

“It’s happening here!” Anti-Trafficking Policy in the City of Ottawa – A Critical  
Analysis

by

Courtney Lockhart

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Carleton University  
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## **Abstract**

Over the last several years human trafficking has been in the political spotlight, and anti-trafficking has become a political arena on its own. “Anti” projects are useful in understanding how law and policies are made. What does it mean to be against human trafficking? Using governmentality and genealogy methods, I focus on one anti-sex trafficking campaign located in Ottawa, Project imPACT, to examine how trafficking has been constructed as a coherent social problem. How does one NGO add or shape the anti-trafficking narrative in the community? I consider anti-sex trafficking as an evolving phenomenon that is constantly being produced through discourse, and practices. The empirical focus helps determine how power is established and controlled related to anti-trafficking, the conflation with sex work and the broader trafficking debates. In this way, government is not only policy or laws itself, but also the spaces in between and the personal lived experience of anti-trafficking.

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I dedicate this thesis to my endlessly supportive family, and to my Opa, Heinz Gunter Kuhnert, who passed away May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the age of eighty-eight.

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## **Introduction**

I found feminism in my academic work as a welcoming, inclusive place of anti-oppression, where individuals united to challenge patriarchal forces in an effort to empower women and the oppressed. I saw sex trafficking and sex work being conflated through the media, articles, and politicians. But I also noticed the engagements and criticisms seem to come all within feminism. Why were feminists battling on this issue of sex work? Why was it related to sex trafficking?

I was drawn to the images of trafficking, and soon realized there was much work done on criticizing the representation of trafficking. This led me to ask: why are women vulnerable? What do these grand narratives of globalization, gender inequality, class inequality look like in detail? I was expecting a straightforward, black-and-white story related to trafficking. How could you be anti-, anti-sex trafficking? Could this be a new way to monitor women's movement and bodies? Is it an increased attempt to focus on the "un-free" side of sex work? I saw concepts of geographical state boundaries, citizenships, and security not as coherent ideas that I had learned in traditional political science approaches, but I saw these concepts were continually being acted, made up and contested.

Through political science and learning feminist literature, I see human trafficking as a place to be critical of many concepts, like migration, globalization, borders, citizenship, and statehood, which seemed to be central to studying political science. Why was human trafficking reported as affecting mostly women worldwide? Why are women economically more vulnerable than men? How were these categories regulating women,

their bodies and their movement? What are the current processes that regulate sex through public discourses (Foucault 1980, 25)?

The purpose of this project is to research the problems and intricacies related to anti-trafficking campaigns that frame and guide political discussions of trafficking. Engaging governmentality and feminist methodology, I seek to question how sex work has become conflated with human trafficking.

Laws and policy are important in the structural understandings of human trafficking, however this project is not focused on trafficking related laws or policy. Rather, I am more interested in the interaction of state institutions with non-governmental organizations, and how human trafficking is framed to be politically important and relevant, particularly where the institutions engage with the general public. The relationship between non-government organizations (NGO) anti-trafficking campaigns and state-led policy is an important way to understand how individuals and civil society interact to create and reshape political priorities. NGOs are also important sites to study as actors who work with state institutions to legitimize their policies and positions. This project focuses on the subtle ways political programmes acquire a hold on the public that are dedicated to anti-trafficking efforts.

With this perspective, I seek not to create generalizations about trafficking discourse, but have chosen to focus on a local, community organization. Vrasti identified the shift away from studying state sovereignty as a master-category “could help us finally overcome the common tendency to view the national and the global as separate and mutually exclusive sites” (Vrasti 2013, 53). I seek to find the problems and intricacies related to anti-trafficking campaign that frame and guide political discussions of

trafficking: these include the use and creation of human trafficking statistics, and the political attention that sex trafficking receives compared to other trafficking and illegal migration. These specific locations provide an important location to focus on the consequences and implications of trafficking discourse.

This is an attempt to purposefully avoid grand theories of causation of human trafficking but to focus on the details and intricacies of small sites and actors that influence the broader debates. I am seeking to go beyond the broader discourses and listen to the individual experiences in a local setting; how have the broader trends and debates affected or shaped one political community? Choosing a case study method on an anti-human trafficking project in Ottawa is purposeful to produce “context-dependent knowledge” rather than seeking only expert experience (Flyvbjerg 2006, 221) and to highlight the complexities and contradictions of real life (Flyvbjerg 2006, 237); this is particularly relevant for anti-sex trafficking projects as contentious and highly debated social projects.

The local case study has enabled me to ask questions and pull back some of the layers of the bigger, global picture. This privileged vantage point offers a space to ask: how are the broader narratives actualized in the lives of people? Typically broader social problems are divided into “camps” of people or organizations that seek different solutions, resulting in stereotypical division of “who’s side are you on?” We can break apart the broader narrative to ask how one NGO adds to, or shapes the trafficking narrative. How is that narrative negotiated between different community groups? How does this debate affect prostitution laws and understandings? How has trafficking come to be constructed as a self-evident and coherent social problem? By investigating this local

research project in Ottawa, I identify the small, empirical ways in which power is established and controlled related to human trafficking. Michel Foucault asks us: “In a specific type of discourse on sex, in a specific form of extortion of truth, appearing historically and in specific places, what were the most immediate, the most local power relations at work?” (Foucault 1980, 97).

This thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapter One outlines the theory and methods. I situate this project within current disciplinary and theoretical debates of political science and political economy related to anti-trafficking, and the feminist debate on sex work. I draw on other anti-policy work, and use feminist and governmentality methods to explain the broader discussions. Chapter Two provides context to the anti-trafficking terrain by investigating historical sites to help understand traffickers, victims and who is being considered as responsible. The purpose is to see how anti-trafficking has developed and shifted over the years. I also expose key moments where anti-trafficking policy has shifted within the Canadian government. Chapter Three outlines the case study of Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking (PACT) Ottawa, the anti-trafficking NGO operating locally in Ottawa, Ontario. Specifically, I focus on their anti-sex trafficking work in Ottawa, called Project imPACT, reviewing the methods they use and the funding models they had to use. Chapter Four describes the analysis of the politics of funding, the various methods used by Project imPACT, and the communities response to the sex trafficking research.

## **1 Chapter: Theory and Methods**

### **1.1 The Theoretical Debates**

My research is situated in both the discipline of political science and the feminist debate on sex work: Firstly, why do the disciplines of Political Science and Political Economy care about trafficking? How have anti-trafficking initiatives been explained? What are the common points of contention? How do critical approaches and feminist critiques position themselves against state-centric approaches? Secondly, who is considered to be a victim of sex trafficking? This project is also located within the feminist debate on sex work. How are the boundaries between trafficking and sex work negotiated?

#### **1.1.1 Political Science and Political Economy Debates Related to Trafficking**

Many scholars in political science have worked to challenge the structural focus of the discipline by examining the gender boundaries and major foundational assumptions of international relations and state politics. Feminist theorists like Jean Bethke Elshtain, Cynthia Enloe and J. Ann Tickner began working in the 1980s to understand the implications gender has on power relations, and to further challenge the basic units of political experience by questioning the structure of the international system and by asking about power in the system: who has it and how do they use it (Strange 2002, 99)? Foundational concepts like sovereignty, the state and security are grounded in patriarchy, and constructed on categories of femininity and masculinity. These scholars among others challenged the inherent masculine nature of state politics that embedded other hierarchies of race, class as assumed to be natural, or “normal.” However, feminists challenge these categories as not natural at all, but as key concepts that are structured on

the marginalization and oppression of gender, racial or class categories supporting assumptions that give priority to some over others. For those that are marginalized, citizenship and the relationship between the individual and the state is not a source of security but remains an oppressive force of systemic exclusion (Tickner 1997, 627). How is state security experienced for those that act outside of the boundaries of the state system, when trafficking is considered a security threat that endangers the state? Within political economy scholars challenge the oppressive nature of state-centric model as inherently oppressive understanding politics, and economics as interrelated and inseparable from culture (Peterson 2003, 5). Specifically with anti-trafficking initiatives, Lobasz understands the importance of critical approaches to investigate gender and racial stereotypes that establish a standard victimization, reproducing categories of practices, perpetrators and victims (Lobasz 2009, 322-23).

Moreover, the gendered and oppressive nature of economic and political structures are important to think of within the division of the formal and informal market economy. Illicit markets of human capital are portrayed as unethical and morally problematic. However, what is largely missing is the reflection on these informal markets as they shed light on the inherent injustices within formal markets where “[y]oung women’s labour is commoditized as cheap labour, and as docile and less troublesome in political terms” (Pettman 2000, 53). By focusing on shifts, changes and marginalized sources of economic activity, feminists work has “underlined the ‘constructedness’ of the economic (Walters 1999, 312) such as women’s labour as less valuable (Robinson 2011, 143), and the intensifying of women’s exploitation and gender oppression in the workplace and at home (Gibson-Graham 2006, 47). More generally, women’s labour

exploitation has been utilized “as a cheap, flexible, part-time workforce is critical to the low-wage competition strategy” (Walby 2000, 166). Critical, feminist approaches resist the traditional, state-centric approach of security, which is rooted in notions of state sovereignty, citizenship and borders. “[F]eminist analyses of human trafficking have eschewed a traditional security framework, considering instead the security of trafficked persons, recognizing the manner in which both traffickers and the state itself pose security threats” (Lobasz 2009, 321). How are the current structures and systemic inequalities exacerbating this? Are women and girls more vulnerable when they act outside of these boundaries?

Resisting state-centric policy solutions gives way for alternative approaches that “[begin] with the assumption that we must take seriously the elusiveness of the boundary between state and society, not as a problem of conceptual precision but as a clue to the nature of the phenomenon” (Mitchell 2006, 170). Moreover, this project is also an attempt to empower marginalized individuals, shifting away from methods that represent and speak on behalf of individuals that end up further exploiting them (Lobasz 2009, 343). The “construction of power and knowledge as a distinct politics will continue to play a vital part in any future global economic governance system” (Best 2010, 210) therefore challenging constructed sites will improve our understanding of economics and the political.

As feminist and critical scholars have examined citizenship and state-borders in the context of human trafficking, they have found complex relationships between citizen and non-citizens. These distinctions lead to question how national boundaries are ethically significant (Miller 1988, 647) and further to challenge the assumption that states

and their borders are inevitable (Williams 2003, 35). Many like Duncan Bell expose how the role of the state as protector prioritizes national interests over vulnerable individuals (Bell 2010, 97). These state boundaries reproduce identities of the “outsider” which creates contemporary moral panic. This growing trafficking discourse “eroticis[es] the desire economies while blaming immigrants and citizens who participate in these industries as contributors of societal anxieties and insecurities” (Agathangelou 2004, 123). The constructions of irregular migrants and trafficked individuals reproduce dominant notions of citizenship to identify gendered and racialized state power (Berman 2011, 62). Agathangelou identifies that these approaches only seek to further marginalize and further oppress those who are vulnerable to human trafficking. “Traffickers and the migrants come to be seen as major violators of the integrity of what is ‘inside’ the state as well as a danger and threat to the homogeneity of the state, society and the polity” (Agathangelou 2004, 129). Therefore, feminists call for an ungendering of international politics, seeking to challenge political analysis of the state structures including questions of citizenship, security, and borders (Tickner 1997, 625).

Scholars have also seen sex trafficking policy as forms of governance feminism. Feminism has been a powerful actor in regulating sex work and combatting sex trafficking (Shamir 2006, 360). Governance feminism focuses on the empowerment of women and the redress of patriarchal oppression and do so by seeking to change laws, institutions and practices. The participation of the feminist movement to combat sex trafficking marks feminism as a major participant in the phenomenon of new governance (Halley 2006, 378). Governance feminist perspectives critique the unintended consequences, such as increasing efforts to the border control agendas of states, the focus



on sex trafficking to the exclusion of other harmful labour practices (Thomas 2006, 388) Some governance feminist perspectives encourage feminist legal thinking to go beyond abolitionist perspectives and to think of feminism's engagements with international crime regimes as a form of governance and management. "If prostitution is not to be legalized then anti-trafficking initiatives must address the background rules and conditions much more than they are already doing to ensure protection of vulnerable workers" (Thomas 2006, 393).

### **1.1.2 Trafficking and the Debate on Sex Work**

What has happened to sex work that has opened up space, and has called forth the focus on trafficking? Formally, human trafficking became apparent during the negotiations of the UN Declaration on Trafficking in Persons. Intense lobbying efforts were made from two ideologically opposed positions on sex work on the inclusion of consent, how trafficking was defined in relation to sex work, and the choice of sex work. Both sides are concerned with the security of people, yet the disagreement and contention can be centered on one question: Who should be considered a victim (Lobasz 2009, 334)? Opposing sides were seeking to challenge gendered oppression, but in conflicting ways. Abolitionist feminists who seek to abolish prostitution understand all prostitutes to be victims of human trafficking, whereas others, considered sex work advocates, understand sex work to be consensual work.

These two sides formed lobby groups during the United Nations (UN) negotiations on the Declaration of Trafficking in Persons. Trafficking remains a central concept and salient for both sides in shaping the boundaries of sex work by blurring the distinction or enhancing it. The International Human Rights Network supported by the

international anti-trafficking NGO Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International (CATW) understands sex work as an inherently violent activity. From this perspective, sex trafficking and sex work are the same projects; sexual and economic subordination and exploitation are inherent in prostitution. “[T]he function of the institution of prostitution is to allow males unconditional sexual access to females, limited solely by their ability to pay for this privilege” (Carter and Giobbe 2006, 24). Prostitution cannot be consensual or a chosen form of work. This perspective came alive during the 1980s, with work by Catherine McKinnon, Andrea Dworkin and Kathleen Barry. Barry supports the positions that sex in prostitution ‘reduces women to a body’ and is necessarily harmful whether there is consent or not (1995, 23). When the negotiations at the UN were underway on the definition of human trafficking, they lobbied at the UN to include “with or without consent of the victims” (CATW 1999). “The promotion of pornography and the legitimization of prostitution sustains women’s forgetting and politically reinforce the sexual relations of power” (Barry 1995, 278). From this perspective, all prostitution is a violation of human rights and the trafficking/prostitution line is blurred.

The International Human Rights Law Group represented the other side of the debate arguing that prostitution is a form of legitimate labour and should be subject to standard labour laws and protections; they were partnered with the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW). Sex work, according to this position, is real work and should not be conflated or intertwined with human trafficking. While lobbying the UN, this side worked to distinguish sex work as separate and distinct from sex trafficking. While recognizing there exists exploitative and coercive working conditions

for sex workers, this perspective does not discount the choice and agency of sex workers to choose their work.

The language used to describe human trafficking is at the centre of the feminist debate on sex work. I seek to frame this project with recognition of the power and value of the word “victim” when describing trafficking and anti-trafficking policy. My purpose is to take a critical approach to trafficking, including the language used to describe “victims.” As my research has taught me, the identity and labels of who is involved with trafficking is a contested arena. Not all “victims” described in the various government reports or anti-trafficking organizations identify themselves as victims. Throughout my project I use the language of the anti-trafficking campaign by describing victims and perpetrators. However, I do not wish to take on the language of the campaigns, but seek to question these labels and terms from a critical perspective.

## **1.2 Anti-Policy**

While policy developments have become focused on trafficking, the anti-policy of human trafficking has become an arena on its own. Anti-trafficking is an apparatus that has affected and constructed trafficking knowledge in a particular way. This is a part of a broader anti-policy development (Walters 2008, 276). The rise of the anti-policy has developed in many ways, including anti-racism (Lentin 2008), anti-corruption (Hindess 2001, 2009), anti-terrorism (Troyer 2003), anti-torture (Bahcecik 2011); these anti-projects are an important way to evaluate and understand contemporary governance. Hansen articulates that the “anti-“ projects “[differ] from predominant perspectives on global governance by highlighting how specific practices of calculation, measurement and comparison can play a distinctive regulatory role in the constitution of spaces of

governance” (Hansen 2012, 524). More attention is paid to the specific technologies that influence the larger efforts of combatting these social and economic forces (Hansen 2012, 508).

This is also an effort to harness Foucault’s focus on disciplinary power to “[reorient] political analysis beyond the strictly legal, legislative and institutional toward a concern for disciplinary power – power that works by crafting docile bodies through exercises that coordinate individuate and normalize, and by effecting political subjects who come to be self-regulating through the internationalization of surveillance” (Troyer 2003, 269). Foucault states that “[t]he function of security is to rely on details that are not valued as good or evil in themselves, that are taken to be necessary, inevitable processes, as natural processes in the broad sense, and it relies on these details, which are what they are, but which are not considered to be pertinent in themselves, in order to obtain something that is considered to be pertinent in itself because situated at the level of the population” (Foucault 2004, 45).

Scholars have also critically engaged with anti-trafficking as reinforcing traditional state boundaries; national borders and identities are strengthened, and citizens are empowered to punish outsiders (Sharma 2003, 59). Critiques of anti-trafficking also draw attention to the gaps and questions of immigration practices that remain unanswered: What are the conditions from which migrants are moving? How are most people able to migrate if not with the assistance of smuggling operations? What are the factors that expose undocumented migrants to heightened vulnerability within nationalized labour markets (Sharma 2003, 54)? This discourse also creates categories of ‘deserving victims’ in contrast with illegal immigrants and the distinction of those who deserve support and

those who do not (Van den Anker and van Liempt. 2012, 3). Agathangelou identified trafficking discourse to “eroticising the desire economies while blaming immigrants and citizens who participate in these industries as contributors of societal anxieties and insecurities” (Agathangelou 2004, 123). The outsider is a threat and there is a contemporary moral panic perpetuating socio-economic inequalities.

### **1.3 Governmentality**

Governmentality is a concept first developed by Michel Foucault that has its effects on a range of studies and disciplines. Governmentality borrows and combines methodology to investigate the organized practices by which citizens are governed in mundane, everyday ways. How is risky behaviour found and categorized, and how then does this behaviour become normalized? Governmentality has three distinct parts: First, governmentality is “the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument” (Foucault 2004, 108). The focus is on the detailed mechanisms of how we govern. Secondly, governmentality is also a Western tendency to lead “towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power – sovereignty, discipline and so on – of the type of power that we can call “government” and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses on the other hand to the development of a series of knowledges” (Foucault 2004, 108). Thirdly, governmentality is the process of how the administration of the state has become ‘governmentalized’” (Foucault 2004, 108-09). Foucault defined government as the conduct of conduct or as an activity, which aims to

shape, guide or affect the behaviour, actions and comportment of people. This comes in many forms whether it is relations with social institutions, exercising political sovereignty (Macleod and Durkheim 2002, 45). Power is not only recognized in formal institutions and state structures, but also understood in an everyday way.

There are many actors influencing trafficking policy and anti-trafficking organizations. Governmentality is useful to this research project by turning away from grand theories and globalization to investigate new forms of power that are formed within mundane practices (Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006, 101). This focused research project seeks to address how rationality has changed and to challenge histories of trafficking. The purpose is to step out of using the language of the state to further understand how power is practiced. To investigate power structures, oppression and social inequalities we must “interrogate the way we ask questions about how we govern and the conduct of both the governed and the governors” (Dean 1999, 28). Rather than engaging with the umbrella topics of state borders, scholars like Valverde encourages attention related to security projects to focus on mechanisms that can be empirically studied (Valverde 2010 19-20). Navigating anti-trafficking with governmentality methods enables an understanding of how the anti-trafficking organization in the Ottawa community are connected to the broader discussion of trafficking, and international agreements that affect larger institutional powers.

Human trafficking is related to highly political and contentious positions on sex trafficking and sex work; these oppositions have been built on a history of antagonism and conflict from various organizations, including evangelical organizations, radical feminist organizations, and state policy makers. Stepping outside of the institutional

positions is important to understand anti-trafficking beyond what are currently understood as the ‘problems’ and the ‘solutions’. This methodology with the topic of human trafficking will “set aside prior conceptions of the ‘who’ of history and look carefully for the unique ways groups are made” (Walters 2011, 138) and question what may be seen as natural ways to govern anti-trafficking policy. Governmentality perspectives engage with how we are governed in the present, individually and collectively in our homes, workplaces and by transnational and national governing bodies. To understand this power more thoroughly, we need to investigate new forms of power, authority and subjectivity being formed within these mundane practices (Rose, O’Malley and Valverde 2006, 101). The location of research is particularly important for this project; “First, moving outside the institution, moving off-centre in the relation to the problematic of the institution or what could be called the “institutional-centric” approach” (Foucault 2004,116).

This is also an opportunity to seek particular questions within the general anti-trafficking phenomena to seek precise empirical answers (Rose, O’Malley and Valverde 2006, 85). This approach unpacks anti-trafficking concepts that have become naturalized such as coercion, consent, conflicting solutions, and the role of the state. Therefore, we can “decentre and diversify what seems uniform” (Rosenow 2009, 498). Government, therefore, is not assumed to “be a by-product or necessary effect of immanent social or economic forces or structures” (Rose, O’Malley and Valverde 2006, 99). The purpose is to investigate the new surfaces of political struggle and to “shift from the study of objects to the practices that produce those objects as effects” (Walters 2012, 18).

Governmentality and genealogy also provide an empirical lens and direct approach to look at anti-trafficking from the direct site rather than holding steadfast to a school of thought. Government should be studied in terms of governmental technologies, programmes and techniques, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody (Valverde 2010, 9). This perspective is motivated to “bridge a concern with empirical detail, that is, with ‘proximity to concrete situations’ (Rabinow 2003:3) on the one hand and important questions about the ‘bigger picture’ on the other” (Walters 2011, 111). This project will provide critical engagement with anti-trafficking discussions by unearthing values embedded in anti-trafficking discourse to study the way in which power is exercised in action (Vrasti 2013, 53) and to focus on a specific location where anti-trafficking knowledge and discourse relate to the larger structures affecting gender inequalities, immigration policy and patriarchal structures. Therefore, locating my research on the mechanisms of government is important for this project.

Rather than focusing specifically on the state as a single governing body responsible for managing citizens, governmentality studies “recognizes that a whole variety of authorities govern in different sites, in relation to different objects” (Rose, O’Malley and Valverde 2006, 85). Anti-trafficking policies and initiatives have existed in various forms; there are changing moments and interruptions with how trafficking is understood. There are always interventions going on with political discourse; the point then is to find a moment on the ground where change is happening to deconstruct ideas and concepts. Rather than understanding the moral contentions we can allow space to investigate further beyond the political strongholds. Dean suggests that “we ask questions



about how we govern and the conduct of both the governed and the governors” (Dean 1999, 28) to understand how we can shift structures of power.

Bringing together governmentality and feminist methods brings focus to the micro-structures to focus and understand how power operates in various ways. However, there are criticisms on the interaction with governmentality methods and feminist perspectives to excessively complicate a theoretical perspective; an example of this would be Foucault’s nihilism and relativism that work in opposition with feminist understandings. I do not seek to answer all these ontological questions, however I have found enough value to unify governmentality and feminism methods. Specifically, both focus on sexuality as a key area of political struggle, expand the political to include social domination, critique biological determinism, and engaged with analysis of the politics of personal relations and everyday life (Macleod and Durkheim 2002, 42-3). Macleod and Durkheim understand Foucault to be useful and productive alongside feminism “to establish multiple points of resistance to the myriad of micro- and macro- level gendered relations of inequality and dominance” (2002, 55). Foucault identified “[t]he real strength of the women’s movement is not that of having laid claim to the specificity of their sexuality and the rights pertaining to it, but that they had actually departed from the discourse conducted with the apparatuses of sexuality” (Foucault 1980, 219). Feminist theories challenge hierarchies and dichotomies of knowledge. This theoretical tool can afford a way “to analyze the complexity of oppressive relations of power that may take on diverse forms in modern society” (Macleod and Durkheim 2002, 57). Departing from typical trafficking discourses allows new space to investigate structures and current understandings of sexuality and gender. Deconstructing the language of sex trafficking

helps to understand power and identify rooted problems of social gender inequality in the current state structures and international regimes. These methods can connect the empirical detail with important, big picture questions (Walters 2012, 111).

#### **1.4 Methodology**

I have applied mixed research methods for this project with a focus on qualitative research including genealogy studies, case study, and interviews. I chose qualitative research because it holds unique ethical and political ability to expose unacknowledged social inequalities, and reveal dissenting voices. This project is centered on a case study of one anti-trafficking organization in Ottawa called Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking (PACT). PACT is a secular, anti-trafficking organization that is motivated to prevent the trafficking of persons and increase the protection of victims. PACT's vision is to recognize the human dignity and promote the well being of all trafficked persons through education, support services, networking and advocacy. In 2012, PACT was successful in receiving funding from the Status of Women Canada to complete a research project on sex trafficking in Ottawa. I am interested in the sex trafficking research project called Project imPACT including the methods, the researchers, and the community reaction to this work. Project imPACT is a human trafficking prevention initiative designed to prevent and reduce the trafficking of women and girls through community planning and was launched in June 2013 with \$200,000 funding from the Status of Women Canada. The project received this funding over two years to conduct a local safety audit, report the findings, and create a community centered plan to prevent trafficking in women. The completed Project imPACT Local Safety Audit Report was published and released in June 2014. This organization publishes public information

campaigns, and focuses on community activism and engagement between the public and human trafficking policy. The empirical research of this case study begins with questions such as: what is the scope of the project? What actors were included in the project? What were the research questions presented to the front line workers? What front line workers were left out? What types of trafficking are the central focuses? What do the numbers say? Where are the statistics from?

My purpose in conducting interviews is to understand how the trafficking discourse is articulated at the individual level and I used this deliberately to seek interaction and personal experience. I conducted semi-structured interviews with four individuals from either PACT Ottawa, or POWER (Prostitutes of Ottawa/Gatineau Work Educate Resist). I also inquired about conducting interviews with Status of Women, however I never received a response. In following research ethics guiding this project, all interviews were conducted in confidentiality, and the names of the interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement. Further, I sought to find alternative sites that were affected by this anti-trafficking project. This was mostly done through word of mouth and community networks. I interviewed one individual from POWER, an organization in Ottawa that advocates for sex workers rights. This was important as a feminist methodology to seek deeper understandings of the structures that “shape the everyday lives of informants and politically it grounds feminist knowledge and politics in women’s everyday experiences” (England 2006, 288). Along with research interviews with PACT organizers, I also conducted research with PACT by acting as a participant observer at one of PACT’s monthly meetings open for members.

A second branch of this research project was collecting information from federal government archives to investigate the history of anti-trafficking in Canada. Most of this research was done at the National Archives of Canada, searching through databases on public policy related to trafficking. Relevant key words included trafficking in women, white slave traffic, sex trafficking, human trafficking, and slavery – white traffic. I did collect more documents and data than were included in this thesis, however a complete genealogy of anti-trafficking policy by the federal government is beyond the scope of this research. My intention was not to investigate every detail or piece of data related to anti-trafficking, but rather to be more deliberate in finding the moments of shift where anti-trafficking has taken on a different form. I was searching through this data to seek out moments or shifts in anti-trafficking efforts through many programs and government departments.

Another branch of research for this project was designed to investigate the details of the funding mechanisms and how formal policy decisions about anti-trafficking are made. First, the application for funding Project imPACT by Status of Women Canada was studied to determine how funding was allocated to anti-sex trafficking. The purpose is to understand the detailed mechanisms of how knowledge is produced within the federal government related to anti-trafficking efforts in Ottawa. This research is also important to have in conversation with information collected outside of institutions in an effort to de-centre the state. This includes the background of decisions on how funding was allocated to sex trafficking, through to the NGO application process, and how PACT-Ottawa was successful. Most of the funding application details were made available through an Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) request. The details and

intricacies of receiving funding for an anti-trafficking project will be studied as an empirical site. Who gets the resources to research, and how is it cited as truth? What is the relationship between PACT and government human trafficking policy? How critical is PACT of state-centric, victim focused trafficking policy? How do non-governmental policies and perspectives differ from state policies? Is there space for self-reflection or any kind of mechanisms to provide feedback or input from sources? Is knowledge only recognized as viable if it is produced by political elites? Who else applied for funding? What other projects related to human trafficking are there? Are there any various political discourses?

I submitted one informal and two formal Access To Information requests to Status of Women Canada via email and mail with a \$5.00 fee each. I requested all the proposal information related to the 2012 call for proposals titled Working Together: Engaging Communities to End Violence Against Women and Girls. I retained a copy of the successful application by PACT Ottawa, and a list of the unsuccessful applicants and their related projects. This is to understand the context of how anti-trafficking efforts have become a political priority. Further, I requested information on all the non-government organizations that were successful and unsuccessful related to this project. The purpose of this was to identify the scope and trends of how organizations were chosen and became successful applicants.

## **1.5 Limitations**

This project certainly met me with many challenges and limitations related to interview research, expectations of objectivity, and navigating the politically contentious arena of sex trafficking as a contested site of feminist activism. Sex trafficking and sex

work are highly contentious social issues; because this arena is so political, I was challenged as a researcher to be objective as a data collector and research interviewer. I made an effort to not underestimate my role as a research interviewer in the social practice of producing knowledge so I was flexible in asking questions, continually sought space to be reflexive on my role as a researcher (Brinkmaan and Kvale 2015, 352). I had to constantly reflect on my role as a researcher acting within this contentious debate; I was often asked: whose side are you on? I made an effort in my interview research methods to be reflexive not only about the research process, but as well about my role as a researcher and the opinions and experiences that have shaped my perspective and my role. I learned through the research process to continue to be sensitive to power relations and the privilege that my graduate student research and position offered me.

The common rejection of interview research is that there are too few subjects for the findings to be generalized (Brinkmaan and Kvale, 2015, 295). This is certainly a risk and limitation of my research. There are far more actors involved in the community related to anti-sex trafficking in Ottawa than I was able to interview representing different non-government organizations, government departments and others involved in the community that are affected by anti-trafficking policy decisions. I also limited the research scope to focus on the Ottawa community and did not include projects or experiences with other anti-trafficking efforts or examples from other Canadian cities. Another limitation of my research is the exclusion of sex workers themselves, and individuals who self-identified as sex trafficked victims. Although this research discusses sex work and sex trafficking, I did not interview sex workers or trafficking victims themselves; rather this project is about political organization, activism and governance on

the subject related to the greater anti-human trafficking arena. Also, there are ethical research considerations to keep in mind when interacting with vulnerable subjects that proved to be challenging for a masters thesis research project timeline.

## **2 Chapter: From “White Slave Traffic” to “Canadian Women and Girls”: The Shifting Landscape of Anti-trafficking**

In order to demystify and pull apart today’s modern assumptions about human trafficking, I’ve traced my steps back to some historical points in anti-trafficking efforts. This chapter provides context to the anti-trafficking terrain and maps out the various shifts, changes and transformations. The purpose is to evaluate and clarify contemporary anti-trafficking perspectives and remove assumptions about current efforts. Related ideas to anti-trafficking are adaptive, and continually in motion like trafficking, migrant labour, and sex work. The point of this historical research is to give a genealogical understanding of anti-trafficking. We can then question how knowledge of trafficking is being constructed in a particular way. In order to understand the evolving image and understanding of trafficking, certain points in history and policy can be used as key points of comparison. How was trafficking described as a social problem eighty years ago? How has it changed and evolved, and what kinds of actors are involved? What were the major concerns about people crossing borders to work in the sex industry?

There are many small, detailed mechanisms that shape and give priority to specific solutions to the trafficking problem. The purpose is to situate Project imPACT as a specific anti-trafficking project within the broader context of Canadian government policy, and to compare with specific historical moments of anti-trafficking policy in Canada. How do current projects like Project imPACT contribute or challenge anti-trafficking messages? Studying the detailed mechanisms of how priority is given through Canadian policy enables me to identify how anti-trafficking funding is creating political priorities. How does the National Action Plan, and Canadian international work shape the



scope and focus of how the various departments are directed? How are these themes and priorities acted out? How are communities and organizations responding to these policy directives?

Anti-trafficking efforts have developed among many formal and informal sites. I searched archives and government sources to understand the history of anti-trafficking in Canada, and the formal and informal methods of outreach. Much of the contemporary work, and PACT itself, focus on anti-trafficking efforts targeted to help women and girls. Has the Government of Canada always offered funding specifically to women and girls? I started searching for the answer to this question by researching Status of Women Canada, a federal government department dedicated to the improvement of Canadian women's lives. The department seeks to promote equality for women with three current priority areas: increasing women's economic security and prosperity, encouraging women's leadership and democratic participation, and ending violence against women and girls (Status of Women, 2015). This analysis focuses on four key points to investigate the fuller understanding of trafficking: the image of the victim, the image of the trafficker, who is determined to be responsible, and the sources of insecurity.

## **2.1 Historical Image of the Victim: The Kind of Women Procured**

Historical anti-trafficking efforts were focused on protecting and regulating unmarried young women deemed vulnerable particularly when crossing borders. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was known as "White Slavery," where it was the government's responsibility to regulate and control young women "destined for an immoral life" (White Slave Traffic 1904). These historical anti-trafficking efforts are important to understand the moral underpinnings of sex work and trafficking and the conflation of the two. Within

the context of moral reform in English Canada, this “White Slavery panic” was specifically related to street prostitution and the increase of regulations and criminalization; this “panic” had broad relevance by symbolizing everything that was dangerous to single women in the urban environment (Valverde 2008, 95). Moreover, the White Slavery campaign allowed individuals to raise questions about safety and the dangers of the city without necessarily challenging structural concepts such as patriarchal and class relations that produced such dangers (Valverde 2008, 103). Not only are these historical projects important to understand the moral regulation rooting anti-trafficking, we can also see the history of government instructed research on anti-trafficking; Anti-trafficking is not a contemporary project. The League of Nations conducted a questionnaire in 1937 asking member states about human trafficking and current prostitution regulation. The questions posed to state governments focused on brothels, the number of brothels, increase or decreases of brothels and prostitution regulation. Responsibility was placed on the state to regulate, and therefore “protect” women by identifying and keeping watch of them in public. Individuals were also called upon to view trafficking from a moral standpoint as to decrease the demand:

“It is especially important that the youth of both sexes should be encouraged to view this matter from the highest moral standpoint. Safeguards of all kinds against international traffic are difficult to enforce when the lowering of the standard of morality serves to create an insistent demand. The remedy lies in a sound and vigilant public policy” (League of Nations 1927, 48).

Trafficked victims were understood as young women and girls crossing borders or traveling unaccompanied making them vulnerable to coercion. Victims were described using stereotypical representations of gender and femininity, such as being vulnerable, weak and dependent. Another important distinction is the

marking of trafficked women as white, making racialized women invisible. The “white slave traffic campaign” also targets a specific class expectation. Women were described as “falling” from their social status and pure sexuality into the depths of prostitution and trafficking.

## **2.2 Representations of Contemporary Sex Trafficking Victims**

The contemporary image of trafficked victims is focused on sex trafficking within Canada, typically vulnerable women unaware of their victimhood needing state protection. The stakeholder consultation report produced by the federal government on the topic of human trafficking describes the typical victim: “The victims, who are mostly women and children, are deprived of their normal lives and compelled to provide their labour or sexual services, through a variety of coercive practices all for the direct profit of their perpetrators” (PSC 2013b, 2). Although the details vary, an overall narrative has been reinforced. The victim is a woman, and exploited by a man who manipulates and coerces her by taking her documents away, or black-mailing her to keep the trafficked victim in a state of subservience to her pimp/boyfriend/trafficker. It becomes a “familiar scenario where female bodies are portrayed as passive objects of male violence and are positioned within the spaces of the home and the nation” (Andrijasevic 2007, 27). The victim is often trapped, and is “saved” by the police and anti-trafficking services when she becomes enlightened by the help of the state institutions and police organizations. Historically, states survey international borders, sex work, brothels and the movement of sex workers as a way to collect anti-trafficking data. However the contemporary narrative has shifted to include sources outside of state-led research and government policy to include personal stories of victims shared in anti-trafficking campaigns. Public Safety

Canada describe trafficking victims as young women trafficked by pimps within a city and province, inter-provincially and prostitutes, and young Aboriginal women trafficked from rural reserves to cities by gangs for sexual exploitation (PSC 2013a, 5).

Contemporary anti-trafficking does not challenge the stereotypical representation of gender and femininity, which further "demarcate[s] the limits within which women can be imagined as active agents" (Andrijasevic 2007, 26). There is really only one narrative that women travelling illegally to sell sex can tell. O'Brien, Hayes and Carpenter point out that "they must embrace their victimisation, especially since that is the only way they will be able to resist deportation and access support from social agencies and police" (O'Brien, Hayes and Carpenter 2013, 81). Sex workers become obliged to victimhood. Further to that, the focus on women as victims also leaves other groups invisible, like transgender or male sex workers (O'Brien, Hayes and Carpenter 2013, 23).

In 2004, Bruckert and Parent reviewed the discourse of human trafficking within the federal government and found many misunderstandings and contradictions. To begin, there are many understandings about how to identify sex trade workers: "Not surprisingly, there was a lack of consensus on how to categorize these sex trade workers: Are they trafficked women? Victimized prostitutes? Or exploited workers?" (Bruckert and Parent 2004, 42).

The concept of "trafficked victim" is in constant motion and is being negotiated by many actors. Though anti-trafficking has typically focused on sex work, the boundaries and understandings of sex work have changed drastically. Anti-trafficking used to mean only sex trafficking. More recently, the boundaries of coerced sex work and consensual sex workers continue to challenge the category of sex trafficked victims. Also, the anti-

trafficking narrative continues to shape how those selling sex and moving illegally describe themselves and interact with the law. These shifts and challenges within anti-trafficking descriptions of victims tell us a lot about the general shifts and changes of anti-trafficking purpose.

### **2.3 Trafficking in Canada - 2000**

In 1997 and 1998, major police raids of massage parlors, code name Project Orphan and Project Trade, occurred in the greater Toronto area related to “trafficking and prostitution.” Shortly after, a community organization called the Toronto Network Against Trafficking in Women (TNTW) began to work with many of the women that were arrested with prostitution charges. With the financial help of Status of Women Canada, TNTW published a research project to examine the inconsistencies of the rescue projects designed to “Save Asian women from ‘traffickers’ (SWC 2000, 4). Even though it was a trafficking rescue mission, the women were treated as criminal offenders and illegal migrants. The research asks a pointed question: “If the women were victims of trafficking, why were their rights not protected and guaranteed?” (SWC 2000, 4). This research supported by the Status of Women is important because the research made efforts to locate and expose the implications of conflating sex work and sex trafficking and to do a case study on the trafficking of women into Canada for the sex industry. Before 2000, there had never been a systemic recording of the experiences of trafficked women. This study was very sensitive in not offering definitive solutions about trafficking in women (SWC 2000, 6). “Women who are trafficked across transnational borders are women in need of protection. They are also women who are highly

stigmatized because of their occupation, and marginalized because they are poor, do not speak the language and have no means of support” (SWC 2000, 75).

Project Orphan marked a significant shift in Canadian anti-trafficking efforts from human rights towards harsher criminal justice. There was a heightened effort to criminalize those that were most vulnerable to trafficking considering only the alleged act of prostitution, not the process (transit and movement) that brought and maintained them in the sex trade (SWC 2000, 22). The police were operating under a trafficking rescue frame, but the women were charged with prostitution and received no help, support, or protection of their human rights.

#### **2.4 Anti-trafficking shifts in Canada - 2007**

In 2007 another distinguished shift occurred in anti-trafficking efforts in a report published by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women titled, “Turning Outrage into Action to Address Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation in Canada”. In this report, trafficking is described as a global phenomenon, with the majority of victims being women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation (SWC 2007, 3). This report published by Status of Women shows an increasing focus on the criminalization of sex work, supporting the idea that all sex work is harmful and exploitative. Rather than focusing on the sex worker’s human rights, safety and vulnerability, this 2007 report states “prostitution is a form of violence and a violation of human rights” (SWC 2007, 5). The relationship between trafficking and sex work is understood as a direct causation in this report: “prostitution is the driving force behind trafficking” (SWC 2007, 13). With this statement, there is no room for choice or consent of an individual choosing sex work as work.

While the 2000 report continued to break down the various aspects that make individuals vulnerable to trafficking, this report links these concepts all together. At this point, sex work is only understood as harmful and exploitative leading to the trafficking of women and girls. This report, like many produced by the Canadian government, motivates the public on the urgency of this issue, to “stand up for victims who are trafficked” (SWC 2007, 23). The moral urgency to “combat” trafficking becomes more acute as a moral concern and obligation.

Including or excluding the experience of the subject/victim has shifted and changed within Canadian policy. The 2000 report calls for an address of hearing trafficked people’s experiences and the 2007 report does not include any individual experiences. Many contemporary scholars have questioned this category of trafficked victims through discourse and images as reducing all women to victims, or all sex works to victims (Andrijasevic 2010, 12). Berman, among others, challenge how anti-trafficking discourse changes contemporary understandings of anti-trafficking by “collaps[ing] complex forms of women’s migration involving everything from deception, abuse to informed decisions to move into a representation of women as victims of a crime” (Berman 2003, 44). This shift in language has created a heightened focus on the category of victim; Van den Anker and van Liempt find this problematic because “the worst outcome of the recent progress in putting trafficking on the agenda is that a category of ‘deserving victims’ is used to contrast with the ‘migration criminal’ or illegal immigrant’ who is undeserving of support” (van den Anker and van Liempt 2012, 3).

Contemporary shifts on how anti-trafficking and sex work relate can be seen clearly through the Government of Canada committee reports. In 2007, the Standing

Committee directly stated that choice and consent do not exist in the workplace of sex workers. Therefore, “sex trafficked victim” became a broad category including all those involved with the sex trade. There was no understanding of sex work as a choice expressed or any identification that sex work can be consensual. Rather, this report directly ties the concepts together, stating that there cannot be one without the other. A year before in 2006, a report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights was tasked “to review the solicitation laws in order to improve the safety of sex-trade workers and communities overall, and to recommend changes that will reduce the exploitation of and violence against sex trade workers.” The subcommittee’s work was not completed when Parliament was dissolved in 2005 but the report is an important piece of evidence of the Canadian government focusing and working to decipher the intricacies of choice around sex work. Very distinct from the 2007 report, this report was not centered on the divide between forced sex work and chosen sex work but rather, the witnesses testified that not necessarily all participants act by choice and of their free will, but that there is a lack of choice that forces individuals into the sex trade (Government of Canada 2006, 8). A significant focus of this report is on the disagreement that prostitution is an inherently violent activity.

While the 2006 subcommittee report focused substantially on choice and the safety of sex work, the 2007 subcommittee report did not even identify the possibility of consensual sex work, embodying more of an abolitionist perspective. This drastically changes the perspective of human trafficking victims and pinpoints a moment or shift with how sex work has become entangled with sex trafficking.



Since 2007, the federal government has produced and supported trafficking initiatives as they are directly tied to sexual exploitation and coercion. The targeted victims are sex trafficked above many other types of exploitation and trafficking. The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking states that the “Government’s view is that prostitution victimizes the vulnerable and that demand for sexual services can be a contributing cause of human trafficking” (PSC 2012, 11). The federal government states that holistic strategies are important, yet there is an assumption made that prostitution and sex work are specific roots of this problem.

PACT’s anti-sex trafficking work, Project imPACT, acts within the contemporary context both adding and contesting the image of the victim. The research of PACT of sex trafficking in Ottawa produced a very distinct image of an anti-trafficking victims, however they also make efforts to push and extend the boundary of trafficked victims by acknowledging race, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds as factors in creating vulnerabilities to trafficking (2013, 15, 16). PACT also was working to challenge the representation that all victims are trafficked abroad, and their destination state is Canada. Their research only focused on domestic trafficking and the movement within borders.

PACT’s project target population is youth ages 12-15 and women 16-30 with various socio-economic backgrounds. Specifically in the city of Ottawa, they were targeting high risk neighbourhoods, street gang territories and low income housing projects. This target population was guided by the RCMP National Threat Assessment which stated that victims are largely domestic. Ontario Police Service described victims as young girls 13-18 in high-risk neighbourhoods with street gangs.

The research of Project imPACT found “youth from all backgrounds were generally at risk of being trafficked, women and girls marginalized by intersectionality of race, class, gender ideology and/or sexual orientation are at higher risk of being trafficked (PACT Ottawa 2014, 15). Marginalization and social exclusion was a big part of grooming victims and manipulating them.

## **2.5 International to Domestic policy: Trafficking is Happening Here!**

The rhetoric of anti-trafficking continues with religious discourse and moral campaigns related to who is being trafficked, and where trafficking is occurring has changed and significantly shifted in the Canadian context to focus on Canadian communities and domestic movement. More so, there is a heightened focus on sex trafficking as being described as the most prolific form of trafficking, and women and girls being the most victimized<sup>1</sup>. Bernstein (2010) also sees the focus on third world trafficked victims as a way for young evangelical women to engage with topics about sexuality and sex while not being directly involved, or be directly connected in the local seeing of sex. Shared views on sexuality, prostitution and morality in public life from radical feminist organizations and evangelical activists has created space to foster this conflation based on universalist constructions of women.

Moreover, the geographical focus on human trafficking has shifted from cross state border movement to inter-state movement for coercive and exploitative work. Earlier trends described trafficking victims in various ways. The RCMP did research reviewing human trafficking cases and intelligence between 2005 and 2009; this research describes the victims as vulnerable, economically challenged and socially dislocated

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<sup>1</sup> “Human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is the most common manifestation of this crime where the vast majority of the victims are Canadian women and children” (PSC 2012, 1).

sectors of the Canadian population. Non-Canadian victims are often brought to Canada from countries in Asia (Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Vietnam) as well as Eastern Europe. This document from the RCMP supports the image of victims being racialized, and “other-ed” as non-Canadian.

PACT is involved in the domestication of trafficking, and campaigns against the perception that trafficking only happens to foreigners in big cities. Project imPACT states that most (90%) sex trafficking victims are Canadian, and from the regional area (PACT Ottawa 2014, 2). The victims are described as mostly women and children that are “deprived of their normal lives and compelled to provide their labour or sexual services, through a variety of coercive practices all for the direct profit of their perpetrators” (PSC 2013b, 2). The women are intimidated, coerced and forced to provide services. “When we started ten years ago people didn’t even understand the term human trafficking. People didn’t know about it. People didn’t talk about. People certainly didn’t think it was happening here. And if they did they thought it happened to migrants, right? To Eastern Europeans or Asians and it was them, you know, over there.” (DC Interview).

Moreover, PACT adds to the urgency of promoting that trafficking happens in Canada, without people realizing it is happening in their backyards. “And it’s happening here! Canada is a source, transit point and destination for victims of human trafficking. But we can fight back. A concerted effort is underway to unite Canadians and organizations in putting an end to the misery, fear and destruction of human lives caused by this terrible crime” (PACT 2013).

Historically, this was not the case and the focus was on the physical state borders and the regulation of prostitution. International movement of women was seen as the

most vulnerable spaces for women to travel in, and be victimized by trafficking. Now, the threat is imminent.

## **2.6 Representations of the Trafficker**

### **2.6.1 The Historical Image of the Trafficker**

Historically, there were four roles associated with sex trafficking: principals, madams, souteneurs, and intermediaries. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, anyone related to the sex industry was simultaneously described as possibly being involved in trafficking women. These descriptions of the souteneur are important to understand the full historical understanding of trafficking, and how anti-trafficking efforts were promoted as valuable and worthwhile. “Associated with them are various other disreputable characters of the underworld who are willing to concern themselves in any fraud or villainy which offers them a chance of making a dishonest livelihood” (League of Nations 1927, 23-24). Sex workers were seen as inherently vulnerable and immoral and preventing trafficking meant preventing the sex industry. Although there was international work being done by the League of Nations, this did not lead to agreed upon principles or international understandings of trafficking; the focus remained on state regulation and border control.

The League of Nations Committee on Traffic in Women and Children (1926) prepared a concise study of the laws and penalties relating to souteneurs; the role was described as someone who exploits sex workers or coerces them into various types of work. They were typically male and described as evil or sinister. The souteneur targeted the “semi-professional” and the “complacent” girls. The souteneur was described as taking control over a girl of this type by making her acquaintance, and following it up with visits to the theatre, and gifts of jewelry and clothes. Then, having posed as a man of

wealth he proposes to take her on a trip as his mistress. Later on, the real situation is disclosed to the young woman and power over her is developed (League of Nations 1927, 19). “He exercises what amounts to tyrannical domination over his victims and possesses an ascendancy over them which specialists have shown in their studies to be of pathological origin” (League of Nations 1926, 4). These descriptions reveal the inherent economic vulnerability women had during this period, and the souteneur provided and facilitated exploitative sex work.

### **2.6.2 Contemporary Representations of Traffickers**

There are certain distinct similarities with how traffickers were described in these historical settings and the contemporary understanding of the trafficker. Human trafficking today is described as linked to trends of drug trafficking and gangs across jurisdictions; this heightens moral panic and focus on protecting “vulnerable women” from “evil traffickers” that is presented as an ever-growing problem beyond borders. The work of traffickers is also ominous; Canadian government discourse often describes trafficking extremely difficult to assess because trafficking is often linked to organized criminal activity, among other reasons (PSC 2013a, 4).

The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking prepared by the federal government describes traffickers as organized criminal networks and individuals operating domestically and internationally (PSC 2012, 4). Traffickers control their victims, robbing them of their freedom in an effort to reap large profits. The federal government designed an Local Safety Audit Guide for NGOs to use as a diagnostic tool in collecting information on sex trafficking in communities. The Audit Guide is directly tied to funding for sex trafficking research as a mandatory method to collect research and

data. The Audit Guide is a step-by-step tool for NGOs to understand the global context, the Canadian context, find victims and create an action plan. The Audit Guide, in an unseeingly way the state controls information and research of sex trafficking. The Trafficking Audit Guide targets the main victims of trafficking to be women and girls through forced prostitution rings. The trafficked victim is then reproduced and validated when NGOs are awarded funding to use this method. This heightens the focus of monitoring prostitution through anti-trafficking efforts.

Project imPACT found the majority of victim of sex trafficking were youth, ages 12-25, from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Victims were not physically restrained or held in captivity, but rather were psychologically controlled. Most victims of sex trafficking in Ottawa were found to be “domestic,” meaning they did not cross international borders. Project imPACT is very different from historical trafficking representations, because the focus has shifted to more underground markets. Trafficking does not necessarily happen under the guise of commercial sex industry, but has moved to more private settings such as homes or private parties (PACT Ottawa 2014, 2). Social media has transformed communication to more private places, out of reach of the public and law enforcement. Women and girls are increasingly vulnerable under conditions such as addiction, youth, female gender, homelessness, low self-esteem, poverty, or prior abuse (PACT Ottawa, 2014 16).

## **2.7 Who is Responsible?**

The responsibility for “solving” sex trafficking has shifted and adapted. Historically, the assumption was made that the state would protect the movement of women; state actors acted in a pastoral role with women traveling across and through

state borders to guard them from harm and vulnerabilities. Women and girls who would be considered vulnerable were not understood as actors themselves, or as capable of protecting themselves from coercive situations: “In addition to the strict enforcement of immigration laws one of the chief protective measures against traffic is that of providing measure against traffic is that of providing directresses on board ships and conductresses on the trains who escort all women coming to Canada from overseas” (League of Nations 1926, 42). There was an effort to maintain order on long journeys, and women without protectors or guardians are much like children traveling without parents.

Governments were seen as a protector of the border and of women’s safety. In 1924, the League of Nations sent out a questionnaire to collect trafficking statistics. One question was looking for ways in which states were protecting women and children traveling to or from or through a country as migrants. Responsibility was place on the state to protect state borders and regulate movement of women.

Trafficking was also “connected with certain other recognized social evils, such as the abuse of alcohol and the traffic in obscene publications and drugs” (League of Nations 1927). These other social evils were considered responsible for fostering an environment for human trafficking to occur; therefore, anti-trafficking efforts were a part of morally regulating the public.

The historical responsibility of trafficking is important to understand how anti-trafficking efforts have shifted to make the public responsible. While historically the state was seen as the greatest enforcer and protector, new efforts focus on educating the public to engage them as watchers of social evil and harm. The state has always been described as the greatest regulator of anti-trafficking by protecting its citizens and acting as an

enforcer and protector. New efforts now focus on educating the public to engage them, and enlist them as watchers of this social evil and harm. With this comes the enhanced focus on sex work, as the demand for sexual services can be a contributing cause of human trafficking (PSC 2012, 11).

Moments of shift are important to understand the current themes in anti-trafficking. This is also important to demystify and denaturalize the anti-trafficking projects we see today. Contemporary anti-trafficking efforts focus on training communities to identify people and places most at risk of human trafficking so that prevention and intervention can be better targeted. Successfully combatting crime requires partnership, therefore the government outlines current efforts to bring traffickers to justice and by strengthening the criminal justice system's response to this crime.

Comparing contemporary and historical understandings of trafficking reveal the anti-trafficking shifts and trends of anti-trafficking. Those comparisons are an important tool in realizing that anti-trafficking concepts are constantly shifting and evolving. Moreover, there still remains many gaps and misconceptions related to trafficking, such as the inclusion of racial and gendered oppression. Anti-trafficking efforts largely reinforce gendered stereotypes and remain closely tied to traditional state-centric approaches.



### **3 Chapter: A Case Study of PACT-Ottawa**

#### **3.1 PACT-Ottawa**

Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking (PACT)-Ottawa is an anti-trafficking organization founded in May 2004. PACT was created as a response from community members that were attending a conference about the community's response to trafficking. Members of PACT come from a wide variety of career background, education and identity. Members include professional educators, public servants, social service practitioners, students and others. These individuals describe themselves as having deep expertise in social services, education law and public policy. PACT is organized by volunteers, and led by a Board of Governors elected from the membership. All positions with PACT are volunteer positions, so the number of members fluctuates according to projects and upcoming events. They hold a members meeting once a month and a yearly membership meeting. PACT relies on membership fees to support the organization.

PACT operates as a secular organization, though the initial organization of the conference that brought the first PACT members together was by three religious sisters on the topic of human trafficking. Anti-trafficking roots in religious organizations is not uncommon, Jaqueline Berman describes the alliance of conservative Christians and radical feminists has been built on the role of morality in public life that has conflated trafficking in women and prostitution (Berman 2005-06, 272). At first, people organized together to learn about human trafficking, and individuals began meeting monthly. The members of PACT have a vision to network with other groups to prevent the trafficking of persons and increase the protection of victims. A big part of this is PACT's work and image as a co-founder of the Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking (OCEHT).

PACT is also connected with many organizations: Canadian Council for Refugees, Chrysalis Anti-human Trafficking Network, Coalition for an Ontario Task Force and the Committee Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children. The OCEHT acts as a subcommittee of PACT, mobilizing first responders and frontline services in Ottawa. They have created a network of 45 partners including law enforcement, NGOs, government agencies and community groups. Before Project imPACT, OECHT had already worked to identify victim services priorities, develop response protocols, and prepare a Train-the-trainer workbook.

An earlier project conducted by PACT Ottawa was the TruckSTOP campaign. This project was designed to increase human trafficking awareness and encourage prevention and detection in the ground transportation industry. PACT provided an audio CD of a human trafficking documentary and a radio drama. These were distributed free of charge at truck stops, driver training courses and trucking industry trade shows. This pilot project was funded by Public Safety Canada in 2011 targeting southern/eastern Ontario regions. The budget was approximately \$90,000 and was completed in December 2012. Other funded project by PACT include \$15,000 from the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General to develop materials and infrastructure for the Coalition. They received \$15,000 in 2011. Another project was an education initiative for frontline responders and high school students in 2012-2013. For this project PACT received \$18,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

PACT members describe the organization as growing very organically, to the point now where they are receiving large grants from the federal government to research sex trafficking in the Ottawa. Since 2004, PACT has worked on various anti-trafficking

initiatives funded by provincial and federal governments and continues to work closely with state organizations. They focus on all forms of trafficking including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and organ trafficking. Yet, sexuality remains an important political site, and sex trafficking has captured the public's attention, renewing the interest between prostitution and trafficking (O'Brien, Hayes and Carpenter 2013, 1). PACT understands themselves to be a policy leader as they promote education on trafficking, and continue to receive state funding. "PACT was a leader in the issue before the government really turned its head to it. And I think as a result of that, because of PACT's involvement had on informing certain things in those early stages, as it becomes more of a public priority and it becomes something that's in the public eye and it becomes a priority and a focus for the government, PACT is already kind of there" (OM Interview).

### **3.2 Project imPACT**

In 2012, PACT received \$200,000 from Status of Women Canada to conduct research on sex trafficking in the Ottawa area. The project was outlined to target vulnerable girls ages 12-15 and young women 16-30 of varied socio-economic backgrounds, which was estimated to be a population of 150,000 people. The research focused on the Ottawa area and specifically on high-risk neighbourhoods identified as street gang territories, and low-income housing project sectors. The funding provided by Status of Women had a few boundaries in terms of research methodology. The project was to follow a "Local Safety Audit" method created by Public Safety Canada. The research was designed following this model. Two other organizations were also chosen to

conduct similar research in Edmonton and York Region using the mandated Local Safety Audit method.

The Women's Support Network of York Region was granted the same funding, and worked to develop inter-agency protocols, guidelines to provide to service providers on anti-trafficking. This organization works to address sexual violence.

Project imPACT was from May 2013-May 2015. The two-year project is organized around the Local Safety Audit design, led by a Steering Committee of community partners. The core steering committee for the project is the OCTEHT, Ottawa Police Services and St. Joe's Women's Centre. St. Joe's Women's Centre is also a founding member of PACT-Ottawa/OCTEHT. St. Joe's was originally designated as the single-window lead agency for victim support. Ottawa Police Service is also central to the OCTEHT by investigating and prosecuting offenders of human trafficking. Further, Project imPACT received community support from the Ottawa Community Housing Corporation and City Councilor Diane Holmes.

Although the inclusion of law enforcement seems "normal," there is much research on the harm police inflict on sex workers under the guise of helping sex trafficked victims. This inclusion of police is built on three central myths that prosecution will stop traffickers, trafficking is a big business controlled by organized crime and trafficking victims should be sent home (Feingold 2005, 28-31). This is an important distinction with this research project because of the 140 victims identified, only three self-identified survivors were spoken to directly; 59% were mentioned as self identified, 30% were referred, and 11% were identified by training received to identify human trafficking victims. Most of the victims counted in this report were labeled as victims,

and not spoken to directly. Although those in the sex industry are identified as the most knowledgeable group in helping identify sex trafficking, they cannot easily report to the police without receiving police harassment. This leads to question what those numbers really represent. The project was aimed at identifying and responding to the specific needs of victims of sex trafficking in Ottawa. Data was collected with case study interviews, focus groups, online surveys and roundtable discussions with community stakeholders. They were seeking information on characteristics of victims; detailed trends of human trafficking incidents; victims needs; organizations responses to trafficking; gaps and barriers in providing services and the number of victims being support.

The research was conducted between June 2013 and April 2014. This research found 140 victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, mostly Canadian and mostly from the local area, challenging the public perception that trafficking occurs within foreign crime rings. This research found that trafficking occurs mostly to young women that were not physically restrained but rather were controlled by more subtle psychological mechanisms. Most victims were found in private settings, and not the commercial sex industry. The research focused on four main actions: Public awareness, Training, Educate and Empower, and outreach and partnership.

The Local Safety Audit method required 5 steps: Mobilizing Energy and Involvement, Broad City Profile, Narrow and Deep Investigation, Identifying Priorities, Opportunities and Prevention Strategies and Consulting and Communicating (PSC 2013a). The details of the audit method are important; this mandatory method shapes who is being researched, who is considered a victim, what kinds of groups of people can be involved with data collection, and how those affected by trafficking can be helped.

Moreover, this auditing practice creates the image that NGOs and community groups have autonomy in finding solutions, but as the Safety Audit reveals, priorities and stakeholders have already been set. Auditing practices assumes a relation of accountability must be complex such that principals are distant from the actions of agents and are unable personally to verify them (Power 1997, 5).

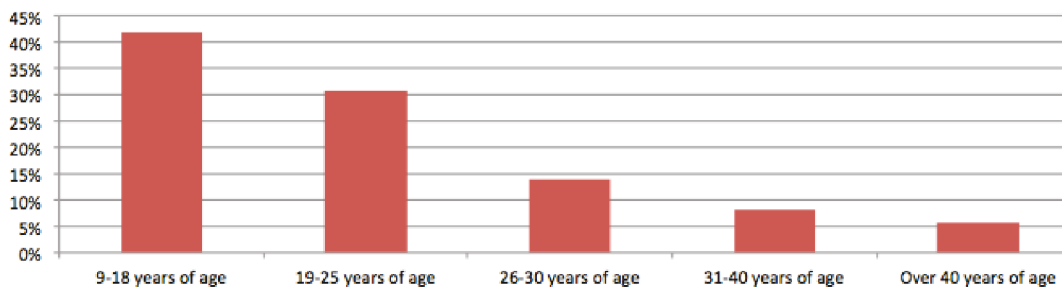
**Figure 1 Risk Factors of Victims of Human Trafficking identified in Project imPACT**  
(PACT Ottawa 2014b, 16)

Table 1. Risk Factors	Number of Key Informants who Identified this Risk Factor (n=27)
Youth	20
Lack of social supports/search for belonging	15
Homelessness/Unstable Housing	10
Addiction/Substance Abuse	8
Lack of parental supervision/instability at home	6
Prior abuse	5
Involvement with Child Protection*	5
Mental Health Issues/Cognitive Impairment/Developmental Delays	5
Poverty	4
Involvement in legal system (current or prior)	4
Low self-esteem	3

\*While involvement with child protection was identified as a factor overall, many key informants explained that youth living in group homes were particularly vulnerable.

**Figure 2 Age Range of Trafficked Persons identified in Project imPACT (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 16)**

**Chart 4. Age Range of Trafficked Persons when First Recruited (n=140)**



## 4 Chapter: Analysis

The anti-trafficking context and historical comparison in the previous chapters provides a way to highlight and identify the shifts, changes and adjustments within contemporary anti-trafficking. What makes the case study of Ottawa significant? This chapter provides some detailed context, which illustrate the significance of PACT's work in Ottawa and what the specific Ottawa community can tell us about the greater anti-trafficking trends.

### 4.1 The Politics of Funding

Funding opportunities have really shaped the focus and priorities of PACT. Project imPACT has been successful in receiving funding and media attention<sup>2</sup>, shaping the dialogue of anti-trafficking in the Ottawa community.

#### 4.1.1 The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking

The funding mechanisms and models of PACT's project are specific and detailed. The National Action plan centralizes trafficking related efforts from many different

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<sup>2</sup> The Ottawa Citizen. "Human Trafficking in Ottawa: At least 150 women used as sex slaves, research suggests." February 3, 2014. [http://www.pact-ottawa.org/uploads/7/6/4/6/7646662/human\\_trafficking\\_in\\_ottawa\\_at\\_least\\_150\\_women\\_used\\_as\\_sex\\_slaves\\_research\\_suggests.pdf](http://www.pact-ottawa.org/uploads/7/6/4/6/7646662/human_trafficking_in_ottawa_at_least_150_women_used_as_sex_slaves_research_suggests.pdf)

The Ottawa Citizen, "Research identifies 140 victims of human trafficking in Ottawa."

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/research-identifies-140-human-trafficking-victims-in-ottawa>

CTV News. "Ottawa researchers identify 140 victims of human trafficking". July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<http://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-researchers-identify-140-victims-of-human-trafficking-1.1939433>

CBC News. "Human trafficking study ends, finds 140 victims in Ottawa. July 30, 2014.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/human-trafficking-study-ends-finds-140-victims-in-ottawa-1.2723031>

Le Droit. "Étude sur le trafic humain: les conclusions dévoilées aujourd'hui." July 30, 2014.

<http://www.lapresse.ca/le-droit/actualites/justice-et-faits-divers/201407/30/01-4787895-etude-sur-le-traffic-humain-les-conclusions-devoilees-aujourd'hui.php>

Ottawa Sun. "Algonquin students working to end human trafficking." April 10, 2014.

<http://www.ottawasun.com/2014/04/10/algonquin-students-working-to-end-human-trafficking>

government departments, to invest \$6 million<sup>3</sup> annually on human trafficking, and outlines a specific plan to increase prevention and awareness efforts. More money is allocated to Status of Women to fund specific projects for women and girls because they are identified as the most vulnerable populations related to sex trafficking (PSC 2012, 14, 32). The funding from Status of Women comes with a specific research and spending model called the Local Safety Audit designed by Public Safety Canada. Funding models are choices, and they are not necessarily objective mechanisms. The decision to spend money on anti-sex trafficking is detailed; it is important to come to this specific funding model with a curiosity and recognition that politics happen in a very intricate way.

The specific action mentioned in the National Action Plan is to provide funding to project supporting female victims of human trafficking, preventative measures such as community safety plans and collaboration with service providers and law enforcement to better identify cases of suspected trafficking and individuals at risk of being trafficked (PSC 2012, 32). The government creates and supports specific kinds of focused efforts and funding and naturally leaves some out. How do these efforts construct the image of anti-trafficking? What is left on the margins? This is important to focus and distinguish the mechanisms of funding contemporary anti-trafficking projects. This is also a focused, detailed way that the federal government is controlling the focus and intention of anti-trafficking initiatives. Ian Hacking reminds us “we have concepts, practices, institutions and even people being formed and molded before our very lives” (Hacking 2000, 127). Therefore, we need to consider how this project does not aim to govern directly, but

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<sup>3</sup> Six million dollars annually on Human Trafficking is allocated to many state departments including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA), Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), Justice Department and Public Safety.



rather through mobilizing civil society through education. The state-society boundary is being blurred; rather than looking for a definition to maintain this boundary, Mitchell sees the need to “examine the political processes through which the uncertain yet powerful distinction between state and society is produced” (Mitchell 2006, 170).

#### **4.1.2 Status of Women Canada: Working Together Engaging Communities to End Violence Against Women and Girls**

In 2012, The Harper Government called for proposals through Status of Women Canada titled, “Working Together: Engaging Communities to End Violence Against Women in Girls.” Two hundred eighty-eight organizations from across the country responded to this call for proposals and 27 were funded. The proposal was divided into four thematic areas, one being preventing and reducing the trafficking of women and girls through community planning (SWC 2012). As outlined in the table below, trafficking is one of a list of four categories where gender-based violence occurs in Canada. The list is peculiar, put together arbitrarily as priority areas where women and girls experience violence. The topic of honour killings is highly controversial, yet received plenty of funding in this set of applications without much media coverage. Because of the funding model, eight organizations were funded to perform controversial research in an uncontroversial way, distant from the state.

**Table 1: Call for Proposals: Status of Women Working Together Engaging Communities to End Violence Against Women and Girls**

Theme:	Successful Applicants	Unsuccessful Applicants	TOTAL
Preventing and reducing violence against women and girls in high-risk neighbourhoods	7	118	125
Engaging men and boys in ending violence against women and girls	9	97	106
Preventing and reducing violence against women and girls in the name of “honour”	8	30	38
Preventing and reducing the trafficking of women and girls through community planning	3	45	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>317</b>

Of those funded organizations, three were funded for anti-sex trafficking projects: PACT Ottawa, Women’s Support Network of York Region and the Action Coalition on Human Trafficking (ACT) Alberta. These three organizations received \$200,000 for up to 30 months. The goal of the funding set by Status of Women is to establish a united community effort with partners and stakeholders on sex trafficking. Preference was given to those organizations that already have done previous work on the prevention of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The project goal of the anti-sex trafficking theme is “to enhance opportunities for communities to take action that prevents and reduces the incidence of trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, including its root causes” (SWC 2012). The effort is to connect the government department with organizations doing community work. Safety Audits are presented as ‘bridging efforts’ and resources to respond to the increase of violence against women happening in Canada.

Many other organizations applied for sex trafficking funding but were unsuccessful<sup>4</sup>. There are three central boundaries set on these projects: First, the research is for supporting women and girls that are victims of human trafficking. Secondly, the research is on trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Thirdly, the projects were to be pilots for using a human trafficking safety audit method designed by Public Safety. The main methods expected from this project are engaging and establishing working partnerships with local women and girls, and community organizations; carry out a needs assessment and conduct a safety audit.

#### **4.1.3 Local Safety Audit**

The Local Safety Audit Guide is one requirement placed on the 2012 sex trafficking funding from Status of Women. This is an important mechanism to regulate community research on sex trafficking that the NGOs must follow.

Because a lot of information related to trafficking is hidden and unreported, the Safety Audit format requires in-depth research on the “groups most at risk of sexual exploitation and those who are trafficking in the local area, the views of communities and key stakeholders, and the strengths and gaps in existing policies and services (PSC 2013a, 18). The safety audit is a different type of tool to both collect and create knowledge around trafficking. This is a mechanism to go beyond the reach of jurisdiction of police or other authorities through ‘the community’ to access places.

The audit practice in this case is represented as an attempt for the government to invest in the community beyond traditional institutions such as police to have a more accurate understanding of sex trafficking. However, the method of auditing has a specific

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A table.

function. The Local Safety Audit template is designed to go beyond law enforcement and the police report data, and to use auditing as a mechanism to monitor a subject from a distance to increase effectiveness (Power 1997,92).

Power questions the formalized control mechanisms to have more to do with myths of control in the environment of organizations than real improvements in operational efficiency (Power 1997, 95). The auditing practices gives the illusion that non-state organizations have the space to shape their message in light of their perceptions as to what they state-key players might want to hear. This is important to question a politically contentious subject as sex trafficking and the boundaries of how these funded projects are set by identifying at-risk populations, such as sex workers. The Local Safety Audit further giving guidelines to controversial and contentious ideas about sex trafficking and sex work. The Audit outlines the nuance of identifying sex trafficked victims that blurs the boundaries between sex trafficked victims and sex workers. “It may be difficult for observers to distinguish between those forced into prostitution, those for whom it seems the only option to earn money, and those who have chosen sex work as a profession” (PSC 2013a, 32). This shapes what the NGOs are able to see and report on in their communities.

In order to receive funding, Status of Women Canada expects organizations to present themselves as subject experts; PACT used the success of other campaigns to establish itself as a reliable receiver of funds. PACT received \$90,000 in June 2011 from Public Safety Canada for a project called Truck Stop Campaign. PACT created educational materials about human trafficking for truck drivers. Further, in 2011 PACT received \$15,000 from the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney

General on the development of human trafficking materials and infrastructure. PACT Ottawa built on their funded project through media attention so much so that Public Safety Canada responded to PACT's action plan and requested to fund one of their pillars. This is evidence of state funding allowing for selectivity of the government to create priorities within the NGO's anti-trafficking work, such as prioritizing sex trafficking over other types of trafficking or migration problems. The project that PACT has worked on was the first time an audit of sex trafficking was done in Ottawa. The media attention and "success" of Project imPACT led to Public Safety Canada approaching PACT to fund one pillar of the four point action plan.

Many participants of this project said it was normal for organizations to "follow the funding," and shape their messaging or research interested to cater to what the state has prioritized. Organizations have to follow a certain protocol and be able to express outcomes in a way that will be understood as relevant and important. Moreover, the funding received is used to receive media attention, and increase the visibility and status of the work that is going on.

#### **4.2 The Community Response to Sex Trafficking Research**

Community research can be understood as governing through community<sup>5</sup>. The mechanisms of funding, and the reaction deepen our understanding of anti-trafficking and this specific anti-trafficking project in Ottawa. Members of PACT have found that the

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<sup>5</sup> Nikolas Rose describes community not only as the territory to be controlled, but a means of government; conduct is collectivized and the state is no longer expected to answer all questions on security and health (Rose 1999, 475-76). "...community becomes the object and target for the exercise of political power while remaining somehow, external to politics and a counterweight to it" (Rose 1999, 475). This is evident in how Project imPACT is presented as community focused and beyond what the state is able to do and be effective. Project imPACT is being funded as a means for the Ottawa community to self-govern and do it in a way that is seemingly outside of politics.

research they completed of sex trafficking in Ottawa has been received through many divergent interpretations, and using it as tools for related political agendas. There are specific prevention initiatives and rescue initiatives that have affected the current debates and understandings of sex trafficking and coercive sex work. There are many perspectives on how anti-trafficking policy and research is being interpreted and used related to prostitution laws, sex work, and working conditions of sex workers.

This project was very specific in addressing sex trafficking in Ottawa and there were two general themes in how the community responded to Project imPACT. The first response to Project imPACT was shock: “Generally, the projects were received initially with shock from the general public. Why are people shocked about this? People in the community at large would respond with, “What? There’s this issue here in my backyard?” (MN Interview). This is a reoccurring theme on how PACT members mobilize and how the public reacts. This highlights the distinction that anti-traffickers are not often a part of the vulnerable population themselves. According to PACT members, the community was not very aware of the concept of human trafficking and generally went through the same enlightenment: “When we started ten years ago people didn’t even understand the term human trafficking. People didn’t know about it. People didn’t think about it. People certainly didn’t think that it happened here. And if it did they thought it happened to migrant’s right? To Eastern Europeans, or to Asians and it was them, you know, over there...and the evidence that it’s happening in our community, rather in your face” (DC Interview).

PACT is a part of the myth-busting work in Ottawa, that trafficking is a ‘non-Canadian’ issue. PACT members have also found community members have responded

with the same shock and realization of trafficking once they learn of PACT's work. "I think people are just kind of shocked to learn that these types of things happen so close to Ottawa; it seemed like such a non-Canadian issue. It's international...it's not even in the States. It's Asian countries, or Eastern European countries. We don't have that here. So to learn of the magnitude of what's existent here is shocking people I think" (MN interview)

Along with shock, PACT members found that many people in the community were questioning why this research was being done, disbelieving the fact that trafficking occurs in Ottawa. Since the project started, there has been an increase in media coverage around trafficking, so generally, people now understand what the issue is. "But I think people still struggle with the notion with how many. They just, they have a hard time understanding that. And so that made it really unique and an opportunity to address that in Ottawa" (FL Interview).

The second response to Project imPACT was the demand for simple solutions. Although sex trafficking is a complicated issue, one participant cites the government and individual people responding to the research as seeking quick solutions. The complexities of human trafficking as it is understood as a systemic issue rooted in structural inequalities was not typically well received: "They wanted to know what can we do. I can't sit here in 20 minutes and tell you what to do. It's a really complex issue. I hate saying that but if I didn't it would just be a band-aid on the issue. But that's partly how the government works right? Especially in an election year, right? I hate to be so depressing but it's true. We want this report, and we've thrown \$20 million at it" (FL Interview).

This government funded project and the research model prescribed to this case strongly emphasized finding policy solutions within the community. However, the direction of the research is not met with the need to investigate the full extent of how and why vulnerabilities and exploitation are the root causes of trafficking. At the same time, there is also a push to use the research as a way to find more shallow solutions. One participant explained the push and need to simplify this problem and this has led to policies being short-sighted: “A lot of the funding is going to research and police work. There’s not really a lot of long term care for these victims. And that’s a huge problem. They’ve been victimized; they’ve been through trauma big time” (EW Interview). This is the double or secondary exploitation of victims.

#### **4.3 Victim? Sex Worker? Or Prostitute?**

The touching point between the concepts of sex trafficked victim and sex worker is contentious, situated on an arena that is constantly changing. The vision of PACT is to recognize the dignity and promote the well being of all trafficked persons including some that may be exploited for sex work. They see this as successfully networking with other groups, which prevent trafficking in persons.

PACT distinguishes sex work and sex trafficking through definition and victim identification. Using a variety of methods to research sex trafficking in Ottawa, PACT identified 140 victims of sex trafficking over the calendar year of 2013. First, the researchers conducted roundtables and an online survey with 34 individuals who work as staff from agencies supporting human trafficking victims or related to the area of human trafficking. Secondly, the research conducted 27 interviews with three self-identified survivors, one former human trafficker and 23 frontline workers. Thirdly, focus groups



were held with 90 youth and 10 self-identified sex workers. Finally, an online survey of people who buy sex was conducted with 104 people. Victims were identified in three ways: through self-identification, social workers or police services<sup>6</sup>. PACT reached out through their networks to speak with social workers who are or have been in contact with sex trafficked victims and they used the United Nations (UN) definition of human trafficking and for the purpose of Project imPACT; they focused on three main concepts:

1. The Act: Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons.
2. The Means: Threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim
3. The Purpose: for the purpose of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs.

The definition of sex trafficking may seem banal, however the definition is a contested arena related to the broader debates on sex work and sex trafficking. The definition of sex trafficking has specific political means. The work of project imPACT was to seek out and clearly define victims in Ottawa. But there were major complications, and this search for empirical data highlights the battleground of anti-trafficking. This research revealed moments when women were transitioning in and out of trafficking situations. “When telling their stories, they made it clear that at times they were trafficked, while at other times they were doing sex work completely outside of a trafficking situation” (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 19). This definition was described as being used as a tool to distinguish sex trafficking from sex work. The researchers did work to

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<sup>6</sup> 59% of victims self identified as a victim of human trafficking. 30% of the victims were identified by social workers and 11% identified by police (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 13).

avoid conflating the terms, but they did want to answer the question: are sex workers at a higher risk of being trafficked than other groups? (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 18). "...some victims and survivors of trafficking neither consider themselves to be victims of human trafficking nor become identified as such by service providers" (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 39).

The key points of conflation rest on the boundaries of choice and victim identification. This tension is still apparent today, as sex worker rights organizations were approached with the project, but were hesitant to be involved because of a popular perception "that human trafficking initiatives are entrenched in the abolitionism of sex work" (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 13). At the fifth Annual General Meeting in May 2012, PACT voted in favour of releasing a statement about sex work. The statement recognizes the links between sex work and human trafficking, but also resists conflating these issues. This statement recognizes that sex work is frequently embedded in structural oppressions such as poverty, racism, predatory capitalism, misogyny and gender bias.

There exists significant distrust between anti-trafficking groups and sex work advocacy groups. Sex worker organizations did not want to be involved because they were approached as victims, whereas they have resources on consensual sex work and not an organization that could find victims of human trafficking. One participant identified this as the sex work advocacy group's assumption that PACT is working from an anti-sex work approach. The researchers explicitly identified this conflict: "In addition, due to the conflation of the issue of human trafficking with sex work, sex work organizations wanted to distance themselves from this project. Members of these organizations wanted to distance themselves from this project. Members of these organizations expect to be

regarded as sex workers by choice and not to be mistaken for trafficked persons” (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 13).

The boundary of “who is a victim” is a site of political struggle. O’Brien, Hayes and Carpenter studied the linking of sex work and trafficking in policy debates of Australia and the United States and identified where this has happened in other nation states including New Zealand, United Kingdom and the Netherlands (2013, 9). The harm of sex trafficking is positioned as a direct consequence of legalized, decriminalized or tolerated prostitution. Legalized prostitution is argued to create the conditions for sex trafficking to develop (O’Brien, Hayes and Carpenter 2013, 1). This is seen very explicitly with Project imPACT and the process of identifying victims and producing a quantitative count. The empirical work exacerbated the tension on this research in the community on choice and consent. There is never a clear case on a trafficked victim’s experience. There were many cases identified where these lines were blurred, such as a sex trafficked victim choosing to go back to sex work. The focus on choice does not really help provide solutions. The frustration, and lack of clarity of the situation is shown here when the interviewee said: “. . .how do you respond to someone who is saying that it’s their choice but who ultimately says later it wasn’t my choice...I was manipulated.” Project imPACT research and the community response highlights the contested arena of “victimhood.” “In the instances where they were trafficked, they self-identified and explained that at the time they were recruited and controlled fully by a pimp, and worked without receiving any of the money. These women were particularly vulnerable because they had already been stigmatized by police and society and were afraid of reporting to the police” (PACT Ottawa 2014, 19). The “victim” was identifying the terrible stigma of

being a prostitute; she had been respected as a sex worker she may not have come up with this narrative. For those who are deeply stigmatized for their sex work, latching onto the trafficking victim label allows them to suddenly escape all stigmas and be embraced as a cherished victim.

When interviewed, PACT members fully acknowledged the importance of having sex workers as key allies: “Who knows the most about the sex industry in Ottawa? Sex workers. Who’s the most empowered to talk about it? Sex workers who’ve said they’ve chosen to be there. Who would be able to observe if they didn’t choose to be there? Sex workers. So we view them as potential allies in helping identify the people who are not there by choice. And as a result we feel we need to be respectful of their opinion and their expressed wishes in terms of how it might be best to identify those people who are not there by choice” (DC Interview).

However, this sentiment is not relayed in Project imPACT, specifically with how the project identifies victims: “Many victims also do not want to consider themselves ‘victims,’ or may not know how to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships, or even between a relationship and severe exploitation/trafficking” (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 39). The perspective of PACT indicates that the researchers are better authorities on whether someone is trafficked or not and victims do not know or understand their own situation. Although PACT members acknowledge the experience and expertise of sex workers, they were not ever included.

Other organizations have challenged the work of PACT, such as sex worker advocacy groups. Prostitutes of Ottawa/Gatineau Work, Educate and Resist (POWER) is

an organization that advocates for the rights of sex workers. The group was founded in 2008 as a response to increased campaign and violence against street based sex workers by the Ottawa Police Service. When asked to describe her reaction to Project imPACT, one participant says: “This goes counter to what actual serious social science tells us when it comes to addressing exploitation in the sex industry or best practices of sexual assault or working with survivors of violence. And it’s a misinformed use of state agents like prisons, coercive exit services, divergent programs, police forces to force an idea of what would address violence against women when sex workers report violence from law enforcement and community agencies from. It’s not informed by reality it’s informed by ideology” (GD interview).

These organizations identify real and specific repercussion occurring in Ottawa with this report on sex trafficking gaining political attention. To start, POWER does not operate with the same categories of trafficking; they focus more on the distinction of sex work and coercive sex work. Human trafficking has been used as a reframing of sex work resulting in harmful and real consequences in Ottawa. The increased attention on sex trafficking has created significant shifts in how sex workers are treated and handled in the city, and where funding is allocated.

The influence of anti-trafficking began to grow as the report was published and received media attention. These shifts in anti-sex trafficking work have directly affected sex workers working conditions and safety the delivery of social services and policing of sex workers, such as increased justification of street sweeps and harsher treatment toward sex workers. The Human Trafficking unit with the Ottawa Police Service increased client sweeps with a new justification to find victims of human trafficking, such as Operation

Northern Spotlight (Ottawa Police Service 2015). From a sex worker rights advocacy organizations were silenced by this anti-trafficking discourse, making it challenging to speak to the broader mechanisms of how and why women are vulnerable.

Community members also challenged the lack of clarity around the purpose of finding trafficked victims. The depth of policy commitment seems to be lacking, because anti-trafficking efforts do not line up with other social services such as housing, drug addiction services, migrant worker advocacy. One hundred forty victims were identified in this research, but how have those numbers helped vulnerable people in the community? Distinguishing between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ participation in the sex trade “paradoxically can both idealize the sex labourer granting her an abstract agency that serves to legitimate or obscure real conditions or depredation and stigmatize her, by reinforcing a discourse in which sexual innocence is linked with individual worth” (Thomas and Halley 2006, 55).

Another gap that was found with this anti-trafficking project is the lack of acknowledgement of the differences in power and resources, and no recognition of the danger anti-trafficking discourse puts sex workers in. Project imPACT recognizes the importance of sex workers experience and expertise in identifying coercive sex working conditions, however sex work organizations in this case did not receive funding or political means to have their experience within the anti-trafficking discourse to be heard or promoted.

PACT members express their role as anti-traffickers affecting the various perspective of sex work. As one participant explains, to take a stance one way or another would implicate them, or create divides, which are tied to strong personal opinions and

beliefs on sex work. “And as soon as we take a stance for or against the issues that arise around sex work and prostitution, we inherently make a divide. And we’re putting ourselves in a position where maybe someone wouldn’t want to come to us. We are non-partisan, we are not judgmental, and so why would we as an organization take a specific approach one way or another? We want to help if you’re a victim or if you’re a survivor. It doesn’t matter. And I think that it’s hard to take a position and justify that” (MN Interview). PACT certainly understands the political implications of identifying and expressing a “for” or “against” perspective on sex work, and Project imPACT was one of their more politically sensitive projects. This is significant, in that PACT is acting as a hybrid form combining the moral, abolitionist perspective while trying to make space for a more progressive focus on agency and choice. They were really making an effort to be non-partisan, non-judgmental wanting to help victims or survivors. Making more of a political stance on the issues surrounding sex work would make a divide. “. . . It’s hard because they view us with suspicion. They think we want to come and save everybody, including people who don’t need saving. But we’ve tried to make it clear that that’s not our intention. That if you say you choose sex work than that’s up to you. And if and when you say no, I was actually coerced or manipulated or whatever this was actually trafficking, than we’re there to help.” During my research I found these to be genuine conflicts not only between organizations, but struggles within the organization. Can you really be assured that you’re not conflating sex work and sex trafficking at this point? “How do you make sure that the data you getting out of it isn’t being misused for a certain conservative, right wing, anti-sex work agenda? I can’t control that.” (FL Interview)

In 2014, this conflict and disagreement occurred in public Canadian debate with Bill C-36. Social stigma around sex work is identified as a major problem in providing services to those who need it. Bill C-36 has been understood as unwittingly reinforcing the social stigma associated with sex work, and at the same time, perpetuating a rescue narrative. “ . . . There’s one whose voice digs out for me because she said, you know I was in and out of hospitals. I was in touch with all the same services, but no one asked me . . . I was just regarded as a prostitute. And I guess therein lies the tension. Because I just finished saying that if you choose it, then we’re not going to judge you and live and let live. But what that particular victim said was at the time I thought I was choosing it so that was my attitude was well scripted and I was treated like a prostitute and a drug addict. And no one tried to help me. No one tried to help me exit. So, that’s when it gets really confusing right? How do you respond to someone who is saying that it’s their choice but who ultimately says later it wasn’t my choice. . . I was manipulated”.

#### **4.4 Further Discussion**

Further to this analysis, I found two other relevant themes in anti-trafficking: the increasing criminalization of trafficking, and the increase use of statistics to explain trafficking.

##### **4.4.1 Increased criminalization of trafficking**

As anti-trafficking has become a political priority, the government has created a centralized effort through the National Action Plan. Canada presents itself as a leader, being one of the first to support the United Nation’s Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Former Minister of Public Safety Vic Toews describes human trafficking as “one of the most heinous crimes



imaginable, often described as modern-day slavery” (PSC 2012, 1). Here, we see that governance is framed as combatting something bad and immoral, mobilizing the fight against evil and the perpetrators. The anti-policy arena becomes charged to up the “anti” and fight trafficking to protect the most vulnerable. The interaction and support of governments, law enforcement and civil society groups is identified as essential to combatting this social problem. Government mechanisms are then set into place to maintain law enforcement’s central role in supporting Canada’s anti-trafficking actions and rhetoric.

The increased focus on trafficking as a crime creates the image of human trafficking as sinister, and evil; it calls for immediate action and attention. Human trafficking is described as “one of the most heinous crimes imaginable, often described as a modern day form of slavery.” (PSC 2013b, 2). This has increased focus on anti-trafficking efforts, broadening the scope of police investigation and increasing tools available for police and law enforcement. The National Action Plan states that “[i]nvestigative techniques such as undercover operations or electronic surveillance are permitted in Canadian law and are invaluable tools in human trafficking investigations” (PSC 2012, 17). However, community members have questioned the uses of police anti-trafficking methods. The reality of increased criminalization is decreased focus on services, programs and the nature of precarious work. There is less focus on the structural inequalities and lack of economic choice that keep people vulnerable to precarious working conditions. “By making non-state actors the chief villains and sex the motive, the state ultimately promulgates laws and policy that are both ineffective and reactionary” (Vance 2011a, 942).

PACT is aware of the contradiction that they are both working with the police and the law enforcement model, yet are aware of the restrictions this creates. PACT is involved in this dynamic process where the limitations of law enforcement to help “solve” trafficking has become evident. The Steering Committee of Project imPACT included the Ottawa Police Service, as well as Crime Prevention Ottawa and St. Joe’s Women’s Centre. There are substantial criticisms that law enforcement perpetuates violence against sex workers, pushing potential victims of sex trafficking further underground and in more dangerous working conditions, and conflating sex work and sex trafficking. Project imPACT and members of PACT recognize that law enforcement can be harmful to sex workers and a hindrance to aiding sex trafficked victims, yet the Ottawa Police Service remained a main stakeholder.

PACT has also been challenged on their close partnership with the Ottawa Police, using law enforcement rather than outreach as a method to reach trafficked victims. PACT has observed, along with other organizations that prostitution sting operations, and trafficking rescue attempts perpetuate the conflation of sex work and sex trafficking. This happens in police undercover operations and raids of where sex workers are working, to find and rescue sex trafficking victims: Law enforcement can endanger potential victims or sex workers by pushing them into more underground and dangerous work: “. . . our research indicated that police enforcement approaches can fuel tensions between sex workers and police, leading to missed opportunities for collaboration and identification of larger numbers of trafficked youth” (PACT Ottawa 2014, 3).

However, PACT remains committed to working with local law enforcement, and since the organization’s inception, has worked with RCMP members. “. . . It’s a part of

our approach as a whole that everybody has their approach and expertise and we, we try and sort of work as a community and as a network respecting people's expertise and constraints within their organizations" (DC Interview).

Simultaneously, PACT recognizes the harm of having law enforcement as an ally as they researched sex trafficking in Ottawa recognizing that "approaching sex workers with a focus on enforcement (rather than outreach) can endanger potential victims of sex workers by pushing them into more underground and dangerous work" (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 3). Further, sex worker rights organizations were hesitant to be involved with an anti-human trafficking project "because of prior negative experiences with similar projects and organizations" (PACT Ottawa 2014b, 13).

"For example, sex workers who experienced police enforcement activity at their homes for the purposes of finding human trafficked victims, felt their privacy and rights have been violated. In some cases sex workers reported feeling harassed and fearful for their safety. Respondents also noted that these kinds of operations make it difficult for community stakeholders including the police to identify, liaise with and gain the trust of sex workers. Respondents identified that their fears of arrest or being violated by officers can lead them to avoid accessing necessary services or reporting human trafficking cases for fear of being disregarded or criminalized" (PACT Ottawa 2014, 50).

Project imPACT is centered on a type of victim, and enforces state-led authority to continue to regulate and criminalize trafficking. This should lead us to question the true intentions of this project to be centered on victims. PACT knowingly acknowledges

law enforcement's anti-trafficking efforts stigmatize marginalized workers and create more victims, particularly those working in the sex industry, yet does not challenge this authoritative position. PACT knows it is not listening to some victims. Mahdavi recognizes there is a gap between policy, discourse and the lived experience of forced labour and trafficking that "reveals the need for a departure from the criminalization framework of current policies" (Mahdavi 2014, 49). Yet, Project imPACT does not challenge these marginalizing frameworks, does not depart from the criminalization efforts, but rather enforces the state led initiative that empowers law enforcement to continue to victimize migrant labour and sex workers. In reality, PACT departs from the message to protect the most vulnerable.

#### **4.4.2 The Politics of Statistics**

There exists a preoccupation with unknown data related to trafficking; no one really knows how many people are trafficked around the world, and to what extent trafficking is being perpetuated in various states. Human trafficking has become an enforcement initiative, yet statistics and evidence-based facts are scarce and the number of trafficking victims varies according to source (RCMP 2005, 4). Many researchers have questioned the empirical premises of the statistics and figures related to sex trafficking (Gozdziak and Bump 2008; Weitzer 2005; Zang 2009). If trafficking is such a heinous crime, and a widespread phenomenon, why is it so difficult to identify victims? Why do we need numbers in the first place to establish political importance? Studying the statistics and research of this anti-trafficking project is a clear and empirical way to sift through the details of this project, and the connection to larger themes that have been previously written about in the anti-trafficking literature. Sharma suggests that funding

opportunities for NGOs are linked to keeping good numbers of who's been 'rescued' (Sharma 2003, 59). This has created a phantom image of the unknown trafficking around the world. The data, figures and estimates around this number are large estimates that are hard to interpret, and verify, therefore they remain as generalizations. Because of the illegal nature of trafficking, authorities do not have clear access to these victims, to 'save' them. If there has been a hyper-focus on sex trafficking, this must be reflected in the numbers and reports that represent all forms of human trafficking. "Assessing the extent of human trafficking in Canada, as in the case internationally, is extremely difficult" (PSC 2013a, 4). Walters writes about how this phantom image has been created with anti-illegal immigration discourse in the European Union; estimates are only used therefore making it impossible to have a clear image (Walters 2010, 83). This 'phantom' is something in the future that needs to be prevented (Walters 2010, 83). In the case of illegal immigration, migrants themselves are assumed to have no voice to contribute to the political process (Walters 2010, 82).

Moreover, it is cited time and time again that collecting empirical evidence and numbers on trafficking is difficult to do because of the complex and clandestine nature. Ian Hacking reminds us that "what you count depends upon your theory about you are counting" (2000, 145). Ian Hacking's work on child abuse investigates this effort to find empirical evidence related to child abuse; there were reports of 'tragic increase' although there was no relevant data (Hacking 2000, 143). The prevalence, and the incidence created discrepant rates (Hacking 2000, 143).

Yet at the same time, the National Action Plan estimates that human trafficking is amongst the most lucrative of criminal activities, rivaled only by drugs and firearms (PSC

2012, 4). Human trafficking is often described as being fuelled by being a lucrative criminal activity. “Traffickers reap large profits while robbing victims of their freedom, dignity and human potential at great cost to the individual and society at large” (PSC 2012, 4). Describing profit as motivation for trafficking individuals sets a moral obligation to fight trafficking, while promoting the sinister nature of traffickers motivations. Not only are traffickers described as seeking power over vulnerable people, but they also seek to create a profit over this power imbalance.

“In Canada, data on human trafficking is collected through a number of ways, including police reported incidents, convictions and the issuance of temporary resident permits for suspected trafficking victims” (PSC 2013a, 4). According to April 2012 statistics, there were 25 convictions (and 41 victims) under human trafficking specific offences in the Criminal Code enacted in 2005, and women are the majority of victims (PSC 2013a, 5). The exact statistics are hard to establish in this case, but most statistics emphasize women and children as being the most affected: “While it is impossible to truly know the full scope and impact of this problem at the international or Canadian level, we do know that women and children are the primary victims – overwhelmingly so for sexual exploitation but also for forced labour – however, men are not immune to this crime” (PSC 2012, 5). This again, is a mechanism to establish and reinforce the state as a protector and inherently creates divides on who has power and who needs protection. This also creates space to continue to hold dominance over the focus of the social problem. The state assumes their leadership role, yet gives itself a buffer on how and why to use the statistics surrounding human trafficking.

There are two problems associated with anti-trafficking data that are found repeatedly throughout the literature. Firstly, the definition of trafficking related to many human trafficking statistics remains unclear. “Dispersed data across different agencies within the government, as well as other organizations including law enforcement and NGOs, each using their own criteria to define a victim of trafficking, hinders the gathering of this information. Most data collected to combat human trafficking is focused on anecdotal evidence or sensationalism rather than on critical analysis of the problem” (PACT Ottawa 2014, 38). Joel Best describes this occurrence of activists promoting social problems through big numbers because they make the problem seem bigger and more important. Best encourages researchers to ask the question of how the problem is defined, and to ask if the definition reasonable (Best 2001, 43-44). The definition of human trafficking varies drastically from all those affected by coercive work, to those only forced into prostitution in Canada. To add to the lack of clarity, the definition of trafficking is rarely presented with the estimate or figure, but rather a large number is presented without context. The most popular way of describing human trafficking with numbers is to present the estimate of number of victims affected, and the estimates on profit made by traffickers.

Secondly, the figures are used to describe human trafficking as the fastest growing crime above all other criminal activity. The numbers presented help argue that the public should care and support this cause because the numbers are huge, and continually affecting more and more people. “Between 700,000 and 4 million people a year are affected by trafficking in persons. The vast majority of people who are trafficked are women and children, and 92% of victims are trafficked for the purpose of sexual

exploitation” (SWC 2007, 1). Many government reports also frame trafficking as an increasing problem affecting more and more people around the world. In a Department of Justice report on Human Trafficking, Pino Arlacchi from the United Nations is sourced as saying that approximately 4 million people are trafficked by criminal groups every year and those earnings are reaching 5 to 7 billion dollars (Arlacchi 2000). Not only does trafficking victimize many people, the numbers of victims are presented as continuing to increase. “Human Trafficking, as we now call it, is the fastest growing crime on our planet today. More people live in slavery now than at any time in history. It is a 32-Billion Dollar industry that feeds off greed and profound human misery” (PACT Ottawa 2013a). This is a moral argument. Statistics are presented, yet always warranted with the moral concern that far more exploitation and coercion is happening.

While these statistics are used to present an urgent problem, the numbers are always paired with an uncertainty about how many people this problem is really affecting. Empirical evidence can be useful, but the figures often are represented with a note that trafficking is a clandestine criminal activity, therefore it is impossible to identify the true effects and implications. As Bigo explains, securitization of migration is used as a mode of governmentality by diverse institutions to play with the unease while justifying politicians own authority (Bigo 2002, 65, 69). The public is permanently unsettled. “The extent of human trafficking, either in Canada or internationally is difficult to assess due to the hidden nature of these offences, the reluctance of victims and witnesses to come forward to law enforcement and the difficulty of identifying victims in practice” (PSC 2012, 5).



Because of the clandestine and illegal nature of human trafficking, cases are often never fully reported, thus “we” will never really know what is happening. Data is presented, yet there is a significant focus on the unknown data and statistics related to trafficking. Because the social problem is presented but is not fully visible, the public is teased with an incomplete idea about sex trafficking, charmed by secrecy (Simmel 1906). This provokes public worry that trafficking increasingly harder to manage and detect because of globalization, open borders, and new technologies; social media and online technology are being used to explain how trafficking is becoming harder to detect (PSC 2013b, 10). There is a political and economic incitement to talk about sex. Sexuality “is constantly being solicited and refused; it is an object of obsession and attraction, a dreadful secret and an indispensable pivot” (Foucault 1980, 109). Though Foucault often speaks of this fascination and unease around sex related to the governance of children and families in the Victorian age, this unease around sex is operating around city streets, policing and crime. PACT members also describe this draw to sex trafficking: “. . . sex trafficking like sex work, is a sexy topic to people. People know what it means and it’s something that’s easy to talk about because it’s something that. . . you can see in pop culture. People can identify it. People know what you’re talking about. (MN Interview).

Ronald Weitzer has challenged these narratives, and the heightened focus of anecdotal or sensationalistic narratives rather than sound research on trafficking (2013, 309). Weitzer states that “the public is bombarded with unverified assertions that the number of trafficking victims is huge, that the problem is steadily growing in magnitude, and that it is the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, after drug trafficking” (2013, 309). Weitzer researched anti-trafficking policy of Brazil and the United States,

and found that the “moral crusaders were able to transform their representations of trafficking into conventional wisdom with the help of the media and government agencies” (2013, 310).

Other government trafficking statistics have been questioned, including the trafficking in persons report produced annually by the United States State Department. After announcing increased improvement to statistical models to produce trafficking estimates, the United States Government Accountability Office conducted an audit questioning the methods of the trafficking in persons estimates. The Accountability Office reported “the U.S. government’s estimates were developed by one person who did not document all his work so the estimates may not be replicable, casting doubt on its reliability” (U.S. GAO 2006, i). Although this discrepancy with trafficking numbers is certainly understandable, the problem is when these statistics are represented as fact. Vague numbers become solidified through a chain of citations that become so long we lose sight of the uncertain origin. The figures become facts.

The numbers of human trafficking have also been used as a mechanism to distinguish human trafficking from other forms of illegal border crossing or precarious labour. This seems to be a regulation mechanism, specifically identifying human trafficking as decisively different than human smuggling. All of these concepts of precarious work, transnational labour are quite complex, and interrelated with various social and economic inequalities and issues. Yet, many reports and education efforts that exist related to trafficking leave it at that surface level analysis.

The use of statistics with human trafficking is an important site to understand the trends and shifts in trafficking, and how the issue is presented as a priority. The numbers

themselves are important to represent cases, stories and convictions, but the statistics are used in other ways, including focusing on unknown cases by activists and others to incite moral panic without any evidence. Moreover, “attempts to measure and understand trafficking as an objective phenomenon have failed due to evidence from moral debates concerning prostitution” (O’Brien, Hayes and Carpenter 2013, 82). Statistics have been used to shape the moral argument and focus of anti-trafficking efforts.

#### **4.4.3 2.45 Million Victims? One Statistic in Focus**

Statistics are used to create priorities shaping the image of trafficking as an important public and political phenomenon. How are statistics themselves understood as constructed (Augustín 1988, 17)? Throughout my research and document collection, I found many different numbers, statistics and estimates on trafficking. Often these numbers are reproduced from international organizations or other state agencies. Statistics of human trafficking typically focus on two sources for statistics: the number of victims affected, and the financial and economic affects human trafficking has on global markets. These statistics are found from two basic questions: how many victims are there? And how much profit are traffickers making? To pick apart how some of this broader discussion occur and play out, I focused on one statistic to see how some of these generalizations or presumptions are presenting themselves through numbers. How accurate are these estimates? To investigate, I wanted to examine the biography of one statistic: where did it come from? How is it being used?

The introduction of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking states that, “[a]t any given time, it is believed that worldwide at least 2.45 million people are forced to perform degrading, dehumanizing and dangerous work in conditions akin to

slavery” (2012, 4). This statistic describes three important details: the number of people affected by forced work, the global context, and trafficking without any time frame. The International Labour Organization (ILO) produced this statistic from research between 1995 and 2004. The number quoted 2.45 million represents an estimate of the number of victims each year during that period living in a situation of having been trafficked (PSC 2012, 43). There are a couple important distinctions to be made on this statistic. Although the same number is used, the time period sourced is presented very differently; the number represents an annual estimate in the ILO research, but the National Action Plan does not present a time limit, but states that this is happening “[a]t any given time.” Moreover, this number does not represent incidences or experiences occurring right now. While the National Action Plan states that this number of victims is happening at any given time, the statistic really represents an annual estimation that is ten years old. This statistic represents a very broad definition and understanding of trafficking being current and past experiences, and does not distinguish between the types of forced labour the Canadian government is focusing on. Within that 2.45 million estimate, there are distinct geographical variations; Industrialized countries were estimated to have 270,000 people in forced labour as a result of trafficking (ILO 2005, 14).

Because of its inherent nature, trafficking statistics are expected to be estimates. However, these numbers are an important to investigate, for they represent and communicate far more than just the number. The increased use and importance of statistics enhances the focus of human trafficking as a criminal, dangerous social problem. Trafficking is then represented through law enforcement statistics of prosecutions and convictions. Further to that, trafficking is often represented as being a

part of a transnational ring of criminal activity that is growing beyond the scope and control of law enforcement. This is important especially because it does not represent the individual experiences of those involved acting as agents, or acknowledge their expertise or knowledge.

This chapter reveals the various mechanisms in place whereby governing occurs through community actors and NGOs. The federal government enlists groups with specific knowledge, and local contacts to exist in spaces the government cannot get at itself. Governing happens at a distance; public priorities are set with little recognition and debate on who those priorities serve.

We must also recognize the authority the state has in controlling anti-trafficking messaging and research. Traditional trafficking representations, the state is presented as the actor keeping communities safe, and reducing crime. However, this narrative is false; state authorities do pose as security threats to marginalized individuals and do not always “rescue victims.”

## **Conclusion**

Anti-trafficking in Canada is a contested site, and the boundaries are continually being shaped and pushed by governments, NGOs and community members. Project imPACT influenced the anti-trafficking narrative in Ottawa. This “anti” project is an important location to understand how law and policies are made in the community. Moreover, this anti-trafficking project in Ottawa proved to be a great location to understand how the broader debates are expressed and negotiated in the community. My research shows the small ways anti-trafficking discourse and practices have shaped the Canadian focus on trafficking through the manipulation of statistics, changing representations of victims and traffickers, and increased criminalization. Even beyond my research, there are still many anti-trafficking projects, research or community organizations that continue to be silenced and do not get access to the same resources and public support that PACT receives. I was intentional with my thesis research to give voice to alternative understandings of trafficking, and investigate where in the community of Ottawa perspectives on anti-trafficking are being silenced. Studying the smaller empirical shifts in Canadian policy while listening to community members has enabled this unique research and questioning of anti-trafficking today.

Critiques of anti-trafficking exist in many forms, including strong criticism of gender stereotypes represented in anti-trafficking campaigns. However, the racialized experience remains untold. Many of the Canadian government documents state that Indigenous women and girls are the most vulnerable to trafficking. Meanwhile, Indigenous women and allies have been mobilizing and drawing attention to the continued increases of indigenous women who are murdered or go missing with little

investigation. International organizations and increased numbers of NGOs have been calling for a national inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). Why do the two campaigns not collide? Perhaps the root of anti-trafficking in “white slave traffic” has not been researched fully, and the racialized stereotypes and racism inherent in anti-trafficking has not been expounded.

My project reveals that anti-trafficking has many political layers, and there are many mechanisms and devices used to control women’s bodies, regulate the movement of citizens and marginalize those already challenged with the stigma of sex work. As trafficking discourse grows and continues to be shaped, we should not take the discourse for granted. Governing occurs in all those small places in between, not only with trafficking crimes, and formal action plans to combat trafficking, but also how those boundaries and definitions of trafficking and sex work are negotiated in the community with state institutions.

## Appendices

### **Appendix A : Table of Organizations that applied to the 2012 Status of Women Call for Proposals: Engaging Communities to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Preventing and reducing the trafficking of women through Community Planning**

This information was received through an Access to Information Request and outlines the three organizations that received funding for their proposals and the many organizations that applied for funding anti-trafficking projects but were unsuccessful. Further research could entail reviewing these organizations to investigate what types of anti-trafficking projects they proposed and why they were rejected. This could be another source to see how the anti-trafficking research in Canada is being guided and governed.

<b>Status of Women Call for Proposals, 2012.</b>		
<b>Preventing and reducing the trafficking of women through community planning</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking in Humans – PACT Ottawa	Funded
2	Women’s Support Network of York Region	Funded
3	Action Coalition on Human Trafficking (ACT) Alberta	Funded
4	Trafficking in Persons Consulting (TIP)	NOT Funded
5	Western Area Women’s Coalition	NOT Funded
6	Indigenous Leadership Development Institute Aboriginal Leadership Institute, Inc.	NOT Funded
7	Nashi Safe Haven Inc.	NOT Funded



8	Northwest Territories/Nunavut Council of Friendship Centres	NOT Funded
9	Ontario Native Women's Association	NOT Funded
10	Nishnawbe Aski Nation	NOT Funded
11	Jesus The King Melkite Catholic Church	NOT Funded
12	Prince George New Hope Society	NOT Funded
13	Roos-Remillard Consulting Services, a Division of 8231800 Canada Inc.	NOT Funded
14	Carrier Sekani Family Services	NOT Funded
15	Grand Council Treaty #3	NOT Funded
16	Mount Carmel Clinic	NOT Funded
17	Legal Assistance of Windsor	NOT Funded
18	The John Howard Society of Thunder Bay and District	NOT Funded
19	Halton Catholic District School Board	NOT Funded
20	Streetlight Support Services	NOT Funded
21	Victims Services of Haldimand/Norfolk/New Credit	NOT Funded
22	Heartland Crediview Neighbourhood Centre	NOT Funded
23	Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre	NOT Funded
24	YWCA Sudbury	NOT Funded
25	FCI Refugee Centre	NOT Funded
26	Main dans la main contro la traite des persones (Chab Dai Canada)	NOT Funded
27	Centre d'encadrement pour jeunes femmes immigrantes (CEJFI)	NOT Funded
28	Action jeunesse St-Pie X de Longueuil Inc. (Maison de jeunes	NOT Funded

	Kekpart)	
29	Concentration des lutes contre l'exploitation sexuelle (La CLÉS)	NOT Funded
30	Alliance of South Asian Communities (ASAC)	NOT Funded
31	Nanaimo Women's Centre	NOT Funded
32	Iraqi Canadian Association Edmonton	NOT Funded
33	Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society	NOT Funded
34	Kamloops Women's Resource Group society	NOT Funded
35	Trafficking in Persons Consulting (TIP)	NOT Funded
36	The Watari Research Association	NOT Funded
37	Surrey Women's Centre	NOT Funded
38	Goddess Within You	NOT Funded
39	Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada	NOT Funded

**Appendix B Methodology for estimating annual profits from trafficked forced labour.** ILO (International Labour Organization). 2006. *A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour*, 56.

**Box 2.4.**

**Methodology for estimating annual profits from trafficked forced labour**

The first column of table 2.1 estimates profits made from trafficked people in commercial sexual exploitation. The estimate follows the methodology described by the OECD to calculate profits from prostitution in general: estimate average turnover (i.e. number of clients multiplied by the price paid by each client) and subtract intermediate consumption expenditures. For this calculation a variety of secondary sources were used and the results compared with other available estimates. The second column shows profits made from trafficked victims in other forms of forced economic exploitation. Since there is no way to know the exact profit generated by each forced labourer, this uses as a proxy the data on average value-added per worker in agriculture from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2004*. This serves as an indicator of profits in low-tech labour-intensive sectors, where trafficked forced labourers typically work. The last column is simply the profits multiplied by the number of victims trafficked into forced labour for either commercial sexual exploitation or other economic exploitation.

An estimate as large as US\$ 32 billion may seem surprisingly high. Another frequently quoted figure in the trafficking literature is the US\$ 5 to 7 billion annual profits for gangster syndicates that traffic women for commercial sexual exploitation. It referred to the earnings made by transporting irregular migrants into western European countries, and not to the amount of profits generated over time by people forced to work as a result of trafficking. Hence, it is not surprising that the two figures do not quite match.

The US\$ 32 billion figure may well be a conservative estimate, for two reasons. First, the global estimate of the number of victims is a minimum one. Second, the estimate of actual profits per person is actually lower than that given by some other informed sources. For example, the estimated profits of US\$ 67,200 per trafficked victim in industrialized countries is lower than the findings of a recent Interpol report. The Finnish police seized accounts from a prostitution ring showing that profits totalled about 85,000 euros per woman. The Asian estimate is an annual profit of US\$ 10,000 per person. This is slightly lower than an earlier finding by Kevin Bales that a girl in a Thai brothel has 14 clients a day for 30 days, at a charge of US\$ 5 per client. This means a turnover of US\$ 2,100 per month or US\$ 25,200 per year. Even if as much as half covers expenses, profits are still US\$ 12,600 per year.

Source: Figure of US\$ 5 to 7 billion calculated in 1993 by Jonas Widgren of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Vienna, for presentation at an IOM seminar; World Bank: *World Development Indicators 2004* (Washington, DC, 2004), p. 126; J. Leskinen: *Finland Report 2002: Organized pandering and prostitution in Finland*, Interpol national situation reports (Mar. 2003); K. Bales: *Disposable people: New slavery in the global economy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1999), p. 55; all cited in P. Belser: *Forced labour and human trafficking: Estimating the profits*, DECLARATION Working Paper (forthcoming).

**Appendix C Example of Contemporary state measurements to identify women at risk of sex trafficking.**

Outlined in the The Local Safety Audit Guide, published by Public Safety Canada, are key questions and sources to consider when investigating anti-trafficking in Canadian communities. (PSC 2013a, 32)

<b>How to Identify Women at Risk: trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation</b>	
<b>Questions to consider for your city/catchment area</b>	<b>Key sources/contacts</b>
<p><i>Women involved in the sex industry</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How many women are known to be engaged in prostitution in the city/catchment area?</li> <li>▪ What is the demographic profile of these women?</li> <li>▪ Where do they come from?</li> <li>▪ What proportion has chosen sex work as a profession?</li> <li>▪ What proportion ended up in sex work because of their difficult childhoods/youth and lack of alternatives?</li> <li>▪ What proportion may be victims of domestic trafficking?</li> <li>▪ What proportion may be victims of international trafficking?</li> <li>▪ Are there increasing numbers of immigrant women working in bars, the service sector and the beauty/aesthetics industries?</li> <li>▪ What is the profile of foreign sex workers working in the city and who are their clients?</li> <li>▪ Are the numbers increasing?</li> <li>▪ In which areas do the city of these women work and live?</li> <li>▪ What politics are services exist to support them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Surveys</li> <li>▪ Interviews with service workers, police, hotel and transport staff</li> <li>▪ Interviews with sex workers, immigrant community organizations</li> <li>▪ Local police data</li> <li>▪ Local hospitals</li> <li>▪ Local health clinics</li> <li>▪ Immigration services</li> </ul>

## Appendix D Interview Question Guide

### 1. Introductions

I will introduce myself and explain my research project, and their participation. I will review the confidentiality agreement with the participant. I will ask for consent verbally and have the participant sign the consent form. I will remind the participant that they can withdraw at any time.

### 2. Audio-Recording

Before recording, I will receive verbal consent from the participant to record. I will review with them that the audio-recording is only used as a transcription aid.

### 3. Demographic Questions

- What is your name/organization?
- Where do you reside / how long have you lived in Ottawa?
- When did you become interested in this social justice issue?
- How are you affiliated with anti-trafficking efforts in Ottawa?
- How are you involved with anti-trafficking in Ottawa?
- How would you describe your role in the community?
- Do you have any formal training on human trafficking? Informal training?
- How would you self-identify? (race, gender, ethnicity, marital status, education level)

### 4. Understandings about Anti-Trafficking

- How would you describe the history of anti-trafficking?
- What is the role of legislation and policy related to trafficking?
- How does trafficking affect prostitution laws?
- Who are the major victims of trafficking?  
What are the root causes of trafficking?
- What are the economic, political and social conditions that make people vulnerable in the first place?
- How would you understand trafficking to be a gendered issue?
- How do you empower women that have been affected by trafficking?
- How are cities dangerous to young women related to trafficking?
- How are anti-trafficking campaigns connected to political practice?
- What are some challenges you face with the work you do? Where do the gaps still exist?

### 5. Organizations Specific Questions – Interview Guide for PACT Ottawa

- Could you describe the history of PACT Ottawa?
- What are its sister organizations? Any affiliates?
- What is your role at PACT Ottawa?

- How was trafficking in Ottawa promoted as a problem? How was a Safety Audit decided on as a method of inquiry?
- How has trafficking become an important political activity?
- How was the research of PACT Ottawa affected prostitution laws? Human trafficking laws?
- Since imPACT Local Safety Audit was published, what have been the most significant outcomes?
- Sex trafficking is seen to be a priority and main focus compared to other forms of trafficking, such as labour. Why is this?
- Where do the gaps on research remain? Any specific demographic or topic?
- What is the future of PACT's work in Ottawa?
- How is Ottawa similar to other Canadian cities and communities related to HT? How is it different?
- A major comment related to HT is the lack of reliable information; how do you understand the role of statistics and empirical research related to HT?
- What is the purpose of the photograph and image campaign?
- How did the organization decide on research methodology? Which organizations did you reach out to and why?
- Where does there exist research gaps?
- Project imPACT highlights the fact that many people understand trafficking to be an international issue, but don't often understand the domestic factors. How has Project imPACT challenged public perceptions of trafficking? Where do those misconceptions come from?
- What surprised you about the trafficking research conducted by PACT? Any specific groups?
- Why is trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation the main focus and purpose of project imPACT?
- Quote from project imPACT, page 3: approaching sex workers with a focus on enforcement (rather than outreach) can endanger potential victims or sex workers by pushing them further underground. Could you explain this? What is the reality?
- How did you identify the most common barriers to help trafficked victims?
- Stigma around sex trafficked individuals and sex work is listed as a barrier to help trafficked victims. How do you understand this? How is this stigma constructed?
- Why was the UN definition on trafficking decided as the central definition?
- Project imPACT page 44: "...most common theme in terms of needs of survivors was that the approach be client-centered, and support the

autonomous agency of the survivor by enabling her to determine the services most useful to her.”

- a. Has this research helped develop community, client-centered programs?
  - b. What is the reality of this in Ottawa?
  - How has the Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking been effective?
  - Methodology:
    - a. How was empirical research decided as an important methodology to combat the complexity of sex trafficking?
    - b. Online survey for people who buy sex: how relevant was that information?
  - Why do you think some sex worker rights organizations were hesitant to be involved with this project? Could you describe some of that interaction?
6. Organization Specific Questions – Status of Women Canada
- How is trafficking a ‘women and girls’ problem?
  - Why is human trafficking an important topic for public funding?
  - What other organizations or governments have affected or influenced Canada’s response to trafficking?
    - UN
    - United States Trafficking in Persons report
  - How has trafficking come to be constructed as a self-evident and coherent social problem?
  - How is trafficking being invented by PACT? Status of Women? Other governing bodies?
  - How do these engagements and confluences affect political discourse and further policy in the aftermath of the Supreme Court Bedford decision?
  - How will the trafficking debate affect prostitution laws and understandings?
  - What are the sources and motivations of conflating trafficking and sex work? Who does this benefit?
  - Why has sex trafficking been the target and focus of most anti-trafficking campaigns?
  - What is the current narrative of human trafficking? The script?
7. Themes:
- Human trafficking, sex trafficking
  - Anti-trafficking community and outreach
  - Project impact, local safety audit of trafficking in Ottawa

- Status of Women funding this project; how and why human trafficking has become a political priority
- Understanding the related networks of supportive organizations and front line workers
- Details related to the research done by PACT, specifically the imPACT, Local Safety Audit of Trafficking in Ottawa
- Details around the process of how PACT Ottawa received funding
- How are the laws on the books and laws in action defined?
- What groups remain invisible related to trafficking? (transgender, male sex workers)
- How do we measure trafficking?
- How do we define trafficking?



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