

ABSTRACT

The Innovation of McLennan County: Law Enforcement Approaches to Human

Trafficking

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The aim of this thesis is to analyze traditional approaches to human trafficking and how these common approaches have been ultimately ineffective in responding to the crime of human trafficking. This is then contrasted with the innovative approach that McLennan County has adopted, which has led to McLennan County being ranked fourth in the United States for human trafficking arrests. The first chapter highlights ineffective yet historically common theoretical responses to human trafficking. These faulty approaches will later be contrasted to McLennan County's policies to showcase their ineffectiveness. The second chapter then outlines the scope of the problem of human trafficking within McLennan County by providing population and demographic data. The third chapter proceeds to delineate the original and successful approach to human trafficking that McLennan County has adopted. This includes an analysis of the cultural climate these policies originated in and the success rate of these approaches. Finally, the fourth chapter discusses the law enforcement educational campaigns that have resulted from McLennan County's effective response to human trafficking as well as improvements that can be made to McLennan County human trafficking policies.

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Trafficking

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Baylor University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Program

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Waco, Texas

May, 2020

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CHAPTER ONE

Common Approaches to Ending Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a pervasive and pernicious human rights violation that negatively impacts lives both globally and domestically. In order to fully grasp the enormity of this problem I will first define human trafficking and its presence globally and domestically. I will then focus on three different theoretical approaches to combatting human trafficking and discuss case models with each theory. The first theoretical approach to human trafficking is the End Demand strategy, which uses a simplistic economic model to place the blame for human trafficking on the demand side without addressing supply side factors. The second approach to combat human trafficking I discuss is criminalization of the buyers and decriminalization of the sellers, which is commonly referred to as The Swedish Model. The last approach I will discuss is the complete criminalization of both the buyer and seller. Each common approach to combat human trafficking places undue emphasis on the demand side without adequately addressing the factors that lead to victims being trafficked.

In 2003 the United Nations Trafficking Protocol legally defined human trafficking as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other

forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.¹

The codification of human trafficking into international law by the United Nations indubitably characterized human trafficking as an imperative international human rights violation that must be addressed.

The Faults within the End Demand Strategy

The International Labor Organization reports that as of 2016 40.3 million victims are trafficked globally. Women and girls are disproportionately affected as they account “for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in” other human trafficking sectors, such as forced labor.² While this issue can often be viewed as the problem of less developed countries, it is a rampant crime in the United States. The Global Slavery Index projected in 2016 there were 403,000 people living in slavery in the United States. Additionally, the State Department estimates that between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States annually.³

Human trafficking remains a vital problem throughout the United States. The United States commonly condemns human trafficking in various regions such as the Middle East and South East Asia, and this is more than validated criticism as the United

¹ Stephanie M. Berger, “No End in Sight Why the “End Demand” Movement is the Wrong Focus for Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender* 35, no. 2 (2012): 534.

² “Forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking,” *International Labour Organization*. 2016. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>. (accessed October 15, 2019).

³ Berger, “No End in Sight: Why the “End Demand” Movement is the Wrong Focus for Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking,” 524.

States produces accurate and substantial research of the global presence of this problem; however, this does not invalidate the presence of human trafficking in the United States.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline reports that the highest rates of human trafficking in the United States occur in the border states of Texas and California.

Victims of sex and labor trafficking into the United States include, primarily, foreign nationals from Mexico and South and Central America. Victims are often lured into the trafficking system through violence and threats or are coerced by hopes for a better life in the United States. One place where this issue is particularly relevant is Waco, Texas, as McLennan County is ranked fourth in the United States for human trafficking arrests.⁴ The prevalence of this crime within the United States as well as within the state of Texas due to its location near the Southern border cannot be understated.

Due to the widespread presence of human trafficking globally and domestically within the United States, various theoretical approaches have emerged to attempt to counter the pervasive problem. One of the common methods to combat the crime of human trafficking on the theoretical level is the End Demand approach. End Demand is commonly seen as a logical path to end human trafficking because it focuses on stopping the demand for the services that traffickers provide. Based on the End Demand method, human trafficking would not exist without a market for sex work and labor exploitation. Advocates for End Demand make simplistic statements about supply and demand interactions to support their claims, such as:

⁴ Kristin Hoppa, "McLennan County ranks 4th in national human trafficking initiative," Waco Tribune-Herald, February 15, 2017, https://www.wacotrib.com/news/crime/mclennan-county-ranks-th-in-national-human-trafficking-initiative/article_b3252f23-0712-554d-b506-aafb6d1c9d96.html. (accessed February 15, 2020).

Without the demand for commercial sex, there would be no market forces producing and sustaining the roles of pimps and traffickers as ‘distributors,’ nor would there be a force driving the production of a ‘supply’ of people to be sexually exploited. Supply and distribution are symptoms; demand is the cause.⁵

By focusing entirely on the demand side of human trafficking, End Demand advocates often lose sight of the victims of such crimes. End Demand strategists focus on increased law enforcement and rehabilitation programs for perpetrators of human trafficking as the most effective method to combat sex and labor trafficking. However, a more nuanced approach to human trafficking reveals that this simplistic economic model of human trafficking is not an adequate or effective solution to the problem.

A varied and complex set of factors—not just demand—drive the exploitation of sex and labor trafficking. There are formidable and influential supply side factors that enable the existence of human trafficking that the End Demand method does not address. Demand can be fueled by an abundant supply of vulnerable women and girls whose labor can be directly exploited. Due to poverty, chronic unemployment, discrimination, and inequality, these women may migrate voluntarily, be trafficked involuntarily, or experience a combination of both voluntary decisions and coercive circumstance that lead to trafficking. Ignoring supply-side factors commodifies workers and ignores the very real fact that trafficked persons, migrants, and workers are people who are trying to access labor and migration opportunities for themselves and their families.⁶ The stories

⁵ Berger, “No End in Sight: Why the “End Demand” Movement is the Wrong Focus for Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking,” 543.

⁶ Ibid.

and experiences of trafficking victims are all very diverse and nuanced. By only focusing on the demand side, the End Demand strategy does not adequately address these factors. While ending demand is a seemingly logical goal to stop human trafficking, it does not factor in the perspective of trafficking victims because this approach views trafficking perpetrators and victims dualistically. The reality of the relationships between trafficker and victim are incredibly complex and nuanced, rather than the simplistic approach that the End Demand strategy advocates.

This complexity can be seen in the 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report released by the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. The report conveys the complex nature of the supply and demand side in labor and sex trafficking. The report includes the story of a young boy named Raul who was born and raised in the Dominican Republic and desired to pursue an education in the United States after high school. A family friend offered to sponsor Raul and hire him in his restaurant while Raul attended school. However, when Raul arrived in the United States, his sponsor pulled him out of his classes and forced him to work at his restaurant full time for less than a dollar an hour. The sponsor withheld Raul's passport, threatened him, forced him to live in filthy conditions, and sexually abused him. After an anonymous call to the national hotline, law enforcement officials raided the restaurant and arrested Raul's sponsor.⁷ The demand and supply side factors in the story of Raul are closely intertwined and not mutually exclusive.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Victims' Stories*, <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2018/282572.htm>. (accessed March 25, 2019).

Another example of human trafficking and the interconnection of supply and demand factors includes the story of Taylor, whose account with human trafficking was also shared in the U.S. State Department’s 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report. Taylor was born in the United States. When she was 16 years old, she met a group of older men at her local mall. One of the men started taking Taylor on ‘dates’ and buying her clothes and meals. Not long after their relationship began, Taylor was coerced into sex trafficking as the man she had begun dating stated that, if she complied, she would never need to rely on anyone ever again. By the age of 17, Taylor was forced to make \$1,000 a day through sex trafficking. Eventually, her traffickers forced her to recruit more teenagers to be exploited into commercial sex. To keep her under their control, Taylor’s traffickers threatened her family.⁸ The exploitation Taylor experienced cannot be entirely understood without comprehending both factors of supply and demand.

The stories of Raul and Taylor are both incredibly different—from age to geography to their motivation for involuntarily entering human trafficking. However, they share the commonality of systemic exploitation for sex and labor. Neither of their stories can be holistically understood without addressing the interdependent factors of supply and demand, which the End Demand approach to trafficking does not adequately address. Additionally, there is little certainty and empirical evidence that ending demand for trafficking is even logistically feasible. However, despite this lack of certainty that ending demand for trafficking is possible, desirable, or effective in reducing trafficking,

⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Victims’ Stories*, <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2018/282572.htm>.

an increasingly strong movement to utilize End Demand strategies is mobilizing especially in the United States.⁹

The Faults within the Swedish Model Strategy

Another theoretical approach to human trafficking that is commonly used to combat trafficking is criminalizing the buyers and decriminalizing the sellers. This is primarily known as The Swedish Model. In 1999, Sweden passed the Sex Purchase Act, which made it a crime to buy sex but decriminalized selling sex.¹⁰ This law attempted to end demand through criminalization, while also pledging money and assistance to victims of trafficking. This model does not necessarily focus on ending supply, but rather on providing aid to those who are supplied as victims of human trafficking. Due to the law's explicit position on the need to combat violence against women and its promotion of gender equality, the law was hailed as groundbreaking at the time of its passage; however, evidence on the actual impact of the law has been mixed.¹¹ Studies conducted within the first few years of the passage of the law tout the law's success in dramatically reducing the number of women trafficked in Sweden by persuading more trafficking victims to come forward and seek assistance to leave their form of exploitative labor. It has also kept more victims from voluntarily entering into trafficking. However, other studies have been skeptical of its purported success, stating that the studies were not objective and were ideologically biased. Despite this contention, there is empirical

⁹ Berger, "No End in Sight: Why the "End Demand" Movement is the Wrong Focus for Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking," 544.

¹⁰ Ibid., 548.

¹¹ Ibid.

evidence stating that the law has significantly reduced prostitution and sex trafficking within Sweden in comparison to its neighboring countries.¹²

However, recent findings among young adults over age 18 who have been prostituted in and around major cities in Sweden confirm high correlations to prior childhood sexual abuse, neglect, and homelessness. These findings are corroborated in other recent nationally representative youth surveys adding socioeconomic factors and nationality as predictors to prostitution. These findings suggest that there are factors outside the scope of the Swedish model that are not addressed. This has made the Swedish law less effective in ending trafficking than was initially projected by the Swedish government. The Swedish model should be amended to reach its full potential to include the factors that push young, vulnerable populations into trafficking scenarios.

In most situations of trafficking, coercive circumstances exist that push victims into sex and labor trafficking. These circumstances may include subjection to sexual abuse as children, homelessness, sex and economic discrimination, and racism.¹³ The mixed empirical evidence based on Sweden's law has made it difficult to track the effects and impacts the law has had on victims of trafficking in Sweden. The law has decreased human trafficking, but not to the extent that was predicted in the early years after the law was passed. While the law does acknowledge the supply side of human trafficking, it seems to still have too narrow a scope, which inhibits it from holistically ending human trafficking. The Swedish law still focuses too much on demand and not enough on addressing the factors of supply. While providing money and assistance to victims

¹² Max Waltman, "Sweden's Prohibition of Purchase of Sex: The Law's reasons, impact, and potential," *Women's Studies International Forum* 34, no. 5 (2011): 449.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 452.

transitioning out of sex and labor trafficking is a step in the right direction, the law does not sufficiently address how the victims became a part of the system of trafficking in the first place.

The Faults within the Criminalization Strategy

Another theoretical approach to human trafficking that is commonly utilized, especially in the United States, is the criminalization of buying and selling sex. The effects of explicit criminalization of both buying and selling sex can be seen in the case of Rhode Island. In 2009, the Governor of Rhode Island signed legislation making buying and selling sex illegal.¹⁴ Despite the law's creation of penalties for both sellers and buyers of sex, the law did include a provision stating it would not prosecute sex trafficking victims. Organizations such as Urban Justice Center and the American Civil Liberties Union actively lobbied against the passage of this law as they argued that criminalization was in reality more likely to harm trafficking victims than help them by subjecting them to repeated arrest, incarceration, and traumatization, without increasing the likelihood of locating, assisting, or identifying trafficking victims.¹⁵

In effect, the law limited, rather than increased, options for victims of trafficking to leave their trafficking situation. Victims of trafficking were often not identified or able to be identified by local law enforcement, which inherently caused the criminalization of trafficking victims. The zero-tolerance policy of the law focused entirely on ending prostitution rather than identifying and supporting the trafficking victims. Through the treatment of prostitutes and trafficking victims as the same, the law criminalized victims.

¹⁴ Berger, No End in Sight: Why the "End Demand" Movement is the Wrong Focus for Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking, 558.

¹⁵ Ibid., 559.

The New York based non-profit advocacy organization, Urban Justice Center, observed that advocates in support of the bill stated that the goal of the bill was to end human trafficking. However, in practice the bill strictly criminalized prostitution. If the goal of this bill was to end prostitution itself, the Urban Justice Center cautioned Rhode Island legislators to consider whether this goal will actually be met through complete criminalization.¹⁶

Instead of the policies implemented within Rhode Island, the Urban Justice Center promoted other, more productive methods to combat human trafficking. These policies included: community education campaigns, forging partnerships with vulnerable communities, and eliminating barriers to sex trafficking victims attempting to transition out of sex work. However, these supply side focused policy initiatives went unheeded. By the end of 2009, of the 14 arrests for prostitution in Rhode Island six were sex trafficking victims, including one 17-year-old girl.¹⁷ The criminalization method has been utilized by other states in the United States, and this method continues to fail to adequately address the entirety of the motivations behind human trafficking. Complete criminalization limits transition opportunities for sex trafficking victims and enables the cycle of abuse.

Conclusion

Each theoretical approach discussed focuses primarily on the demand side within the system of human trafficking, especially the End Demand method and the complete criminalization of buyers and sellers. The Swedish Model is one of the only existent models that attempts to support victims of sex trafficking on a holistic policy level.

¹⁶ Berger, “No End in Sight: Why the “End Demand” Movement is the Wrong Focus for Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking,” 559.

¹⁷ Ibid., 560.

However, even this model fails to address the push factors that lead to human trafficking. The majority of people suffering from human trafficking do not fit the exact mold of the perfect victim who can tell a story of being fully coerced and forced as seen in the stories of Raul and Taylor. Common theoretical approaches do not address this factor but rather place the primary responsibility on ending demand to combat human trafficking. Anti-trafficking efforts should move beyond debating supply and demand to look more seriously at the conditions that enable and encourage trafficking to occur.¹⁸

¹⁸ Berger, “No End in Sight: Why the “End Demand” Movement is the Wrong Focus for Efforts to Eliminate Human Trafficking,” 566.

CHAPTER TWO

Identifying the Scope of the Problem within McLennan County

Human trafficking continues to be a detrimental and prevalent issue within McLennan County. While law enforcement entities and local nonprofits have taken great measures to attempt to stop this crime, it still remains a part of daily life in McLennan County. In order to understand human trafficking specifically within this area it is essential to comprehend the origins and demographics of trafficking victims in McLennan County. I will convey this by first comparing statistics of human trafficking within Texas and McLennan County. Then I will delineate the limitations of this data as well as a demographic breakdown of trafficking victims within McLennan County. And finally, I will discuss specific factors of McLennan County that make human trafficking so prevalent within this region. Understanding these various factors will enable a more holistic comprehension of human trafficking in McLennan County, and it will also permit an understanding of why law enforcement and nonprofits in this region have chosen to implement the policies and strategies that they have to combat trafficking.

Human Trafficking in the State of Texas

In comparison to other states and regions within the United States, high human trafficking rates within Texas demonstrates the pervasiveness of this crime. According to the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, within Texas there are 300,000 trafficking victims at any given time, which includes 234,000 victims of labor trafficking. Additionally, there are an estimated 79,000 victims of youth and minor sex trafficking in

Texas.¹⁹ The culmination of these statistics caused Texas in 2017 to be ranked second in the United States for human trafficking rates just behind California.²⁰ Texas stands out among the United States as a region where the trafficking industry has deeply taken root primarily due to its proximity to the Southern border and its high population. Despite the incredibly high rates of human trafficking in Texas, very few cases are reported and/or prosecuted due to difficulties in acquiring the necessary legal evidence. For example, in 2016 only 7,600 cases of human trafficking in the United States were reported, and Texas constituted 665 of those cases.²¹ This reveals that out of the 300,000 estimated trafficking victims in Texas only 0.02% of cases are reported demonstrating a clear and prevalent uphill battle in terms of trafficking prosecutions. While these numbers may seem dismal, in 2018 Texas was ranked number one in the country for achieving the highest rate of active criminal human trafficking cases in the United States.²² Despite these successes in terms of federal criminal prosecutions, there are still massive gaps in thwarting human trafficking as this pernicious problem continues to permeate the state of Texas.

¹⁹ “Human Trafficking,” *Office of the Attorney General of Texas*. 2017, <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/initiatives/human-trafficking>. (accessed November 15, 2019).

²⁰ Sonia Lunn, “Worst States for Human Trafficking 2015-2017,” *Grassroots, Investigations, and Statistics*. Human Trafficking Search, 2019, <https://humantraffickingsearch.org/worst-states-for-human-trafficking/>. (accessed November 15, 2019).

²¹ Tiffany Huertas, “Texas Human Trafficking Epidemic among Worst in Nation,” *News*. KSAT News Station, January 30, 2018, <https://www.ksat.com/news/2018/01/30/texas-human-trafficking-epidemic-among-worst-in-nation/>. (accessed November 16, 2019).

²² “State Summary,” *Texas*. Federal Human Trafficking Report, 2017, <https://www.traffickingmatters.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Texas-State-Report-WEB.pdf>. (accessed November 21, 2019).

Outside of sheer victims, human trafficking also profoundly exploits the statewide economy. Within the United States, there are an estimated yearly loss of \$20 billion in unpaid wages due to labor trafficking.²³ The exploitation of wages is particularly prevalent in Texas due to the already high trafficking rates. According to the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at the University of Texas at Austin “youth sex trafficking costs the state of Texas approximately \$6.6 billion annually.” In total, traffickers exploit nearly \$600 million from labor trafficking victims in the state of Texas.²⁴ This exploitation undermines and devalues the “ability of victims to economically support families” and it “increases social costs” for tax paying citizens.²⁵ The direct victims of human trafficking are often, and rightfully so, the focal point of this crime; however, trafficking also negatively affects the tax payer through economic exploitation. The detriment that the human trafficking industry holds on Texas cannot be understated. The immense number of victims along with the impacts on the state and local economies within Texas demonstrate the gravity of this issue. Additionally, the lack of reporting and prosecution of human trafficking crimes due to the clandestine nature of the industry creates an unfortunate culture of impunity concerning the crime.

²³ “Human Trafficking in Texas,” *More Resources and Resolve Needed to Stem Modern Day Slavery*. A Report of the Texas Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, August 2011, <file:///Users/clairecrites/Downloads/726638.pdf>. (accessed February 28, 2019).

²⁴ Nicole L. Nale, et al., “Human Trafficking by the Numbers,” *The Initial Benchmark of Prevalence and Economic Impact in Texas*. Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at the University of Texas at Austin, December 2016, <https://ic2.utexas.edu/pubs/human-trafficking-by-the-numbers-the-initial-benchmark-of-prevalence-and-economic-impact-for-texas/>. (accessed November 21, 2019).

²⁵ “Human Trafficking in Texas,” *More Resources and Resolve Needed to Stem Modern Day Slavery*. A Report of the Texas Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, August 2011.

Human Trafficking in McLennan County

The combination of these factors in Texas all interplay in the McLennan County region. McLennan County is located in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas, which is charged with federally prosecuting all human trafficking offenses in this region. In 2017, there were 13 federal cases of human trafficking, which were specifically made up entirely of sex trafficking cases.²⁶ While this is a very low prosecution rate in comparison to the extent of the crime, it does reflect an earnest effort on behalf of the U.S. Attorney's Office presiding over McLennan County to challenge the pugnacious nature of this crime.

Further narrowing the scope, human trafficking rates in McLennan County in comparison to the Western District of Texas and the State of Texas as a whole are comparably high, which remains consistent with the rates previously discussed. This is evident due to the high rates of human trafficking within McLennan County that have been tracked. Due to the recent growth and awareness of the crime of human trafficking, there has been a number of local nonprofit and law enforcement initiatives to track human trafficking statistics within McLennan County. One of the earliest local nonprofits that began collected data was Unbound, which opened in 2012 in Waco, Texas and has been collecting victim data since 2016. Unbound's role to combat human trafficking centers around "prevention and awareness, professional training, and survivor advocacy."²⁷ Unbound specifically focuses on victim services to advocate for their needs and recovery process. The most recent data that Unbound collected and made publicly

²⁶ "State Summary," *Texas*. Federal Human Trafficking Report, 2017.

²⁷ "Our Values," *Unbound Waco*. 2016, <https://www.unboundwaco.org/about-unbound>. (accessed November 25, 2019).

available is that Unbound served 19 victims in 2016, 51 victims in 2017, and in 2018 the organization served an estimated 60 victims. All victims Unbound has served were located in the McLennan County area. The growth in victims served demonstrates not only the growth of Unbound, but also the need for resources for the high number of victims of human trafficking in McLennan County.

Due to the high number of victims in this area, the Heart of Texas Trafficking Coalition was founded in 2016 through a U.S. Department of Justice grant.²⁸ The coalition works to unite nonprofits and law enforcement organizations to synthesize their efforts combatting human trafficking. There are multiple organizations in this coalition from the McLennan County area including the Waco Police Department, Unbound, and several other local anti-trafficking nonprofits such as the Advocacy Center and Jesus Said Love. Due to the growth of human trafficking awareness in McLennan County, the coalition began tracking and collecting data in 2017. In total, the coalition served 90 victims from the McLennan County area in 2017. This high number of victims again demonstrates the prevalence of human trafficking in this area. However, these numbers are not anomalies as throughout Texas counties there are numerous trafficking victims that go unnoticed or unreported. Due to the surreptitious industry of human trafficking many of these victims are not just lost in the system but not even acknowledged by it. Only considering the victims that have received services discounts many victims who have remained in the thralls of the trafficking industry. Therefore, it is likely that these

²⁸ “Goals and Coalition Partners,” *The Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition*. 2016, <https://www.hothtc.org/coalition>. (accessed November 25, 2019).

numbers are exceedingly low in comparison to the victims who exist hidden in plain sight in McLennan County.

Limitations of Human Trafficking Data in McLennan County

It is clearly evident that due to the limited data collected as well as the recent nature of data available, there are major gaps in the statistical data concerning human trafficking victims in McLennan County. This is not entirely the fault of local law enforcement and nonprofits as they are attempting to create change to gain a sense of trafficking data in this region. Rather, the lack of historical data collection can primarily be traced to the fact that McLennan County is a mid-sized county that does not receive the funding or services that larger counties receive to combat trafficking.

For example, cities such as Houston, Texas receive major amounts of funding and services to combat trafficking that a smaller county like McLennan would not have access to.²⁹ The Heart of Texas Coalition only received a grant from the Department of Justice in 2016 to begin collecting the data necessary to comprehend the scope of the problem in McLennan County.³⁰ Additionally, Unbound, one of the most prominent and largest anti-trafficking organization in Waco, Texas, began in 2012, but was only able to start collecting data by the end of 2016 due to funding and resource growth the organization accrued through the years. In order to understand how many victims need services and how to best combat trafficking in McLennan County there needs to be

²⁹ Rissa Shaw, “Central Texas Human-Trafficking Strategy draws National Attention,” *CW12 of Central Texas*. August 22, 2019, <https://www.kwtx.com/cw12tv/content/news/Central-Texas-countys-human-trafficking-strategy-draws-national-attention-with-seminar-557823311.html>. (accessed December 2, 2019).

³⁰ “Goals and Coalition Partners,” *The Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition*. 2016.

growth in data collected by anti-trafficking organizations. There will be no way to track the progress of anti-trafficking policies without consistent and reliable forms of data collection. As awareness of the need for statistical data of trafficking victims in McLennan County grows funding and resources will no doubt increase, but presently this is one of primary reasons for data limitations for McLennan County.

Additionally, another major hinderance to the collection of trafficking victim data is the fact that there are numerous victims that have not and will never receive services from anti-trafficking organizations. Due to the fact anti-trafficking organizations are the primary source of victim data, any number that these organizations produce is lower than the actual victims being trafficked. Any data that is collected is based off of victims rescued and recovered, which leaves open a wide margin of victims that are still in the shadows. This is a major gap in human trafficking data collection in McLennan County as without a reliable number of victims in the area, it is difficult to know how and where to utilize law enforcement anti-trafficking resources in order to find and rescue victims. These organizations that service victims, while absolutely necessary, cannot produce an entirely accurate measurement of potential victims in the McLennan County area because they only account for the victims they serve. This is another major impediment and limitation to human trafficking victim data in McLennan County.

Furthermore, the very nature of human trafficking exacerbates problems concerning data collection. Human trafficking is meant to function as a covert operation to avoid detection from law enforcement. Many human trafficking victims are hidden in plain sight, which can make victims undetectable. Human trafficking is not a crime like homicide or theft where there is often physical evidence produced by the crime. Rather

traffickers hide their victims in the open public, which can make the victims appear to be safe and secure. For example, in 2014 a study revealed that 88% “of all human trafficking victims accessed health care services while they were being trafficked” in the United States.³¹ The ability for victims to so easily slip through the system due to fear and intimidation tactics utilized by their traffickers makes this crime especially difficult to obtain accurate data concerning victim numbers.

Due to the recent nature of data collection, the inevitable low estimates of trafficking victims, and the clandestine nature of the human trafficking industry, it is clear there are sharp limitations in trafficking data collection in McLennan County. While there is no way to obtain an exact number of total victims in the region, the statistics provided by local law enforcement and nonprofits concerning the victims they have serviced prove that trafficking is a prevalent issue within McLennan County. Estimates can only be larger than the actual numbers provided, which demonstrates the massive effects the human trafficking industry has had and continues to have on the McLennan County region.

Demography of Human Trafficking Victims in McLennan County

Understanding the demography and background of trafficking victims is essential to be able to comprehend where the victims originate and how to best craft solutions to the crisis. According to the Heart of Texas Coalition in 2017, the victims they serviced were between the ages of 6 to 58 years old. The average age in total of all victims the coalition served was 25. Additionally, 35% of victims served were 18 years old or

³¹ Suh Hughart, “Hidden in Plain Sight,” *Exclusives in Patient Care*. Journal of Emergency Medical Services, January 16, 2020, <https://www.jems.com/2020/01/16/hidden-in-plain-sight/>. (accessed January 20, 2020).

younger. This demonstrates that trafficking affects people of all age ranges, but it particularly targets young populations for sex and labor trafficking. Furthermore, the victims in total were primarily women and girls. Out of the 90 total victims serviced in 2017, 88 were female and 2 were male. The prime target for traffickers is primarily young women and girls as this is a vulnerable population that has been and continues to be exploited by traffickers.

The racial demography of trafficking victims in McLennan County is also very telling of the populations targeted. Of the known ethnicities of the victims serviced by The Heart of Texas Coalition, 44% were white, 15% were African American, 15% were Hispanic, 10% were Asian, and 4% were bi-racial. This racial breakdown of victims conveys that overwhelmingly racial minorities are targeted by traffickers. Additionally, 77 victims were United States citizens, and 13 victims were non-United States citizens. This data serves to prove that the traffickers primarily attempt to exploit vulnerable populations, which predominately consists of young, minority women and girls. This data is in no way novel or unusual as throughout the United States trafficking victims have remained consistent with the demographic found in McLennan County. Traffickers seek to exploit the vulnerable, and populations of young women and girls are a marginalized community that traffickers can manipulate to serve the needs of labor and sex trafficking industries. Despite this demographic consensus, the data provided by the coalition conveys that human traffickers can affect people of all ages, genders, and races as long as the individual can be exploited to assist the trafficking industry.

Understanding the Prevalence of Human Trafficking in McLennan County

While there is no way to gain an exact scope of the number of victims of trafficking or the exact demographic of these victims in McLennan County, the conditions within McLennan County have created an ideal climate for trafficking to thrive. One of the key elements that is conducive to trafficking is poor economic conditions. Low income communities can more easily be preyed upon by traffickers because these populations are often more desperate to attempt to improve their financial situation.³² This can cause victims to view trafficking opportunities as an escape from poverty. Traffickers often exploit this desperation by coercively or forcibly conscripting victims into the trafficking industry by attempting to appear as a way out of their poor economic conditions. Many victims lack food and housing, and these victims can view trafficking as a sort of economic reprieve from the constraints of low-income life.³³ Poor economic conditions are unfortunately pervasive through McLennan County and the Waco community. The poverty rate of McLennan County in 2018 was 19.3%.³⁴ In the same year, Waco's poverty rate was reported as 26.8%.³⁵ In comparison to the state of Texas' overall average poverty rate of 14.9%, it is clear there is drastically higher poverty

³² Annalisa Enrile, "Freedom's Journey," *Understanding Human Trafficking*. University of Southern California Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, 2017, <https://msw.usc.edu/freedoms-journey-understanding-human-trafficking/>. (accessed January 20, 2020).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ "Poverty Rate," *Data USA*. 2017, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/mclennan-county-tx>. (accessed January 25, 2020).

³⁵ "Income and Poverty," *Waco City, Texas*. United States Census Bureau, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wacocitytexas/POP060210>. (accessed January 25, 2020).

rate in the McLennan County region in contrast to other Texas areas.³⁶ The high poverty rates and poor economic conditions in McLennan County foster a region that is incredibly conducive to trafficking and a population that can be easily exploited by traffickers.

Additionally, poor educational opportunity that is precipitated and further exacerbated by a struggling local economy, is another factor that is conducive to higher rates of human trafficking. While there are average and high ranked public schools in McLennan County, there are also low ranked educational institutions that lack the opportunity and resources to provide the best care to their students. This poor education system can be seen through the fact that in 2018 five of the twenty public and private K-12 schools in McLennan County were labeled as failing with no signs of improvement.³⁷ These schools were primarily a part of Waco ISD's district and consisted of: Brook Avenue Elementary, JH Hines Elementary, Alta Vista Elementary, GW Carver Middle School, and Indian Spring Middle School. Additionally, nearly all of Waco ISD's schools continue to struggle. In 2018, Waco ISD's graduation rate stood at 77.5%, which was far below the state average of 89.1%.³⁸ This culture created by a poor education system is a factor that is conducive to trafficking. Many people that live at or below the poverty line in McLennan County lack access to an education, and the education that students receive often is not of a high quality, despite the best effort of educators. This culmination of

³⁶ "Income and Poverty," *Texas*. United States Census Bureau, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/TX/RHI125218>. (accessed January 25, 2020).

³⁷ Zachary Miller, "Waco Public Schools are Failing," *Texas Scorecard*, April 27, 2018, <https://texasscorecard.com/central-texas/waco-public-schools-are-failing/>. (accessed January 25, 2020).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

these factors not only “limits job opportunities” that are available to populations that can be exploited for trafficking, but it also leaves young adults “unable to advocate for themselves in work and contract negotiations.”³⁹ This further enables traffickers to exploit these vulnerable populations. The combination of high poverty rates and a poor education system in McLennan County demonstrate why human trafficking rates are so high within this region.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that human trafficking is a prevalent crime throughout the state of Texas and specifically within McLennan County. The trafficking rates in Texas are some of the highest in the United States, and this can directly be connected to the high rates in McLennan County as well. Despite limitations in data, human trafficking rates have exponentially been growing since the collections of victim data began in 2016. Due to the very recent nature of data collection as well as the clandestine nature of the trafficking industry, there are considerable limits to trafficking data collection. However, despite these limitations it is clearly evident that the trafficking industry thrives in McLennan County. Of the victims who have received services by organizations such as Unbound and the Heart of Texas Coalition, it can be deduced that trafficking victims are often young, minority women and girls; however, this is not an exclusive characterization as victims can come from a diverse array of backgrounds. Additionally, there are many factors that are conducive to the trafficking industry in McLennan County. These factors

³⁹ Annalisa Enrile, “Freedom’s Journey,” *Understanding Human Trafficking*. University of Southern California Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, 2017.

primarily center upon high poverty rates and lack of access to a quality education. The culmination of both of these aspects allows sex and labor traffickers to prey upon and exploit a vulnerable population. The high rates of data and the interpretation of this data conveys the pernicious and prevalent nature of human trafficking in McLennan County.

CHAPTER THREE

The Innovation of McLennan County

In order to be able to fully understand the existence of and the success of McLennan County's policies towards human trafficking, the recent cultural shifts that have occurred concerning human trafficking must be analyzed. I will do this by first discussing the cultural changes that have occurred concerning human trafficking crimes. This will include analysis of the prominent case of Cyntoia Brown, which received national media attention as it directly and clearly conveys the cultural changes that have occurred within the United States in relation to trafficking. I will then discuss the innovative approaches that McLennan County has taken towards human trafficking that has allowed the region to be ranked fourth in the nation for human trafficking arrests.⁴⁰

Cultural Shifts Concerning Human Trafficking

The culture that human trafficking occurs in is inextricably linked to the pervasiveness of human trafficking. Crimes and responses to crimes do not occur in a vacuum, and it is necessary to understand the changes in cultural attitude towards human trafficking. Without these absolutely necessary shifts in culture, there would likely be little to no innovation in terms of the approaches that McLennan County has taken to respond to human trafficking.

Despite its pervasiveness as a crime that has existed for centuries, human trafficking did not become illegal until 1930 through the Tariff Act, which only

⁴⁰ Kristin Hoppa, "McLennan County ranks 4th in national human trafficking initiative," Waco Tribune-Herald, February 15, 2017.

exclusively dealt with and identified labor trafficking.⁴¹ There have been many amendments and additional federal laws created since this original law was passed to account for all aspects of human trafficking such as sexual exploitation. However, even with these legal changes there was little follow through in terms of arrests and prosecutions in trafficking perpetrators. Despite the illegality of human trafficking being expressed in the early 20th century, it was not until the 21st century that these crimes would be more fully comprehended and therefore prosecuted at higher rates. This was able to occur primarily through major changes in American culture that changed how victims of human trafficking were viewed. Without these cultural changes in understanding trafficking, there would not be the innovation that has existed in McLennan County.

These cultural changes in human trafficking can primarily be seen through the view that the victim is not responsible for the crime that was committed against them. While this may seem like an obvious statement, victim blaming for trafficking has been a massive hurdle to overcome in terms of understanding the crime of human trafficking. Due to the coercive nature of both sex and labor trafficking, often times victims are blamed for the circumstances that resulted in them being trafficked. For example, Central America migrants from Northern Triangle countries seeking a better life in the United States or a young girl who is attempting to escape poverty may appear to be making choices out of their own volition. Because of the intimidation tactics used by traffickers, victims often appear to maintain a sense of personal autonomy and because of this the

⁴¹ “Human Trafficking Laws and Regulations,” *Laws and Regulations*. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, September 19, 2019, <https://www.dhs.gov/human-trafficking-laws-regulations>. (accessed February 15, 2020).

crime of trafficking is misunderstood and not adequately addressed. It must also be stated that victim blaming for trafficking crimes occurs in a much larger cosmos. The idea of victim blaming is not a new concept and still exists concerning many crimes ranging from human trafficking to sexual assault. It is still common that men and women after being sexually assaulted hear the farcical and dehumanizing phrase of questions: Were you drinking alcohol? What were you wearing? Did you try to stop it? As if any of these questions make a claim any less truthful. Victim blaming does not originate with human trafficking as it has always existed within certain crimes. However, there have been major recent cultural shifts in the United States that have attempted to change faulty cultural narratives associated with victim blaming.

One of the clearest areas where this shift has occurred can be seen in the realm of sex trafficking. Because sex trafficking victims are often women and girls in prostitution circles, these victims have often and continue to be in some regions criminalized for selling sex. The traditional approach to prostitution crimes has been to simply arrest the prostitute with little distinction concerning whether the prostitute is a sex trafficking victim or not.⁴² Prostitution was not commonly viewed through the lens of organized crime, and due to the very narrow scope of traditional prostitution laws, arrests were made of individual prostitutes and sex trafficking victims. Despite these arrests, the existence of prostitution continued. This traditional approach did not account for pimps in these arrests and focused solely on the women and girls who were ‘choosing’ to be a part

⁴² Steve Marin, “Prostitution and Human Trafficking: A Paradigm Shift,” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, March 5, 2013, <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/prostitution-and-human-trafficking-a-paradigm-shift>. (accessed February 16, 2020).

of prostitution circles.⁴³ This approach also did not account for the push factors that caused women to enter prostitution in the first place. This one-dimensional approach to sex trafficking and prostitution did not address the circumstances that led prostitutes into the situation that they are in. Prostitution is rarely ever a willful career choice that a woman makes to intentionally break the law. This field of work is often a last choice option for those who believe they have no other way to make a living, or they believe it is their only way to escape their current circumstances.⁴⁴ The glamorization of prostitution in American culture through movies such as *Pretty Woman* is not reality. While this is not to say that there are not sex workers who deliberately and willingly chose this lifestyle, it is a minority. In 2003, a study within the *Journal of Trauma Practice* stated that 89% of women and girls in prostitution desire to escape the lifestyle.⁴⁵ This clearly conveys that prostitution is rarely a lifestyle choice and more a means for survival.

Additionally, the traditional approach to arrests of prostitutes did not identify that women and girls in prostitution often come from very similar backgrounds. These backgrounds consisted of “sexual abuse, neglect, addiction, incest, poverty, racism, and, of course, gender inequality and a culture that turns women and girls into sexualized objects.”⁴⁶ The flagrant injustices that many victims of prostitution are subjected to

⁴³ Steve Marin, “Prostitution and Human Trafficking: A Paradigm Shift,” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, March 5, 2013.

⁴⁴ Meghan Murphy, “To Fight Sex Trafficking We Need to Change the Culture and Legislation,” Verily, May 17, 2015, <https://verilymag.com/2014/11/sex-trafficking-sentences>. (accessed February 20, 2020).

⁴⁵ “The Link Between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking,” *Bureau of Public Affairs*. U.S. Department of State, November 24, 2004, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/38790.htm>. (accessed February 20, 2020).

⁴⁶ Meghan Murphy, “To Fight Sex Trafficking We Need to Change the Culture and Legislation,” Verily, May 17, 2015.

directly influences the opportunities that are available to them and their exposure to those who could recruit them to sex trafficking. A joint study by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Urban Institute in 2017 found that in the United States 31.5% of prostitutes enter the field through family connections, and 26% of prostitutes enter into the lifestyle through neighborhood context.⁴⁷ The environment in which one is raised directly affects the opportunities available and exposure to sex trafficking. By solely arresting prostitutes and sex trafficking victims to try to eradicate this crime, the traditional approach to human trafficking does not take into account the victims' needs.

However, this traditional and narrow approach has changed within recent years as there have been distinctions between trafficking victims and actual prostitutes. This nuance is essential to more accurately combat trafficking crimes. Without this long overdue cultural shift, victims of sex trafficking would still be being blamed for a crime that they never desired to be a part of. By having a victim-centered approach, sex trafficking victims have begun to be treated like the actual victims they are rather than criminalized. This cultural shift can especially be seen through the changes in language used to describe trafficking victims. The nonprofit Weave, which provides victim services for trafficking victims stated that law enforcement and legal entities should never refer to a child as an underage woman.⁴⁸ There is no such thing as an underage woman—this is a child. Additionally, Weave also stated that the term child prostitute should no

⁴⁷ Meredith Dank, et al., “Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Eight Major U.S. Cities,” Urban Institute, March 2014, https://www.urban.org/research/publication/estimating-size-and-structure-underground-commercial-sex-economy-eight-major-us-cities/view/full_report. (accessed February 20, 2020).

⁴⁸ “Sex Trafficking: Local Resources, Fact, Warning Signs and Help,” *Weave*, 2019, <https://www.weaveinc.org/sex-trafficking>. (accessed February 21, 2020).

longer be used as there is no such thing. Children cannot consent, which makes them sex trafficking victims rather than a prostitute.⁴⁹ While these shifts in language may seem inconsequential in the larger scheme, they are a direct reflection of cultural shifts concerning sex and labor trafficking, and without these changes in perception, the growth of arrests in human trafficking could have never been realized.

The problem of human trafficking can be more appropriately responded to because it is now better understood. This is primarily due to larger cultural shifts that have occurred within the United States concerning human trafficking that have improved responses to this crime. There is now a growing understanding in law enforcement and nonprofit communities that victims are not to blame for being trafficked because they are coerced. This is an essential distinction that allows these victims to be seen as such. Additionally, particularly within the realm of sex trafficking, there has been a growing awareness of the differentiation between prostitution and sex trafficking as well as the circumstances from which prostitutes and sex trafficking victims originate. These important points of nuance reflect cultural shift that have occurred within the United States concerning victim blaming and victim mentality.

The Case of Cyntoia Brown Long

A direct case that showcases this cultural change in the United States is the story of Cyntoia Brown. Brown was raised in Tennessee through the foster care system after her drug abusing and alcoholic mother gave her up for adoption. At the age of 16, Brown ran away from her newly adopted family to live with her ‘boyfriend’ in a local motel. Her

⁴⁹ “Sex Trafficking: Local Resources, Fact, Warning Signs and Help,” *Weave*, 2019.

boyfriend turned out to be a pimp who repeatedly raped her and forced her into his sex trafficking ring. In 2004, Brown was picked up by 43-year-old Johnny Allen in order to rape Brown. During their time together, Brown felt fearful for her life and believed Allen was reaching for a gun, and in response, she shot and killed him. As she left the scene, she stole his wallet and two guns. Despite being 16 years old, Brown was tried as an adult and convicted of first-degree murder and aggravated robbery in 2006 and sentenced to life in prison.⁵⁰ Her case received national attention in January of 2019 in response to the possibility of Brown receiving clemency for her case because of changes in the understanding of juvenile crimes and human trafficking. Due to changes in the perception of children connected with human trafficking crimes and the lifelong trauma that can bring, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam granted Brown clemency in January of 2019.

In merely a decade, the perspective of Brown changed radically. When she was convicted in early 2006, there was no outcry to assist her in her case or advocate for her as a child that was forced into sex trafficking. However, due to underlying cultural shifts concerning human trafficking, her case was able to be advocated for in early 2019. Her case received support from A-list celebrities such as Rihanna and Kim Kardashian West, which would have been highly unlikely in the early 2000s.⁵¹ Brown is a direct manifestation of how this cultural shift occurred and how it changes responses to victims of human trafficking. This nation-wide cultural shift allowed for the creation of legal change and a more understanding, holistic approach to victims.

⁵⁰ Christine Hauser, "Cyntoia Brown is Granted Clemency After 15 Years in Prison," *New York Times*, January 2, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/07/us/cyntoia-brown-clemency-granted.html>. (accessed February 21, 2020).

⁵¹ Ibid.

McLennan County: The Victim-Centered Approach

As previously discussed, the cultural shift that occurred within the United States in the last decade cannot be understated. Without such changes occurring, there would not be the change that has emerged in McLennan County concerning law enforcement policy towards trafficking victims. Because innovation does not occur in a vacuum, it is clear that the initiatives put in place by McLennan County law enforcement required this long overdue cultural change. The principal aspect of McLennan County law enforcement that has allowed for the success of its initiatives against human trafficking rests primarily in its victim-centered approach. This approach can be defined as:

the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner. A victim-centered approach seeks to minimize retraumatization associated with the criminal justice process by providing the support of victim advocates and service providers, empowering survivors as engaged participants in the process, and providing survivors an opportunity to play a role in seeing their traffickers brought to justice.⁵²

This innovative approach to human trafficking breaks with common, traditional approaches to trafficking that center on criminalization of the victims.

The central figure in McLennan County law enforcement who has been the leader in the implementation of this strategy is Detective Joseph Scaramucci, who serves as the lead human trafficking detective in the McLennan County Sheriff's Office. Scaramucci began his career in law enforcement after serving as a corporal in the United States

⁵² "Sex Trafficking and Prostitution: An Overview of Four Legal Response Models," The Advocates for Human Rights, 2018, https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/sextrafficking_and_prostitution_10_15.pdf. (accessed February 21, 2020).

Marine Corps. Following his time in the Marines, Scaramucci began his law enforcement career at McLennan County Sheriff's Office serving in patrol units until 2008 when he was promoted to detective. After serving as detective within the sheriff's office and gaining broad exposure to the crime of human trafficking, Scaramucci became the inaugural human trafficking investigator for the McLennan County Sheriff's Department in 2014.⁵³ Due to the demonstrated prevalence of human trafficking in McLennan County made clear through organizations like Unbound and The Heart of Texas Trafficking Coalition, the sheriff's department created Scaramucci's position. Since becoming the principal law enforcement leader fighting against human trafficking in McLennan County, Scaramucci has instituted a variety of new policies and approaches to tracking and investigating human trafficking offenses that have remained widely successful.⁵⁴

One of the primary changes in initiatives led by Scaramucci is the victim-centered approach to investigating human trafficking offenses. Scaramucci states that "it is not productive" to criminalize the women and girls that are being trafficked not only due to the immorality of this criminalization, but it is ultimately not effective in ending trafficking.⁵⁵ Scaramucci does not believe that it is an effective policy to arrest women and girls who appear to be prostitutes as he believes pursuing criminalization of the pimps and/or traffickers is ultimately a more effective method to root out this crime. Victims of sex trafficking in particular can often be easily profiled and criminalized because of the resemblance of the work to prostitution. Due to this criminalization of

⁵³ "Joseph M. Scaramucci," Mountain View College, <https://www.mountainviewcollege.edu/events/act-now/pages/joseph-scaramucci.aspx>. (accessed February 23, 2020).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Interview with Joseph Scaramucci, April 2019.

victims, these women are often sought out as the target of arrest stings rather than the pimps and/or traffickers.

However, Scaramucci desired to change that policy by focusing on the needs of the victim. Scaramucci has a perspective of human trafficking that actually sees victims as victims. Scaramucci stated that “if a college girl is raped you don’t go out and prosecute her.”⁵⁶ The circumstances and location of the victim may be different for human trafficking victims, but the same sort of blamelessness of the victim must apply to human trafficking victims as well. This outlook is also not limited to only human trafficking victims. If Scaramucci comes into contact through an investigation with a prostitute, he still treats this woman as a victim because he believes “no one would get into this work if they didn’t have to.”⁵⁷ Scaramucci is aware that nearly all prostitutes have already been the victim of abuse, rape, and/or neglect, which influenced their decision to become a prostitute. Additionally, prostitutes are often under coercion and threats of physical violence by their pimps not to speak to law enforcement. By protecting these women, treating them as victims, and not arresting them, Scaramucci is able to break that cycle of abuse. Because of this awareness he is able to advance a holistic and empathetic approach towards these victims that changes the culture associated with sex trafficking and prostitution. This change in culture allows victims of trafficking to feel comfortable sharing information that potentially could lead to the arrest of their trafficker and/or pimp. Criminalization creates a culture of fear and isolation concerning the victim, and by changing this, Scaramucci fosters a more habitable climate

⁵⁶ Interview with Joseph Scaramucci, April 2019.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

for victims to support future investigations. This information provided by victims enables more expansive arrests of trafficking perpetrators and is a key factor to the high arrest rates achieved in McLennan County. Not only is the victim-centered approach the more decent and moral approach to trafficking victims, it is also much more effective in terms of raising trafficking arrest rates as seen through Scaramucci's work.

McLennan County: The Organized Crime Approach

Another crucial initiative that Scaramucci has adopted that has enabled the drastic increase of trafficking arrest rates in McLennan County is treating trafficking as if it were organized crime.⁵⁸ Rather than treating the trafficking as an isolated incident, this approach connects trafficking to a more systematic structure. In investigating both sex and labor trafficking cases, it became clear to Scaramucci that the structure of trafficking crimes more closely resembled an organized crime structure rather than just isolated incidences. This crucial change enabled immensely higher arrest rates by criminalizing the cause of trafficking rather than the victims.

Organized crime is often associated with gang or mafia related crime, but due to Scaramucci's field experience, he was able to also see elements of an organized crime structure in human trafficking as well. Traffickers rarely work in isolation, and it is often a group effort to coerce and/or force a victim into sex or labor trafficking. A pimp or trafficker is usually defined as "daddy" in the organizational structure of trafficking.⁵⁹ The "daddy" is the leader of the crime ring and often uses force or coercion tactics to

⁵⁸ Interview with Joseph Scaramucci, April 2019.

⁵⁹ "Human Trafficking Awareness," San Diego State University School of Social Work, https://calswec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/full_day_human_trafficking_training.pdf. (accessed February 25, 2020).

recruit victims. A “bottom” is the term for a woman who usually has been with the pimp and/or trafficker the longest and is trusted by the trafficker. The “bottom” serves in a mid-level role by organizing the logistics of trafficking. The “bottom” also can assist in recruiting and coercing victims as well.⁶⁰ The victims are the lowest rung in this structure as they are forced to partake in exploited labor, sex, or both. By understanding the system of trafficking through a top-down approach, it is clear there are hierarchical elements of organized crime associated with trafficking.

The organized crime approach has enabled increased arrests by Scaramucci through recognition of this structure and attacking the root causes of it. Rather than criminalizing victims, Scaramucci prefers to investigate and arrest the leaders of these crime rings such as the bottoms and the pimps. By going after the hierarchical leaders of trafficking rings, Scaramucci is more aptly able to identify and recover victims and decrease the possibility of more victims being recruited into trafficking. This approach demonstrates a clear understanding of the actuality of trafficking, which enables a more effective response to stopping these crimes. The organized crime approach has ultimately led to much higher arrest rates within McLennan County.

Outside of higher arrest rates, another positive initiative that has grown out of the organized crime approach is increased preventive action associated with sex trafficking crimes. Since 2015 there has been a massive growth of preventive initiatives to combat sex trafficking. These initiatives have primarily manifested through anti-online solicitation of a minor strategies.⁶¹ McLennan County Sheriff’s Department as well as

⁶⁰ “Human Trafficking Awareness,” San Diego State University School of Social Work.

⁶¹ Interview with Joseph Scaramucci, April 2019.

other local law enforcement agencies in McLennan County such as Woodway and Waco Police Departments have started programs that attempt to preventively capture sex buyers. Due to the fact that the organizational structure of trafficking has been realized in McLennan County, law enforcement has been able to exploit this advantage through online solicitation initiatives. The anti-online solicitation of a minor initiatives has local law enforcement agents pretend to be young girls—typically middle school aged—on Facebook and other social media sites. Through the content that is posted on these fake Facebook accounts, traffickers prey on what they believe are potential trafficking recruits through Facebook messaging and texting.

Through these efforts, law enforcement is able to obtain direct, physical evidence that connects traffickers to their crime and ultimately arrest them for it. Within the first two weeks of the roll out of this initiative, 20 adult men were arrested.⁶² This initiative could not have been realized without the awareness of what trafficking is and the organizational structure that it holds. Many times law enforcement is required to act reactionarily to crimes being committed, but this initiative allows law enforcement to take a preventive approach to protect future victims. The organized crime approach is absolutely critical to being able to respond to trafficking crimes more aptly and effectively in order to ensure crimes such as these can be prevented.

McLennan County: Arrest Rate Outcomes

Due to the effective nature of these two innovative approaches, McLennan County ranked fourth in the nation for human trafficking arrests in 2017.⁶³ In total, sting

⁶² Interview with Joseph Scaramucci, April 2019.

⁶³ Kristin Hoppa, “McLennan County ranks 4th in national human trafficking initiative,” Waco Tribune-Herald, February 15, 2017.

operations that lasted from 2016 to 2019 led to 120 arrests of trafficking perpetrators and the identification of over 200 victims.⁶⁴ Additionally, in the National John Suppression Initiative spearheaded by Scaramucci there were 450 arrests in an eight-month period.⁶⁵ These drastically high arrest rates placed McLennan County among the highest arrest rates of trafficking in the country.

According to Scaramucci, the success in high arrest rates is not attributed to a higher rate of human trafficking. Trafficking rates are not staggering for McLennan County in comparison to larger metropolitan areas such as Dallas; what is different is how these crimes are addressed. According to Scaramucci, Dallas law enforcement does not address trafficking through the lenses of victim-centered and organized crime, and because of this, their arrest rates remain low in comparison to McLennan County.⁶⁶ This further conveys that the policy initiatives made by McLennan County are the cause of the high arrest rates.

Conclusion

It is clear that through the innovation of McLennan County polices, there have been higher arrest rates, which is a direct reflection of the success of these policies. However, these policies were not created in a void. It is essential to be aware that the change in culture associated with this crime has enabled these policy changes to occur. The cultural shifts primarily occurred due to a greater understanding of the reality of trafficking. There has been an increased understanding within the United States that victims are not to blame concerning this crime as well as a growth in the awareness of the

⁶⁴ “Joseph M. Scaramucci,” Mountain View College.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Interview with Joseph Scaramucci, April 2019.

mentality of trafficking victims. A direct case study showcasing this cultural change can be seen through the prosecution of Cyntoia Brown. Brown was originally charged for murder for the death of her rapist; however, in 2019 she was granted clemency due to a greater understanding within the United States that this was an action committed under the constraints of child sex trafficking. The granting of Brown's clemency made this cultural shift evident. Understanding these nuances has fomented cultural change and without such change, the innovation that has been so clearly achieved in McLennan County would not have been achievable.

The two innovative approaches that McLennan County has taken in concerns to human trafficking are the victim-centered and organized crime approach. Each of these initiatives were led and directed by Detective Joseph Scaramucci. The victim-centered approach does not criminalize sex or labor trafficking victims as well as prostitutes, which creates a culture of tentative trust between these victims and law enforcement. This trust enables law enforcement to gain information about pimps and traffickers that can enable the holistic take down of trafficking organizations and systems. Additionally, McLennan County's Sheriff's Department has also utilized the organized crime approach, which treats trafficking in a systematic and hierarchical way. By attacking trafficking crimes through this hierarchical structure, law enforcement is able to permeate every aspect of human trafficking. This approach has also led to the development of preventive initiatives such as the anti-online solicitation of a minor programs. Ultimately, the success of these policies can be seen through the high arrest rates of traffickers and a greater number of victims that are able to be identified and recovered, which clearly conveys the real-world difference made by such policy innovation.

The implications of such an approach to human trafficking are absolutely imperative. Due to the originality of McLennan County's approach, victims are seen as victims, which not only increases arrest rates but humanizes the victim. This humanization of victims is essential to respond to this crime in a holistic manner. It is critical that this approach be emulated by other local, state, and federal law enforcement entities as well as nonprofits working to fight human trafficking as this will improve their responses to the crime. The victim-centered approach matters because it changes how law enforcement entities see the reality of this crime. A crime cannot be conceived of as a crime or responded to adequately if the victim is blamed for what happened. McLennan County's approaches removes the culture of impunity that all too often surrounds human trafficking, and in doing so, they are able to serve victims rather than work against them.

CHAPTER FOUR

Looking Forward

Due to the innovative and pioneering policy changes that McLennan County law enforcement entities have implemented, there have been major efforts dedicated to disseminating these policies to other law enforcement agencies. In order to demonstrate this growth and expansion, I will first explicate the policy recommendations that law enforcement entities should adopt that originated in McLennan County. This will also include a discussion on the importance of dedicating resources to human trafficking. Next, I will showcase the educational campaigns spearheaded by Detective Scaramucci, and how they have influenced law enforcement agencies. Finally, I will end with a discussion of improvements that can be made concerning McLennan County's approach to human trafficking.

McLennan County Policies to be Adopted Nation-Wide by Law Enforcement Entities

Due to McLennan County's success in combatting trafficking, both the victim-centered approach and the organized crime approach are policies that should be adopted by other law enforcement entities. In order to end the impunity associated with human trafficking, it is essential that these two approaches are utilized. These approaches concerning human trafficking are non-traditional law enforcement responses to the crime, which demonstrates their necessity. Scaramucci recognized the innovative and original nature of McLennan County's responses to human trafficking when he stated in an interview: "I have been approaching human trafficking using non-traditional investigative practices for years...Most entities will detain or arrest victims with the hope of the victim

then testifying against their trafficker.”⁶⁷ The novelty and effectiveness of McLennan County policies demonstrates the need for adoption of these approaches. The traditional approach to trafficking largely fails to arrest perpetrators and provide victims with the services they need. Adopting Scaramucci’s victim-centered and organized crime approaches will aid in responding to this crime in an effective manner.

Additionally, another crucial policy that must be adopted by other law enforcement entities to effectively respond to human trafficking crimes is increasing operational and logistical resources to combat this crime. Both the victim-centered approach and the organized crime approach cannot even be considered as a potential law enforcement policy without dedicating resources such as funding and personnel to respond to this crime. While this may seem like an obvious, logical step to combat trafficking, the crime of human trafficking often does not have the resources available for an adequate response. Often times, explicit and obvious crimes are given precedence in law enforcement agencies. These crimes are better understood and historically precedented crimes. However, human trafficking differs from traditional crimes as it is more covert in nature, and there is often much victim blaming associated with this crime. This makes human trafficking more morally ambiguous to the untrained eye. Other crimes such as homicide and robbery that do not have this same sort of ambiguity typically receive more resources. This can be seen through the fact that in McLennan

⁶⁷ Brian Monroe, “Scholarship Spotlight: Focus on victim protection, rather than prosecution, critical to building human trafficking cases, says Joseph Scaramucci,” Association of Certified Financial Crime Specialists, September 9, 2019, <https://www.acfcs.org/scholarship-spotlight-focus-on-victim-protection-rather-than-prosecution-critical-to-building-human-trafficking-cases-says-joseph-scaramucci/>. (accessed March 16, 2020).

County, Scaramucci's position as lead human trafficking investigator did not even exist until 2014.⁶⁸ Due to the ambiguity often associated with the nature of human trafficking and the inaccurate misconceptions concerning the crime, Scaramucci's policies towards trafficking did not exist until recently within the last decade. McLennan County could not have become a nation-wide leader of fighting human trafficking without the logistical and administrative decision to even have a lead human trafficking investigator. As seen through the case of McLennan County, the dedication of resources including both funding and personnel to combat human trafficking is essential to improving law enforcement entities' response to the crime.

McLennan County's Domestic and Global Educational Campaigns

Outside of the previously mentioned measures that Scaramucci has utilized in order to increase arrests of trafficking perpetrators, he has also organized educational campaigns targeting law enforcement agencies to improve responses to human trafficking. Scaramucci stated in an interview with a local news station that: "I think education is key to detection and prevention...For law enforcement and the justice system, to our citizens. Until people learn to be angry about the exploitation of other human beings, it makes it difficult for them to consider someone could be a victim of trafficking."⁶⁹

In light of this realization, Scaramucci has spearheaded massive national educational campaigns. These educational campaigns came about through a 2016

⁶⁸ "Joseph M. Scaramucci," Mountain View College, <https://www.mountainviewcollege.edu/events/act-now/pages/joseph-scaramucci.aspx>. (accessed February 23, 2020).

⁶⁹ Brian Monroe, "Scholarship Spotlight: Focus on victim protection, rather than prosecution," Association of Certified Financial Crime Specialists, September 9, 2019.

partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s investigations office. This joint task force unites U.S. Homeland Security efforts along with local McLennan County human trafficking experts to ensure that these educational campaigns share “knowledge of human trafficking” on both the federal and state levels.⁷⁰ This partnership led to Scaramucci being named a Task Force Officer within Homeland Security Investigations.⁷¹ This joint partnership has allowed for educational campaigns to grow throughout the United States. Starting in 2016 and continuing into present day these campaigns have led to training of “215 law enforcement agencies throughout 26 states” which has extended “investigative thought leadership in the human trafficking arena to 3,000 people, including a powerful cross-section of professionals from law enforcement, attorneys, and non-government organizations.”⁷² The primary lesson that Scaramucci hopes to teach law enforcement agencies is to “immediately seek help for the victims. Then go after the pimps.”⁷³ Due to the success of this approach in McLennan County, Scaramucci hopes to expand this method to other law enforcement entities. The expansive reach of these educational campaigns has led to major changes domestically in human trafficking approaches by law enforcement agencies.

Scaramucci is particularly successful in these educational campaigns on the state and local level because he teaches these law enforcement entities how to be successful

⁷⁰ Brian Monroe, “Scholarship Spotlight: Focus on victim protection, rather than prosecution,” Association of Certified Financial Crime Specialists, September 9, 2019.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Donna McCollum, “Human trafficking expert says law enforcement is ‘going after the wrong people,’” *KTRE News*. February 27, 2020, <https://www.ktre.com/2020/02/28/human-trafficking-expert-says-law-enforcement-is-going-after-wrong-people/>. (accessed March 16, 2020).

based on his experience in McLennan County. Scaramucci teaches other agencies about the victim-centered and organized crime approach, which has led to massive growth in human trafficking policies that actually target the perpetrator of the crime and not the victim. The effectiveness of these educational campaigns can particularly be seen in Denver. After Scaramucci's training of Denver law enforcement entities Denver's Deputy District Attorney, Lara Mullin, stated that:

They've done a really excellent job here in integrating this model of working with a community-based victim advocacy group...That's really made a tremendous difference in terms of integrating them into police operations, having them be the first point of contact for victims when they identify them, whether it be at a Chinese massage businesses or elsewhere, and they've made a lot of progress on those kinds of cases where law enforcement, frankly, across the country, have been failing.⁷⁴

The implementation of Scaramucci's approaches has led to growth in trafficking arrests in Denver and a more holistic approach to human trafficking as a whole. Understanding this issue on the state and local level has led to increases in human trafficking arrests of the perpetrators rather than the victim.

Additionally, these campaigns have not only remained state and local as federal training has been prioritized through Scaramucci's joint partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Since 2016, Scaramucci has trained in total "nine [federal] agencies, including the U.S. Army and Air Force and the Mongolian Federal Police and Prosecutor's Offices on how to conduct counter-trafficking operations, along

⁷⁴ Rissa Shaw, "Central Texas human-trafficking strategy draws national attention," *CW12 News*. August 22, 2019, <https://www.kwtx.com/cw12tv/content/news/Central-Texas-countys-human-trafficking-strategy-draws-national-attention-with-seminar-557823311.html>. (accessed March 16, 2020).

with stings targeting illicit massage parlors – a common front for monetizing trafficked victims.”⁷⁵ By focusing on federal policies against trafficking, Scaramucci is able to reach a larger audience for his educational campaigns and alter trafficking policy on the federal level. Human trafficking is a crime that is tackled by a variety of different federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. military, and many others. By spreading educational awareness of the success of Scaramucci’s approaches to trafficking, federal misconceptions and ignorance concerning this crime can be ameliorated and a more effective response can be utilized.

Additionally, these educational campaigns have also been utilized on the international scale as the success of Scaramucci’s policies are not limited to domestic borders. Scaramucci has traveled abroad since the beginning of the 2016 educational campaigns to spread the effectiveness of his methods. The joint task force of McLennan County and Homeland Security has funded Scaramucci’s travel to Canada, China, New Zealand, and Guatemala.⁷⁶ Human trafficking is an issue every nation in the world struggles with no matter the level of development of that nation, and due to the success of McLennan County’s policies, these policies are being utilized on the international scale as well.⁷⁷ In a 2019 interview, Scaramucci stated that one of the most immersive international training campaigns he was a part of took place in Mongolia. In 2019, Scaramucci along with other McLennan County law enforcement personnel traveled to

⁷⁵ Brian Monroe, “Scholarship Spotlight: Focus on victim protection, rather than prosecution,” Association of Certified Financial Crime Specialists, September 9, 2019.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Rissa Shaw, “Central Texas team takes human trafficking to Asia,” *KWTX 10 News*. June 5, 2019, <https://www.kwtx.com/content/news/Central-Texas-team-takes-human-trafficking-training-to-Mongolia--510900441.html>. (accessed March 16, 2020).

Mongolia for a week to train Mongolia’s federal law enforcement in “human trafficking prevention, identification, prosecution, and legislation.”⁷⁸ Despite differences in language and culture, Scaramucci stated that “trafficking there was strikingly similar to trafficking in Central Texas.”⁷⁹ Susan Peters who serves as the National Director of Unbound stated “For some of them it was the very first time for them to say ‘oh, these young girls are not in this because they want to be, there's actually a trafficker behind them,’ so the victimology was kind of new to a lot of people.”⁸⁰ In response to the success of Scaramucci’s approaches to trafficking on the international scale he stated “It's modern day slavery everywhere in the world, and I think putting an end to it in Waco or 3,000 miles away, whatever we can do to end it, I think, is going to do something good for the world.”⁸¹ No matter nationality, language, or culture, the nature of human trafficking remains conspicuously similar, and due to this similitude, Scaramucci’s approaches to human trafficking can be successfully translated both domestically and internationally.

The success of these educational campaigns on the local, state, and federal level cannot be understated. This can be seen through interviews with Rochelle Keyhan, the CEO of the nonprofit Collective Liberty, which focuses on supporting law enforcement agencies in combatting human trafficking. After attending one of Scaramucci’s trainings she stated “When a mid-to-smaller size county like McLennan County can really pull their resources together and eradicate certain types of trafficking from their community,

⁷⁸ Rissa Shaw, “Central Texas team takes human trafficking to Asia,” *KWTX 10 News*. June 5, 2019.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

it's a really hopeful example of the fact that anyone can do it if we can get it done here.”⁸² She also went on to call McLennan County a “unicorn” in terms of the effectiveness of its response to trafficking.⁸³ Due to the success of Scaramucci’s approaches to human trafficking, he along with other law enforcement entities have led the charge in expanding educational awareness. Without these educational campaigns, the flawed traditional approach to trafficking would still persist, which demonstrates why these campaigns are so necessary and imperative.

While these non-traditional approaches to human trafficking have primarily originated in McLennan County through the innovation of Scaramucci, these policies have not stayed in McLennan County. The success of these approaches has led to massive educational campaigns that have improved trafficking responses on the local, state, federal, and international levels. This has fostered a greater understanding of the reality of trafficking and how to best respond to it. These educational campaigns originating in a mid-sized county in Central Texas have transformed trafficking approaches both throughout the United States and the world.

Improvements to Human Trafficking Policy in McLennan County

While McLennan County has proven itself to be a domestic and international force to improve human trafficking approaches, there are still improvements that can be made to human trafficking policy in McLennan County. McLennan County law enforcement has done an excellent job publishing public data concerning the educational

⁸² Rissa Shaw, “Central Texas human-trafficking strategy draws national attention,” *CW12 News*. August 22, 2019.

⁸³ *Ibid*.

campaigns that have existing since 2016; however, the data concerning human trafficking victims in McLennan County needs improvement. Because McLennan County's policies are new, data remains limited. The only victim data available in McLennan County was provided by nonprofits such as Unbound and the Heart of Texas Coalition. These nonprofits, who came into existence in the last four to five years, have only recently begun to track their own victim data. For example, Unbound, one of the most prominent anti-trafficking organizations in Waco, Texas, was founded in 2012, but was only able to start collecting data by the end of 2016 due to funding and resource growth the organization accrued through the years.⁸⁴ Due to the newness of Scaramucci's policies and the recent existence of nonprofit data collection, there are major limitations concerning data accumulation in McLennan County.

Accruing accurate data measurements of trafficking victims is essential to understand the entirety of human trafficking in McLennan County. "Precise statistics" concerning human trafficking are often difficult to estimate; however, it is essential that these estimates are made in order to know the resources needed by law enforcement to track and arrest "trafficking agents."⁸⁵ Accurate data allows law enforcement to estimate the number of perpetrators who need to be investigated and allocate resources accordingly. Additionally, precise data allows victim service organizations to understand the need in their community and to raise the support to meet that need. Needs for victims vary greatly depending on their age, gender, citizenship status, and many other factors

⁸⁴ "Our Values," *Unbound Waco*. 2016, <https://www.unboundwaco.org/about-unbound>. (accessed November 25, 2019).

⁸⁵ Cathy Zimmerman, et al., "Human trafficking and health: A conceptual model to inform policy, intervention and research," *Social Science and Medicine* 73, no. 2 (2011): 327.

that make each victim unique. By having a more comprehensive understanding of the victims in McLennan County, victim services can respond in a more effective manner to meet the needs of each victim.⁸⁶ Data limitation challenges within McLennan County harm the ability of both law enforcement and local nonprofits to respond to human trafficking.

A way to improve this limitation is to facilitate greater communication concerning data accumulation between law enforcement and nonprofit service providers in McLennan County. While this partnership is already strong in McLennan County in comparison to other local partnerships throughout the United States, there is still room for improvement within the realm of data collaboration. Law enforcement and nonprofits provide very different services in responding to human trafficking, but the data accumulated between these organizations must be shared in a more collaborative way in order to understand the totality of human trafficking within McLennan County.⁸⁷

Outside of developing stronger partnerships between local law enforcement and nonprofits, there should also be an independent organization dedicated to solely processing and studying victim and perpetrator data in McLennan County. Oftentimes law enforcement and nonprofits combatting trafficking focus exclusively on arresting and prosecuting perpetrators and/or victim services. While both of these responses to trafficking are absolutely necessary, the importance of collecting and analyzing accurate human trafficking data can often be overlooked. Also, law enforcement and nonprofits in

⁸⁶ Zimmerman, et al., “Human trafficking and health: A conceptual model to inform policy, intervention and research,” 334.

⁸⁷ Guri Tyldum, “Limitations in Research on Human Trafficking,” *International Migration* 48, no. 5 (2010): 4.

the field of human trafficking oftentimes do not have the resources and time to put towards data accrument and analyzation. Having a nonprofit or a branch within law enforcement specifically dedicated to analyzing human trafficking data solely within McLennan County will result in improved responses to human trafficking.⁸⁸

Conclusion

The importance of the human trafficking approaches directed by Scaramucci cannot be understated as they have managed to affect policy changes in local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies domestically and internationally. These policies include changes that align with the victim-centered and organized crime approach as well as increases in resources to combat human trafficking. The success of McLennan County's response to human trafficking has led to domestic and international educational campaigns on all levels, which has created major changes in human trafficking approaches. These changes that break with the traditional approach allow victims to be seen as such and increases the arrests of perpetrators. However, despite the major successes of McLennan County concerning trafficking, there is still room for improvement especially in the realm of human trafficking data accrument and analyzation. This can be improved by prioritizing data accumulation and the study of such data, which will assist in understanding human trafficking within McLennan County. While McLennan County does have room for improvement, the innovative work they have done within this realm has led to positive changes across the United States and the world.

⁸⁸ Tyldum, "Limitations in Research on Human Trafficking," 12.

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