Bush administration (Zimmerman 2010:84). Bush adopted human trafficking as a high priority human rights issue during his time as president. The TVPA is looked upon favorably by the public and international communities because the anti-trafficking
legislation is seen as helping people, and the moral ethos involved overwhelms the
American public with feelings of moral rectification despite lack of results. The reality is
that these efforts have made little impact on the problem (Soderlund 2011:207).

The Bush administration used religious and theological rhetoric in the campaign
against human trafficking, introducing sexual ideology that delegitimized sexual activity
outside of heterosexual marriage. Bush consistently used the term “evil” when referring
to the moral reprehensibility of human trafficking, implicating the moral issue with
trafficking that it was a sin rather than a human rights offense. In contrast with statements
of evil, Bush often used statements about human life as “a gift of our creator.” The Bush
administration would also speak of “rescuing women and children,” comparing women
and children to the Israelites in the biblical story of Moses and traffickers to the pharaoh.
The moral crusade against sex-trafficking allows the United States to appear as though it
were making humanitarian interventions at a lower cost; however the nature of these
interventions are extremely limited in scope (Zimmerman 2010:87).

Religious rhetoric and ideology used in the Bush administration have been
detrimental to the anti-trafficking movement. This religious justification for focusing on
sex-trafficking led to more power being given to constituencies who are poorly trained
and ill equipped to deal with trafficked people, such as the Office of Faith-Based and
Community Initiatives, which welcomed faith-based groups interested in anti-trafficking
work. The Faith-Based Community Initiative has been criticized for favoring grant
applications submitted by Christian organizations, despite claims that religious
affiliations does not affect consideration for grants. Although elimination of non-
Christian grant applications may not have been intentional, the group that gathered to
review the applications was overwhelmingly Christian. Over a four-year period, the State Department increased funding to faith-based anti-trafficking projects by 15% each year (Zimmerman 2010:88).

The TVPA used language that reflects cultural norms and assumptions about sex, making it a culturally significant document in the research of human trafficking. By conflating human trafficking and prostitution, the TVPA fueled the controversy over prostitution and sex work. Nationally, the TVPA instilled a greater social meaning on the term “sex-trafficking” by setting parameters in which trafficking should be understood, sometimes as broad as all sex-work. In this way, communities are able to redefine areas of the TVPA's policies to align with the views, norms, and assumptions held by those leading the anti-trafficking movements locally. Consequently, this has influenced laws and policies that affect trafficked people (Peters 2013:222).

The TVPA, as implemented by the United States, has directed anti-trafficking discourse away from migration or labor issues to focus primarily on prostitution as the main form of trafficking and women and children as the primary victims. Sex-trafficking is a major focus and it is often given a special “place” in the conception of human trafficking (Peters 2013:222). The focus on sex-trafficking ignores the widespread practice of trafficking people into exploitative work, such as agriculture, construction, domestic work, and other nonsexual labor (Chuang 2006:140). The assertion that prostitution and other forms of sex work are sex-trafficking lacks an empirical basis; it is merely a normative claim that has been repeated (Cheng 2011:483). Thus, anti-human trafficking movements have become predominately anti-sex-trafficking movements, focusing on prostitution, despite the fact that the most trafficking occurs in hospitality,
manufacturing, and service industries (Galusca 2012:4). Referring to prostitution as a form of sex-trafficking is a moralistic approach that ignores gendered poverty and does not consider poverty, hunger, or low wages equally as forms of structural violence against women (Soderlund 2005:71).

**Prostitution**

Human trafficking has been routinely conflated with prostitution and viewed as predominantly sex-trafficking (Cheng 2011:487). This is apparent in the United States’ TVPA which does not offer a category for unforced prostitution. Both the TVPA and the UN protocol give multiple definitions of human trafficking. The UN protocol on human trafficking capriciously refers to all commercial sex work as forced, but also distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary prostitution (US Department of State, TVPA 2013).

There are two dominant interpretations of the role prostitution plays in trafficking. The radical feminist discourse, also known as the feminist domination discourse, considers prostitution to be the embodiment of oppression against women. The prostitute is seen as a victim of sexual violence in need of help to escape. This viewpoint maintains that prostitution is forced by definition, considering poverty as a coercive factor in a woman's decision to prostitute. The second discourse on prostitution views it as a survival strategy that should be respected. This discourse acknowledges that women have sexual self-determination and a right to work as a prostitute, or rather, in this discourse, a “sex-worker.” The first type of discourse argues that the consequences of prostitution are
profound, while the second type of discourse argues that the problem is the stigmatization of prostitution (Outshoorn 2005:145).

Among the anti-prostitution groups some are more conservative than others. The conservative position in the anti-prostitution movement views prostitution as immoral because it is inappropriate; they believe that women's sexuality should be reserved for heterosexual marriage. The conservative anti-prostitution groups view the heterosexual nuclear family as a solution to trafficking, while the less conservative view patriarchy as a root cause for trafficking. Anti-prostitution conservatives are aligned heavily with anti-prostitution feminists to lobby for grants for victim services, prosecution of pimps, education of johns (clients of sex-workers), and reform of vice squads. Funding goes to groups with strong anti-prostitution rescue missions; these groups also wish to blacklist anti-trafficking organizations that do not condemn prostitution (Dragiewicz 2008:188-189).

Types of prostitution and sex work vary regionally, and since sex work and trafficking are linked, this is important in understanding the interpretations of trafficking activity (see Table 1). More recently, the main forms of prostitution in the West are brothel prostitution, street prostitution, and escort prostitution; this does not include other forms of prostitution that occur in strip clubs and other venues. There is an increase in the use of the Internet for escort prostitution, causing escort services to overtake brothels in the industry. Escort prostitution is harder to control and regulate. In escort prostitution, women tend to meet with men in hotel rooms and in their personal homes where there cannot be checks on safety or hygiene (Jeffreys 2010:211-226).
Table 1. Displays the types of sex work and businesses associated with regions in the United States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Types of Sex Work and Businesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Street prostitution, escort services, massage parlors, health clubs, brothels in hotels, rented houses and apartments and legitimate front businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro New York</td>
<td>Street prostitution, strip clubs, go-go bars, peep or fantasy booth shows, massage parlors, after-hours clubs, private apartments, hotels, escort services and makeshift operations in beauty parlors, restaurants and warehouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Midwest</td>
<td>High street prostitution activity, saunas, health clubs, strip clubs, bars, escort services, “chick shacks” (dwellings used for quick prostitution transactions) and brothels in migrant farm worker camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro San Francisco</td>
<td>Street prostitution, strip clubs, bars, adult entertainment theaters, pornography emporiums, massage parlors, escort services, private residences and rent-by-the-hour hotels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Massage parlors and brothels in urban and suburban areas as well as makeshift brothels in gambling halls, houses and trailers in isolated and rural farm worker camps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding types of sex work and venues that sex-workers occupy is crucial in understanding the motivations and definitions by which anti-sex-trafficking advocates operate. Many factors such as legal restrictions, social acceptance, cultural perceptions, and simply geography can influence the sex industry (Gomez 2001); the same can be said for the illegal sex-trafficking industry. It is possible to recognize that sex-trafficking occurs where sex work is legal and also where it is illegal without conflating sex work and sex-trafficking.


** Trafficking Victims

The process of providing resources and protections to victims requires that victims be identified. How the guidelines of victimhood are “translated” can alter the conception of what being a victim of trafficking entails. The terms used to describe prostitution and other forms of sex work shed light on the social and cultural beliefs that propagate the guidelines typically put in place by legislation. Cultural concepts, moral frameworks about sex, professional biases, and past experiences with trafficking, among other factors can influence how trafficking is perceived and understood. Service providers interviewed by Peters felt that they were acting in opposition to the anti-prostitution feminists; however, training for police officials and other agencies on trafficking, victims, and procedures was by anti-prostitution groups. This and other factors have caused a disconnect between recognizing real victims of trafficking and the prioritization of perceived trafficking victims (Peters 2013:235-237).

Translations of legislation perpetuate ideas about sex-workers. Sophie Day gave an example of one such translation that sex-workers should be “redeemed, rehabilitated, and reintegrated” in order to “learn to work properly” (Day 2009:2). She argued that this translation perpetuated the idea that sex work is not proper employment. Translations such as these have influenced the punitive measures against sex-workers, forcing them to stop defining what they do as “work.” The TVPA, for instance, defines sex-workers as victims, yet refuses to define what they experience as a crime, causing confusion among people translating this document into guidelines for resources. In this way, anti-trafficking activists are perpetuating a poor working environment. According to Day, “... It is through work that collective action has been organized since the 1970’s. Trade
unions and other associations have lobbied constantly for better conditions, legal reform, and measures to reduce stigma” (Day 2009:3).

Interpretations that identify a “victim” who needs saving, consequently find a “villain” who needs to be punished (Cheng 2011:485). In some cases, the villain is the trafficker or a pimp; in other scenarios a pimp can be seen as a victim as well. Often there is an argument about who is more of a villain: the pimp or the john.

The experiences of victims of sex-trafficking are often sensationalized in the media, encouraging the trafficking discourse to focus on sexual trafficking rhetoric. Films that represent human trafficking as sexual trafficking portray individuals' experiences, which they present as if they were genuine (Cheng 2011:418). Empirical evidence indicates that the cases of forced sexual labor are much more complicated than these films suggest, and feminist scholars and artists argue that the visual images representing women in films and other media degrade women by lessening their experiences (Rutvica Andrijasevic 2007:38). According to Jamie L. Small, “These films have resulted in highly sexualized narratives that justify themselves by continually referencing the realness and urgency of the social problems that they articulate” (Small 2013:439-440). Sexual trafficking detracts from trafficking as a whole and is sensationalized by the media (Galusca 2012:4).

The real, lived experiences of trafficking victims, in many ways, are at odds with perceptions that are derived from the TVPA. Victims of sexual trafficking are often prioritized as experiencing the more severe form of trafficking, reflecting the TVPA's emphasis on the trauma of sex-trafficking survivors as unique; however, Peters found that
sex-trafficking survivors listed similar reasons for their trauma as labor trafficking victims, such as isolation, deceit, fear, and threats to their family.

In an interview conducted by Peters with an immigration officer, the officer explained that the detrimental effect of trafficking on an individual's life is dependent on the perspectives of the person who experienced the trauma (Peters 2013:241). Different factors about an individual can influence their interpretation of what has happened. The interviewed officer explained that it depends on, “her [the victim's] own ideas about herself, her own resiliency, and her own ideas about sex.” This idea was confirmed by Peter’s subsequent research with trafficking survivors.

The Sex-worker

Despite some of the dominant discourse that conveys the belief that prostitution is inherently forced, there is evidence from around the world that demonstrates that prostitutes are capable of making the decision to enter the world of prostitution without coercion. Prostitutes in some countries are becoming organized, and others are even actively working to better their working environments. I will give examples from Argentina, France, and South Korea of sex-workers uniting for change. The legal circumstances that surround prostitution vary between countries, but what they have in common are instances of sex-workers organizing in order to preserve or improve their line of work.

In South Korea, around 2004, a series of laws were implemented that claimed to protect human rights and women working in the sex industry. The mass arrests of sex-workers that followed caused women to rise up and rally against the new laws.
Thousands of women showed up in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, for mass rallies, picketing, and sit-ins, and a dozen women even participated in a two-month hunger strike (Cheng 2011:476).

The Argentine Prostitutes Association, also known as Ammar, is a trade union for sex-workers in Latin America. In Argentina they are raising awareness for sex-worker's rights and the need for protection under the law by using graffiti on walls. These graffiti murals are on the corners of buildings. On one side appears to be a sex-worker, but when you turn the corner you see the whole picture: a woman holding on to a stroller or her child's hand (see Figures 2 and 3). According to an article online, Gerogina Orellano, an Ammar activist and former sex-worker, said “We wanted to show we are first of all women, mothers and breadwinners and then sex-workers and that we need laws to protect us. Some of us chose this work and there should be a legal framework for it. We need it to end marginalisation and to empower us.” Ammar helped to draft a bill to put sex-workers into a “self employed” category in order for sex-workers to qualify for rights under the law (Radu 2013).

France, in 2003, made the activities surrounding prostitution illegal, but prostitution itself is not. Men who solicit prostitutes can face legal repercussions. Although prostitution is not illegal, prostitutes were forced into hiding for the sake of their customer base. In 2010, lawmakers wanted to make brothels legal again, forbidding prostitutes to work independently. Hundreds of sex-workers marched and protested with signs that said things like “You sleep with us, you vote against us” (see Figure 4). Instead of legalizing brothels and limiting options for sex-workers, they want lawmakers to
legalize solicitation. Dozens of prostitutes marched and participated in a day-long conference for lawmakers in order to bring awareness to this situation (Purtill 2013).
In each of these countries women who chose to be sex-workers took charge, protesting in more than one way, in order to demonstrate that their right to be sex-workers was imposed upon. Human trafficking victims, while they are victims, are by definition incapable of doing this. Human trafficking victims can be sex-workers; however, sex-workers are not always human trafficking victims. By making prostitution and solicitation illegal, sex-workers are sent into hiding, either to protect themselves or their clients. Punitive measures have only made it more difficult to provide protections for sex-workers as well as for public health measures.

These specific instances of sex-workers unionizing and organizing are not exceptional cases, but just a few examples of many worldwide. There are international, national, and even local sex-worker unions. On the Sex Work Activists, Allies and You (SWAAY) website, there is a list of pro sex-worker organizations. There is even a widely
recognizable symbol that represents the struggle for sex-worker rights, a red umbrella (see Figure 5). The history of prostitution section of the SWAAY website begins by explaining that as sex work has been part of human culture for so long, it would be extraordinary if sex-workers had never spoken up against oppressive conditions and moral denunciations. There are sex-workers who write politically about sex work, sex-workers who write about the issues faced by sex-workers on the job, and sex-workers who write about pop culture representations of sex-workers, among other things; there are even sex-workers who are working to end sex-trafficking. There are sex-workers who are active in all parts of society.

Figure 5. Advertisement for International Day to End Violence Against Sex-workers with the international red umbrella symbol for sex-worker rights. Image from ugproi.com.

Sex-workers are professionals. One sex-worker, known as “Furry Girl,” is quoted as saying:

I love my job, but my website is a business, not a dating ad. I can't stress that enough. Don't go to a strip club if you have no money for tipping, don't call an escort because you're looking for a girlfriend, and don't email porn performers that you're not 'some kind of creep' who buys porn, but would be willing to take us out for dinner instead. The most annoying people I deal with are people who disrespect me by assuming that they are entitled to discounts and freebies because
they think they're 'too good' to pay for my services. Treat us like the professionals and small business owners that we are (SWAAY).

There is a link to a video that has sex-workers of all different backgrounds giving details about themselves such as “I am a Muslim,” “I like bacon,” and “I have two brothers” then immediately after stating, “I am also a sex-worker” (SWAAY). The video is meant to show that to a sex-worker, it is just another fact that makes up who they are.

**Pornography**

In a study done by Griffith et al. (2012) the authors studied what they referred to as “The Damaged Goods Hypothesis,” which is the common myth or stereotype that portrays pornography actresses as having suffered trauma as children in the form of sexual abuse resulting in psychological damage. The damaged goods hypothesis is based on multiple studies and research by Jennee Evans-DeCicco and Gloria Cowan. In one of their articles, entitled “Attitudes Toward Pornography and the Characteristics Attributed to Pornography and the Characteristics Attributed to Pornography Actors,” they discussed the attitudes toward pornography actors and actresses. One of the many conclusions they made is that there is a large discrepancy between beliefs about female pornography actresses and reality (2001:351-352). One opponent of pornography, Catharine A. Mackinnon, is mentioned and quoted in this article as saying “all pornography is made under conditions of inequality based on sex, overwhelmingly by poor, desperate, homeless, pimped women who were sexually abused as children” (Mackinnon 1993:20; cited in Evans-DeCicco and Cowan 2001:352)

Griffith et al. contested and questioned this research by surveying women in pornography about sexual beliefs and attitudes, self-esteem, quality of life, and alcohol
and drug use. The results were used to examine the stereotypical perceptions that pornography actresses are victims of sexual abuse and are psychologically unhealthy. They concluded that the actresses did not suffer from more sexual abuse than the general public, suffered less from self esteem issues than the general public, and reported higher rates of sexual satisfaction and spirituality (2012:7-8).
METHODS

After gaining IRB approval (study approval number 13-0085) on September 7, 2012, I carried out research at several different agencies that are associated with the Kitchen Inc. including: One Door, a central intake program; Safe to Sleep, a women’s overnight homeless shelter; the Rare Breed, an outreach program for homeless and at-risk youth; two homeless resource centers, Bill’s Place and the Veterans Come Home Center. I observed the agencies that work in conjunction with One Door in order to better understand the programs and services that One Door clients can access. Michelle, who is in charge of One Door, gave me a list of agencies that would be easy to access. I spent more time at agencies where I could interact with clients in depth; this is where I could feel more useful. While visiting these places I also had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with clients. I have seen many of the clients from One Door at these other agencies. I also attended trafficking meetings at Community Partnership of the Ozarks and religiously oriented meetings about trafficking as the opportunity presented itself. I met with people who are familiar with sex-workers, homeless populations, and other perceived at-risk groups. I worked with individuals who are homeless at several local agencies, as well as under-aged youth, all of whom are perceived as being at-risk for trafficking or having experienced being trafficked.

I used an ethnographic approach for my research. The ethnographic method is the best method to study human trafficking, for several reasons: 1) perceptions of human trafficking vary wildly between individuals, 2) most human trafficking occurs covertly and 3) information gathered through informal conversation can hold valuable information about discourse and rhetoric. An ethnographic approach has been best suited to study
human trafficking in the area is best suited to understand the diverse view points from various agencies, organizations, and groups working toward ending trafficking in Springfield. This method has also proven useful working with individuals who have experienced trafficking or who are perceived as having been trafficked, due to the fact that many of these individuals do not identify with or use the term “human trafficking” when speaking of their own experiences.

I used participant observation at meetings and at local agencies that work with the homeless and other at-risk populations. Some of the meetings I attended are the human trafficking meetings held monthly at Community Partnership of the Ozarks (CPO), meetings held monthly at the Heartland Covenant Church, conferences held at universities, and a showing of the documentary Sex & Money at both the Heartland Covenant Church and another sponsored showing at Missouri State University. I also spent time with several other organizations where trafficking is discussed on a daily basis. I gathered more detailed information from individuals in casual conversations, in-depth interviews, and life histories. I interviewed people who are involved with the anti-trafficking movement in Springfield. I did life histories with people who are perceived as being trafficked, as well as individuals who identify or have been identified as experiencing trafficking. I conducted interviews with trafficked and perceived trafficked individuals.

For my internship, in the summer of 2012, I spent over 200 hours at organizations that work with homeless and individuals at-risk for being trafficked. Over the fall semester I spent twenty to forty hours per week at these organizations, trafficking meetings, and conferences.
One of the potential limitations of this study is that some of the populations I wanted to work with can be difficult to access. Most sex-workers working of their own volition, as well as people who have experienced trafficking, desire privacy. I respected the privacy of individuals who did not wish to be interviewed, and used the information from willing participants in the study to the fullest extent.
STUDY SITES AND POPULATIONS

Populations

**One Door.** One Door is a central intake agency that was associated with the Kitchen Inc. but is not part of the Community Partnership of the Ozarks. It is in the process of becoming the only intake agency in Greene County. They offer a range of services such as assessments to get into the Missouri Hotel, but other services are as simple as providing single diapers to clients with infants. There is nothing that they will not try to do for a person in need. For my internship I initially worked with One Door, observing what services One Door provides to clients and attending services and interactions.

**Safe to Sleep.** Safe to Sleep is a temporary, overnight homeless shelter for women run by Council of Churches. At Safe to Sleep I spent many nights as an overnight volunteer. I was expected to monitor the women overnight along with at least one other volunteer. Duties included handing out bedding and supplies, putting out dinner and breakfast, being a mediator in case of disagreements, and ensuring that all the women are safe. I signed up for as many overnights as possible in the month of July and the beginning of August. Typically I would volunteer about 36-48 hours (3-4 nights) a week at Safe to Sleep. Safe to Sleep has given me the most valuable experiences.

The shelter had been in operation for less than one year, so many of the women still recalled what it was like sleeping on the streets. Many still carry knives and other forms of protection. It is routine to ask the women to give their weapons to the volunteers overnight, but the women can request these items to be returned in the morning when leaving.
While spending time at Safe to Sleep, I was able to have in-depth discussions with the women about living on the streets as well as their personal stories and how they became homeless. Some of these stories from the women have also led to interesting discussions at trafficking meetings, as well as private discussions with the director of One Door.

At times situations can get frustrating for the volunteers, especially on nights where there are twenty or more women who need things out of rooms they are not allowed to occupy. A majority of the women I interacted with suffer from mental and psychological disabilities, sometimes along with physical disabilities. This has caused many disagreements, especially as the women have varying levels of maturity. There are women who are bullies and pick fights with other women. This is sometimes due to age and other times mental illness.

The Rare Breed. The Rare Breed is an outreach center and program for youth up to the age of twenty-one. It is an agency of The Kitchen Inc., which oversees several programs and is affiliated with many of the programs offered to the homeless and those in need. Roughly 40% of the youth who attend identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or queer (LGBTQ). I have seen some of the women who attend the Rare Breed spend nights at Safe to Sleep, but the program has its own shelter for teens called the Transitional Living Place, also known as the TLP. This program is similar to that of the Missouri Hotel (also run by the Kitchen Inc.), but there are some differences in requirements. One of those differences is that the Missouri Hotel requires the residents to work 40 hours a week at a job or in the shelter. The TLP requires that their residents spend 40 hours per week bettering themselves, whether that be taking GED courses,
going to counseling, going to different themed meetings throughout the week, or volunteering in some way.

During my internship I spent about ten to twenty hours per week volunteering at the Rare Breed. My duties were mainly mentoring; I would spend time with youth and answer questions or have discussions with them. If the youth needed any of the resources the Rare Breed offered I would get one of the facilitators to help them. At The Rare Breed there is always something to be done. The youth who attend The Rare Breed are asked to do a lot of the cleaning and organizing chores, and this gave me many opportunities to work along side the youth while getting to know them. Some things that I participated in cleaning, putting up clothes, and helping with dinner, along with the youth who attend.

Bill's Place and The Veterans Coming Home Center (Vet Center). Bill's Place and the Vet Center both offer laundry services, bathrooms, water, mailing services, lockers, and much more. At the Vet Center people can access the Internet, but some of them preferred to use the computer services at the public library two blocks away. At Bill's Place and The Vet Center I spent time with clients outside and found this more beneficial and informative for my own research. Bill's Place is a very common hangout for many homeless people. Many of the women I met at Safe to Sleep spent time at both these facilities during the day. My experiences there were mostly limited to interactions outside with clients of other services I knew. The services that Bill's Place and the Vet Center provide are essential in connecting the homeless population with the resources they need to get other resources. For instance a viable place to receive mail is necessary
to get welfare benefits, such as food stamps, disability, and cash assistance from the government.

Locations of Trafficking Meetings

**Community Partnership of the Ozarks (CPO).** The CPO is an organization that is comprised of other organizations and programs that are community oriented. One Door is now housed in the CPO building as well. They hold monthly human trafficking meetings that I attended for my research. Leaders from different organizations and groups in Springfield were welcome to attend the meetings.

**Heartland Covenant Church.** The Heartland Covenant Church is a church in Springfield that has decided to focus their efforts on raising awareness about and fighting human trafficking. Heartland also holds a public monthly human trafficking meeting that I attended. The same group from Heartland Covenant Church that holds the trafficking meeting held a conference they called “Stand Against Trafficking” on November 27th, 2012. The conference had leaders in the anti-trafficking movement from around the US, including: Kristy Childs, founder of an organization to end sex-trafficking called Veronica's Voice; Michael Bartel, organizer of an effort to end human trafficking called FREE International; and Joyce Vogt, a chairperson and consultant for the Board for Well-Founded Hope, a ministry in Arizona focused on life restoration for women who are victims of sex-trafficking.
FINDINGS

Vulnerable Populations

Substance abuse is a risk factor in being trafficked. While at Bill's Place I observed as a worker tried to explain to one woman that her trust in the man who was watching her-stuff was a set up for a dangerous situation. The woman had been complaining to the worker that her medication, a highly addictive painkiller, had been stolen for the second time while she was hanging out with people she had just met. Her trust in the people she hardly knew was a set-up for her pills to get stolen, but it is possible she was trying to get more pills because she was abusing them, which I was told was more likely in this scenario.

Homeless youth are particularly vulnerable to trafficking; most are not mature enough to make responsible decisions and do not have the parental guidance needed at this age. One instance of trafficking that has been brought up repeatedly at trafficking meetings, is youth who get involved with magazine sales. These magazine troupes recruit people to travel around the country selling bogus magazine subscriptions for made-up prizes; often these people do not get paid and end up stranded far away from “home.” There was one instance of a person I had met at the Rare Breed getting stranded in New York City and it was brought to my attention that there is a hotline they give to the youth that can only be used once in their life in order to get a bus ticket home.

LGBTQ youth are also more at risk for homelessness, and consequently trafficking, because their parents are more likely to disagree with the minor's lifestyle. While working with One Door, I helped create new rules in order to accept women who identify as men and men who identify as women into the women's shelter. Unfortunately,
the representative of the Council of Churches, which runs the Safe to Sleep program, dismissed the new rules without discussion. Although less common in the LGBTQ community, there is a growing number of people who identify as transgendered or queer, and many will “age out” of the Rare Breed program, meaning they will be unable to attend because they will be too old. This portion of the LGBTQ group is particularly at risk for violence, because of the lack of social acceptance. There are too few men's shelters to meet the need in the community, but the risk of placing a transgendered male-to-female in a men's shelter is insulting to the individual who identifies as female, as well as dangerous. Most if not all, the shelters are run by religious organizations that deny all LGBTQ any sort of assistance. Allowing women who identify as men to stay in the women's shelter is a last resort, as there are not enough men's shelters available. This puts LGBTQ individuals at a greater risk for trafficking.

**Encounters with Trafficking**

During my internship I heard several anecdotal stories and encountered situations that have been discussed at meetings as forms of trafficking. There are young men at the Rare Breed experiencing labor trafficking who are hired to strip old cars of parts for below minimum wage. I heard other stories of men coercing women on Commercial Street to steal things from stores for them, as well as convincing women to come live with them somewhere in order to trap them and sell them for sex. Women who are new to the streets are warned about dangerous men, and I have witnessed some of these behaviors from men at the drop-in centers. I have witnessed women being friendly with men they have just met, asking them to watch their bags and other favors; this has been
discussed at the trafficking meetings as behaviors that lead to being a victim of sex trafficking.

A young girl named Rachel, whom I met at Safe to Sleep, had been a part of a program called “Teen Challenge.” Rachel's situation was disturbing to me. She was part of a program that recruits people to pay to be in the program, and generally these are people who are recovering from drugs, alcohol, or have behavioral issues. According to Rachel and some others I have talked to about the program, upon arrival they are routinely signed up for food stamps, but never see their food stamp benefits, other than the meals provided by the program. They spend Sunday through Wednesday devoting themselves to God and Thursday through Saturday working in a woodworking shop. At the wood shop they create merchandise such as wooden emblems of crosses that are sold on the streets to “pay” for their living in the program's facilities. After one month of a thirteen-month program, Rachel decided that the program was not for her. When she asked to leave they dropped her off at the bus station with no money to get home. To me this signaled a situation where she was given the illusion that she could “leave,” but they set her up to fail and have to return to the program. When One Door called the Teen Challenge program, they accepted responsibility to buy Rachel a bus ticket home, but had not previously offered one before being confronted. I have seen several other young women come through the Safe to Sleep shelter who were in the process of getting signed up for Teen Challenge.

At the monthly human trafficking meeting at CPO I brought up Rachel, but to be honest I brought it up to gauge the reactions of the people in attendance at the meeting. The Heartland Church, which has members that attend the CPO human trafficking
meeting, thought it sounded suspicious and should be reported. It was not brought up again. The situation was disconcerting and I felt that there were definite ethical boundaries that were being crossed by the Teen Challenge program. If the committee felt that the magazine sales were trafficking, then the committee must be giving the Teen Challenge program the benefit of the doubt simply because they are a religious organization.

**Local Service Agencies**

Statistics reported at meetings in Springfield routinely come from national data that are questionable. Area statistics are estimated based on the number of homeless combined with statistics about poverty levels in order to prove there is a problem with trafficking in the area. Administrators from agencies interested in the problem are encouraged to give anecdotal evidence of local trafficking stories and from personal encounters with clients. Local stories have included a scenario where a man sexually exploited a mentally handicapped woman for years and another where a family was sexually trafficking their under-aged son for money. Both of these stories were reported by local news agencies, both are sex-trafficking related, and both are sensational.

Among the groups meeting in Springfield to combat trafficking, there are many interpretations of what is considered trafficking. The more religious groups have identified prostitution, all forms of pornography, and strip clubs as targets for their efforts. The Heartland Covenant Church is an example of one of these religious activist groups and put on the “Stand Against Trafficking” conference described earlier. At the this conference the only form of trafficking discussed was sex-trafficking, the only
information handed out was on sex-trafficking, and the speakers, although some were presented as working to end trafficking as a whole, spoke only about sex-trafficking. Representatives from different interest groups in the Springfield area attended the conference. At the conference a pamphlet was handed out with information that was presented as “facts” and “myths,” none of which were actually facts and myths, but rather moralistic opinions, such as, “Pornography, stripping/exotic dancing/lap dancing are almost always prostitution” (see appendix). This information was obtained from a website called “Prostitution Research & Education,” maintained by an NGO founded by Dr. Melissa Farley, a research and clinical psychologist, known for her role efforts as an anti-prostitution and anti-pornography activist. Farley's research has been criticized by scholars for her methods as well as biased and inflammatory comments about prostitution and other forms of sex work.

The Heartland Covenant Church group invited guest speakers from organizations around the U.S. known for their efforts against trafficking. These agencies, largely religious, focused particularly on sex-trafficking. One speaker showed images from Backpage, an Internet website that has an escort section, of girls who appeared to be young, but claimed to be eighteen years of age or older. The speaker accused the girls of being underage, although this was only speculation, and emphasized the fact that these were images from the Springfield area Backpage website. These images were presented along with the “fact” that all pornography and sex work is trafficking and the “statistic” that most girls enter the world of prostitution at the age of fourteen. At the conference there were representatives from local agencies, who later repeated the statistics and facts.
There has been a push toward educating more social service agencies, police agencies, faith-based organizations, and other not-for-profits about trafficking. Locally, there have been meetings, movie showings, and conferences with guest speakers from organizations around the U.S. in order to spread awareness in the Springfield area in hopes of increasing the resources available to trafficking victims. By providing services to homeless women, such as the Safe to Sleep shelter, Springfield advocates hope to keep women of all ages, who are in need, from engaging in prostitution as survival sex. The coordinator of Safe to Sleep claimed (email to Safe to Sleep volunteers, November 1st, 2012), “We continue to get stories of our women who's lives are changed by having this safe place. Know that you are preventing drinking, drugs, prostitution, sickness, violence and maybe even the death of one of these women!” (Email to Safe to Sleep volunteers, November 1st, 2012).

Representatives from nonreligious agencies serving low-income families and homeless people have expressed concerns in Springfield about instances of trafficked workers in service industries and in scandalous magazine sales troupes. There has been an even greater focus on the homeless community, particularly homeless youth. However, most of the research on homeless youth cited by the United States government is more than a decade old, before human trafficking was connected with homelessness, survival sex, or underage prostitution. There have been instances of under-aged girls who have prostituted themselves, or been prostituted by others, but because of their age they are considered trafficked even if they feel they made the decision. The Rare Breed, a youth outreach center, has reportedly encountered cases of youth engaging in survival sex.
An activist group working to end trafficking, known as Night Light International, has a location in Branson and is strategically placed to reach out to Branson, Ozark, and Springfield. On the website terms such as “restoration” and phrases such as “We want them to know they are valuable” are used when speaking of working with strippers in the tri-state area. According to their website this organization chose the Tri-Lakes area for their campaign because of three risk factors: 1) it has a high drug production rate, 2) 30% of families live below the poverty line, and 3) there are two national airports within 50 miles of each other. Their main campaign is working with strippers. They refer to as “dark places” where these women are “trapped” and “broken.” The main campaign they have is working to “mentor” strippers. The prevention team also works with at-risk children by “breaking the cycles of poverty and single parent homes…”

**Church Involvement**

At every organization I worked with for my internship, churches were heavily involved and have a major influence on services. Each day, at the Rare Breed, meals are provided by churches. These churches regularly sign up for certain days to provide a meal, and other recruited churches fill the remaining days. Safe to Sleep, while initiated by One Door, has been adopted by the Council of Churches, which is in charge of all the activities of the overnight shelter. Churches host the Safe to Sleep shelter seasonally, changing the location every few months. The churches provide showers, laundry facilities, a kitchen, and a gym with fold-up beds. Cook's Kettle provides hot meals for anyone who is willing to listen to a sermon. Very rarely did I hear about women who do not want to listen to the sermon at Cook's Kettle; typically, if women do not eat there, it
is the quality of the food that deters them. Cook’s Kettle is the location where the Safe to Sleep bus picks the women up to take them to the overnight shelter. The women I encountered all have professed or alluded to being Christian; they make comments about being right with god and request arrangements to go to church. The administrator of the Safe to Sleep shelter at the Council of Churches has come to the shelter to read Christian devotional readings that she felt were particularly meant to be read to the women.

**Local Media**

On October 8th, 2012 a Springfield KY3 news story and article reported that local advocates say that teenagers in the area are “absolutely victims of sex-trafficking.” According to the article online, a local advocate named Taft said “It's our job to teach them that there are resources for that and you don't always have to make a bad choice. You can make a good choice and there are resources in the community to stay away from things like this” (Forhetz 2012). During an informal conversation between a director at the Rare Breed and myself, she explained that she frequently browsed the escort section of Backpage in order to find young women from the Rare Breed center. Once she found their advertisements she would approach the girls and confront them.

The same KY3 article on October 8th mentions the Heartland Covenant Church group that is bringing awareness to sex-trafficking in Springfield. This is the same church group that hosts a trafficking meeting in their facilities, one of which I attended on November 6, 2012, where I was introduced to Mindy Stewart of Night Light International. Stewart spoke at this meeting about what Night Light in Branson would be doing and gave a talk about trafficking.
In a local KY3 story, on August 27th, 2013, Stewart was interviewed and quoted on the nature of prostitution arrests in Nixa. In the news story, the topic was introduced by saying, “We often think of human trafficking, or the sex slave trade...” Many times “human trafficking” is used interchangeably with “sex-trafficking.” Night Light, a religious organization, and Stewart herself believe that prostitution is always trafficking. The first sentence that introduces Stewart in the corresponding article states “Mindy Stewart works with Night Light Branson, an organization that helps so-called prostitutes get out of that line of work.” The next sentence after introducing Stewart gives a version of a highly disputed fact: “The average age of entry is as young as thirteen years old.” This striking, yet disputed, “fact” has been repeated at meetings, conferences, and training sessions with little to no supporting evidence.

The article on the KY3 website concludes with the question: “So how big of a problem is it here? It's big enough that the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI just did a training with local law enforcement on identifying sex traffic cases.” Mindy (who has had a total of six clients, or victims of trafficking referred to her) then discusses a phone call about a “potential” case of sex-trafficking. The article explains that Branson and Ozark police attended the training, while Springfield and Nixa said they have had training in the past, as if this were evidence of a sex-trafficking problem.

**Individual Perceptions**

In order to understand how the people in Springfield who are working to end trafficking, understand trafficking, I asked several of them to do a brief writing exercise, also known as a personal documentation. This consisted of three questions designed to
solicit responses about conceptions of trafficking. The three questions were: 1) What is human trafficking? 2) Why should we try to stop human trafficking? and 3) How can human trafficking be stopped?

I asked responses of people who are involved in the anti-trafficking movement because these are people who are actively attending conferences and actively participating in meetings where trafficking is being defined. Their definitions influence the policies they will create and affect the resources they will provide and to whom. Of the fifteen responses I got, several are people I have discussed previously or people from groups I have discussed who are leaders in the community working to end trafficking; respondents include: the director of Safe to Sleep, an administrator with AIDS Project of the Ozarks (APO), facilitators at the Rare Breed, a representative from Nightlight International, and a representative of the Victims Center.

Most responses to the first question offer definitions of trafficking (see Appendix A for the full responses). Many of the definitions listed contain key words like slavery, “force, fraud, or coercion,” and exploitation. “Force, fraud, and coercion” is an official phrase that is included in laws. Answers to the first question include: low wage labor or slavery; exploitation or for financial gain; removing freedom of choice; force, fraud, or coercion; the purchase of a person; and minors in the sex industry. Exploitation or for financial gain was most frequently listed in the definitions of human trafficking. Second was force, fraud, or coercion. The third most frequent responses were not being compensated fairly for a job (slavery), tied with the use of force and coercion against a person. The least frequent definitions were the purchase of another human and minors in the sex industry. A few risk factors were listed in some of the definitions were: poverty,
homelessness, risky behaviors, sudden loss, immigrants, low-income, lack of education, and being a woman or a child.

Several responses listed facts such as “Human trafficking happens globally, and is the third largest illegal commodity,” this “industry” makes approximately $32 billion per year, and “sex-trafficking (being forced to have sex with up to 40 people a day)...” The first two are disputed and contradicted by other facts and figures, while the third “fact” was a rather bizarre claim by a facilitator at the Rare Breed who is particularly interested in the movement against human trafficking in Springfield. Facts such as these are repeated frequently at meetings and conferences.

In response to the second question, “Why should we try to stop human trafficking?” the main responses were that it is a human right's violation, a legal issue, it is a moral issue, or that it was simply wrong because it is slavery. Several responses to the second question also focused specifically on sex-trafficking, such as “they are forced into a vicious reality of sexual exploitation. It usually does not allow a person out, in which they are caught in a cycle of sexual violence for the remainder of their lives,” and “At the very least they have the ability to make their own decision and not be stolen and forced to have sex for someone else's profit or worse.” Other responses explain prostitution as sex-trafficking, using common religious rhetoric and terminology such as “strips people of their dignity and self worth” and “It leaves a person an empty shell whose value is determined by the profit they make off their body. Human trafficking is an abomination to our society.” The representative of the Victims Center discussed labor rights in her response: “We have rights in the United States as working citizens. We have labor laws that protect us, whether we are citizens or foreign nationals. Also, the 13th
amendment to the US Constitution outlaws slavery and involuntary servitude...” Most responses discuss ethics and human rights violations. “Modern day slavery” was a common response for this specific question.

In response to the third question, “How can human trafficking be stopped?” the three main responses (with some respondents giving more than one response) were: education or awareness, punitive interventions, and advocating for victims. Education was the most frequently listed response. Some respondents wrote “to educate people at risk,” others want to educate the community to bring awareness to the issue, and some listed both. Punitive measures were mentioned in a variety of ways, such as “better laws,” “stronger repercussions for perpetrators,” and “stricter laws.” Two responses discussed a popular theme in anti-trafficking efforts, which is supply and demand: “It can only be stopped if the buyer stops buying and the seller stops selling.” Another response said “Education allows us to create awareness, and decrease demand which will decrease supply.”

Some responses focused specifically on sex-trafficking, such as “...Only if a victim finds holistic healing (in every aspect of their life) can they find complete freedom from what they have endured. The average return rate for someone leaving the sex industry is up to seven times. This is because they must find complete healing before they will not return to what is familiar.” However, several responses also discussed labor trafficking: “...most people do not consider manual labor nor do they consider that trafficking happens in the United States.” Another response, again from the representative of the Victims Center, which touches on both labor and sex-trafficking is: “We must be able to organize as workers. Consumers should not consume so much.
Those that hire domestic aide workers must be educated and engaged with regard to the practices of the agencies which provide the bodies who do said services. We must all be held accountable. Hotels should disclose which agencies they use for staff. As well as nail salons, spas, casinos, tours, housekeeping, home health care providers, etc. And then, we must stop putting so much emphasis on sexual gratification or make prostitution legal, allow sex-workers to form unions, to provide insurance, to maintain records of johns.”

Perceived Trafficking Victims

The following are informal interviews with people who have been considered, or could be perceived as being, trafficked by groups working to end trafficking in Springfield.

Brenda. I interviewed this young woman because she is homeless and has multiple sexual partners that she meets up with at many of the homeless hangouts, such as the VA and Bill's Place, before going back to their houses. She is not a prostitute and explained to me that she does stay at their houses when she wants somewhere to stay, but that is not why she has sex with them. This scenario is interesting because it is one that the trafficking board has indicated is “trafficking,” unbeknownst to the person being trafficked.

At the time that I met her she was in a new relationship with a man who was also homeless. She referred to him as her husband. I later learned that he was not her husband legally and that she had only been in a relationship with the man for a few weeks. A few months later they broke up, after she decided he was violent. During the interview she told me how much she still loves him.
I asked her how her sexual encounters happen. Brenda explained that men would ask her if she wants to stay the night, she says yes and goes home with them. She also told me she believes she is addicted to sex. At the time that she met her now ex-boyfriend, Steve, she was married to another man, but they did not have much to do with each other. She also has three kids that she does not see regularly. Before her latest relationship, which lasted two months, she has been involved with four or five other men who were more “friends with benefits.” She told me she met them by just “walking around; they say, 'what's up girl!', and I'm like, fine.” She explained it took a few days before they started sleeping together.

During the interview Brenda told me about a prostitute she knows who gets in cars with men, takes their money and then runs, but Brenda said this particular girl enjoys being a prostitute. This prostitute lives on the streets, does drugs, and does not want to get a job or change her life. This was interesting to me because there are people who believe Brenda is prostituting herself or using survival sex and it seemed Brenda was defending her own lifestyle by describing a young woman who was in a more indigent situation.

**Kat.** Kat used to strip at different strip clubs, driving as far as Dallas, Texas to strip on the weekends to make more cash. Currently she is not stripping because she got into some legal trouble for transporting drugs, and she has to have a steady job as part of her agreement to keep her from going back to jail.

Kat started stripping when she won a few wet t-shirt contests and thought she would try stripping to make money. Since she had just moved out of her parent's house with her boyfriend and they had nothing for their own place, she saw the benefit of earning quick cash as a stripper.
She got her first stripping job when she was drunk at a strip club and her boyfriend asked the manager to give her an “audition.” She told me the story that she was so nervous she forgot to take her clothes off during her audition dance. She felt that she had as many positive experiences as negative ones with stripping; she really enjoyed the compliments that she got. She explained that her experiences depended on what club she was at; some clubs attracted people who were generally less respectful, while at other clubs she could have fun with the patrons. Kat did not feel she had to use drugs to strip, and did not use drugs while she was on the job, but recreationally outside of work she would.

In Dallas she could bring home about $1200 for a weekend. Kat felt that a lot of the girls in her area stripped because there weren't a lot of job opportunities. Some of the benefits of stripping as a job were that there was not a strict schedule and she could come in as she pleased; she couldn't imagine having a job where you are scheduled and have to be in at a certain time or day and work. When I asked her about the general idea that women who work in these establishments are being devalued, she said she likes to think that those people are just jealous and wish they were up there dancing. She never felt in danger stripping herself, but she had heard stories, specifically an instance in Memphis, Tennessee where a stripper was being attacked and the bouncers didn't do anything about it.

The only other time that Kat stopped stripping was while she was pregnant and after she had her son and was nursing him for the first year. She was part of a welfare program that paid her bills while she did that, but she was tired of being broke so she
went back to stripping. Kat said it's a hard lifestyle to leave because she had never learned any other skills and had no other work experience.

Currently Kat works at Papa Murphy's. She is not sure she will go back to stripping because of the pressure from her family not to, but she misses the income that it brought in and the flexibility. She said she might go back to save up money because some day she wants to open her own bakery.

**Tara.** This interview became more of a life history about how this young girl ended up in her current living situation at Isabelle's house. She began her life story with the fact that she was a product of incest, between her mother and her mother's cousin, who were forced into having sex by Tara's grandmother. Tara was exposed to many instances of sexual and physical abuse from her mother's family and her mother's boyfriends.

Tara has a long history of drug abuse and other criminal activities including prostitution. She first engaged in prostitution at the age of 14, when she ran away from home. She continues to use prostitution as a means to get by when she is financially in need. Tara has also made and sold drugs for money. She has also been involved in the "magazine sales scams," as described earlier. More than a few times she travelled to other states to sell magazine subscriptions.

At the time of the interview, Tara was living at Isabelle's house after a short relationship she had with a meth cook who became abusive. She was going to outpatient rehab and had not used meth in several weeks.

This is an example of someone being trained from a young age to engage in prostitution. Her grandparents, who sometimes recorded the events, often initiated the
sexual abuse in Tara's family. When other family members sexually abused her, Tara was
told that nothing could be done about it because “it's family.”

From Tara's perspective, blood family was considered most important; she would
often “sacrifice” herself so that her younger siblings would not be victims of the sexual
abuse. Tara's stepfather, who was the biological father of one of her siblings, favored the
child who was biologically his. The biological child was allowed to shower more often,
eat more food, and have more clothes than the other children. The family members who
sexually abused Tara never faced consequences, because they were family.

The Tara put a strong emphasis on transportation as a reason for many of her
actions. For example, she stole cars to run away. When she was living in a homeless
shelter she used prostitution as a way to stay with men who had cars. She joined the
magazine sale scams in order to travel out of the state.

**Hannah.** I was at the Rare Breed when I was approached by a young woman after
telling some other people about my thesis project. She wanted to share her experience of
being an underage prostitute in Hawaii.

Hannah explained that she had been kicked out of her home at the age of 14. She
felt that she was seeking negative attention and her parents were unhappy with her
behavior. She lived in a homeless shelter where she met other young girls who sold their
bodies and she learned how to do it by watching them. Hannah began using drugs. She
charged $150 for a half hour or $200 for an hour and spent her money mostly on drugs.
She claimed to have seen up to 40 customers on a good Friday night but sometimes fewer
than 10 customers on a Monday. She has not practiced prostitution in Springfield or used
drugs since she came here. She is currently pregnant and lives with her boyfriend and his mother. Her boyfriend's mother currently sells marijuana.

What I found interesting about this particular interview is that she compared being a prostitute to being in prison, but the only way to get out of prostitution was to get locked up or have a probation officer help you get on your feet. She often threatens to prostitute herself again when she feels that she is in a bad position, like her current living conditions. She does not foresee actually prostituting herself, but claims she is too lazy to get a real job. She feels that men seek out prostitutes because of the way prostitutes walk and dress. She described the older prostitutes in Hawaii as being confident women who had skills and techniques for picking up men. She has acquaintances (not “friends” because she says you can't trust a prostitute) that are prostitutes in Springfield and disagrees with them about what prostitution is. She believes it is a degrading practice, while they “enjoy it.” She says these acquaintances are 21 years old and older. While she practiced prostitution in Hawaii, the average age of the prostitutes she knew was around 14 years old; the youngest was 10 years old, but there were women in their 30's and older that she encountered.

**Natalie.** Natalie grew up on a reservation and receives money from the government for being Native American. I met Natalie when I called 911 for a woman who was passed out (from drugs and alcohol) on the sidewalk near the square. Only halfway through the interview did I realize I was talking to a woman (this is important because it lead into some questions about sexual orientation and gender identification). The woman who was passed out was picked up by the police, I am unsure what happened to her after this.
Natalie was visibly upset about the woman's passing out, but left the scene when the woman's husband (significant other?) told her to leave since she was also somewhat intoxicated and younger than 21.

During the interview, Natalie and I were interrupted several times by people who wanted a cigarette or a drink of alcohol that she had stashed in her backpack. She intimately kissed and hugged several girls that I knew from the Rare Breed. The other girls did not seem to mind these interactions with Natalie.

Natalie explained to me that the woman had passed out from drinking and drugs because she was upset that her kids were taken away from her by DFS (Division of Family Services). Natalie said this woman and her husband were her “adopted parents,” that they took her under their wing when she became homeless. This had only been for the last month or so.

Natalie was kicked out of her parents' and then her uncle's house for being “the way she is.” She told me this was hard for her because she can't change this. I asked her what she meant by “the way she is.” She explained that she likes girls and that it also had to do with her having a drinking problem and a drug problem. I asked her further about gender identification, whether that was part of the reason for her parent's lack of acceptance, but she never gave me a clear answer.

I asked Natalie about her kissing and being intimate with several girls on the square and asked if they were dating and she said no, that they were all “close.” She then talked about sleeping with men for drugs. The men that she was referring to were also homeless and lived in the homeless camps around Springfield.
The interview was cut short because she had to leave with people going to get dinner at a church. Natalie said she would be at the square again soon, but I did not see her again after that. This formal interview was not very long and she was hesitant to talk to me. I feel I gained much more information from the casual talks we had that were not formal interviews.

**Paula.** I met Paula at Safe to Sleep and after several encounters and casual conversations we had a more formal interview. This summary draws on the recorded interview, as well as notes about her life from casual conversations. I was interested in her experience with homelessness. She had been homeless many times before and after she spent some time in prison. At some point she got her life somewhat together, but lost it all again when she became homeless. She lost her job and eventually lost her home after developing a drinking problem. The first few nights she slept outside before finding Safe to Sleep.

She described feeling unsafe sleeping on the streets at night. She had a few experiences with weird men who were also homeless. She explained to me that the homeless camps were typically men and in her experience they were aggressive toward women.

Some of the more interesting things she talked about during previous conversations, that I wrote in a journal, had to do with privacy. She was concerned about people knowing her name because, she explained, some of the women were vindictive and could use the information against her in different ways, such as turning her in for welfare fraud, or finding out she has a warrant for her arrest. The director of Safe to Sleep
was not open to the idea of allowing pseudonyms and did not understand the purpose, but One Door routinely allowed women to use fake names if they felt uncomfortable.

What is interesting to me about this is the very real threat that this woman (and several other women) felt from other women. The Safe to Sleep director did not understand that this could be an issue because she runs Safe to Sleep as a place for women to be safe from men, not other women.

**Patricia.** I met Patricia on the square during the First Friday art walk. She was barefoot and had a hula-hoop. She explained she took the bus down to the square for the Art Walk event and that she hula-hoops in front of the crowds for tips. Patricia was complaining about a cop who had come to disperse the crowd that was forming.

I interviewed Patricia because she had been homeless fairly recently and uses her body in order to make money. She had found a place to live, but still came to the square to make tips while hula hooping. She did not hesitate to discuss how money was not the main motivation for her, but it was more the artistic expression.

I asked Patricia about the people who observed her hula-hooping performance. I was curious because some of the women I had talked to who had been strippers and/or prostitutes described the discomfort they felt while performing for “creepy” men and men they were not attracted to. Patricia also described what she referred to as “creepy” men who would watch her, but said that she did not mind. She did not hesitate to discuss the differences between stripping and hula hooping. Patricia believed what she did was very sexual, but a more beautiful expression of sexuality than stripping.

**Lisa.** I went in to the women's homeless shelter, Safe to Sleep, as a volunteer for the night. One of the women who also volunteers there took me aside to tell me about a
girl (Lisa) who was being trafficked that I should talk to. The volunteer told me how this young girl was being kept in a house and forced to use drugs; luckily she escaped. When Lisa came to the shelter, I asked if I could do an interview with her.

I realized before the interview was over that her story did not make sense. Lisa explained to me that she was locked in a house for days, but nothing happened; no one was blocking the door, but they were weird and she was afraid to leave. When I asked her why they would not let her leave the house, she said she did not know. When I asked her how they kept her there, she told me she was just scared to leave. I asked her why she was scared and she said because they were Satanists and doing weird stuff. She wanted to talk to me and she answered all my questions, but all of it was devoid of detail.

She is a chronic drug user. She told me that after her daughter was born she immediately went into the bathroom at the hospital to use drugs. I had been told by a volunteer that Lisa was forced to use drugs, but from my conversation with Lisa I gathered she willingly went to the house to use drugs and that drug use just continued. From her story I gathered that she was frightened, and she and her friend, who had been with her during all of this, called the friend's parents. The friend’s parents dropped Lisa off at One Door so she could get set up to stay at Safe to Sleep. Lisa explained that they dropped her off at One Door because they did not like her.

The volunteers and everyone involved in Lisa's case were highly concerned. Another volunteer had pulled me aside to tell me about Lisa's situation and what they were doing to get Lisa help. They made it their number one priority to get her to the airport to go to a rehab in Florida, because she was being “trafficked.” While getting ready to go to the rehab she talked to me about how great it's going to be in the sun in
Florida and had me help her search for more “beach-worthy” clothing in the bin of clothes for women at the shelter.

**Elle.** I was introduced to Elle through Reddit, a social interactive news website, in a subsection for Internet camera models. Elle is twenty years old and works online as a web cam model. She had been a model on the current site for approximately four weeks when I spoke with her via Skype, but she had previously worked on other cam sites. Elle posted a thread where she talked about her work, answered people's questions, and then promoted a free show she was about to do. I watched the show and then contacted her in order to talk more with her.

Elle was reluctant to talk to me at first. She started off by talking about her line of work, emphasizing how much money she made, but also the effort that she put into being one of the best models. She claimed to be ranked highly on the cam website. Elle works approximately 20 hours a week and makes anywhere from $20 to $100 dollars an hour working on the site. She makes enough money that she has to file taxes as self-employed. After switching to a new cam site, she had to work from the bottom again and build up a regular client base, but she said that she has been very successful because she knows how to work her “room.”

For the current cam website Elle works for, she had to submit pictures and a picture ID in order to be approved to work online as a model. On this website, viewers buy tokens for a fee and then pay tokens to the models. Each token the model receives is equivalent to $0.05 USD, but the viewers pay more for the token; Elle was unsure how much more. For this site Elle live-streams video into a public, free chat room where she can do generally whatever she wants, with very few enforced guidelines. Viewers can
also give tips in the public chat. The goal is to get a following and then she could get paid tokens to go into group chats that costs each viewer 10 tokens per minute, or she could go into a private session with one person which costs the viewer 60 tokens per minute (however, people can “spy” for a small fee), or a true private session which costs 80 tokens per minute and there are no “spies.”

The website Elle works for allows the models to block IP addresses linked to specific states for the model's protection; Elle chose to block the state she lives in for fear that someone she would not want to know she does this might see her online. Elle said that she does not think the work she does is negative in any way; however, she is aware that many people would, and she especially did not want her family to know about her work. Elle had a day job that she used as a cover for the money she was making so her immediate family would not get suspicious.

She described the collection of props she has for her work and told me she buys new props to keep her regulars returning for entertainment. Elle explained that working as a cam girl gave her a creative outlet to express herself. She said that she believes she is successful because she laughs with her viewers and plays games and just has a good time. She excitedly described this part of her work, and she seemed to be generally happy with it. She explained that she always felt that it boosted her self-esteem since she always got compliments, and she found that talking to people in the public chat was a fun way to make money and interact with people.

I asked her to tell me about private chats and what those entailed. Elle explained that what happens is really up to the model, but that most men expect a “decent show.” Elle did not mind performing for people, but she also explained that many want her to
view their cams and this always made her somewhat uncomfortable. When Elle live
streamed into the chat room she could not see the other end of the cam. Elle felt that it
was almost as if there were not real people viewing her. She told me that she was still
comfortable doing whatever the viewer wanted, but she did not go into detail.

Anti-Trafficking Advocates

Adam. Works with AIDS Project of the Ozarks (APO) and is a youth facilitator at
the Gay and Lesbian Center of the Ozarks (GLO). I originally wanted to talk more to
Adam about GLO, but I found that he had a lot of experience working with sex-workers
at APO, so we talked more about testing clients for STDs. When asked about his
definition of human trafficking, Adam gave a definition for sex trafficking and he
decided it was because of the nature of his job with APO, which frequently involves
testing sex-workers for sexually transmitted diseases.

Adam is a “prevention specialist” with APO. They have a program that does risk
assessments and gives STD tests for free, specifically rapid HIV testing, is the main focus
of the program. It takes only a few minutes to get results from the rapid HIV testing.
When people use this service, while waiting for their test results, Adam opens up a
dialogue about sex. There are a few required questions, and from there he asks follow-up
questions about safe sex and other risk factors and options for the client.

There are two types of HIV testing in Greene County: confidential and
anonymous. APO does confidential testing, while Green County Health Department does
anonymous. As Adam explained it, confidential testing allows the agency to access your
test results, while in anonymous testing only patients can see their own results and no
information about the patient is taken. Most sex-workers prefer to use the anonymous testing through the health department, but Adam has noticed that sex-workers will come to the APO testing when they feel judged by the people working with the health department.

According to Adam it is better to be “sex positive” with clients; what they do with their sex life is their prerogative and being sex positive means accepting that fact. But Adam's job is to inquire about things like condom negotiation, and if the client doesn't know how to negotiate condom usage he gives suggestions to the client.

Adam explained that indicators like condom negotiation are a great way to know whether a client is doing sex work and being trafficked or not. If a client can confidently negotiate condom usage with their sexual partners, they are probably not being trafficked. A sex-worker who has standard rates or a website is probably not being trafficked. When clients are more withdrawn, report living in multiple cities in a short amount of time or ask for certain items, Adam either gives them the Victims Center business card, or, if they will not take the card, he asks them to memorize the number from the card. To my surprise, Adam had not received any training in the area of trafficking from any organizations or government agencies.

Adam explained that he has conducted enough interviews and risk assessments with clients that he can tell what kind of conversation he should be having with a client, whether it be about safe sex, drug use, or alternative options.

**Kristy Childs.** Kristy Childs is an activist who is working to end trafficking and prostitution. She is the founder of a nonprofit organization called Veronica's Voice that helps trafficking victims and former prostitutes, named after a friend of hers who was
murdered while she was a prostitute. Childs has an interesting perspective because she is a former prostitute and victim of trafficking; she refers to herself as a survivor.

Childs believes that all prostitution is a form of trafficking; it is “coercive” because people will do what they have to do to stay alive. Although she believes that all prostitution is trafficking, it was interesting that she started the interview explaining to me how some girls fake being trafficked because they hear about trafficking through the media and think that they can get special treatment for being trafficked.

Childs was in “the industry” for 24 years. She believes the real trafficking problem has to do more with psychological control than physical force. Her main focus is on reforming johns, also known as clients. Currently they only get minor punishments for using prostitutes, and the prostitutes can get in more legal trouble than the johns.

Childs has a johns school where men who are caught with prostitutes have to pay to go to for a day. They have several panels of people talk to them, they hear testimonials from former prostitutes, and they also have HIV tests. For Childs' school, the money goes directly to helping former prostitutes and trafficking victims.

Childs believes we have a culture of sick men. She explained to me that with all things there is good and bad, including her experience with pimps. She had a really good pimp that she never told me much about other than saying a “good pimp” will show a girl the ropes and protect her. She believes pimps are not to blame because they typically come from poverty and abusive homes, both being consequences of what she referred to as “a failed government.” However, as she described it, a pimp can be beneficial for a sex-worker.
Childs described the movement against trafficking as something that has been highly commercialized. She expressed concern about the motivations of other organizations. As she put it, “They are not in it for the right reasons.” Her concern led to a conversation about trafficking “victims” whom she felt were not victims, but rather were “using the system” to their advantage. She explained that young girls would hear about trafficking and use the term to describe their situations in order to get special treatment.

I asked her about the role of faith in the anti-trafficking movement, and she was very excited about the question. She explained that many churches want to “lay on hands” or think that prostitutes don't know Jesus, but the truth is that many of them have been abused by the churches and lied to. She gave an example of a young woman who was told that god was going to give her her child back, but it did not happen. Childs believes in the Nordic model to combat prostitution, which involves punishing the clients of prostitutes and not the prostitutes themselves.

**Rita.** Rita is a Safe to Sleep volunteer who wanted to be interviewed one night. I was unprepared so I just asked her a few questions about her life, her religious background, and her opinions about prostitution, pornography, and other sex work.

Rita had a troubled childhood. She experienced sexual trauma at a young age. Later in life she became religious and now adheres to a strict Pentecostal lifestyle. She feels that her experience of being sexually abused has influenced the way she has viewed the experiences of the women she works with and that it gives her more insight into the women's lives at Safe to Sleep. While she has never had women confide in her about practicing prostitution, she has “heard through the grape-vine” about women engaging in
prostitution, and she has had women hint at it. In Rita's view, the women are using sex as a way to avoid staying in the shelter, to feed their addictions, and also because they want to “avoid the drama” that women have.

An interesting point from our interview was her view on the differences between men and women in relationships. She believes that men just want sex, while women want love. She believes that women cannot defend themselves on the street. From our discussion I could infer that many of her beliefs about women are influenced by her past (being abused as a child) and her religious beliefs, portraying women as a weaker sex, needing child-like protection.
DISCUSSION

During my internship and subsequent volunteering and fieldwork, I found that the religious organizations in the Springfield community are currently shaping the human trafficking movement here. There are many groups working to identify the human trafficking problem in the area. Some groups are government agencies, while others are religiously affiliated. Their interpretations influence each others' perceptions of the problem.

Conferences

Conferences held by both religious or nonreligious groups are attended by both groups. Statistics and interpretations of “victims” of trafficking at events are creating a definition of trafficked victims that is not universal. Often the statistics and “facts” learned are repeated at other meetings and events in an attempt to get more organizations interested in the anti-trafficking agenda. In the personal documentations there were several unchecked “facts” listed that I had heard before, such as “Human trafficking happens globally, and is the third largest illegal commodity,” “this 'industry' makes approximately $32 billion per year,” and “sex-trafficking (being forced to have sex with up to 40 people a day)...” Popular terms and phrases used in the trafficking dialogue at meetings were repeated in the personal documentations, such as the popular comparison that human trafficking is “modern-day slavery.”

It seems that sex trafficking dominates the trafficking discourse, likely as a result of the training sessions and conferences held by religious organizations that are focused primarily on the sex-trafficking movement. Not only do the secular organizations attend
these, but also they recycle the facts they hear there to educate the public on trafficking. Some of the ways in which sex-trafficking has dominated discourse are by repeating statistics and anecdotal stories and by using religious rhetoric and framework to understand trafficking. The fact that “sex-trafficking” and human trafficking have become interchangeable terms illustrates that despite secular organizations' desire and claims that they are not highly focused on sex-trafficking, sex-trafficking inadvertently dominates the discourse.

At conferences held by religious organizations, there is an obvious preoccupation with sex during discussions that include the dangers of pornography, presumably underage girls prostituting on the website backpage.com presumed to be underage, general prostitution, strip club venues, proselytizing to strippers and prostitutes, and the dangers of the Internet for young girls. Labor trafficking was rarely even mentioned at meetings. This approach to gaining support for trafficking has severely limited the interest and knowledge of labor trafficking. Religious rhetoric used at conferences and meetings about trafficking and prostitution was repeated in some of the responses in the personal documentations, such as “It leaves a person an empty shell whose value is determined by the profit they make off their body.” This response is an example of the focus on sex-trafficking when discussing human trafficking.

Local News Stories

The KY3 article that discussed survival sex and prostitution was an instance of perceived “trafficking” of a young woman from the Rare Breed who is 19 years old, whom they describe as “fitting the bill.” This young woman, Brittney, was a prostitute
with a pimp. Brittney's short biography was followed by a quote from an administrator of the Rare Breed about “the vulnerability of children.” The decision of the 19-year-old woman to use prostitution as a way to, in her own words, “make money for me and my kid to live...” should not be compared to the vulnerability of a child. Comparing this young woman's difficult decision to use her body as a source of income to the vulnerability of child merely reduces her to a victim. This approach tells her that she is incapable of making decisions for herself about her own body, her child, and her future, and suggests that perhaps someone else is more equipped to do that for her. The goal of a social worker should be to empower people, not to victimize them (Forhetz 2013).

The KY3 news story on August 27, 2013 that discussed prostitution arrests in Nixa and described Night Light as “an organization that helps so-called prostitutes get out of that line of work,” is another example of institutionalized victimization. While some prostitution is trafficking, there are prostitutes and other types of sex-workers who do not consider themselves victims of trafficking. Creating victims out of people who do not feel like victims is a waste of energy and resources when there are actual trafficked victims in the sex industry, and even more labor trafficking victims. Mindy's comment on the KY3 report about finding more cases of trafficking because she has been, in her view, “trained” to look for cases, in this situation seems more like confirmation bias, which is a tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs or theories. According to her interview, Mindy has had six clients referred and another phone call about a potential case of sex-trafficking since her organization has been in operation. The reporter rhetorically asks how big the problem actually is, and used the fact that the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI did training with some of the local law enforcement as
proof of the existing extent of the problem. Such training is hardly an indicator of the number of trafficking cases (Forhetz 2013).

Victimization of Sex-workers

Locally, the dominant discourse conveys the belief that prostitution is inherently forced, despite evidence from around the world that demonstrates prostitutes are capable of making the decision to enter the world of prostitution without coercion (see Background). One issue that came up repeatedly while talking with people involved in some form of sex work was being uncomfortable around the viewers, or seeing the customers. Kat, who was a stripper, said she would get uncomfortable with “creeps” viewing her. Hannah, the former prostitute, described the discomfort and dissatisfaction of having to sleep with repulsive men; this was, in her opinion, the worst part of her work as a prostitute. Childs, the formerly “trafficked” prostitute who is now an anti-trafficking activist, also described the scenario of girls sleeping with men they would never sleep with outside of this business; this to her was evidence enough that all prostitution is forced. For Elle, the webcam girl, it seemed that her line of work was somewhat easier because she could choose to not view the cams of viewers if she did not want to.

From the interviews I conducted I was able to find positive aspects in the work that sex-workers did and some were still doing. Although not all of the encounters these women had were positive experiences, they were able to, in some cases, find resources (sometimes temporary, sometimes more permanent), creative outlets, and stability.

At the many informational meetings, conferences, and interviews, it has been said that many people who are trafficked do not refer to themselves as trafficked, or might not
know that they have been trafficked. Only one person I interviewed referred to herself as trafficked, Kristy Childs. Lisa, who had been identified as being trafficked by advocates, never actually said to me that she was trafficked, but told her story, with somewhat questionable and conflicting information. Her behavior and her demeanor led me to believe she was using the trafficking scenario to get what she needed, but what concerned me was the reaction and special treatment she got because of her claims. It was obvious to me that she was being manipulative.

There might be some benefit in giving someone who feels that they were wronged in some way the words to describe what has happened to them as trafficking. However, for the majority of people I interviewed none of them identified as having been trafficked, and in most of these cases, they were not suffering the emotional trauma indicative of a trafficking victim. I would see no benefit in telling Kat, the former stripper, or Brenda, a homeless woman, or Elle, the cam girl, that they are victims.

Adam, during our interview, discussed the differences between sex-workers who were and were not being trafficked. Condom negotiation between sex-workers and clients, for instance, was an indicator that they were not being trafficked. During the interviews I conducted, I discovered that sex-workers who had more choice in what types of people they interacted with enjoyed their work more than those who did not get to chose. The interview I did with Kat, the former stripper, who often went to Dallas to strip, discussed what she referred to as “the classiness level” of the clubs: when she was at classier clubs, she felt more at ease, she made more money, and she was generally happy with her job. I spoke with several women who were sex-workers. Of these women
the Internet webcam girl, Elle, was by far the most satisfied with her line of work; I would attribute this to the level of personal choice.

I conducted interviews with perceived trafficking victims, who were considered trafficked in the opinion of people who attended meetings, put on conferences, and handed out information on trafficking to the public. Not only did I find that these definitions of trafficked individuals did not reflect the feelings of the individuals in this line of work, but I also found that many of these individuals found their work to be beneficial to their lives. Kat found that she could make a lot of money being a stripper, she could chose her hours, and she was able to see her son more often than a 9 am to 5 pm job would allow. Kat had goals and ambitions, and did not reflect on her experience as a stripper as a negative one. Kat even told the story of her first stripping audition as a comedic one. Brenda reflected on her experience sleeping with men for a place to stay in a way that did not indicate trafficking. Although she insisted she was addicted to sex, I felt that this was her way of explaining her behavior in a way that would not be judged by others. For Elle, her work was an empowering experience. Her public chat room, which I was able to witness, was a creative outlet. Patricia, the hula-hooper I interviewed, like many women who use their bodies to make money, felt that there were uncomfortable situations where creepy men would watch her perform. Her performance uses her body and is highly sexualized, and she receives tips. Patricia, being a young recently homeless woman, could be considered high risk to be trafficked. Her decision to use her body in a way to earn money, in her eyes, was a positive uplifting thing, a way for her to be creative and express her sexuality in a positive way. There are many ways to use one's body to make money; this way, to Patricia, was creatively expressive, empowering, and a
regenerative way to earn a living. Who is to say this acceptance of empowering artistic expression cannot be extended to other performers?

Hannah and Tara both had traumatic experiences as underage prostitutes. These women were more than just traumatized by their experiences, and they felt they degraded themselves in order to make money and get by. Of the people I have talked to, the younger girls that have experienced sexual abuse have had what I would call “text-book” training to become prostitutes, meaning that they fit the description that I have heard from the public figures and speakers on human trafficking or rather sex-trafficking. This was not the case for the women I talked to and know of who began working in the sex industry at an older age of their own volition. Although Tara and Hannah seemed more traumatized by their experiences, Hannah said she often threatens to go back to prostitution to make money to leave where she is now, and Tara discussed how prostitution will always be a way for her to make money when she feels there is nothing else.

At the Heartland Church conference, Kristy Childs said that if people want to help trafficking victims they should find out what is already happening in the community and try and fill in the gaps. There are plenty of forces working to end sex-trafficking with conferences, speakers, groups, and movie showings. Labor trafficking is a resource gap that has yet to be filled to this extent. Childs, who has a unique view on trafficking, having been trafficked and now working to end trafficking, insisted during her talk at the Heartland Church conference that “It is not about rescue, it is about empowering and informing.” We should be asking, “What do you need from me in order help you?”
Childs explained that this could be a GED, it could be a home, it could be transportation, or any number of things.

**The Prioritization of Sex-trafficking Victims**

I have found that the general trend of anti-trafficking leaders emphasizing sex-trafficking victims as distinctly separate from other trafficking victims, often gives sex-trafficking victims an imperative claim to resources. The local Springfield KY3 articles on trafficking had to do with sex-trafficking involving a possible prostitution ring and a woman who had engaged in prostitution as “survival sex.”

Another example of this prioritization is Lisa, the woman I interviewed at Safe to Sleep, who was said to be trafficked by many of the volunteers and the director of Safe to Sleep. Lisa was given the priority as she was provided transportation, and certain people were “alerted” of her situation. However, the young girl Rachel, who was involved with the church program Teen Challenge, whom many of the advocates at the monthly trafficking meeting felt should be “hotlined” as a trafficking victim, was not given similar priority or treatment. They called the organization and asked them to provide her transportation home, but there was no follow-up, and people were not alerted of her “situation.” While most government and secular agencies and advocates claim to not conflate prostitution or sex work with trafficking, there is evidence of inadvertent conflation of the two and subsequent prioritization of sex-trafficking victims.

The majority of people who responded to the personal documentation questions separate trafficking into two categories: sex-trafficking and labor trafficking. Other responses managed to give definitions of human trafficking that could include both,
without separation. The need to separate one type of trafficking from another suggests that there is also a need to separate the types of victims, seemingly based on the type of trauma they have experienced. Understanding how trafficking victims are discerned from non-trafficking victims, can give insight into how resources are distributed.

In the Background section I discussed the implications of creating a distinctly separate category of trafficking as sexual. Whether intended or not, it affects how people perceive victims of trafficking. Sex trafficking is seen as “severe” trafficking, needing the most help, and services that are limited are given out based on the severity of the case. While sexual trafficking is still trafficking and can be detrimental to the victims, labor trafficking is more prominent and similarly detrimental. What constitutes sex-trafficking is highly disputed. How it affects people is completely dependent on the person's own perceptions of sex.

Furthermore, the detrimental elements of sexual trafficking are not the sexual part, but rather the isolation and threats. The personal documentation exercise shows how inadvertently (and sometimes consciously) people are prioritizing sex trafficking over labor trafficking victims, despite Springfield and the surrounding area having risk factors that are more aligned with labor trafficking. The clearest evidence of this was in response to the first question of the personal documentations, “What is human trafficking?” Many of the responses, more than half, unnecessarily placed sex-trafficking, or some version of “sex-trafficking,” either first as the only definition or first within a list of types of trafficking. This is significant because the question did not ask for types of trafficking. If types of trafficking were mentioned, sex-trafficking was identified first (except in one instance), such as “It predominantly comes in the form of sexual slavery...”; “Trafficking
is modern day slavery and can be defined as sex-trafficking and labor trafficking”;
“Exploitation of human beings which includes prostitution, forced sexual acts, forced
labor, slavery, removal of organs, and/or similar practices”; “Human trafficking is any
time where money is exchanged for the purchase of sex, or labor...”; Human trafficking
includes a myriad of things from forcing someone to provide sexual acts for the
traffickers gain to forcing them into some sort of labor”; “There is sex-trafficking ...or
human labor trafficking, being forced to work without pay...”; and “It's most commonly
associated with sex-trafficking, where people are forced into prostitution.” These
responses show that sexual trafficking is the most “ideal,” or clear-cut, trafficking
scenario in the minds of those who are looking for trafficking cases.

Prostitution, often conflated with sex-trafficking, is thought to be a form of
trafficking because the freedom of choice is removed; it is thought that prostitutes are
forced and coerced by poverty into prostitution in order to survive. In this way popular
definitions of trafficking fail to truly define what trafficking is, leaving it open for
interpretation. One response listed prostitution, forced sexual acts, forced labor, slavery,
and removal of organs as forms of trafficking. This response listed prostitution as a form
of trafficking, without distinguishing between forced prostitution and unforced
prostitution (but sexual acts and forced sexual acts were distinguished), suggesting that
this person believes prostitution is inherently forced.

Response to the second question in the personal documentation, “Why should we
try to stop human trafficking?” tended to overlap. Morally it is wrong to violate human
rights and legally we set up protections for human rights, but they can be distinct ways of
looking at the problem. Basic human right is an explanation used more by secular groups.
Understandings of trafficking can shed light on how organizations working to end trafficking are interpreting things like risk factors for trafficking. The more religious organizations are more concerned with preserving a family dynamic and thus find that risk factors for being trafficked include things like single parent homes. How people go about ending trafficking is influenced by their interpretations, such as interpreting trafficking as a moral issue, a human rights issue, or a legal issue. A moral issue might be solved by educating the victim, while a legal issue would be solved by educating the traffickers and using law enforcement. Either way, education was listed frequently as a response to the third question on the personal documentation form. As discussed before, educating the public on trafficking issues has been a primary focus, but with facts and information that are highly disputed and primarily aimed at sex-trafficking.
CONCLUSION

During my time spent at these organizations it became apparent that it is primarily
churches and other religious organization that regulate resources for the needy in
Springfield and surrounding areas. The religious beliefs of churches, such as those that
sponsor the Safe to Sleep shelter, could inhibit the services that are offered and to whom
they are offered. However, the resources that these organizations can offer are
irreplaceable, the time that has been donated by volunteers through these religious
organizations is invaluable, and the help people have received through their programs is
immeasurable. Religiosity is not necessarily the problem, but rather there might be a
solution to some of the issues that accommodates the religious undertones of these
organizations.

Churches and religious organizations are heavily involved with the anti-
trafficking movement, particularly because of their focus on poverty, women, and family.
Their influence on the trafficking movement has been that they are actively educating and
advocating for trafficking victims in the Springfield area with a focus on perceived
victims of sex-trafficking based on a set of standards and beliefs they hold about sex and
sex work. Often these organizations are perpetuating a standard that teaches victimization
of sex workers, rather than empowerment. It should also be acknowledged that trafficking
facts and statistics vary greatly between organizations and are often disputed. By being
aware of the statistical discrepancies in trafficking research, it would be easier to avoid
disputed and controversial facts that might discredit the efforts of a group or mislead
volunteers, victims, and other interest groups.
Faith-based organizations have been the dominant force in educating the public on trafficking issue. Although well intentioned, the anti-trafficking efforts could use more emphasis on labor trafficking from secular organizations that wish to fill a resource gap in the anti-trafficking movement. Religious organizations are highly motivated to help with the anti-trafficking movement. When working with these groups I think it is important to acknowledge the differences in opinions about sex-trafficking in order to assure that any joint efforts achieve the goals of both groups.

The religious motivation to help trafficked victims is a great resource for the anti-trafficking movement. The difference in interpretation of human trafficking and sex-trafficking can affect how resources and services are distributed. In order to provide the best resources to all trafficking victims there should be a dialogue about these differences and how to bridge the differences. Acknowledging that sex-trafficking has been prioritized over labor trafficking and that labor trafficking is of equal importance to sex-trafficking is the first step.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrijasevic, Rutvica

Cheng, Sealing

Chuang, Janie

Day, Sophie

Dragiewicz, Molly

Evans-Decicco, Jennee and Gloria Cowan

Forhetz, Sarah
2012 Young Girls Selling Their Bodies for Money: Youth advocates say survival sex is common. KY3 News, October 8.

Forhetz, Sarah
2013 Nixa Prostitution Sting May Shed Light on Problem of Sex-trafficking. KY3 News, August 27.

Galusca, Roxana

Gomez, Carol J.
Griffith et al.

Haynes, Dina Francesca
2004 Used, Abused, Arrested and Deported: Extending Immigration Benefits to Protect the Victims of Trafficking and to Secure the Prosecution of Traffickers.

Jeffreys, Sheila
2010 "Brothels without Walls": the Escort Sector as a Problem for the Legalizations of Prostitution.

Mackinnon, Cathrine A.

Outshoorn, Joyce
2005 The Political Debates on Prostitution and Trafficking of Women.

Peters, Alicia

Purtill, Corinne
2013 Prostitution in Europe: Legalize or Criminalize?. Global Post, September 4.

Radu, Roberta
2013 Argentina's Prostitutes- Mother's First, Sex-workers Second: Banksy-style ad campaign aims to show the reality of prostitution and highlight the need for laws to protect women in the sex trade. The Guardian, June 17.


Shorn, Cris and Susan Wright, ed.

Small, Jamie L
Soderlund, Gretchen

Soderlund, Gretchen

Stone, Marjorie

UNESCO

United Nations

United Nations Treaty Collections

US Department of State

US Department of State

Zimmerman, Yvonne C.
APPENDICES

Stand Against Trafficking conference handouts

Appendix A-1

Conference Schedule

8:00 - 9:00 am – Registration
9:00 - 10:00 am - Kristy Childs
10:00 - 10:10 am – Break
10:10 - 11:00 - Michael Bartel
11:00 - 11:10 am – Break
11:10 - 12:00 pm - Joyce Vogt
12:00 - 1:00 pm - Lunch on your own
1:00 - 2:30 pm - “Sex & Money”
2:30 - 3:00 pm - Q & A

SAVE THE DATE...AND BRING A GROUP!
SEX + MONEY DOCUMENTARY
Tuesday, Nov. 27th at 6:30 pm
Heartland Covenant Church
1700 South Campbell Avenue
What is Sex Trafficking?
Sex trafficking within the U.S. is legally defined as commercial sex acts induced by force, fraud, or coercion or commercial sex acts in which the individual induced to perform commercial sex has not attained 18 years of age.

Who's Most at Risk
Girls and Women who are...
- 12-14 years old
- Unemployed
- Past history of sexual abuse
- Poverty
- Undocumented migrants
- Mental health related problems
- Limited education
- Lack of family support (runaways, homeless)
- Living in vulnerable areas with police corruption and high crime
Statistics

The average age into prostitution is 12-14 (U.S. Department of Justice)

100,000-300,000 children are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation each year (U.S. Congress Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005)

30% of shelter youth and 70% of street youth are victims of commercial sexual exploitation (Estes, R. Weiner, N. "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico." University of Pennsylvania, 2001)

As many as 1.6-2.8 million children are on the streets at any time (National Runaway Switchboard)

41% of minors arrested for prostitution in Las Vegas from 2004-2006 had been victims of sexual assault; 21% had been victims of familial molestation. (Shared Hope International)

78% of children in prostitution had run away four or more times in the past year (Shared Hope International)

In 2011, there were 6,422 missing children in Missouri, 465 in Greene County. At the end of the year, 110 in the state and 7 in Greene County remained missing. These are just the children who were reported. Many more go unreported. (Missouri State Highway Patrol)

A national study shows that 75% of all women used in prostitution were victims of incest and/or physical abuse as children (Veronica's Voice- WHISPER, National Task Force)
Appendix A-4

Myths & Facts

Myth: Women choose to enter prostitution. It's better to choose to make lots of money as a prostitute than to choose to work at a minimum wage job like McDonald's.
Fact: It is profoundly unjust to declare that prostitution is an acceptable job for some women - those who are mostly poor, mostly women of color, mostly young. Prostitution is an intrinsically abusive institution and women stay poor in prostitution (although lots of cash passes through their hands on the way to pimps, strip-club managers, bartenders, taxi drivers, casino hosts and other predators).

Myth: Most prostitution does not involve pimps.
Fact: Most prostitution involves pimps. Health service providers, shelter staff, survivors of prostitution, and law enforcement sources estimate that 65%-85% of all prostitution is pimp-dominated.

Myth: Social stigma is the most harmful aspect of prostitution.
Fact: The worst thing about prostitution is not social stigma, it is rape, strangulation, beatings, toxic verbal abuse, and other violence from Johns and pimps.

Myth: Pornography and stripping are not prostitution.
Fact: Pornography, stripping/exotic dancing/lap dancing are almost always prostitution.

Myth: Legalized prostitution would control the sex industry.
Fact: Legalization/decriminalization of prostitution expands the sex industry.

You can view details about these myths and others at:
http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/files/000034.html
Appendix A-5

Taking Action

- Be informed - research the facts
- Know the law regarding sex trafficking
- Know your local resources: city, state, federal
- Know what's happening in your area in sex trafficking
- Spread the word
- Find a core of people ready to pursue a course of action
- Get involved - use your talents
- Have a fundraiser
- Host a viewing of the Sex & Money film Info @ sexandmoneyfilm.com
- *email Alex to host a viewing alex@thecanopy.com
- Join Springfield’s Coalition
- Pray...Pray...Pray
Appendix B-1

Personal Documentations Responses to the First Question

Responses to first question in the personal documentation exercise, “What is human trafficking?”

1. Trafficking involves the use of humans in a way that robs them of the freedom of choice in their activities. It may be for labor for the purpose of very, very low wages. It might be for sex or some other purpose that involves some forced cooperation. Removing the person from their usual support system, gaining cooperation with the offer of rewards, and limiting contact with others are used to isolate and coerce. Usually this is perpetrated on those who are already isolated due to homelessness, limited intelligence, risky behaviors, or sudden loss.

2. The exploitation of vulnerable women, children, and sometimes men for financial gain. Women and children are more likely to be used in sex trade, while men may be used as laborers as well.

3. Human trafficking is the selling of a person for a financial profit. It predominately comes in the form of sexual slavery (i.e., prostitution, stripping, and pornography). Human trafficking happens globally and is the third largest illegal commodity (preceded by drugs and weapons).

4. Selling humans for profit

5. Purchase of a human being from another person for performing any kind of work or service not in agreement with the person performing it. (against their will or understanding)

6. Human trafficking is using another person to provide services which the said person has not agreed to, or was not given the choice to say no. Human trafficking can also be defined as an unbalanced working relationship; as in a worker works ten hours a day, seven days a week, and is paid less than minimum wage or not at all. In very harsh words, human trafficking is the 21st century enslavement. Though it is certainly illegal, the human trafficking “industry” makes approximately $32 billion a year (this statistic is from the Polaris Project in 2009).

7. Taking someone by force or coercion and thrusting them into and keeping them in a lifestyle that is not of their choice by removing their ability to escape.

8. Trafficking is modern day slavery and can be defined as sex-trafficking and labor trafficking. The crime of sex-trafficking is providing or obtaining persons for commercial sex acts through force, fraud or coercion or providing or obtaining minors under the age of 18 for commercial sex acts. The criminal is liable to be prosecuted if he or she recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides or obtains a person for a sex act or if he or she benefits financially or by receiving thing of value from knowingly participating in a venture which has engaged in such acts.
The crime of labor trafficking is providing or obtaining labor or service through force or physical restraint or serious harm or abuse (threaten to abuse) of law or legal process. Or scheme or plan to cause the person to believe that above means would be used.

9. Exploitation of human beings which includes prostitution, forced sexual acts, forced labor, slavery, removal or organs, and/or similar practices. (forced labor/forced sexual act/ not forced prostitution).

10. I believe Human Trafficking is any time where money is exchanged for the purchase of sex, or labor, where force, fear, exploitation or coercion is involved. More specifically if the victim is not earning, and keeping a fair wage.

11. Human trafficking includes a myriad of things from forcing someone to provide sexual acts for the traffickers gain to forcing them into some sort of labor. The key ideas in trafficking are that someone is being forced to do something for the financial or otherwise gain of the person doing the forcing. Also, trafficking implied that the victim is being moved across geographical boundaries (state or country lines for instance) to accomplish the goal of financial or other gain.

12. Slavery! Bondage, Trafficking is being forced to sell “yourself.” This is the biggest form of slavery ever seen. Bigger than the trans-Atlantic slave trade. There are multiple forms of trafficking. There is sex-trafficking (being forced to have sex with up to 40 people a day) or human labor trafficking being forced to work without pay or to pay off a “debt.”

13. Human trafficking is the trade and exploitation of humans.

14. Human trafficking is where deranged criminals will kidnap unsuspecting people, mainly women, and use or sell them. Often times these criminals will force addicting drugs onto their victims so they will be more complaisant for physical or sexual abuse. After time the need for the drugs becomes more important than their well-being. This is a horrendous crime that is active all over the world. Trafficking is also one of the least talked about crimes. People do not want to talk about it and the criminals involved hide it well. Most Americans think human trafficking is a European or third world problem; when in fact it happens in states every day. It is always someone else's problem.

15. Human trafficking is the for-profit exploitation and trade of people. It’s most commonly associated with sex-trafficking, where people are forced into prostitution. It’s also portrayed as mostly affecting city dwellers, new immigrants and low-income individuals with little education or base of support.