

**RIGHTS AND RESCUE: ETHICAL WORLD MAKING IN THE ANTI-TRAFFICKING
AND SEX WORKER RIGHTS MOVEMENTS IN CANADA**

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Abstract

Grounded in ethnographic research on the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, with additional insights gathered from the migrant worker rights movement, and rooted in activist anthropology research methodologies, this dissertation explores social movements, interactions within and between them, and how human rights frameworks are differentially imagined, produced, and interpreted by them. Drawing on the anthropologies of humanitarianism, ethics, and human rights, as well as the interdisciplinary scholarship on social movements and critical feminist anti-trafficking studies, social movements are conceptualized as ethical worlds wherein the individual ethical orientations and ideological beliefs of movement members contribute to the movement's guiding framework, with implications for how tensions and conflict are navigated, the activities of movement members, and discursive and in-person encounters between different social movements. With implications for how human rights are conceptualized, deployed, and engaged with by both privileged and differentially marginalized populations in Canada, this dissertation identifies and unpacks the hierarchies of suffering and compassion that sustain them and presents a valuable theoretical framework for investigating the privileging of some over others.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
Prelude.....	1
1. Introduction.....	7
On Social Movements and Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies.....	11
The “Ethical <i>Friction</i> ” of Social Movements.....	17
Background.....	19
The Anti-Trafficking and Sex Worker Rights Movements.....	19
The Migrant Worker Rights Movement.....	24
Methodology.....	26
A Roadmap.....	37
2. Towards an Analysis of Social Movements as Ethical Worlds.....	42
Ethical Worlds and Humanitarian Histories.....	45
“Human Rights”.....	55
Social Movements as Sites of Knowledge Production.....	64
Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies.....	71
Conclusion.....	77
3. The Anti-Trafficking Network: Creating Ethical Worlds, Crafting Ethical Action.....	78
The Anti-Trafficking Movement in Toronto: Creating the Network.....	82
“Sex Trafficking”, Christianity, and Feminism.....	88
Ethical Diversity in the Network.....	99
“Bringing Everyone to the Table”.....	110
Limitations and Exclusions.....	114
Conclusion.....	116
4. Sex, Labour, and Rights: The Sex Worker Rights Movement in Toronto.....	121
The Development of the Sex Worker Rights Movement in Canada.....	124
Responding to Inequality, an Ethics of Care, and Human Rights.....	128
Meetings: Creating Intentional Spaces.....	139

Complicating Inclusion: Allyship	148
Challenges: Capacity, Reactionary Organizing, and Being “Above Reproach”	154
Conclusion.....	165
5. Discursive Encounters: Knowledge Production, Public Education, and Representation	168
Knowledge Production and Communication	174
Knowledge Production in the Anti-Trafficking Movement.....	176
Academic Critiques of the Anti-Trafficking Movement	187
The Migrant Worker Rights Movement: Uneven Utilization, Acceptance, Avoidance	193
The Sex Worker Rights Movement: Unavoidable Engagement.....	201
The Effects of Discursive Encounters.....	207
Conclusion.....	209
6. Personal Encounters and Ethical Friction.....	211
“The Feud”	212
Disruption	216
Building Bridges	221
Uneven Change.....	227
Unequal Access: A (Partially) Unexpected Encounter	236
“Difference within common cause”	241
Conclusion.....	247
7. Conclusion	250
Bibliography	262

Prelude

The Anti-Trafficking Roundtable

October 2013

In a bright sunlit room with tall ceilings and large windows, a wooden cross hangs prominently on one of the main walls, lit from behind by sunlight and looming over the space. Looking around the room, I can see that there are easily over 100 people gathered to listen and participate in the local anti-trafficking Network's first of three public anti-trafficking roundtables. Two of the Network's founding members, Ava¹ and Maria, open the event by describing the Network's brief history and what they are hoping this event will accomplish. They are employees of the refugee centre that serves as the 'hub' of the anti-trafficking Network and do the bulk of the organizing that supports the Network's public events. They tell the audience that the Network, formally founded earlier that year, came into existence to address the gaps and overlaps in service provision to victims of human trafficking and public awareness of and knowledge about human trafficking in Canada, in particular in Toronto. They describe the Network as a grassroots collaboration involving numerous non-government organizations (NGOs), grassroots organizations, and individuals that all share the common goal of eliminating human trafficking in Canada. The advertised purpose of this event is to foster collaboration and establish a basic level of knowledge and awareness about human trafficking in Toronto so that, with assistance from the audience, the Network can begin the work of developing "a response model" that will ensure trafficking victims receive the support services they need, regardless of what organization they first come into contact with.

The format of the event is to have the audience listen to a series of speakers, with break-out sessions interspersed for audience members to form groups and workshop ways to address

¹ Pseudonyms are used throughout this dissertation to help ensure participant anonymity.

human trafficking in Toronto. As the day goes on, speaker after speaker tells the audience that Toronto is a “hot-bed” for human trafficking, primarily “sex trafficking,” and that we must act in all earnest to stop the spread of this horrifying human rights violation. About half of the speakers are members of the Network, including Maria, mentioned above, and Diane, who has been involved with the Network since its founding and whose work focuses on outreach services for sexually exploited youth. The rest of the speakers are from organizations inside and outside the city of Toronto and include speakers from: NGOs that have tasked themselves with educating the public about human trafficking; outreach and drop-in programs focused on youth; police in uniform; and Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA).

All are regarded as “experts” on human trafficking and, while Maria gave a brief presentation on non-sexual labour exploitation and the “refugee and immigration perspective”, the overwhelming message the event conveys is that “we” need to protect “our kids,” particularly “our girls,” from “sex trafficking,” that sex trafficking is the most egregious of human rights violations, and that it is rapidly spreading across Canada. Above all, we must “Protect Our Communities.” Though several presenters refer to the United Nations (UN) definition of human trafficking,² which specifically mentions forced labour, an in-depth discussion of human trafficking occurring outside the sex industry, apart from segments of Maria’s presentation, is conspicuously absent. Beyond Ava and Maria, the speaker list does not include any representatives of migrant worker support service providers, or organizations or

² The United Nations *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* defines Trafficking in Persons as: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime 2004:42)

experts in labour trafficking. Thus, for the majority of the event, it seems that like has called to like – speakers are agreeing with each other and reiterating similar messages focused on “sex trafficking”, while the majority of audience members are nodding their heads, applauding, and complimenting them. I meet numerous members of the Network during two of the break-out discussion sessions that occur, including Melissa, a founding Network member who is employed by an organization of nuns to do public education about human trafficking, and Christine, a retired cop who, like Melissa, works predominantly on public education efforts, but who has also sought to raise awareness about trafficking among the police forces.

As the event continues, the positive atmosphere that has developed from back-to-back presentations mutually reinforcing each other and appearing to be well-received by the audience changes when the Chair of the Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking gives her presentation. In it, she boasts of Ottawa’s stream-lined response model for identifying, rescuing, and supporting victims of sex trafficking and says that, because of Toronto’s location on the “prostitution pipeline of Canada,” sex trafficking is a rampant human rights violation that Toronto needs to take seriously by creating a Toronto-specific response. A large portion of the audience applauds as she mentions the recent police raids and “rescues” undertaken by Ontario police officers, including the recent ‘Backpage Raids,’³ and emphasizes a victim-centred, non-judgemental approach to offering resources, programs, and services.

3 For these raids police officers in Ontario went through the ads for escorts posted on the website *Backpage* looking for ads where the age of the advertiser was listed as 18-25. The officers claimed that these ads were most likely placed by traffickers and pimps who were sexually exploiting underage girls. Posing as clients, the officers made appointments with the escorts and arrived at the predetermined meeting locations with guns and cameras, ready to 'rescue' underage victims of trafficking. No underage trafficking victims were identified or rescued, but the women, the majority of whom were working independently or with another escort, were filmed. This resulting film was shown on local news networks that glamorized the police officers' efforts to rescue victims of trafficking, blurring the faces of the women they attempted to 'rescue' but otherwise leaving them easily identifiable to those who knew them and saw the segment (NSWP 2016).

Partway through the presentation, a member of the audience raises her hand to ask a question. Once a microphone is passed to her, she introduces herself as Shannon, a representative of a local sex workers rights and support services organization, and says she wants to flag that some of the organizations that the presenter is citing as doing exceptional work only accept clients that are referred by an 'approved' service organization. She suggests that this is a problem because a lot of sex worker organizations that are likely to come into contact with persons who are being exploited are not approved, leaving large gaps in the response model. She also says that local sex workers "are concerned about the police Backpage outreach efforts... because they are profiling sex workers" and sending a message that sex work is the problem. She goes on to explain how the techniques used to find victims of trafficking are having harmful consequences on already marginalized communities and asks: "If you're causing harm to girls who aren't underage, who aren't being trafficked, is this justified by finding maybe one girl who is exploited? What if –" The presenter cut Shannon off by speaking loudly into her own microphone and saying: "I'm going to tell you a story, myself and a cop that I was training were in a Starbucks discussing rescue efforts and a woman leaned in and said 'Where were you 20 years ago, I could have used that help' and I said [she pauses for effect] 'We're here now.'" Members of the audience nod their heads and when Shannon tries to finish talking she is shut down and told that due to time constraints the presentation needs to move on.

The tension that has built up in the room over the course of Shannon's attempts to speak is palpable and several groups of audience members, including the three women sitting near me, make no attempt to hide their contempt for her words, whispering to each other about the inappropriateness of her presence at the event, glaring in her direction, and pointing her out to

their companions. Others, including Melissa, Ava, and Maria, furrow their brows as they seem to be considering her words and the challenge they present.

When Shannon waits and tries to raise her points again during the formal question period she is only given the microphone once it is clear that there are no other audience members waiting to speak. She again attempts to discuss the presenter's misrepresentation of the Ottawa organization's work, the conflation of sex trafficking with sex work that had been a theme throughout the event, the effects of criminalization on the human rights of sex workers and how human trafficking campaigns often support this criminalization, and the poor relationship that results between sex workers and police where there is a high level of violence and sex workers are afraid to go to the police because of experiences with police brutality. While various audience members interrupt and attempt to speak over her, Shannon continues to speak until two male uniformed police officers in the audience stand up to interrupt her. Raising their voices so that they can be heard above the microphone, they condescendingly speak down to her while applauding their own efforts, minimizing any "alleged" police violence and re-emphasizing the importance of their own work. The majority of the audience applauds the officers while a smaller number look concerned by this turn of events and the way that Shannon has been constantly interrupted. The event organizers insist that we need to move on because of time constraints.

During the break, multiple audience members, including myself, speak with Shannon, making it clear that she is not the only one that objects to some, if not all, of the content being presented at the event. Shannon chooses to leave at the break and when the roundtable resumes one of the organizers asks the room if there are any more "questions or emotional outbursts." Many audience members laugh at this joke and look to Shannon's now empty seat, making it

clear that her contributions are now being labelled “emotional outbursts,” dismissing the value of her contributions and validating those that sought to interrupt and speak over her.

By the end of the event, no one else has verbally objected to the content of any of the presentations or challenged the proposed anti-trafficking methods and no one else has identified themselves as a member of an organization that supports sex workers through human rights advocacy and outreach. Upon reviewing the official summary of the events put together by the event’s organizers, I see that, while the questions and comments of many audience members are recorded therein, there is no record of the points Shannon had raised.

1. Introduction

Reviewing my notes of the anti-trafficking roundtable featured in the Prelude, I see a moment of encounter between different social movements with similar goals but very different ideas of how to achieve them. I also see salient absences. This was an encounter that involved conflict and brought strong emotions to the foreground, taking place at an event that was simultaneously publicly open and ideologically closed. It was my first hands-on introduction to the anti-trafficking movement in Toronto, as organized by the anti-trafficking collaborative known as the Network, and the first in-person interaction between members of the sex worker rights movement and the anti-trafficking movement that I was present for during the course of my research. It is my starting point for exploring social movements themselves, interactions within and between them, and how human rights frameworks are differentially imagined, produced, and interpreted by them.

Over the course of this dissertation, I unpack this event and others like it in order to better understand how social movements that are deeply concerned with the elimination of violence find themselves at cross-purposes with each other; actively using the language of human rights to frame their goals and actions and yet neither readily identifying the other as reliable sources of allyship. I ask: How and why do these movements so often find themselves speaking past each other when on the surface it appears they are speaking the same language and working to solve similar problems? Why, at an event that focused heavily on violence within the sex trades, was Shannon, a representative of an organization whose sole focus is on the human rights and well-being of those working in the sex trades, treated disrespectfully and made to feel like she didn't belong? Beyond those in attendance, welcome and unwelcome, how do we account for the absences, for those potentially impacted but not invited to present, who refused invitations, or

who were unaware that the event was even taking place? More broadly, how did we get to a place where we have such different approaches to using “human rights” frameworks to support different agendas and what can this tell us about the effects and limitations of contemporary Western human rights frameworks?

Through my engagement with these questions I also probe the concept of social movements itself which, as an identifier, was readily deployed by individuals with vastly different social, economic, and class privileges, as well as varying degrees of government support and collaboration, as a means of achieving unity and strengthening their abilities to work towards a common goal. Given the diverse political and ethical worldviews of those uniting under this banner and the flexible application of the term, “social movements” can become an empty descriptor of reduced analytical value, claimable by anyone who envisions themselves as engaging in efforts to change the social, regardless of whether their actions serve to shore up, rather than challenge, hegemonic government control and social norms. In acknowledgement of this, I work to develop a conceptual framework for analyzing social movements through their practices of world making and the ethical frictions that exist within and between them, an approach that I discuss in more detail in Chapter Two.

To engage with these questions, I draw on information gathered at public events held in Toronto from October 2013 to September 2016, as well as information gathered during 12 months of fieldwork with individuals and organizations involved in the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements that took place between September 2015 to September 2016. In unpacking and understanding the social movements that I participated in, I turn to theoretical frameworks prominent in the anthropologies of humanitarianism and ethics to create a foundational conceptualization of these social movements as ethical worlds. I bring this

into conversation with the anthropology of human rights, which problematizes rights-based frameworks, presents diverse ways of interpreting and organizing around them, and connects rights-based policies with praxis to enable an interactional focus on competing human rights frameworks and the moral and ethical worlds their adherents envision. I then connect this with conceptualizations of social movements developed by scholars, both within and outside of anthropology, as sites of knowledge production to explore how social movements build their membership, engage with their envisioned publics, and participate in knowledge making practices that help constitute and reinforce the ethical world of their social movement.

To this end, my research presents a bridging of disciplines and literatures, connecting studies of social movements with anthropological studies of humanitarianism and ethics and, in doing so, makes an original contribution to both through an analysis of the ethical worlds of social movements that root themselves in Western liberal human rights language. In undertaking such an endeavour, I embrace the productive messiness and tensions that result from bringing together academic and activist integrities, which I delve into in this chapter's methodology section, and the messiness and tensions that result from engaging with multiple social movements simultaneously. In doing so, I highlight the productive friction and potential that Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing tells us can come from heterogeneous and unequal encounters – how “[r]ubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick” (2005:5) - and draw attention to her reminder of the importance of interaction in defining movement, cultural form, and agency, for it not only slows things down and speeds things up but is required to keep power in motion, “inflect[ing] historical trajectories, enabling, excluding, and particularizing” (2005:6). In looking at how these movements have developed and changed over time, as well as the significant antecedents or catalysts of change, I look at the messiness of

movement building and how a movement's guiding frameworks are contested and negotiated, both internally and externally. In exploring moments of encounter between different movements, I focus on what they can tell us about uneven distributions of power and the uneven *movement* of movements, the (un)expected outcomes of such encounters, and how tensions within and across movements are navigated.

Following from this, I ask: Beyond the surface level trading of barbs and philosophical disagreements, what else comes from encounters between these movements? In studying their interactions and the ripples of those interactions, what can we learn about the nuances, transformations, and limitations of the ethical worlds they imagine and the human rights frameworks they deploy? How do we understand unexpected outcomes, such as the fracturing within movements that I witnessed during my fieldwork, unexpected moments of mutual accord, failed rallies, or attempts at finding common ground that don't bear immediate fruit but may still sow seeds of change? How might we theorize the diversity found among movement members and what brings them together, challenges them, and motivates them? If we were to limit the analysis of these movements to public moments, such as the one I witnessed take place between Shannon and the Network, it might seem as though there was little 'else' to explore and we might not think to look for what eventually followed from this interaction: that Shannon and I would repeatedly meet to discuss it, leading me to, with her permission and prompting, revise a course paper I had written about the encounter and submit it to the Network, beginning my multi-year involvement with it; that, within the Network, Shannon's words triggered a process of re-evaluation and re-orienting of the ethical orientations that informed the anti-trafficking work some members engaged in, beginning a process of slow and uneven change within the Network's ethical world; and that, within the sex worker rights movement, the treatment of Shannon would

catalyze both resistance to and avoidance of Network activities and a desire to influence, reshape, and impede them. Thus, as Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's (2005) exploration of the productive and unpredictable moments of *friction* between diverse, unexpected, and sometimes opposing groups demonstrates, there is much more that we might glean from a close ethnographic study of the interactions of these social movements, both with each other and with others occupying the various scales of the broader social movement landscape.

In the remainder of this chapter I introduce the key themes, analytical tools, and bodies of literature that I draw on throughout this dissertation. I begin with a brief review of the literature on social movements that this dissertation contributes to and which I take up in greater detail in Chapter Two, and position this dissertation within the field of critical anti-trafficking studies to which it also contributes. From this discussion, I introduce my approach to exploring the ethical worlds of social movements and how an analysis of "ethical friction" provides a valuable lens for unpacking the guiding frameworks of social movements and encounters between them. I then briefly review the historical, legal, and political contexts of the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements in Canada. This context strongly informed the methodological approaches utilized during my research, which I elaborate on in the penultimate section of this chapter. In concluding, I briefly outline the content of each dissertation chapter, providing a roadmap that highlights the dissertation's key themes and areas of focus.

On Social Movements and Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies

In turning to the existing literature on social movements, particularly within anthropology, this dissertation's interactional focus on competing human rights frameworks and the ethical worlds their adherents envision positions it to make an original contribution to the literature. In establishing a baseline for determining the limits, porous though they are, of social

movements, I draw on conceptualizations of social movements as organized groups working to create social change (Little 2014) that are prominent in the interdisciplinary work on social movements and which I elaborate on in Chapter Two. I also rely on the labels that participants used for themselves and each other, with many referring to their work as contributing to, for example, a larger “anti-trafficking movement” or identifying themselves as being a part of the “sex worker rights movement.” These descriptors suggest that, although members of other social movements may, for example, view the anti-trafficking movement as a tool of government rather than a resistance to it and thereby disqualified from its claims to be a “social movement”, this does not reduce the potential of the term to serve a unifying purpose. Beyond identity politics, it pushes social movement researchers to consider those movements that are not necessarily “radical” but do still envision themselves as engaged in activities that promote some form of social change, what this means for our understanding of what constitutes a “social movement”, and how we can better conceptualize and understand them. Critiquing the nature and degree of change such movements envision and coming to the conclusion that it is less “change” and more an extension of biopolitical state power has not appeared to reduce the pull, motivation, or amount of funding a particular movement is able to achieve. Moving beyond the surface and further complicating our understanding of social movements is the ideological diversity that can occur within a particular movement, the effects of which I begin exploring in detail in Chapter Three.

Throughout this dissertation then, I recognize participants’ use of the term “social movement” as a descriptor and engage with it analytically to highlight the presence of a shared commitment to a common goal that transcends ideological leanings, political difference, and oppositional stances, but does not eliminate those differences. I trouble assumptions of

homogeneity within social movements by exploring the aggregate pieces that contribute to and differentially interpret and engage with a given movement's over-arching goals. I also attend to the ways that social movements have the potential to nest within, overlap with, and relate to others. As such, the term "social movement" is predominantly used in this dissertation to describe the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements, with the understanding that these movements can themselves be described as fitting under the larger umbrellas of broader social movements, such as the labour rights movement or women's rights movement, on both national and international scales, and that these broader movements, like the smaller ones that I focus on here, have a diverse, factionalized, self-identifying membership purposefully working towards common goals. Within the confines of this dissertation, I focus on the worlds these social movements have created in Toronto, Canada, with an awareness of how, as ethnographic case studies, they provide windows into the larger national and international movements of which they are a part. In connecting these case studies together through an exploration of how social movements engage with each other, I draw attention to the profoundly different ethical positions found both within and across social movements.

In this dissertation, I draw on Arturo Escobar's (1992) conceptualization of social movements as emerging out of crisis and as sites for the negotiation of social practices and envisioning and reconstructing of social orders. In this framing, social movements not only emerge from but seek to re-write the cultural and socioeconomic conditions that make up the daily lives of movement members. To this end, movements are multivalent, not simply "oppositional" but practicing "an innovative politics of challenging, shifting, and sometimes accepting established forms of power" (1992:415). How, then, are the social movements that are the focus of this dissertation seeking to re-write the world around them and what can we learn

from their efforts? Escobar argues that, for anthropologists, social movements are important phenomena for study because they are not simply political struggles in pursuit of socio-economic goals, “but also, and essentially, cultural struggles” (1992:396). As I discuss in greater detail in Chapter Two, to study them requires looking at micro-level everyday practices and their imbrication with larger processes of development, patriarchy, capital, and the state — how these forces find their way into people’s lives, their effects on people’s identity and social relations, and people’s responses and ‘uses’ of them (1992:420).

As a study of diverse and overlapping social movements, this dissertation moves beyond dichotomizing discussions of the anti-trafficking, migrant worker rights, and sex worker rights movements to more deeply explore the different and at times competing ethical worlds these movements create, the human rights frameworks that bolster them, and what the *friction* of these movements can teach us about these worlds, the frameworks they employ, and the *movement* of social movements. As Tsing (2005) has pointed out, discussions of “new” social movements in the late twentieth century have often found themselves talking past each other on the basis of audience, with those who address themselves to cultural theorists stressing the formation of new kinds of universalizing, liberal, and biopolitical disciplinary power and those who include activists in their audiences stressing the urgency and potential of a given movement (Tsing 2005:4-5). In noting this tendency of researchers to speak past each other and finding an echo of this in the ways that different social movements with overlapping goals speak past and over each other, I have sought to write this dissertation in a way that brings the diverse literatures that inform social movement research and the equally diverse voices of these social movements together with critical feminist and anthropological work on ethics more broadly.

The combination of some of these bodies of literature will not come as a surprise; for all that scholars of the anthropologies of human rights and humanitarianism may seek to separate themselves from each other (e.g., Redfield & Bornstein 2010), it is not uncommon to find them overlapping and mixing with one another (e.g., Wilson & Mitchell 2003; Ticktin 2011). As demonstrated by Didier Fassin's (2011), James D. Faubion's (2011), and Peter Redfield's (2013) contributions, which I discuss further in Chapter Two, the anthropologies of humanitarianism and ethics have come to be increasingly interwoven as their bodies of literature have developed. Similarly, it is not uncommon to find the anthropologies of human rights and social movements blending with and drawing on one another, as demonstrated by Erica Bornstein and Aradhana Sharma's (2016) work on rights and the technomoral politics of NGOs, social movements, and the state in India, and Jeffrey S. Juris and Alex Khasnabish's (2013a) anthology on transnational activism and the political.

However, studies of humanitarianism and ethics have generally not drawn upon the approaches common to those studying social movements and vice versa. Anthropological research on ethics and humanitarianism often focuses heavily on the ideological frameworks, histories, subject positions, and worlds that humanitarian actors seek to cultivate (Fassin 2011; Faubion 2011; Pupavac 2010), the hierarchies of suffering that take shape as a result (Fassin 2010a, 2010b), the militarization of humanitarian narratives (Fassin & Pandolfi 2010; Orford 2010), and issues of presentation and voice (Jelin 2009; Laqueur 2009; Malkki 2010; Suski 2009). As this dissertation seeks to demonstrate, this theoretical work, which I discuss in Chapter Two, can make a significant contribution to anthropological studies of social movements. Similarly, discussions of "new humanitarianism," in particular the emphasis on voice and narratives (Fassin 2011) and the increasing number of humanitarian missions and interventions

that are being justified using the language of human rights violations (Wilson & Mitchell 2003), suggest that there is much that the research on social movements and human rights can contribute to anthropological discussions of humanitarianism and ethics.

Beyond its engagement with the anthropologies of ethics, humanitarianism, and human rights and the literature on social movements, this dissertation also draws from and contributes to the interdisciplinary scholarship of critical anti-trafficking studies, which I take up in Chapter Two. As Ann De Shalit and Emily van der Meulen (2015) note, since the introduction of the United Nation's *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children* in 2000, followed by the incorporation of anti-trafficking legislation in Canada beginning in 2002, the international outcry against human trafficking that has grown since the 1990s has been repeatedly legitimized in Canada. In response, numerous sex workers, migrant workers, and Indigenous communities, as well as allied policy researchers, lawyers, and academics, in Canada have created and contributed to the internationally growing body of literature that Jennifer Musto (2013), among others, refers to as "critical anti-trafficking studies". As the anti-trafficking movement in Canada has continued to grow and obtain increasing levels of dominance in social and political arenas, often at the expense of more marginalized social movements (which I elaborate on in Chapters Three and Four), an in-depth analysis of the movement's practices of world making is of benefit to researchers and members of sex worker, migrant worker, and anti-trafficking movements more broadly. I position this research within the field of critical anti-trafficking studies and make an original contribution to the literature through my approach to anti-trafficking activities as contributing to a dynamic social movement. As I discuss in detail in Chapter Two, approaching the anti-trafficking movement in Toronto as a social movement that is a part of a larger national and international movement and connecting

this frame of analysis to anthropological studies on ethics, human rights, and humanitarianism allows for an analysis of the ways that social movements can contain different ethical orientations within them, the implications this has for organizing and mobilizing, and the role of friction in movement building.

The “Ethical *Friction*” of Social Movements

As Cymene Howe’s (2013) work on the struggle for sexual rights in Nicaragua demonstrates, there is much diversity present in any fight for human rights, for even when the human rights goals and imagined futures are closely aligned there are still disagreements regarding strategies, visibility, and the details of proposed legal reforms. As Chapter Four discusses in more detail, intersectionality – in particular, the ways that layers of marginalization, stigma, and criminalization connected with experiences of gender, racial, and income inequality – was central to the ways that some movement members engaged with and negotiated diversity. As Marie Laperrière and Eléonore Lépinard (2016) have demonstrated, theories of intersectionality, drawn from Black feminism and the work of feminists of colour (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; Moraga & Anzaldúa 1984), have become both a means of validating and critiquing the work of social movements, as well as government policies and practices, in Canada. As such, uneven engagements with and hierarchical recognition of different forms of oppression and marginalization constitute salient points of focus for unpacking the frameworks that guided movement members and the ethical worlds they created. To this end, attention to and appreciation of friction as Tsing (2005) has envisioned it became an exceptionally useful tool for framing this dissertation and for making sense of some of the data I gathered during fieldwork. It is a concept that stayed in the back of my mind as, through ethnographic explorations of meetings, work places, moments of inaction, encounters between movements, and tensions

within them, I have sought to determine the guiding frameworks of the movements and how these frameworks are reflected, contested, transformed, implemented, communicated, and re-inscribed through actions and organizing around issues of sex, labour, and exploitation.

At the same time, the focus of this dissertation departs from Tsing's primary use of friction as an analytical concept emphasizing the unpredictable outcomes that can occur in zones of awkward engagement, focusing instead on what I refer to as "ethical friction", a form of friction that can occur when two ethical orientations that do not complement each other or 'mesh' together come into contact and those involved react to or engage with this potential incommensurability. Ethical friction is not reducible to conflict, though aspects of it may be expressed as or result in an escalation to conflict. It is closely tied to the ideologies of movement members and their ideas of what is right and wrong, moral and immoral, harmful and helpful. In honing in on the "ethical", I look to how it is informed by and informs the ideologies of individual members and connects to broader political trends in Canada, pursuing how ethical action is shaped by ideological frameworks and vice versa, and how this complicates, challenges, and informs the world making practices of movement members. I position the ethical as both an outcome of these broader ideological frameworks and as a dynamic site for intervention into them. At times predictable, intentionally instigated, or actively deployed as a strategy of resistance, "ethical friction" is connected to the ethical worlds of these social movements and the changes, challenges, and conflicts that may occur when these different interpretations of what constitutes ethical action come into contact. In part, it is expressed through different interpretations of human rights, interpretations which themselves must be unpacked and denaturalized, and I use it to explore the ethical worlds of these social movements and encounters between them.

This approach also draws on Tsing’s discussion of universals and the processes of generalization, wherein generalization from the particular to the universal “requires a large space of compatibility among disparate particular facts and observations” (2005:89). As I seek to unpack how “human rights” were differentially interpreted by these social movements, I look at how the concept of “human rights” was used as a bridge or way of connecting within and across social movements despite conflicting “disparate particulars.” Here, disparate particulars connect to the ideological frameworks of individual movement members and their attendant implications for ethical action, identifiable through the ways that they understood and identified a particular issue as a human rights problem and the solutions that they envisioned. At the same time, “human rights” as a universal served as an entry point for diving into the conflicting particulars underlying the universal, a process capable of generating ethical friction that held the potential for change. In exploring encounters between different social movements and unpacking how universals and ethical friction function in those environments, I illuminate both the ethical worlds of these movements and the malleability of “human rights” in Canada. In doing so, the ways that human rights are differentially interpreted, experienced, and deployed come to the foreground, drawing attention to the limits of human rights frameworks in these contexts and the work that can be done to change them.

Background

The Anti-Trafficking and Sex Worker Rights Movements

Human trafficking, defined by the government of Canada as involving the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour (Public Safety Canada 2012), has become an increasingly popular focus for government and

public concern in Canada over the past two decades. Paired with the launch of its *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking in Canada*, the government of Canada dedicated \$25 million in 2012 to ending human trafficking in Canada, with the majority of funds going to support criminal justice-based initiatives (ibid.). Likewise, the anti-trafficking movement in Canada has grown immensely, a growth that can be measured by the increasing amount of government and private funding that is actively being directed to fighting human trafficking (including the \$2 million that the Canadian Women's Foundation [CWF] supplied in 2012-2013 to support NGO and grassroots anti-trafficking efforts [CWF 2013] and the \$72 million that the Ontario government announced it would put towards combatting human trafficking from 2016-2020 [Grant 2016]), the growth of NGOs and other interest groups that identify themselves as engaging in anti-trafficking work and their membership, new pieces of legislation, and the media coverage the topic receives. Broadly, it is a social movement that strives to create social change by agitating for society's collective recognition, understanding, and subsequent elimination of human trafficking. These efforts, as I observed them at the local level through the actions of the Network, are frequently characterized by emotive appeals to end the human trafficking of women and children, wrapped in gendered social justice and human rights language that connects to liberal nationalist narratives that position Canada as a benevolent nation; they also often pair carceral approaches to solving the problem with humanitarian undertones centred on "rescuing" and "saving" helpless victims of human trafficking.

It is a movement that researchers in Canada, such as Ava Rose (2015), and movement members interviewed for this research frequently described as clashing with or opposing the sex worker rights movements. This opposition is rooted in the ways that anti-trafficking discourses, reinforced by many anti-trafficking movement members and challenged by others, frequently

conflate human trafficking with prostitution, painting the existence of the sex industry as a significant contributor to the existence of human trafficking and fueling divisions between the two movements. As Laura Agustin's (2007) globally focused work demonstrates, this opposition is not unique to Toronto but is a prominent feature of much anti-trafficking activism around the world. In the context of the Network, this conflation and opposition was the source of a significant amount of ethical friction, which sometimes escalated to direct conflict, within and between the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and, to a lesser extent, migrant worker rights movements.

As Deborah Brock (2009) has documented, the sex worker rights movement in Canada has also grown immensely in the contemporary era. In particular, during the 1980s, 2000s, and 2010s, this growth has been marked by provincial court challenges, Supreme Court victories, and an increase in the movement's visibility across social media platforms (Ferris 2015). It is a social movement that fights for the decriminalization of sex work and works to destigmatize it by cultivating social recognition of "sex work as work" and "sex workers rights as human rights," placing heavy emphasis on the need to recognize and challenge issues of sex, gender, economic, and social inequality and violence, while supporting sexual, labour, and women's rights (Ferris 2015; Golkar 2016; van der Meulen, Durisin, & Love 2013b). Recognizing and desiring to eliminate violence in the sex trades, voices associated with the movement often emphasize the historical and contemporary harms that carceral approaches to engaging with the sex trades have had and argue that "only rights will stop the wrongs" — that is to say, only a recognition of the human rights of sex workers and actively working to uphold and value those rights will reduce violence within the sex trades (van der Meulen et al. 2013a). As the work of Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (1998), among others, demonstrates, these issues have become a rallying point

for sexual labour organizing around the world. In contrast, carceral approaches that seek to eliminate the violence in the sex industry, particularly the existence of human trafficking, through attempts to eliminate sex work via its criminalization are presented as contributing to the violence that sex workers face by pushing the industry underground and supporting the stigmatization and devaluation of workers through their criminalized status.

As Shannon's presence at the Network's roundtable demonstrates, these two social movements actively interact with and influence each other. As *Bedford v. Canada* and the passage of the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* (PCEPA) demonstrate, this interaction is not limited to public roundtables. While I take up the implications of this court case and PCEPA for the sex worker rights movement in detail in Chapter Four, a brief review will show the significance of these two movements to Canada's social and political landscapes as well as the timeliness of my research. Court proceedings for what became *Bedford v. Canada* were initiated in 2007 at the level of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. The applicants argued that, while the legislation at the time did not make the act of prostitution itself illegal, it criminalized nearly all actions associated with it⁴ to create a state of de facto criminalization. This criminalization put the lives of prostitutes⁵ at risk and, as such, was a violation of their rights to life, liberty, and safety of the person, as enshrined in Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.⁶ In opposition, the federal and provincial governments argued that prostitution was itself dangerous, exploitative, and a harmful nuisance to the community,

⁴ The applicants argued against three provisions: Section 210, which makes it an offence to be an inmate of a bawdy-house, to be found in a bawdy-house without lawful excuse, or to be an owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, or occupier of a place who knowingly permits it to be used as a bawdy-house; Section 212(1)(j), which makes it an offence to live on the avails of another's prostitution; and Section 213(1)(c), which makes it an offence to either stop or attempt to stop, or communicate or attempt to communicate with, someone in a public place for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or hiring a prostitute. (*Bedford v. Canada* 2013)

⁵ Here the term "prostitute" is used because it was the legal language used by the courts at the time of the case.

⁶ Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1982)

drawing on the arguments of radical feminists that view all prostitution as patriarchal violence against women and conflate human trafficking with prostitution, those who view the sex industry as the primary cause of human trafficking, and religious and political conservatives that view prostitution as part of an immoral criminal underworld. On December 20th, 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously sided with the applicants and struck down the three contested pieces of legislation, giving the government one year to replace the legislation.

In the year that followed, the government introduced Bill C-36, PCEPA, which sought to recriminalize all aspects of prostitution that the Supreme Court ruling had decriminalized, expand the reach of the legislation to include the criminalization of those who purchase sexual services and diverse means of advertising the sale of sexual services, and entrench in law the presumed connection between prostitution and human trafficking (See PCEPA 2014; Bill C-36, Historical 2015). During the hearings for amendments to and debate on PCEPA, anti-prostitution advocates drew heavily on the spectre of human trafficking to argue in favour of recriminalization and the Bill received Royal Assent on November 6, 2014, coming into effect on International Women's Day, December 6th, 2014.

Records that detail the evidence and arguments that were put forward and debated during *Bedford v. Canada* (2013) and during the public hearings on PCEPA (Bill C-36, Historical 2015) demonstrate that the opposing usage of human rights language played a significant role in court decisions, the crafting of government policy and legislation, and public opinion, strongly influencing the intersecting forces that affect the lives and working conditions of those involved in the sex trades, as well as public attitudes and perceptions of different forms of sex, violence, and labour. This dynamic, often opposing, and, at times, hierarchical application of human rights language is reflected in the ethical worlds and activities of the anti-trafficking and sex worker

rights movements, pointing to a need to unpack these different interpretations of “rights” and hierarchies of suffering (Fassin 2011) in Canada.

The Migrant Worker Rights Movement

Following this thread and looking to the broader social movement landscape that these two movements are a part of, interact with, and are influenced by, a third social movement comes to the foreground: the migrant worker rights movement. While the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements in Ontario have established themselves as stakeholders in the legislation of sex in Canada, the migrant worker rights movement has increasingly been brought into these conversations (sometimes as a willing figure and sometimes not) as a group that is positioned at the intersection of human trafficking, labour rights, and the legislation of mobile bodies. The movement seeks to cultivate social change by raising awareness of the barriers faced by migrant workers, in particular “low-skilled” migrant workers labouring under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), Live-In Caregiver Program, and other Temporary Foreign Worker Programs (TFWPs), including their vulnerability to and experiences of gendered labour exploitation, health risks, and human rights violations (Hughes 2012; Hennebry & McLaughlin 2012), how the Canadian economy depends on their precarious labour, and the denial of labour and human rights to migrant workers (Preibisch & Encalada Grez 2011; Sharma 2012).

As a whole, the migrant worker rights movement in Canada has not yet made up its mind regarding its involvement, if any, with the anti-trafficking movement and the language of anti-trafficking more broadly. Some organizations have taken up the language of trafficking to draw attention to the exploitation their workers face in the hopes that it will bring in additional resources, while others have been avoiding it as a means of avoiding the conservative, carceral,

protectionist legislation it might bring with it or the sexual overtones that are associated with trafficking discourses. As one movement organizer put it:

We know that we have to come up with a position on it, we can't just keep avoiding it, but we don't know what that position will be. Some of us want to stay away from it entirely and others want to know if it could help some of our workers get access to emergency visas. Some think it's a way to access more funding and others think it will just bring CBSA [Canadian Border Services Agency] and deportations. Then there's those who want to avoid it because they think trafficking only happens in the sex industry, that there's no connection to the labour exploitation they see in the fields.

From the inception of the SAWP in 1966 through the expansion of TFWPs to the present, migrant workers have been targeted by bylaws and pieces of legislation that place strict limits on the human rights that the government of Canada is willing to acknowledge they have while working or otherwise residing in Canada (Encalada Grez 2011; Sharma 2012). Catalyst moments that have spurred talk of and legislation around human trafficking have often been moments where discussion of human smuggling and migration has been centre stage, such as the arrival of migrants off the coast of British Columbia in 1999 that spurred changes to the International Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). At the same time, there are salient silences: when media coverage of the exploitation of migrant workers who had been brought to Canada under the TFWP increased from 2010-2013, which coincided with Alberta's economy beginning to slump, the government changed the program to limit the amount of time migrant workers could work in Canada – a move that further curtailed their already meagre rights in Canada – and capped the percentage of workers certain businesses could hire (Barneston & Foster 2014). Despite the labour exploitation, coercion, and other forms of abuse the workers experienced (Alarcon 2013), the language of trafficking was conspicuously absent from these discussions.

The migrant worker rights movement also overlaps significantly with some of the human rights frameworks, organizing strategies, and goals of the sex worker rights movement, in

particular their mutual and frequent use of labour rights language. Some organizations within the sex worker rights movement, such as the Migrant Sex Workers Project, have also actively sought to cultivate alliances with migrant worker rights organizations, citing the importance of such partnerships for meeting the needs and supporting the rights of migrant sex workers.

Additionally, some organizations that belong to or otherwise support the migrant worker rights movement are also actively engaged in the anti-trafficking movement, sometimes pushing for change within the anti-trafficking movement and contributing to cross-movement coalition building that seeks to bridge the divide between the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements. It is this complex positioning of the migrant worker rights movement, simultaneously overlapping with, tentatively engaging with, and resisting both the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements that has helped me to better grasp the nuances of the limits, overlaps, contradictions, and tensions present in the ethical worlds these movements seek to create. As such, it presents a valuable third point of reference for my research, in particular when discussing hierarchies of suffering, the invisibility of exploitation in non-sexual industries, the limits of certain human rights frameworks, and the effects of internal and external social movement encounters.

Methodology

Throughout fieldwork and in the writing of this dissertation, I have sought to recognize the variable power imbalances between the sex worker rights, migrant worker rights, and anti-trafficking movements, imbalances that are actively reinforced by the criminalization, stigmatization, and surveillance of some bodies and not others. I have also been conscious of the power dynamics present in anthropological research, in particular between the researcher and the

researched, and the potential for exploitation therein. Regarding these engagements, Asale Angel-Ajani writes that:

through the practice of ethnography, I see that we have concerned ourselves with the authoritative act of what it means to witness. That authoritative act is the act of speaking, giving voice, reclaiming and reconstructing events. Ironically, however, an anthropologist's job is supposedly based on the act of listening. Listening does not imply that the listener is an expert or an authority. I believe there are valuable lessons to be learned if we open our ears to experiences that might not fit what we think we know. Critical reception might just lead to ethical engagement. (2006:87)

This points to the heart of discussions on the ethics of anthropological research methodologies, which have been critiqued for being exploitative in the way that anthropologists frequently conduct research *on* rather than *with* stigmatized and marginalized populations. In doing so, anthropologists design and control all primary aspects of “their” research, leveraging the privilege and authority that members of the academic community benefit from to position themselves as “experts,” eventually reaping professional and financial benefits that rarely translate into meaningful benefits for the “objects” of an anthropologist's research. In this sense, anthropologists are awarded and maintain discursive power as their analysis can carry significant weight where the voices of those they study do not. Given the historical entanglements of anthropology with colonial exploitation, critiques that draw attention to this power dynamic are important and have a long history that follows the tradition of public critique begun by people of colour, immigrants, and others challenging unequal power relations (Sanders 2006:2-3).

Much of the research that focuses on anti-trafficking initiatives has demonstrated how such initiatives can contribute to the silencing of local and migrant sex workers (GAATW 2007),⁷ migrant workers outside the sex industry (Brennan 2014), and Indigenous communities

⁷ See also the articles, “Critical Perspectives on Canadian Anti-Trafficking Discourse and Policy,” eds. Ann De Shalit and Emily van der Meulen (2015), which includes Hunt (2015) and Maynard (2015).

(Hunt 2015; Maynard 2015); therefore, a methodological approach that actively challenges imbalances in discursive power and authority is ethically necessary. In undertaking this research reflexively, as an activist, academic, and ally in the fight for sexual, labour, and migration rights, I have actively sought to position myself in the role of what Emily van der Meulen (2011) has called the “hybrid scholar/activist,” a role where neither the scholar or the activist takes precedence. To facilitate this approach, I have used engaged activist anthropology research methodologies (Speed 2006, 2009) rooted in a strong commitment to the marginalized communities that have made this project possible, including incorporating feedback from members of the sex worker rights movements in the design and development of this project and in guiding fieldwork activities, helping to organize public events that support marginalized community members and raise awareness about the harms of criminalization, and working to ensure that research results are disseminated in different accessible formats outside of academia. As discussed in the conclusion to this dissertation, these dissemination and collaboration efforts will not cease upon the completion of my degree requirements. Such methods differ from traditional anthropological research methods in that they seek to address the basic structural inequity between the anthropologist and those researched that has, according to Ruth M. Krulfeld, been “built into ethnographic research” (1998:22), by cultivating co-partnerships with research participants and forming collaborations that facilitate the research being used for the political ends of marginalized research participants. In support of such approaches, Shannon Speed writes that “at the intersection of anthropology and human rights, a critical activist engagement is ethically and practically warranted” (2006:75). Speed suggests that this form of activist engagement in anthropological research requires, at a minimum, a collaborative dialogue with research participants, a shared desire to see their rights respected, a promise to involve them

in research decisions, a commitment to contribute something to their struggle through one's research and analysis, and transparency (2006:71). It also involves a recognition of the participants as more than *just* participants and of the incredibly intimate potential of anthropological research methods.

At the same time, this project has been shaped by the productive challenges that I have faced as a graduate student with the dual goals of conducting research that will culminate in a single-author dissertation and also respond to the diverse and at times conflicting needs of the organizations involved in the project. Throughout my fieldwork I was keenly aware that my analysis might not be welcomed by all organizations or their members and that the dissertation, framed by disciplinary requirements, may be inaccessible and of little benefit to many marginalized migrant workers and sex workers. Tensions between activism and academia have persisted throughout my long-term involvement in both spheres and I have often struggled with what felt like being “too much an academic” to be welcome in some activist spaces and “too much an activist” to succeed in academia. While this ongoing engagement has facilitated the development of my relationship with several organizations that were key to this project, it has been difficult to find ways to ensure that the arrangement continued to be mutually beneficial, particularly after my period of formal fieldwork ended and the process of data analysis and “writing up” became necessary priorities. While I have told myself that I must finish my analysis, writing, and degree so that I can then use my dissertation as the basis for both academic and community accessible publications, the tension between personal academic and community activist efforts remains.

A core strength of anthropological research methods is that they move beyond interviews with research participants and deep literature reviews, though those too are important, and

involve long-term immersion in the world of research participants in the form of participant observation. Such immersion not only allows the researcher to gather more detailed knowledge about the social environment of research participants, but also an opportunity to compare information shared in interviews with lived realities and experiences – to compare what might be the ‘party line’ with a less staged presentation of life. In the case of my research on social movements, it served as a means of gathering data while also actively contributing to the work the social movements were undertaking. It also presented me with opportunities to gather feedback on the development and dissemination of the research, to help ensure that it could be translated into accessible, useful documents for community use. Beyond being a practice that revealed to me many of the nuances of these social movement landscapes, it was also a messy practice, at times fraught with tension and anxiety, as I sought to gain access to, involve myself in, and navigate three separate social movements.

A researcher’s involvement in the world of their research participants may pre-exist their official entry “into the field” or the cultivation of such relationships may not begin until the researcher sets their feet to the ground, as it were, in the geographical location where their research will take place. In my case, my entry into what would become my fieldwork site was in the works years before I received official ethical clearance to enter the field and speaks to the rooting of my research in activism and community engagement. It began in Victoria, BC, with my own experiences with support groups and organizations for survivors of sexual violence and as a member of the queer community. In the context of these overlapping groups, I came to know members of the sex worker rights movement first as friends and only later by their self-identification as sex workers. I learned that collectively they were fighting for many of the same human rights that queer communities fight for: the right to be free from stigma, criminalization,

and discrimination, and the right to access anti-oppressive systems of redress when targeted with violence. Recognizing the gains that queer communities had made on these fronts and the many challenges that sex workers still faced sparked my intense interest in the ways that governments attempt to manage and police sexualized bodies and the beginning of my involvement in sex worker rights activism. Upon moving to Toronto in 2012, I sought to involve myself in local sex worker rights organizing and was confronted with a very different environment, one where the term “anti-traffickers” was frequently spoken with derision and where I, as an unknown non-sex working academic who claimed to be an ally, was met with significant distrust. So began my lengthy process of cultivating trust with members of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto, a process that involved not simply showing up to events but also learning the language of the movement and actively demonstrating my commitment to being the “right” kind of ally. Thus, while my formal fieldwork took place from September 2015 to September 2016 in Toronto, Canada, my involvement with the sex worker rights and anti-trafficking movements predates and exceeds that time.

It was through this involvement and my simultaneous course work, first at the University of Toronto during my MA and then at York University during my PhD, that my research came to be dually shaped by academic and activist motivations: my activist self seeking to leverage academic knowledge to further activist goals; my academic self seeking to better understand the barriers the sex worker rights movement faced and find ways to overcome them. Following my attendance at the anti-trafficking Network’s event that opened this chapter, the friendship that subsequently developed between Shannon and I, and my submission of the revised course paper to the Network, it became clear that the impact of the anti-trafficking movement on the sex worker rights movement in Toronto was a concern worth pursuing on activist and academic

levels. But how best to approach it? At the urging of my PhD committee member Dr. Kamala Kempadoo and in conversation with several members of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto, I worked to develop a project that would take a more holistic look at the anti-trafficking movement itself, with the goal of wanting to better understand the different perspectives, in particular those that I felt myself ethically opposed to, for the potential to reduce the perceived harm the anti-trafficking movement was causing to the sex worker rights movement and individual sex workers, and to potentially build bridges between the social movements. As part of a desire to gain a more thorough understanding of the impact of the anti-trafficking movement and to avoid reinforcing the conflation of human trafficking with sex work, I pursued involvement with and knowledge of the migrant worker rights movement, a point of reference that became increasingly important as organizations seeking to support migrant sex workers actively sought out allyship with migrant worker rights organizations.

Gaining access presented varying degrees of difficulty depending on the social movement. Key organizers in the sex worker rights movement were, given the history of researchers exploiting the knowledge of sex workers to further their own agendas (Dewey & Zheng 2013), understandably wary of an unknown academic. Further, as a white academic without sex working experience, the intersectionality of my feminism was not something that anyone assumed, particularly within a movement that was (as I take up in Chapter Five) actively having to engage with the hegemony of colonial, white feminist anti-trafficking discourses. This was in addition to what sex worker rights organizer Anise described as the “deceptive first impression” other organizers had of me – characterizing me as appearing “like a librarian, like the quiet girl with glasses who bakes good cookies and goes to church on Sundays”, an impression that brought with it assumptions about my own ethical orientation and goals in

wanting to join the movement. In organizing spaces, as I discuss in Chapter Four, white privilege, along with economic and educational privileges, was taken up and engaged with in a critically reflexive manner that strongly influenced recent organizational discussions and debates. As such, my position and privilege as a cis-gendered, non-sex working, white academic was an important point for my own and my interlocutors' critical reflections and discussions as I worked to be more involved in the movement.

In time, as my years of activist involvement with the movement in Toronto built upon themselves, I eventually gained credibility as “one of the good ones” and the friendships that were cemented through rallies and vigils stood me in good stead when it came time to ask for formal interviews. In total, seven members of the sex worker rights movement from three different organizations agreed to sit for open ended interviews, while numerous others declined to participate in formal interviews but were more than happy to be involved in more informal ways, including chatting over coffee and inviting me into their lives as a researcher, ally, and friend. During my fieldwork I worked as a volunteer with a sex worker support services and rights organization in Toronto to further develop their capacity to address the needs of migrant sex workers in the city. I also worked with an advocacy organization, the sister organization to one that engaged in outreach and support service provision to racialized migrant sex workers in Toronto, which was tasked with developing public education materials geared towards distinguishing migrant sex work from trafficking, developing support resources for migrant sex workers, and fundraising to support service provision and outreach. In every case, all participants have had the opportunity to review and revise the inclusion of any data gathered during my time with them.

Gaining entry to the Network proved to be, in some ways, surprisingly easy. The paper that I submitted heavily critiquing their roundtables proved to be well-received and earned me an invitation to sit in on Network meetings. This led to my role as an unofficial research consultant, with the primary organizers of the Network seeking my aid in developing an anti-oppression framework and, over time, strategizing ways to reduce the harms to which the Network contributed. In this environment, my status as an academic awarded me a sort of privileged neutrality and authority, while at the same time my use of the term “sex work” indicated to others that I did not identify as a sex work “abolitionist.” Here, the first impression others often had of me as a “quiet girl with glasses who bakes good cookies and goes to church” allowed me to blend in unquestioningly. In an organizing space where the majority of participants were cis-gender, white women who worked or volunteered for religious organizations, all I needed to do was cover my tattoos and remain quiet to blend in. Upon reflection, and when contextualized within the ethical world of the Network which I discuss in Chapter Three, this ease of access aligned with both the Network’s ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” and the pre-eminence of white feminist ideologies within Network spaces.

As fieldwork approached, my involvement with the Network turned into a volunteer position with the primary organization behind it and I was able to immerse myself in the daily life of an organization whose anti-trafficking work was but one of many priorities. During my time with this organization, which employed Ava, Maria, and Willow, I was regularly exposed to the intersections of precarious migration conditions and labour exploitation. As the organization also did a significant amount of work to provide support services to migrants more broadly, I quickly learned that anti-trafficking language was to be found in conversations about migrant detention, refugee claims, and welcoming newcomers to Canada. This emphasized the

importance of including the perspective of migrant worker rights organizers in this research. In total, thirteen open-ended interviews were conducted with anti-trafficking movement members, spanning twelve organizations, and all participants were given the opportunity to review transcripts of their interviews.

When it came to gaining access to the migrant worker rights movement, my research's focus on anti-trafficking worked against me. As previously mentioned, many within the migrant worker rights movement are undecided on the topic of anti-trafficking and were hesitant to engage with it on any level. My strongest connections to members of the migrant worker rights movement came through my activism in the sex worker rights movements and the anti-trafficking organizations that also did migrant worker rights work. The former proved to be a connection that gained me some access with those who were sympathetic or seeking to foster alliances with the sex worker rights movement but turned other potential participants away as a result of their desire to avoid any connection to the sex industry. Connections forged through anti-trafficking organizations led to a similarly small number of successes, with many migrant worker rights organizers responding to interview or other requests to meet by saying that they "didn't know anything about trafficking." My attempts to assure them that I was interested in the migrant worker rights movement itself opened some doors, but many involved in the movement did not have time to spare to initiate the uninitiated. Unlike the sex worker rights movement in the city of Toronto, where I could demonstrate my value to the movement by taking on heavy lifting or blending into anti-trafficking spaces like a fly on the wall, in the migrant worker rights movement the ways that I could tangibly contribute were very limited. Unlike the anti-trafficking movement in Toronto, whose membership was predominantly made up of white middle-to-upper economic class women working or volunteering in the Greater Toronto Area, the migrant worker

rights movement in Ontario was largely headed by women and men of colour, many of whom came from working class immigrant families in Canada, and much of the work took place outside of Toronto on farms in Southwestern Ontario. As Eve, the co-founder of a prominent migrant worker rights and support organization in Ontario, explained to me, on the farms my white skin would mark me as an outsider and might tip off farm owners that there were non-workers present “stirring up trouble,” undoing the work that organizers of colour had already done to build trust and blend in with the workers. She said that if a farm owner saw her, if anything he might think she’s a “harmless woman of colour coming round to offer English lessons, workplace safety lessons, or newcomer information.” Unlike the anti-trafficking movement where much of the work took place in offices, few migrant worker organizations had offices where I could volunteer my time doing office or other work; trips to the farms were scheduled and discussed over email and Facebook. In total, five interviews were completed with migrant worker rights organizers, though I had little opportunity to involve myself in the daily workings of the organizations, limiting my participant observation opportunities to public events and coalition meetings. All participants were given the opportunity to review and revise transcripts of their interview. Overall, while my access proved to be limited, it nonetheless provided valuable insights about the social movement landscape in Ontario, barriers to coalition building, and different human rights frameworks.

Practically, in following through with my activist/scholar intentions, this project in general and fieldwork methods in particular were largely shaped by conversations with members of the sex worker rights movement. It was generally agreed that I could be put to the most use supporting the sex worker rights movements by acting as a “fly on the wall” in anti-trafficking spaces and reporting back, along with using interviews across movements as places to instigate

what I hoped would be a productive friction geared towards harm reduction and, when appropriate, serving as a means of active coalition building. In particular, during interviews with members of the anti-trafficking movement I used interview questions to open up lines of discussion intended to probe at the ideological and ethical boundaries of their humanitarian vision and to explore and challenge the limits of their human rights frameworks.

In doing so, this research has also been an attempt at “studying up” (Nader 1969; Marcus & Fischer 1986) by analyzing the culture of the more privileged and politically and economically dominant anti-trafficking movement, while attempting to balance the hazards of, as Barbara Heron writes, deconstructing dominance: that “at the moment it is challenged, it reclaims centre stages and makes its issues the ones that count. [Because] if not challenged, relations of domination will continue” (2007:20). To this end, I also draw inspiration from Tsing’s effort to “write as a hair in the flour... to look for weaknesses, confusions, and gaps in business as usual” (2005:207) as a means of creating such frictions as might instigate change; to tell of moments of ‘underdog’ movement building and movement creation whether or not the results seem victorious, as a means of keeping alive and paying homage to the dreams of movements to change forms of hierarchy and unequal power relations that appear impossible to dislodge, and in doing so offering those cast as underdogs a chance to “rattle the hegemony” of those in positions of power and privilege (ibid.).

A Roadmap

The ethical worlds of these social movements, the encounters between them, and the ethical frictions that result are central to this dissertation and to answering the questions that I have laid out thus far. In laying a foundation for exploring them, Chapter Two will dig into the theoretical frameworks that I am employing, as well as positioning this research within existing

bodies of scholarship. In particular, I unpack in more detail the relevant theory and literature from the anthropologies of human rights, humanitarianism, and ethics that I have introduced in this chapter, foregrounding theories of ethical domains, the construction of morally legitimate suffering bodies, denaturalizing human rights discourses, and Foucauldian theories of biopolitical governance through humanitarian endeavours. In discussing the ways that these social movements each work to create their own ethical domains, I link this to how social movement theorists have discussed the ethical cultures and worldviews that develop within social movements, the production of knowledge within social movements, and the intentional spaces that some movements create, wherein these ethical frameworks are both performed and ingrained into daily interactions.

Chapter Three applies this theoretical framework to an exploration of the anti-trafficking movement, demonstrating the humanitarian underpinnings of the movement and discussing how the anti-trafficking Network creates and sustains an ethical world wherein a variety of approaches to anti-trafficking can be validated. I explore the religious roots of organizations and their connections to narratives of Canada as a proud country that protects its citizens and human rights more broadly, demonstrated through close working relationships with police and trust and support for carceral approaches to end human trafficking. This chapter also unpacks how heteronormative sex-gender norms are validated in Network spaces, facilitated by efforts to avoid conflict through an adherence to axioms of unity rooted in “human rights”.

Chapter Four discusses the sex worker rights movement, drawing more heavily on social movement theories to describe how the movement developed in opposition to moral campaigns to eradicate sex work that positioned sex workers as both health and social ills. As a movement that developed in opposition to and through engagement with growing divides in critical feminist

theory and, in its infancy, was also a driving force behind the fight for LGBTQ rights and against HIV/AIDS stigma, the sex worker rights organizers actively challenged numerous aspects of dominant sex-gender and nationalist ideologies while leaving others, such as capitalism, intact. The movement was heavily influenced by the individual and collective experiences of criminalization, violence, and stigma, and members actively worked to create ‘intentional’, horizontal organizing spaces that challenged broader social oppressions along race, class, gender, and sexuality lines. At the same time, the movement drew heavily on dominant liberal Western frameworks of individualized human rights, creating tensions around intersectional forms of oppression and coalition building and highlighting the different goals of those involved.

Chapter Five explores the conscious and intentional work that went into producing the public representations of these social movements and the discursive and ideological encounters that occurred during such work. Having already established the broader ethical worlds of these social movements, this chapter looks at the diverse meetings, poster making sessions, and event organizing discussions where movement members intentionally crafted their public representations. I hone in on ethnographic examples of sex worker rights organizers encountering and seeking to “speak back to” anti-trafficking imagery, while some anti-trafficking organizers struggled to produce imagery that moved beyond “pity porn” and others gave little thought to reproducing images of chained and bruised women. In doing so, I draw on critical anti-trafficking studies literature that discusses the significance of anti-trafficking discourses and anthropological discussions of power and discourse more broadly and connect it with anthropological literature on social movements. Here, Cymene Howe’s (2013) work on the crafting of public imaginations and public representations that social movements engage in, Sylvia Escarcega’s (2013) insights into “alternative” knowledges, and Maria Isabel Casas-Cortez

et al.'s (2008) theoretical framing of social movements as sites for knowledge creation and knowledge-practice are instrumental. I discuss the different representational strategies that various organizations employed, the tensions and disputes over the use and development of particular images and narratives that occurred within and across organizations and movements, and both the emotional labour that went into this crafting and the emotional effects different strategies hoped to achieve. In exploring the increasing unevenness of organizational approaches to the public representation of trafficking and the work that organizations were doing, I discuss the tangible impact of discursive encounters as it connects to ethical friction and the uneven movement of the movements, particularly in regards to public, political, and legal traction, membership expansion, funding, and discursive power.

Chapter Six focuses on in-person encounters between social movements and the uneven development and change within and across movements that occurred during the course of my fieldwork. Through the lens of ethical friction, I explore how some of these changes affected organizers, their public and private meeting spaces, their relationships with each other, and the shape of the movements with which they were connected. Here attempts at and moments of cross-movement allyship and recruitment take centre stage, in particular the changing relationship between the Network and the sex worker rights movement, work done to build bridges between the sex worker rights movements and the migrant worker rights movements, and growing ties between the sex worker rights movement, Black Lives Matter Toronto, and queer communities of colour. In exploring these encounters, my aim is to highlight their complexity and the powerful potential they hold as moments of arguably predictable ethical friction that can have very unpredictable outcomes. Taken together, these encounters help to demonstrate some of

the limits of the differentially interpreted, experienced, and deployed human rights frameworks that these social movements drew on.

Collectively, this exploration of the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and, to a lesser extent, migrant worker rights movements provides a window into the contemporary social movement landscape in Canada and the (re)production, realization, and denial of “human rights” as they are diversely interpreted. Looking at the messiness of movement building, the ethical frictions that contribute to both change and resistance, and the uneven distributions of power that influence the social movement landscape, we can better understand how a movement’s guiding frameworks are validated, contested, and negotiated. With this in mind, I turn now to the theoretical tools and literature that frame this dissertation.

2. Towards an Analysis of Social Movements as Ethical Worlds

What starts a social movement, catalyzing it and taking it beyond a single moment of individual protest, coaxing it into a particular shape? Is it legislative freedom? Oppression? Moments of community backlash? At what moment does a group of people working towards a common goal come to qualify as a ‘social movement’? What draws people to become active participants in a social movement and how do they understand the work they are engaging in? How do we determine a movement’s boundaries, what limits it, and what influences it? What can we learn from the incredible diversity of social movements, bringing together the Civil Rights Movement, Occupy, the Arab Spring, Idle No More, the Zapatistas, the animal rights movement, the anti-trafficking movement, the sex worker rights movement, and the LGBTQ* rights movement, among others, together under such a broad umbrella of a term?

As I have looked for ways to frame and make sense of what I participated in and recorded over the course of my research, I have found myself coming back to these questions again and again. In the beginning, each time I did so I found that the theoretical frameworks that I had expected to draw on, predominantly located in the anthropologies of humanitarianism, ethics, and human rights and the interdisciplinary scholarship on critical anti-trafficking studies and sex work research, were important, but not enough. They could aid me in conceptualizing, organizing, and explaining some of what I was observing, but I had the constant feeling that something was missing. At first, I thought that this stemmed from the insecurity I felt as both an academic and an activist, that there was something that would ‘click’ if only I was ‘enough’ of one or the other. If not this, then perhaps it was because I was guilty of trying to force my data into a structuralist framework that would always fail to contain and convey the messiness, tensions, and ethical frictions that were integral to my participants’ reality. Unsure of what to do,

I returned to my interviews – not to transcribe them but to listen. I returned to my fieldnotes, reviewing images, snippets of conversation, and descriptions of encounters between groups of activists. It was then that I heard what I was missing: “movement” and “movement building”. Those involved in my research had often identified themselves as activists and organizers working to build the movement(s) that they were involved in, in order to have that movement gain momentum, to grow and spread and in so doing cultivate social change.

From this, I re-directed myself towards the interdisciplinary scholarship on social movements. There I found that the anthropology of human rights overlapped significantly with the work that was being done on social movements. Here the unpacking, denaturalizing, and (re)deployment of “human rights” connected to local “struggles” (Howe 2013) and revolutionary efforts to remake communities, countries, and worlds (Juris & Khasnabish 2013a). The centrifugal and centripetal forces that some associate with social movements and the fragmenting and unifying impacts of identity politics (Edelman 2001) connected with the *friction* of contested universals and studies of global connections (Tsing 2005). Whereas before I had a broad, overly abstract theoretical framework that seemed incomplete, one that emphasized ethical worlds and was critical of human rights frameworks, but that felt inadequate for conceptualizing the tensions and encounters between groups of organizers that were so central to my participants experiences of movement building, I now felt that I had found my feet again. By bringing the literature on social movements and human rights into conversation with the anthropological work on contemporary humanitarianism and ethics, I could more deeply explore the reality of movement building and organizing that my participants described and the worlds they sought to create.

This chapter, then, sets out the theoretical framework that is central to this dissertation and situates my research within the anthropological literature on humanitarianism, ethics, human

rights, critical anti-trafficking studies, and social movements. I begin with the anthropology of humanitarianism and ethics, with its emphasis on ethical domains, hierarchies of suffering, morally legitimate suffering bodies, and biopolitical governance (Fassin 2011; Faubion 2011; Pupavac 2010; Ticktin 2011). From here I discuss the overlaps between research on humanitarianism and human rights before moving on to a more in-depth discussion of anthropological studies of human rights. Here I explore critiques that focus on the limitations of Western human rights and other universalist frameworks, ways of unpacking “human rights” as a concept, and how “rights” are differentially interpreted, taken up, and (re)deployed in diverse contexts around the globe. These conversations foreground local voices and experiences and in doing so overlap, directly and indirectly, with research on social movements that focuses on the culture of social movements and the lives of movement members.

In concluding this overview, I bring together scholarship on social movements and critical anti-trafficking studies, building a theoretical framework that incorporates the salience of anti-trafficking studies to this dissertation and allows for a nuanced approach to the ways that the anti-trafficking movement diversely and unevenly affects other social movements organized by sex and/or migrant workers and vice versa. I highlight the specific emphasis that social movement researchers often place on the knowledge production practices of movement members and the centrality of both knowledge production and consumption to the social movements I participated in. I link these practices to the “movement” of social movements, as members seek to communicate, negotiate, and challenge the social worlds around them with the goal of growing the movement(s) they are a part of, gaining social and potentially political and legal traction for their concerns, while potentially inhibiting or circumscribing that of other movements. I bring this into conversation with the work that has been undertaken in critical anti-

trafficking studies to map the anti-trafficking movement globally. Here, I draw attention to the analysis which aids my conceptualization of the ways that discursive practices contribute to the ethical worlds and world making activities of diversely positioned groups within social movements. Connecting this to the anthropologies of humanitarianism and ethics, I frame these practices as integral to the imagining and creating of ethical worlds that movement members participated in and which connect to the frameworks that members brought into movement spaces.

Ethical Worlds and Humanitarian Histories

A common desire participants expressed was to change the world around them. As Juris and Khasnabish (2013b) have noted, social movement members generally identify and respond to what they perceive as a failure of state institutions to adequately address a particular issue. The collective work of a social movement, then, is to instigate the change they want to see in the world around them. In doing so, members often cultivate movement spaces – those physical and digital locations where movement-related work is undertaken – that seek to reflect in miniature the changes they want to see in the broader world around them, engaging in processes of world making that draw on the ethical orientations of leading movement members to establish the movement’s guiding frameworks. In other words, through their ‘world’ making activities, movement members cultivate the ethical world of the social movement of which they are a part, wherein particular codes of conduct are encouraged, performed, and validated.

To better understand the practices of ethical world building that my participants engaged in, I turn to the anthropologies of humanitarianism and ethics, which have put substantial effort into theorizing ethical domains and the cultivation of ethical subjecthoods, as well as the historical development of concepts of humanitarianism and initiatives that deploy these concepts

in practice. Anthropologists trace the roots of Western humanitarian and human rights initiatives to similar origins: the antislavery movements in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Christian conceptions of religious charity (Fassin 2011; Goodale 2009).⁸ The antislavery movement marked a significant development in terms of identifying persons as deserving of, and at times requiring, intervention. Historically, religious conceptions of Christian charity focused on providing food, alms, and other forms of support that generally did not substantially change the position of those aided, did not aim to prompt wider social or political change, were not formally structured in nature, and were generally provided with a religious message or with the goal of religious conversion (Bornstein 2012). However, in the more secular branches of humanitarian and human rights thought that have been identified as emerging through the antislavery movement, we see a movement in Europe away from forms of religious charity undertaken solely by religious persons towards attempts to cultivate a more secular desire to 'help.' Key to the cultivation of this desire was the development of Western European universalist understandings of what it means to be human.

As Thomas Laqueur demonstrates through an analysis of eighteenth century antislavery publications, this required the cultivation of an 'ethical subjecthood,' wherein individuals came to believe they had an obligation to prevent wrongdoing to others and, as a result, more people came to be seen as members of the "circle of we" (2009:38). Such efforts worked to draw attention to the ethics of individuals and to expand the ethical worlds they operated within to include "outsiders." Laqueur argues that early efforts to cultivate and expand "circles of we" involved developing conceptions of 'human,' 'humane,' and 'humanity,' wherein: 'human' was first understood biologically as an inclusive universal category; 'humane,' as a variant of 'human',

⁸ For a discussion of the historical and religious roots of forms of humanitarianism and charity outside Western Europe, see Erica Bornstein's (2012) discussion of humanitarianism in India.

reminded a person that belonging to a common species has long entailed treating other humans as 'family'; and 'humanity' became a concept deployed as a means of mobilizing both the heart and the mind with the intention of prompting persons to charitable action (2009:38-44). These concepts can be traced back to the Aristotelian idea that there is a universal element to being human (Wilson & Mitchell 2003:7) and that ethical action is in the praxis, the doing, and can be taught (Faubion 2011:23). A useful framework for analyzing social movements, then, is to explore how certain initiatives directly or indirectly 'train' others to cultivate a particular kind of ethical subjecthood through action.

Lacquer's early "circles of we" can be expanded theoretically using Foucault's conceptualization of ethical domains. Working to develop the anthropology of ethics, James D. Faubion (2011) outlines this lens in his discussion of and elaboration on Michel Foucault's (1978; 1985; 1986) framework for understanding ethical domains and ethical subject positions. Faubion writes that Foucault outlines four parameters of the ethical domain: 'Ethical substance,' which is the object of conscious consideration and the labours required to realize an ethical end, 'that stuff' that demands attention if a given actor is to realize themselves as the subject they wish to be; the 'mode of subjectivation,' which refers to the manner in which an actor evaluates and engages the criteria that determine what counts as living up to being a subject of one or another kind; 'askesis,' from the Greek word for 'training' or 'exercise,' which refers to the particular work a subject must perform on their ethical substance to become a subject of a certain quality or kind; and 'telos,' which refers to the subject that is the end goal of an actor's striving (2011:3-4). In addition to these parameters, Faubion himself adds two more: the 'ethical pedagogue,' which requires an addressee, determines the mode of determination of the ethical trainee's subjectivation, and determines their status as ascribed or achieved regarding the subject

position for which they are a candidate (2011: 60-62); and ‘matrices of justification,’ which determine with greater specificity the ethical orientation towards code and practice (2011:69).

Together, this conceptualization constructs the ethical domain as a space within which persons strive to achieve ethical subjecthood through reflexive actions that are oriented towards a particular ethical code and practice and are judged by gatekeepers to the ethical domain. Key to this understanding is Foucault’s (1985; 1986) analysis of ethics as a reflexive relation of the self to itself and the potential for moral agency that intentional work on the self allows for. Foucault envisions the individual actor as striving to occupy a ‘subject position,’ a striving which results from actors not being born ethical subjects (Faubion 2011:4) and which bears similarities to the Aristotelian understanding that a person needs to and can be taught ethical behaviour. Significant to this understanding is the way that subject positions are conceptualized. Faubion writes that, according to Foucault, the ethical subject is the occupant of one or another ethically marked subject positions. Some subject positions can nest within others, some may be mutually incompatible, some are trans-institutional, the demands of some may override the demands of others, and they can bear variable ethical weight (2011:66). What is significant about this for Faubion is that this understanding of ethical subjecthood as achieved through action within ethical domains allows for an understanding of how ethics functions at both the collective and individual levels.

Didier Fassin (2011) takes this framework of ethics and connects it to Foucault’s (1978) conception of biopower, focusing on how autonomous individuals are led to strive for particular ethically marked subject positions that align with the ethical domain of the dominant society. Foucault argues that biopower emerged as a technology of governance in the eighteenth century and that it functions as a means of managing populations with the goal of producing populations

comprised of individualized, docile bodies, disciplined and trained in such a way as to promote the health of the overall population. Significant to the development of biopower, and to Fassin's conceptualization of humanitarianism as a mode of governing, is that biopower requires, as did the development of humanitarian and human rights initiatives, the creation and ingrainings of the conceptualization of the autonomous, ethical actor that lives within a society (or ethical domain) comprised of other autonomous ethical actors. Further, this ethical actor is biopolitically disciplined to strive to act and encourage others to act in an ethical manner that aligns with the overall ethical orientation of the dominant society.

For Fassin, humanitarian initiatives deploy biopolitical technologies to create a "government of the precarious" (2011:x). Bringing Fassin, Faubion, and Foucault together, I suggest that these humanitarian initiatives create quasi-self-contained ethical domains and that this conceptualization of ethical domains provides a useful lens for analyzing both the externally focused world making practices of social movements more broadly and the internal ethical world making that is cultivated through these efforts. At the same time, we must remember that the ideological and ethical frameworks that guide social movements and the subject positions that accompany and complement them are not static – they are flexible, contested, and subject to change. What happens, then, when the matrices of justice and ethical pedagogues in a given social movement experience a shift in their individual ethical orientation and seek to apply this to the movement's projects of ethical world making? How does this affect both the world making activities of the movement and the ethical world of the movement itself? The implications of such shifts are expanded upon throughout this dissertation. In exploring them I look to their antecedents and how movement members strategized, navigated, and worked to shape the ethical

worlds they came into contact with, connecting it to my conceptualization of ethical friction and what occurs during and after moments of encounter between movements.

In applying these theories of ethical domains and subjecthoods to my research, I adjust the language of domains to “worlds” because the term “world” more accurately reflects both the ways that movement members envisioned the work they were doing and the ways that their externally focused world making efforts shaped the internal ethical world of the movement itself, as reflected in movement spaces. As Maria and Ava, two founders of the anti-trafficking Network and refugee centre employees, told me: they were seeking to “Make the world a better place,” to “change the world and the ways of people in it,” and to “get others to see the world the way [they] do.” I take this descriptive outward focus on ‘worlding’ and turn it inwards in order to develop a nuanced understand of the ‘world’ of the movement itself, approached through the lens of ethical action and subjectivity. This connects the term “ethical domains”, which emphasizes contained spaces, to the anthropological understanding of “worldview,” that set of beliefs that influences the way a person perceives that world around them, emphasizing that the ethical domains that people create and seek to inhabit and expand are always influenced by their broader culturally inflected worldviews, with all of their attendant hierarchies, norms, and oppressions, including those they seek to change and those they do not. In applying these theories, I treat social movements as ethical worlds and approach movement members as creators, builders, and curators of said worlds that are simultaneously engaged in the outward focused task of (re)making the external world. While the term “world” might suggest a kind of enclosure or separation from other worlds, I emphasize that these ethical worlds are porous, with the ability to engage with, nest within, and merge with other ethical worlds.

Further complicating this conceptualization, I work to make space for and explore the individual ethical orientations of movement members, which are both influenced by and influence the broader ideological orientations individual movement members adhere to, and how these individual orientations inform and challenge the ethical world of the movement. Here, “ideological” refers to an over-arching collection of normative beliefs and values that an individual holds, which includes, but is not limited to, ideas regarding what constitutes appropriate ethical behaviour and values, with “ethical orientation”, drawing on Faubion’s (2011) use of the term, referring specifically to the ethics related component or outcome of these ideologies which determines what ethical action and ethical subject positions can look like. As Ilan Kapoor (2013), focusing on individual celebrities and NGOs, such as MSF, that have achieved a kind of celebrity status and drawing on Žižek’s conceptualization, describes it, ideology is that which obscures the gaps, contradictions, and imperfections of the dominant world to demonstrate how popular humanitarians and humanitarian initiatives function to obscure the traumatic inequality of the contemporary capitalist world order. In this dissertation, I explore what can be gained from an analysis of the ethical and the role of ethics in both the worlds of social movements and their world making activities, understood as something which is both informed by and informs the ideological. “Ethical worlds”, then, emphasizes the importance of ethics to the world making activities of social movement members and draws attention to the ethical component of the broader ideological frameworks that are involved in this worlding. In doing so, I present the “ethical” – both in regards to the world of the social movement and individual orientations towards what counts as ethical action – as an important point of entry for studying social movements, as well as a salient point of contact between movement members

and between social movements, with the outcomes of such contact illuminating much about the hierarchies of suffering and rights that are at play.

Through involvement in their chosen social movement(s), I analyze the ways that movement members sought to achieve ethically marked subject positions and the processes through which they were able to realize particular forms of ethical subjecthood. I pay particular attention to the malleability of certain subject positions during encounters between members of different social movements, including the ways that identifying with or being externally identified as belonging to certain subject positions could create friction between and within social movements. In looking at moments of encounter between the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements in particular, I examine how and why some subject positions were privileged over others and how different social movements' members saw certain subject positions as inherently incompatible. In applying Faubion's emphasis on the pedagogues and matrices of justice of ethical domains, I look at the gatekeepers of these social movements and how ideas of intersectionality, lived experience, agency, and voice were used as tools to lift up, challenge, and tear down persons of authority within social movements. Across all of this, I take care to illuminate the hierarchies of ethical worlds and subjecthoods that came to light through moments of encounter across and within these movements, including attempts to build coalitions, meetings wherein community members held each other to ever higher standards of ethical behaviour, and events where members of one social movement sought to oppose or disrupt the other.

This analysis of hierarchies also extends to looking at who was included and excluded from the ethical worlds of each social movement and what the requirements were for such inclusion or exclusion, for it tells us much about how movement members envisioned the

boundaries of their ethical worlds and the forms of action and behaviour that were considered complementary or in opposition to their own. For example, in the context of the anti-trafficking movement, there was significant friction within and outside of the movement around the inclusion or exclusion of sex workers in anti-trafficking work and the politics of voice and legitimacy came to the foreground in encounters between the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements. This connects to questions of who can achieve and occupy a given ethically marked subject position and the ways that ethical pedagogues and matrices of justice (pre)determine eligibility, ethical performance, and the limits of “appropriate” ethical behaviour, behaviour that is both racialized and gendered (Heron 2007; Mai 2013; Mindry 2001; Orford 2010), and those they identify as in need of aid.

Similarly, in working to build coalitions between the migrant worker rights and sex worker rights movements, those migrant worker groups that were open to building connections with the sex worker rights movement during my fieldwork were hesitant to form those connections. This was due to the fear that, by including migrant sex workers in their call for labour rights or visibly supporting the labour rights of both migrant and non-migrant sex workers, their own efforts would be stunted due to the “contagious” nature of whorephobia, both within the migrant worker rights movement more broadly and from the general public and policy makers that organizers hoped to recruit to their cause. As James, a young migrant worker rights organizer who worked predominantly with workers from South East Asia, told me, “in part it’s ultimately culture that we have to work on, to break down those feudal, conservative viewpoints and build trust with these communities... because from my point of view, labour is labour, and we shouldn’t be afraid to treat it as such, but we are.” The inclusion of certain “outsiders” in some ethical worlds can thus be met with barriers related to broader prevailing social norms and

the work required to overcome such barriers must occur across multiple scales, from the individual to the organization to the broader cultural world that movement members are a part of.

These practices of exclusion and inclusion and the porous, malleable, and overlapping nature of some ethical worlds also lend themselves to a discussion of Agambien (1998) “states of exception,” particularly in relation to the anti-trafficking movement and its ability to gather support across a variety of otherwise often-opposing political parties in Canada. As Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi (2010) argue, the creation of humanitarian ethical domains involves the simultaneous creation of “states of exception” where the normal rules of politics are not meant to apply. While those studying humanitarian initiatives often refer to *physical* states of exception, such as medical camps (Redfield & Bornstein 2010; Redfield 2013), I use the term to apply to *discursive* states of exception, though anti-trafficking raids and initiatives such as Operation Northern Spotlight also create physical states of exception. As I explore in detail in Chapters Three and Five, the discursive power that the anti-trafficking movement actively cultivates and deploys through fund-raising campaigns, public forums, education efforts, and lobbying involves highly effective emotive appeals and a discourse that is depoliticized, presenting itself as “ethically inarguable” (Peters 2013) through the display of “morally legitimate suffering bodies” that reinforce culturally inflected hierarchies of suffering (Fassin 2011; Ticktin 2011). At the same time, this discourse is constantly assailed by the sex worker rights movement and constitutes a significant point of friction between these two social movements. As I explore in Chapter Six, the resulting ethical friction has recently led to a subtle but increasingly salient fractioning within the anti-trafficking movement as some movement members aim to “reform” their activities as a means of upholding ethical ideals of harm reduction and anti-oppression.

In the Canadian context, the creation and maintenance of hierarchies of suffering, the role they play in ethical world building, and the recognition of morally legitimate suffering bodies is closely connected to conceptualizations of human rights, freedom, and agency. This results in an intricate linking of humanitarian intervention-based approaches with grassroots “human rights” initiatives that actively engage in practices of knowledge production that seek to influence broader cultural attitudes regarding who is (and, as a consequence, who isn’t) deserving and in need of help; of who we are (and are not) obligated to provide assistance to and what form that assistance must take. For example, for some anti-trafficking movement members, persons who are in situations of human trafficking can only realize their human rights if interventions take place on multiple fronts, including police raid and rescue operations and social interventions that change social attitudes about the issue more broadly. But who counts as a “person” who is experiencing “human trafficking”? What “human rights” are they being denied and what would their realization look like? Is a lack of “human rights” at the root of the problem and, if so, exactly what rights are absent? What if the “human rights” that a social movement identifies as being absent and attempts to “give” are not the same “human rights” the identified receiver wants? To more fully develop the approach I use to engage with human rights as a concept and the human rights frameworks my participants employed, I turn now to the anthropology of human rights.

“Human Rights”

As noted by Richard Ashby Wilson (2010), the nineteenth century saw humanitarianism assume greater prominence in international affairs when the first array of 'laws of humanity' were created, laying the foundations for 'crimes against humanity.'⁹ These laws and conventions

⁹ These laws included the Red Cross sponsored 1864 Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Wounded and

focused on the identifiable, physical suffering of the biological human body in times of war, drawing on a universalist understanding of the biological human body as the lowest common denominator of humans as a species, and sought to create neutral, apolitical spaces where these bodies could be tended. Human rights discourses followed a different path, maintaining a strong, intentionally political element geared towards equal rights and freedoms for all humans. These rights were based on universalist understandings of what it means to be human and that being human entails certain 'natural' rights, in all times and in all places (Arendt 2009; Goodale 2009). We see this culminate in 'The Declaration of the Rights of Man' at the end of the eighteenth century which, for Hannah Arendt (2009), meant "nothing more nor less than that from then on Man, and not God's command or the customs of history, should be the source of Law" (2009:45). Lisette Josephides (2003) echoes this interpretation, writing that "human rights discourses originated as a tactic in extremis of a bourgeoisie desirous of freeing itself from the constraints of the feudal order without seeming to demand class privilege" (2003:230). For Arendt, the declaration was also intended, through the establishment of inalienable and irreducible 'natural' rights, to provide protection against a changing world, including the new sovereignty of the state and a perceived new arbitrariness of society (Arendt 2009:45). The declaration included rights to security, liberty, property, resistance to oppression, equality before the law, and freedom from suffering, rights which John Gledhill (2003) argues were intentionally formulated to be blind to differences of gender and race in order to, idealistically, support equal recognition.

However, in the face of this declaration, a paradox arose between "the efforts of well-meaning idealists who stubbornly insist on regarding as 'inalienable' those human rights, which are enjoyed only by citizens of the most prosperous and civilized countries, and the situation of

the rightless themselves” (2009:39). Arendt demonstrates this paradox by identifying two groups that are denied the rights of man, the stateless and minorities, and showing that the 'so-called Rights of Man' are not an essential quality of man, but the result of having a community willing and able to guarantee these rights – the loss of which entails not the loss of something inalienably human, but the loss of such a community. She argues that, over the course of two World Wars, we witnessed the end of 'the rights of man,' as it was demonstrated that nation-states were (and are) required to ensure or deny these rights. To demonstrate absolute rightlessness, which, through its negation, aids in identifying what 'rights' are, Arendt writes that:

no matter how one may attempt to improve an ambiguous formulation like the pursuit of happiness, or an antiquated one like unqualified right to property; the real situation of those whom the twentieth century has driven outside the pale of the law shows that these are rights of citizens whose loss does not entail absolute rightlessness. The soldier during the war is deprived of his right to life, the criminal of his right to freedom, all citizens during an emergency of their right to the pursuit of happiness, but nobody would ever claim that in any of these instances a loss of human rights has taken place. These rights, on the other hand, can be granted (though hardly enjoyed) even under conditions of fundamental rightlessness. The calamity of the rightless is not that they are deprived of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness... but that they no longer belong to any community whatsoever. Their plight is not that they are not equal before the law, but that no law exists for them... (2009:49)

Daniel M. Goldstein's (2007) work on Bolivia demonstrates that Arendt's analysis still rings true, that despite the establishment of the UN and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, rights require citizenship and a state to guarantee them and those that lack full citizenship and a nation-state face absolute rightlessness. The goal of human rights initiatives is thus in many ways to guarantee those rights, either by ensuring that a nation-state and citizenship are not necessary to provide them or by ensuring that every human is able to access full citizenship in a nation-state that will. However, a further paradox remains: that it is the loss of human rights that coincides with the instant when a person becomes a human being in general, when they are

thrown back on their natural givenness and are only human (Arendt 2009:54). This existence as only human and not human citizen has been theorized by Arendt and later developed by Agamben (1998) as the difference between the Greek *zoe* and *bios*, a difference that has historically been reflected in the different stated aims of humanitarian and human rights initiatives, with the former focused on *zoe* and the latter working towards equal access to and realization of *bios* for those that have been denied it.

Supporting and elaborating on this distinction, Peter Redfield suggests that humanitarian interventions belong more to the cyclical realm of existence than to the realm of life beyond it, to biological survival or *zoe*, but not necessarily “having a life” or *bios* (2013:16). Redfield, together with Erica Bornstein, has elsewhere written that “human rights claims emphasize the political end of political economy... [and] at its core, human rights advocacy seeks to confront general wrongs” (2010:5-6). Here human rights are associated with the Agambian *polis* and achieving political recognition and rights for currently or previously bare lives, while humanitarianism is associated with apolitical bare human suffering outside the *polis*. However, this distinction relies on the presumption that we can know, imagine, and universally recognize what a life stripped of all political and social features looks like. As Miriam Ticktin (2011) argues, this figure – be it the figure of the universal suffering body or that of bare life – is a political device to create conditions for care, that it always comes with political and social attributes allowing it to be identified as human, as base, and as 'life.' For Ticktin, biology, in the sense of 'biological life,' is fundamentally political, including how we define and characterize physicality, and what counts are the political choices that make us understand something as apolitical, as bare, as well as the political configurations that make this figure necessary in the first place (2011:14). This critique can be connected to Fassin’s (2011) framing of humanitarian

initiatives as creating a “government of the precarious,” allowing for the identification of a productive conflict between the claimed political neutrality of humanitarianism and the (anti)politics (Ferguson 1990) of considering something as apolitical.

While there are numerous researchers that use the language of human rights and humanitarianism interchangeably (for example, see Wilson & Mitchell 2003), I draw attention to attempts to distinguish humanitarianism by framing it as “apolitical” and Ticktin’s complication of that distinction to point the need to denaturalize and unpack the universals that undergird humanitarian and human rights initiatives. As Arendt (2009) has demonstrated, “human rights” are not an inherent quality of being human but rely on others to recognize and guarantee the realization of those rights. Thus, what comes to be recognized as “human rights” and whose suffering is recognized as a violation of those rights depends on broader cultural attitudes and systems of formal recognition that illustrate the hierarchies, contradictions, and malleability of these universals as they are interpreted on the ground. To elaborate on the discussion of universals introduced in Chapter One, I refer back to Tsing’s argument that:

generalization to the universal requires a large space of compatibility among disparate particular facts and observations. As long as facts are apples and oranges, one cannot generalize across them; one must first see them as ‘fruits’ to make general claims. Compatibility standardizes difference. It allows transcendence: the general can rise above the particular. For this, compatibility must pre-exist the particular facts being examined; and it must unify the field of inquiry. The searcher for universal truths must establish an *axiom of unity* – whether spiritual, aesthetic, mathematical, logical, or moral principles. Second, tentative and contingent collaborations among disparate knowledge seekers and their disparate forms of knowledge can turn incompatible facts and observations into compatible ones... (2005:89, emphasis original)

In the context of the social movements that inform this research, “human rights” works as a universal that brings together diverse persons under the umbrella of each movement. At the same time, the “disparate” particulars that underlie this “axiom of unity” actively challenge its

stability across and, to a lesser extent, within these movements. This framing provides an entry point for understanding how social movements can appear to speak the same language when they draw on the language of “human rights” but have very different understandings of what human rights are and what the realization of them might look like in practice. Attention to the particulars that are subsumed by a universal also allows for an exploration of the frameworks that movement members employ when they envision their own actions and the subsequent consequences as ethical.

The malleability of concepts such as “human rights” and the validity of claims to a “universal” human experience have received significant attention within the discipline of anthropology. As Ellen Messer (1993) outlines, when asked to comment on the proposed Universal Declaration, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) initially rejected the notion of universal human rights, emphasizing that different peoples have different “rights” concepts and that they also refer to different authorities. The AAA also criticized this universal international legal framework as ethnocentrically Western, expressing distrust for the framework of national sovereignty that was charged with its enforcement (1993:224). Adding to this is the historical role anthropologists have played in colonialism, paired with the more recent advocacy for the rights of collectives, especially Indigenous peoples, a formulation of human rights that has only recently begun gaining widespread acceptance and still faces resistance because of a perceived conflict between collective and individual human rights (Gledhill 2003; Kymlicka 2009). As Fassin (2011) has discussed biopolitical governance in relation to humanitarian initiatives, so too have anthropologists focused on human rights initiatives emphasized the biopolitical and colonizing potential of imposing Western human rights frameworks across the

globe (Hulcombe 2016). As Sally Engle Merry has written, “the human rights system challenges states’ authority over their citizens at the same time as it reinforces states’ power” (2009:5).

For Messer, the solution to moving beyond the debate that sprung from this moment lies in acknowledging that human rights concepts are culturally relative and accepting the challenge of identifying commonalities and interpretations so that “essential human rights are universally respected” (1993:227). Marie-Benedicte Dembour (2001) provides a different solution. She argues that within this debate universalism and relativism are presented as two opposite and irreconcilable moral or epistemological positions on human rights, but that they should not be considered independently of each other for each is untenable by itself and needs to accommodate the other to be sustainable (2001:56). She suggests that a moral agent is inevitably drawn into a pendulum motion and should pursue rights struggles with an awareness of the limitations of either pole, which include the arrogance of universalism and the indifference of relativism.

In her work on human rights and violence against women, Sally Engle Merry (2009) takes this conception of the pendulum of universalism and cultural relativism further, arguing that this polarized debate treats culture as static when it is in fact contested and its elements constantly in flux. She suggests that it is an essentialized understanding of culture that has contributed to universalism versus relativism debates, with universalists criticizing relativists as moral nihilists, assuming that relativists accepted all the practices of a society, including the oppression of vulnerable groups, and relativists asserting tolerance for difference by defending cultures as wholes (2009:6-8). She argues that by seeing culture as contested, hybrid, and porous we can also see it as a mode of legitimating claims to power and authority, which shifts the way we understand the debate by undermining those who resist changes that would benefit weaker groups in the name of preserving 'culture' and encouraging human rights activists to pay attention

to local cultural practices. In this framing, culture ceases to be a barrier to human rights mobilization and instead is the context that defines the relationships and meanings, constructing the possibilities of action (2009:9). Within anthropology, this approach has gained considerable sway, as reflected in the AAA's amended position on the concept of universal human rights and the increasing number of anthropologists that research how power, discipline, and social regulation functions within rights issues (Wilson & Mitchell 2003).

In the context of Canada, “human rights” is a powerful, but undefined, concept that has been actively built into nationalist narratives through the creation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which became law in 1982. The Charter, which draws on the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted in 1948, does not define “human rights” but, through its basis in the *Canadian Bill of Rights* of 1960, supports the universalist understanding that every human inherently has “human rights and fundamental freedoms” rooted in their inherent “dignity and worth” as humans (Statutes of Canada 1960). This approach is characteristic of “Western” human rights frameworks that emphasize rights as being both inherent and individual, supporting egocentric, as opposed to sociocentric, cultural worldviews, and focusing on individual over group rights. Since its inception, the Charter has been used on national and global stages as a means of demonstrating that Canada is a liberal, democratic, and progressive country, as well as a means of establishing a sense of Canadian “identity.” As former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau wrote in his memoir: “But what is Canada itself? With the charter in place, we can now say that Canada is a society where all people are equal and where they share some fundamental values based upon freedom” (1993:323). Nationalist narratives of Canadian identity are thus intimately tied to the language of human rights and for social movements in Canada, it is this language, with the Charter as a useful tool, that many actively

deploy to challenge the government on what are perceived as its failures to live up to its own reputation as a defender of human rights.

The ways that claims regarding human rights function in connection with systems of power, privilege, and oppression are a primary focus of this dissertation. As the different social movements that I worked with demonstrated, the language of human rights and perceived violations of those rights can be employed as a means of upholding and challenging systems of power that are seen as capable of recognizing, denying, and upholding human rights. At the same time, claims that rely on universalist understandings of human rights are inherently unstable, as they rely on processes of generalization that erase the disparate particulars of how rights are differentially interpreted and experienced. As a result, the social movements I focus on both relied on the broad acceptance of “human rights” as a universal that they could make claims upon and actively worked to change the particulars that lay beneath the surface as a means of reshaping the worlds they were a part of.

Attention to these particulars reveals the more specific limits and boundaries placed on ethical action and responsibility, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the ethical worlds of these social movements. It also draws attention to the limitations of relying on human rights frameworks for achieving empowerment and challenging systems of oppression. As Heather Montgomery demonstrates in her analysis of child prostitution in Thailand and the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, people may be given multiple rights but, in practice, “the assurance of one right often occurs at the expense of others. How these rights are prioritized is not culturally neutral and forms one of the greatest problems of their implementation” (2001:85-86). Pointing to a further limitation, Indigenous scholar Sarah Hunt writes in regards to the challenges Indigenous women face in Canada and the limits of recognition, “Those whose lives

are negated or made illegible cannot have violence done to them. Rights claims depend on presenting ourselves as bounded and legitimate beings within existing socio-legal categories” (2015:27). This draws attention to a central problem with the prevalence of human rights frameworks as the primary solution to issues of violence and oppression, which is, as Harri Englund explains, that human rights frameworks may open up possibilities, but they also simultaneously create structural limitations wherein the only voices that count are the ones that adhere to the boundaries of human rights discourses (2009:247). In order to better understand the ways that power operates to privilege certain frameworks over others and, in doing so, creates and reinforces particular hierarchies of rights and suffering in connection with these frameworks, this dissertation focuses on those that actively engage in (re)shaping and (re)imagining these ethical worlds.

Social Movements as Sites of Knowledge Production

To expand upon my framing of participants as engaging in acts of world making and creating ethical worlds, I turn now to the interdisciplinary research that has been done on social movements to clarify my conceptualization of the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements as “social movements” and as sites of knowledge production. William Little (2014) defines social movements as “purposeful, organized groups striving to work towards a common goal... [to] create social change,” and I pair this definition with Arturo Escobar’s assertion that social movements:

emerge out of the crisis of modernity; they orient themselves towards the constitution of new orders, and embody a new understanding of politics and social life itself. They result in the formation of novel collective identities which foster social and cultural forms of relating and solidarity as a response to the crisis of meanings and economics that the world faces today. (1992:396)

Building on this is participants' self-identification as activists and organizers that were part of a larger "movement." Returning to the quotes from Ava and Maria earlier in this chapter, an emphasis on working to "change the world and the ways of people in it" strongly connects with an understanding of social movements as purposefully working to create social change and points to the over-arching goals that brought movement members together.

As Marc Edelman (2001) notes, anthropologists were relatively absent from the bodies of literature on social movements that began to grow during the 1960s, and sociologists, political scientists, and historians are largely responsible for developing the theoretical foundations that anthropologists began to draw on in the late 1980s and 1990s. This absence is thought to have resulted from disciplinary boundaries that saw anthropologists focused on the "Third World," while sociologists and others focused on social upheavals in the "First World." Further, early ethnographic research on social movements seemed to resist "grand theoretical" generalizations because "close-up views of collective action often looked messy, with activist groups and coalitions forming, dividing, and reassembling and with significant sectors of their target constituencies remaining on the sidelines" (2001:286). This began to change towards the latter half of the 1970s and 1980s, with French sociologist Alain Touraine (1988) and Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci (1989), Touraine's student, developing the theoretical foundations of the identity-oriented 'European paradigm' of New Social Movements (NSMs) theory. Around the same time, American sociologist Jean L. Cohen's (1985) work, building on economist Mancur Olson Jr.'s (1965) theory of collective action, developed the 'American paradigm' or resource mobilization (RM) theory.

Influenced by Marx's notion of central conflicts in society and Weber's concept of "the actor" in social action, Touraine frames social movements as struggles over the "way of life"

(Edelman 2001:288). They are “the work that society performs upon itself” (Touraine 1981:29), a self-production of society through efforts to challenge, develop, and control “historicity,” that “set of cultural models that rule social practices” (1988:8). For NSMs theorists that followed Touraine, NSMs came to be seen as emerging out of crises of modernity, struggling over the “symbolic, informational, and cultural resources and rights to specificity and difference” (Edelman 2001:289). As Melucci argues, they “announce to society that a fundamental problem exists in a given area” (1985:797). What, then, are the fundamental problems that the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements are announcing? Edelman also writes that participation in social movements is a goal in itself, separate from instrumental objectives, “because everyday movement practices embody in embryonic form the changes the movements seek” (2001:289). This last point is one that was driven home during my fieldwork, particularly during my time working with the sex worker rights movement as I discuss in detail in Chapter Four, as movement members actively sought to incorporate the guiding frameworks of the movement into their daily lives through language choices and practices of community care.

In contrast, early American RM theorists drawing on Cohen’s (1985) work focused on the development of “social movement industries” made up of “social movement organizations,” where collective action was regarded as interest group politics played out by socially connected groups rather than by the most disaffected (Edelman 2001:288). Movement members were seen as being tasked with mobilizing and channeling resources and discontent into organizational forms and scholars focused heavily on resource availability and preference structures. As Edelman (2001) has noted, RM paradigms tended to disregard those social movements that emerged despite having few resources or where participation in movements could endanger

participants. RM proponents have since conceded, as Mayer N. Zald (1992) has written, that RM theories did a poor job of accounting for feelings of solidarity, communal sharing, spontaneity, or conversion experiences.

Seeking to avoid these shortcomings, scholars began actively blending these frameworks together so that analysis based on political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing encompassed the ways that collective identities arise, as well as “the interpretative, discursive, and dramaturgical practices that shaped movement participants’ understandings of their condition and of possible alternatives” (Edelman 2001:290-91). For Arturo Escobar (1992), this means that it is crucial for anthropologists to see social movements as “cultural struggles in a fundamental sense, that is, as struggles over meanings as much as over socio-economic conditions” (1992:412). As more anthropologists have undertaken social movement research, both employing and challenging these blended lenses, Latin America has become a particularly fruitful field site for interdisciplinary research, as the volumes edited by Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez (1992) and Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (1998) demonstrate. A significant amount of cross disciplinary social movement and collective action research also focuses on the 1994 Zapatista uprising in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, including that of George Allen Collier with Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello (1994), Neil Harvey (1998), June Nash (1997), and Shannon Speed (2006).

Research on contemporary social movements of women, sexual and other oppressed minorities, environmentalists, and anticolonial forces has also grown. Some scholars, such as Tsing (2005), emphasize global connections and the *friction* that results. As Juris and Khasnabish’s (2013) volume demonstrates, Tsing’s work has influenced much research on social movements, including what they describe as radical autonomous social movements, such as the

Zapatistas (Khasnabish 2013), the global Indigenous movement (Escárcega 2013), and world social forums (Caruso 2013; Conway 2013). Focusing on resistance and social justice, Othon Alexandrakis' (2016) edited volume *Impulse to Act* contributes to, and moves beyond, social movement research by incorporating explorations of affect, agency, the politics of ethnography, and ethics across a broad range of sites, including Irene Peano's (2016) research among migrant farm workers in Italy, Tania Ahmad's (2016) work on the "politics of the ordinary" in Pakistan, and Marianne Maeckelbergh's (2016) piece on ethics and responsibility in the field.

As Juris and Khasnabish note, many social movements around the world, such as the Zapatistas, "are specifically responding to the failure of state institutions to address their needs and concerns" (2013:380b). In this dissertation, I take up the question that results from this statement, asking what failures of the state the sex worker rights, migrant worker rights, and anti-trafficking movements are identifying and responding to and how? As this research is set in a Western liberal settler nation-state whose government has intentionally built the language of respecting human rights and freedoms into its narratives of nationalism,¹⁰ the social movements that are the focus of this research are not directly comparable to the radical autonomous collectives that are the focus of most of the social movement research in Juris and Khasnabish's (2013) anthology. While much social movement research is focused on struggles for human rights in countries that are not readily labelled "democratic" or "liberal" and, as such, are able to examine the difficulties of attempting to apply Western liberal human rights frameworks in non-Western contexts, the translation that occurs as terms like "human rights" are incorporated into local contexts, and the Eurocentric shortcomings of these frameworks (Englund 2006; Gledhill

¹⁰ See former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's discussion of the creation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms for a discussion of the intention behind this document and its significance to definitions of Canadian identity and the Canadian nation state (Trudeau 1993).

2003; Montgomery 2001), my research is located in a country that is readily labelled Western, liberal, and democratic, yet also has a colonial past and a history of oppressing numerous minority groups.

What, then, does a study of social movements in this setting add to this existing research? In a sense, it brings these critiques of Western human rights frameworks to one of their “sources” and critically examines their strengths, limitations, effectiveness, and applications in a setting where such rights are, on a national scale, taken for granted by a privileged majority. It removes Canada, a country whose government actively critiques the human rights records of other countries,¹¹ from its pedestal and examines the problems that social movements have identified as existing within the country’s borders, how the government’s nationalist deployment of human rights language can be used to bolster claims against the state, and the way that same language is diversely and divisively used by the state and others to argue for the uneven granting and denial of “rights” to different populations. An exploration of how these differences and contradictions develop, shaping individual social movement members as they simultaneously work to re-shape the world around them, will contribute to our understanding of how dominant Western liberal human rights frameworks are developed, challenged, and renegotiated in Western countries.

Much work, such as that of Shannon Speed (2006, 2009), engages with the language of human rights that is frequently attached to social movements and discusses ways of engaging in ethical research with activist groups. As sociologist Manishia Desai (2013) notes, for all the tensions that are present in the work of activist-scholars, some of which I touched on in Chapter One, their active boundary crossing between the worlds of social movements, the academy, and

¹¹ See, for example, Canada’s role in condemning the countries of Iran, Myanmar, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for their human rights records at the United Nations in 2016: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2008/gashc3940.doc.htm>

sites of policy production has led to their playing an increasingly larger role in the knowledge production of and on social movements. This speaks too, to the growing body of work of which this dissertation is a part, which incorporates an analysis of social movements as sites of knowledge and cultural production. In outlining their approach to analyzing social movements as sites of knowledge production, Maria Isabel Casas-Cortes, Michal Osterweil, and Dana E. Powell (2008) write that recognizing social movements as sites of knowledge production is key to recognizing participants as experts to conduct research “with”, rather than objects to conduct research “on”. They argue that this recognition is necessary in order to engage with movements “not simply as objects to be explained by the distanced analyst, but as lively actors producing their own explanations and knowledges” (2008:21). Knowledges, conceptualized by the authors as “knowledge-practices” to emphasize the concrete, embodied, lived, and socially situated character of “knowledge”, are diversely constituted by social movements as they actively engage in co-producing, challenging, and transforming hegemonic discourses through stories, ideas, narratives, ideologies, theories, and expertise, as well as critical and political analyses of their particular contexts (2008:20-22).

Building on this, Cymene Howe’s (2013) research on the struggle for sexual rights in Nicaragua argues that,

In an era in which political practices – from communitarian impulses to liberal rights – move rapidly across borders, understanding activists as a class of mediators who actively craft and situate political ideals allows us to understand not only activists’ values and the settings of their struggles but also the points of ‘friction’ (Tsing 2005) at which globally disseminated rights and concepts of sexuality become reformulated in local context. (2013:3)

To this end, her work pays close attention to the ways that sexual rights activists “pedagogically craft, intellectually engineer, and dialogically engage with audiences and with other activists”

(2013:167). I want to highlight here the recognition of and focus on activists as aware of, mediating, and intentionally engaging with audiences that include policy makers, the general public, and other activists, as well as the emphasis on the ability of activists to engage in intellectual engineering, two points which I focus on in Chapter Five. To this end, I follow Howe's example in focusing on how "the mediational work in these processes demonstrates not only how activists attempt to institute social change, their sites and acts of intervention, but also, and just as importantly, the epistemological work and knowledge production that is foundational to these politics" (2013:125).

Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies

In examining sex and migrant worker rights groups in relation to the anti-trafficking movement, I draw on the interdisciplinary scholarship of critical anti-trafficking studies, in particular the work that has been done to map the discursive practices of the anti-trafficking movement across local and international scales. This research has diversely explored contemporary anti-trafficking initiatives around the world, ranging from historical approaches that demonstrate how the contemporary anti-trafficking movement, particularly in North America, connects to the mythical "White Slave Trade" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its attendant moral panics (Doezema 2010) to explorations of how the "making" of human trafficking into a human rights issue reveals the racial, gendered, and sexual discourses at work in shaping senses of national identity and belonging (Hua 2011:xv). Demonstrating some of the key themes in this body of research, a special edition of the journal *Dialectical Anthropology* (2013), with articles by Jay Levy and Pye Jakobsson, Jennifer Musto, and Luca Trappolin, among others, examines how trafficking discourses, laws, and interventions complicate attempts to define, address, and engage with the vulnerable populations that are

captured by anti-trafficking policies. The authors place considerable emphasis on the need for more research focused on issues of agency, consent, identity, individual autonomy, and social governance (Marcus & Snajdr 2013). On a more global scale, Laura Agustin's (2007) work shows how anti-trafficking discourses have coalesced into a veritable “Rescue Industry,” wherein governments, NGOs, and academics profit from the perception that “sex trafficking” is a rampant problem that they know how to combat.

Researchers have also broken down dominant human trafficking discourses into identifiable sub-narratives, including the emphasis on children and youth in the global sex trades which erases issues of global income inequality, poverty, and homelessness (O’Connell Davidson 2005; Gozdzik 2008; Musto 2013); narratives that influence migrant labour policies and shape more dangerous migration strategies (Parrenas 2011); those that describe human trafficking as “modern day slavery” while failing to engage with the history and legacies of slavery and racism (Stewart 2015), deploying it instead as a discourse of depoliticization that protects the interests of the privileged (O’Connell Davidson 2015); and how “modern slavery” narratives in wealthy countries are used to enable nation-building through the (re)creation and maintenance of the fiction of the “otherness of the third world” (Ticktin 2011:191). This focus on narrative and discourse, in particular analysis of the “victim narrative” that anti-trafficking discourses create and reinforce, is traced through a myriad of iterations, frequently returning to its harmful consequences for already marginalized and, often, criminalized populations around the world and its role in maintaining global income inequalities, as well as creating and maintaining hierarchies of suffering, rights, and compassion. Here, Kamala Kempadoo’s (2012) description of the collection of authors that contributed to the edited volume *Trafficking and*

Prostitution Reconsidered 2nd Edition provides an apt summary of this discipline as one where the authors share:

a critical stance toward the narratives on human trafficking that locate migrants and sex workers as victims, advocate a politics of rescue, or call for greater criminalization of human life. They all advance an approach to trafficking that supports the humanity, agency, rights, and perspectives of labor migrants and sex workers and seek to open up borders and spaces rather than tighten or foreclose them. (2012:xi)

In doing so, critical anti-trafficking studies scholars have connected anti-trafficking discourses to the ideological frameworks that support and maintain them, in particular neoliberal, conservative, and capitalist ideologies interwoven with Western humanitarian and human rights-based imaginations that privilege neocolonial strategies for maintaining disparate global income inequalities and the hegemony of a white global North.

Locally, this research has explored how government anti-trafficking efforts in Canada have been, at a minimum, dual-pronged as they have focused on controlling, managing, and monitoring not only the bodies of racialized migrant women seeking to enter Canada (Sharma 2005), but also on local populations deemed to be “at-risk” (Public Safety Canada 2012). Christine Bruckert and Colette Parent’s (2002) early research analyzing the harms of homogenously depicting trafficking victims as sexually abused women and children charted the antecedents of the contemporary prominence of anti-trafficking concerns in the media, connecting the growth of public and government discussion of the issue to xenophobic, gendered, and racialized concerns regarding Asian women in Canada’s sex trades and the arrival of migrants off the coast of Canada. Nandita Sharma’s (2003, 2005, 2012, 2015) work, through a focus on the treatment of temporary foreign workers and other low-income economic migrants in Canada, has unpacked how anti-trafficking rhetoric has been used to support the creation of a “global apartheid” that severely constrains the mobility of racialized migrants from the global

South and whitewashes anti-immigration programs with a veneer of humanitarian concern.

Critiquing the minimal research in which Canada's anti-trafficking efforts have been grounded, Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez, Marie Lacroix, and Jill Hanley (2005) argue that the government's concern is heavily focused on border control and prosecution, rather than attending to the structural factors that facilitate trafficking, including racism and disparate income inequality.

As with critical anti-trafficking studies scholarship more broadly, a significant portion of research that focuses on Canada has explored the negative impact anti-trafficking initiatives have had on the lives of sex workers. Demonstrated by a recent article cluster entitled "Critical Perspectives on Canadian Anti-Trafficking Discourse and Policy" (2015) published by *Atlantis* that emphasized the "production" of the figure of the "trafficked woman" in Canada (Durisin & Heynen 2015), the creating and sustaining of anti-trafficking policies and legislation that are not evidence-based (Roots & De Shalit 2015), and the tangible harms that anti-trafficking initiatives have inflicted on sex working communities (Rose 2015), in particular Indigenous communities (Hunt 2015) and racialized migrant communities (Maynard 2015), this body of research has worked to center the voices of diversely marginalized and criminalized populations in anti-trafficking discussions that have overwhelmingly erased and silenced them. As is also the case in the international context, augmenting these scholarly studies are a growing number of grassroots and other collaborative open-source publications that directly critique both government policy and anti-trafficking discourses in Canada, such as Elene Lam's (2018) *Behind the Rescue: How Anti-Trafficking Investigations and Policies Harm Migrant Sex Workers*, which centres the voices of migrant sex workers in Canada, and the brief developed by Kamala Kempadoo and myself (2017), in collaboration with sex worker and migrant worker support services organizations, *Challenging Trafficking in Canada*.

Building on critiques that center race, inequality, and borders, Julie Kaye's (2017) research focusing on issues of dispossession, colonial violence, and resistance among Indigenous and racialized women in Canada in responses to human trafficking provides one of the most in-depth studies available at the time of writing. Unpacking anti-trafficking responses and contextualizing them in settler colonial Canada, Kaye demonstrates how these and other anti-violence efforts "reproduce structures of domination more often than addressing ongoing forms of dispossession that continue to naturalize inequalities and produce contexts in which trafficking and varying forms of violence occur" (2017:4). Significantly, Kaye finds that anti-trafficking initiatives are part of the nation-building project of Canada, which:

is premised on multicultural and humanitarian ideals of inclusion, which render invisible settler colonial structures of national, racial, and gender domination and legitimize settler interventions that continue to reproduce the systems and structures settlers claim, and often aim, to be addressing through rights-based mobilization. (2017:196-197)

In this context, the formulation of responses to human trafficking contribute to and create space for the production of white settler identities (2017:10).

The centrality of national discourses on both human trafficking and Canadian national identity, and the salience of race, human rights, and humanitarian ideals to those discourses, are reflected in this dissertation through discussions of how they connect to the broader ideological frameworks that inform the ethical orientations of individual members of the anti-trafficking movement, how the spaces social movements create support the cultivation of particular subjectivities, and the movement's ethical world. In relation to the broader literature that makes up critical anti-trafficking studies, this dissertation draws on the ideological and discourse analysis strengths of this body of research and connects them to a nuanced analysis of the social movements that (re)create, challenge, and interpret them. In connecting to research on

humanitarianism and ethics, I use the creation of frictional ethical worlds as a lens through which the disparate particulars that lay below these universalizing discourses can be engaged with and explored. This allows for an analysis of the negotiations and tensions that are involved in the continued circulation of these discourses, as well as identifying a possible point where the instigation and occurrence of friction may hold transformative potential.

As this dissertation demonstrates through ethnographic analysis of the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements in Toronto, practices of knowledge production, as conceptualized by social movement researchers and complimented by the discursive analysis of critical anti-trafficking studies, were central to the creation and maintenance of the ethical worlds of individual movement members, as well as the “intentional spaces” (Juris 2013), such as meeting spaces, that members created. They were also diverse in intended audience and medium, with activities including creating reports, writing and circulating policy documents, creating media campaigns, organizing public round tables, organizing rallies and protests, and publishing independent op-eds. Knowledge production practices also played into attempts to strategically instigate ethical friction and emotional responses towards a variety of ends, including fund-raising, presenting an issue as inarguable, and working to alter the ethical world of ones’ own or another’s social movement. In this way, knowledge production and consumption practices were closely tied to the movement of these social movements, with uneven access to funding, political audience, and social capital intersecting with the needs and capacities of different movement members in salient ways that I explore in Chapters Five and Six. The politics of how different forms of knowledge were consumed, evaluated, altered, and (re)produced, as well as hierarchies of access and the strategic emphasis that was placed on particular understandings of “human rights”, combined to make the knowledge production

practices of social movements and their role in ethical world making a valuable point of entry for understanding the guiding frameworks that these social movements employed and to which members sought to adhere. Further, it allows for an in-depth look at how universals were differentially interpreted, how people worked to change those interpretations, and the hands-on work that went into creating, maintaining, and expanding ethical worlds.

Conclusion

In returning to some of the questions that this chapter opens with, this theoretical framework provides a means of exploring how social movements begin and expand, the work that movements do within and outside movement borders, the hierarchies within movements, and how movement members envision themselves and the work they seek to do on both themselves and the world around them. To the extent that social movements involve practices of teaching, knowledge production, and embodying one's ethics through day-to-day practices of living, it also lends itself to a critical engagement with the biopolitical function that social movements can serve. Beyond this, this chapter has drawn attention to important questions regarding ethics and human rights, including their malleability, construction, and centrality to the world building these movements engage in. In the following chapter, I begin to apply this theoretical framework to the anti-trafficking movement through an ethnographic exploration of how the anti-trafficking Network, as a case study of the anti-trafficking social movement, creates an ethical world wherein its members can support, reinforce, and perform forms of ethical subjecthood.

3. The Anti-Trafficking Network: Creating Ethical Worlds, Crafting Ethical

Action

After the anti-trafficking Network's meeting, during which Mira, one of the newer members, shared that she was giving presentations about sex trafficking in local high schools and needed referral information for students, Willow, a founding Network member and employee of the refugee centre that predominantly organizes and hosts Network activities, sits down with me to talk. She's livid and tells me about the meeting she just had with Mira, a one-on-one meeting that immediately followed the Network meeting. She starts by saying that: "I couldn't say what I needed to say to her in front of the rest of the room, it would have been too harsh, but she has absolutely no business giving presentations without any counsellors on hand. I was really mad about the workshops, there's no oversight on the workshop content and most importantly, students are disclosing to her and she in no way has the skills, knowledge, or training to respond appropriately. Plus, she waited until the meeting to share the information with me or to reach out to the [sexual assault support organization], which means there's been a huge gap between the multiple disclosures and referrals to appropriate services. So, I had a strongly worded talk with her, making it clear that she was doing more harm than good." Willow goes so far as to suggest that Mira and her organization should no longer be allowed to be members of the Network, but in the months that follow no organizations are "removed" or told they should leave. Mira continues to attend Network meetings and her work is positively received by the broader membership. (December 2015, fieldnotes)

How do social movements influence and shape their members? How do movement members know whether or not their activities are in line with the movement's goals and will be supported by other movement members? How do they determine what their contribution will be and what goals to pursue? How are conflicts managed and membership determined? How do movement spaces reflect the changes members want to see in the world around them? In approaching these questions, I focus on the actions of the anti-trafficking Network in Toronto, which plays a significant role in the broader, national anti-trafficking movement and actively influences provincial approaches to the issue. I first encountered the Network while attending their first public round table with another graduate student in 2013, with the goal of gathering information that would form the basis of a course paper for the graduate course on The Global Sex Trade that we were both enrolled in. This was the same year that the Network was officially

established as a means of formally bringing together a network of service providers, NGOs, grassroots organizations, and other interested parties to coordinate the “anti-trafficking movement” and its efforts in the Greater Toronto Area. As introduced in the prelude to Chapter One, a key focus of the Network, and one for which it has repeatedly received funding for from the City of Toronto, was to educate the public about human trafficking and create a coordinated response model to streamline the process for victims of human trafficking in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) seeking or identified as requiring support or emergency services. Thus, an overarching goal of the Network was, as Ava, one of the Network’s founders, described it, to “make sure no one falls through the gaps.” Beyond the bounds of the GTA, the Network actively communicated with other organizations that engaged in anti-trafficking work at the provincial and national levels (more on this below), drawing on their publications, sometimes bringing in speakers from other cities in the province to speak at roundtables, and both facilitating and participating in nation-wide training and information sharing activities, in an effort to connect their activities to the larger anti-trafficking movement in Canada and reduce the number of ‘gaps’ through which victims could fall.

I came to be involved with the Network shortly after the first public round table in 2013. My involvement began with the submission of a revised class paper that critiqued the Network’s first round table for silencing Shannon, the member of a local sex worker supports services and rights organization, and erasing her from the record of the event. The paper itself was strongly influenced by my conversations with Shannon and my growing exposure to critical anti-trafficking studies scholarship, in particular Julia O’Connell Davidson’s (2005) *Children in the Global Sex Trade*, through my participation in committee member Dr. Kamala Kempadoo’s

graduate course on The Global Sex Trade at York University.¹² I submitted the paper in December 2015, via email to the Network's formal email address and shortly thereafter was contacted by Maria and Ava, two founding Network members and employees of the refugee centre that spear-headed and did much of the logistical work that went into organizing the Network. During our first meeting, Ava and Maria both told me that it was important to them to listen to feedback and that they appreciated the time I had taken to submit my paper to them – a response that took me by surprise as, given how Shannon was treated, I had expected confrontation or dismissal. They then invited me to participate in and give feedback on the Network's activities by attending Network events and meetings in my capacity as an independent researcher.

From early 2014 through to late 2016 I did so, becoming increasingly involved in Network projects, developing their anti-oppression framework, presenting at Network events on the topics of LGBTQ migrants and forced labour, harm reduction, and academic critiques of the anti-trafficking movement, and drafting preliminary Terms of Reference and Memoranda of Understanding during attempts to further formalize the Network. Despite the involvement of non-grassroots organizations, during the time of my involvement the Network identified and represented itself online as “grassroots and committed to the fight for human rights.” Regarding the former, to members this meant no membership fees, consensus-based decision making, not having formal contracts or Terms of Reference that members had to abide by, not having a board of directors or executive committee, and that anyone could join. In practice, due to a lack of consistent participation from the membership, decisions on direction and Network projects, such

¹² In particular, the paper focused on the round tables silencing of Shannon as a form of erasing and silencing marginalized and stigmatized voices from the event, as well as the avoidance of issues of agency and consent through a focus on “youth” and “children”.

as round tables, were often made by Ava and Maria, with members asked to give feedback on documents that were being developed for public circulation. In my time participating on the Network mailing list, there were no instances of Network members directly objecting to these decisions.

Central to the Network's purpose was connecting organizations engaged in anti-trafficking work with each other. To this end, meetings were held throughout the year, organized and generally hosted by the refugee centre that functioned as the Network's 'hub'. As employees of this refugee centre, Ava, Maria, and, during her period of employment, Willow, were the Network's primary organizers. With 42 organizations participating in the Network, meeting spaces helped members connect with each other, share information about their activities, share resources, and receive feedback on and support for their work. Network meetings were also places where collaborative events were planned, such as the public round tables that I attended. This chapter hones in on these meetings and focuses on the particular ethical world that they contributed to creating and maintaining. In doing so, I apply Faubion's (2011) Foucauldian conceptualization of ethical domains introduced in Chapter Two and presented here as "ethical worlds" to highlight the ways that the spaces the Network created outlined and maintained a framework of "agree-ables" which in turn informed the shape that ethical action could take, both that which was directed toward external social change and that which created and reinforced the ethical world of the Network itself. This framework and the ethical world it provided structure for were both influenced by the membership and shaped the action members took within Network spaces. By looking at how meetings operated, the goals of meeting organizers, and how movement members performed in these spaces, I explore how the hegemonic framework of the Network, itself a window into the larger anti-trafficking movement in Canada, was cultivated

and the ongoing processes of negotiation that were involved. In looking to the framework that guided the Network's activities and meeting spaces, I unpack the ethical orientations that members drew upon to support their work and the ways that meeting spaces functioned to validate individual members' pursuits of ethical subjecthood. By looking at the activities that members engaged in inside and outside of meeting spaces, I draw attention to the different interpretations of "human rights" that members cultivated and the ethical friction that resulted, connecting it to the boundaries that members placed on the worlds in which they participated. In doing so, I highlight that the Network was dynamic, with some members working to alter the forms of ethical action other members engaged in without compromising the axioms of unity that brought them together and that, despite this, members remained unified in their commitment to the larger movement goal of eliminating human trafficking and violence against women.

The Anti-Trafficking Movement in Toronto: Creating the Network

As those involved with the founding of the Network noted during interviews, while the language of human trafficking has been growing in usage since the 1980s, in particular in connection with the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing,¹³ it wasn't until the mid-2000s, after the UN Protocol was released and Canada found itself on Tier 2 of the *US Trafficking in Persons* report,¹⁴ that Toronto began to see a significant growth in the number

¹³ UN Women. 1995. The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women: Platform for Action. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/violence.htm>

¹⁴ The *Trafficking in Persons Report* is an annual report generated by the U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. It ranks countries according to tiers based on what the U.S. government perceives as their compliance with the standards of the U.S. *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* (TVPA). Tiers include: Tier 1, countries whose governments fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards; Tier 2, countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards but are making significant efforts to do so; Tier 2 Watchlist, countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards but are making significant efforts to do so and a) the number of victims of trafficking is very significant or significantly increasing or b) failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking from the previous year; and Tier 3, countries whose governments do not comply with the minimum standards and are not making efforts to do so. Countries placed on the lower tiers may face trade sanctions controlled by the United States. The report has faced a significant amount of academic criticism, for more information see Peters 2013.

of organizations actively using the language of and seeking to raise awareness about human trafficking. Though the official UN definition of human trafficking¹⁵ is what almost all Network members referred to when asked to define what they meant by “human trafficking,” a definition that includes forced prostitution, forced labour, slavery, and the removal of organs, the overwhelming focus of the majority of Network members was on trafficking in the sex trades or “sex trafficking”.

This focus reflects a national emphasis on “sex trafficking” as the most prevalent and severe form of human trafficking in Canada, as demonstrated by the number of recent publications that reiterate this claim, such as the Canadian government's *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking* (Public Safety Canada 2012), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's *Human Trafficking in Canada* (2010) and *Domestic Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Canada* (2013), Benjamin Perrin's *Invisible Chains* (2010), and Anette Sikka's *Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls in Canada* (2009). Collectively, these publications and the majority of anti-trafficking work in Canada reinforces the dominant international narrative that sex trafficking is an ever-growing global criminal enterprise that is forcing hopeless, agency-less young women and girls into sexual slavery and justifies a diverse array of government and non-government actions in the name of preventing and eliminating human trafficking (Agustin 2017; Bruckert & Parent 2002; Roots & De Shalit 2015).

¹⁵ Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Earlier research conducted by Christine Bruckert and Colette Parent (2002) charts the antecedents of this focus in Canadian media, demonstrating that there was minimal public discussion of human trafficking during the 1990s until a sudden growth in 1998, when media outlets began focusing on Asian women trafficked into Canada's sex trade and a special police unit was established to investigate organized crime and trafficking in women (Bruckert & Parent 2002:20). As Elya M. Durisin and Rob Heynen (2015) demonstrate, media outlets during the 1990s played a significant role in crafting the figure of the “trafficked woman,” who, prior to the additional emphasis on Asian women that was prominent in 1998, was depicted as being a Central or Eastern European migrant woman. Debates were intimately tied to moralizing discussions of labour, deploying “an ethnosexualizing discourse that enabled narratives of victimization and legitimated repressive border security and policing practices” (Durisin & Heynen 2015:8). These debates reappeared in 2012, when the government of Canada barred employers from hiring foreign workers in what it deemed to be “morally degrading” exotic dancer positions in the name of combatting sex trafficking (Curry 2012; HRSDC 2015). Collectively, the trends in Canadian media and government responses to growing public and political concern regarding human trafficking reflected the growing international attention the issue has received. Likewise, Canadian scholars have both benefitted from and contributed to the academic critiques and analysis that have responded to this growth (reviewed in Chapter Two).

By late 2012, the rapid increase in the number of anti-trafficking organizations and activists in Toronto had led to a recognition on the part of organizers that there was an increasingly problematic lack of coordination among them. As Ava recounted to me when describing the Network’s history, there was “mixed messaging to the public and service users, service duplication, redundancy, problems working effectively with police, and lots of groups

competing for the limited funding that was available through government and from donors.”

Elaborating, Ava lamented that “it was impossible to know about all of the services that were out there, it was impossible to know where to refer people, and we didn’t ever want to drop the ball and not be able to connect someone with services. We also knew we didn’t have the funds to do everything in house.” Together, Ava and Maria, working out of a refugee centre which had recently expanded its mandate to include anti-trafficking work, worked with several other organizations doing anti-trafficking work to develop a grant application for government funding to create the Network. That application was successful and the Network was formed with the formal purpose of coordinating anti-trafficking work in the city of Toronto, raising public awareness about the issue, and developing a “response model” to connect victims of trafficking with appropriate support services.

Much of the Network’s early work was taken on by Ava and Maria, with support from: Melissa, who worked for a faith-based group doing awareness raising work; Willow, a retiree who had spent much of her life working at various organizations that provided support services to women in need and sometimes worked as an employee alongside Ava and Maria at the refugee centre; Diane, an employee of a national organization that provided support services to at-risk youth; Christine, a retired law enforcement officer with ongoing connections to several policing organizations; and Cheryl, who worked with survivors of forced marriage. From its inception, the Network emphasized that human trafficking was a “human rights violation” and a primary goal of coordinating both a response model for survivors and a city-wide response to the issue was to support “the human rights of trafficking victims.” As Maria and Ava described it when speaking to new members, “we all came together for a common cause, to support the rights of trafficking victims, to make sure that they don’t fall through the gaps.” At the same time, a

wide array of organizations and individuals came to be members of the Network, each bringing with them their own interpretation of the issue and ideas about what solutions should look like. As Ava described this diversity to me, she said that “while there are always going to be tensions and groups that don’t exactly agree with each other, the important thing is bringing everyone to the table, to make sure that we are all connected so that we can meet whatever needs a survivor has.” As the vignette that began this chapter suggests, the ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” had meaningful implications for what was said (and left unsaid) in group meetings and how the tensions Ava hinted at were handled. Further, it reflected the influence of nationalist Canadian liberal values of multiculturalism and cultures of tolerance, with their emphasis on peace building, diversity, and inclusion which, as Eva Mackey (1999) notes and this chapter discusses, can also effectively mask and erase hierarchies of difference.

The Network gained new members through word of mouth, their online website, personal and professional referrals, and public education events. As of 2016, the Network’s membership count included 42 different organizations, some of which involved more than one of its staff members in Network activities, as well as nine individual members that were affiliated with the Network but did not necessarily represent a particular organization in a formal capacity. At any given time, the number of active members (defined as members who regularly attended Network meetings and contributed to current projects) fluctuated, sometimes seeing lows of only half a dozen members attending a Network meeting and other times filling the meeting room with over two dozen attendees. New organizations also sought to join and some member organizations closed down or, if they did not respond to repeated calls for membership confirmation, were removed from the membership list. No new members were refused and, for the most part, those participating in Network activities did so as part of their paid work with their home organization.

Describing their motivations for joining the Network, new members often referenced a desire to learn more about the issue and connect and collaborate with other organizations, as well as receive support for their projects.

Network meetings were held on a regular basis, though this was largely dependent on Ava's capacity. As I learned during my time working as a volunteer at the refugee centre that employed Ava, Willow, and Maria and participating in Network meetings, everyone who worked at the refugee centre worked on whatever task was most pressing at the time. In practice, this meant that, although Ava was hired to work on anti-trafficking activities, she also took on diverse refugee and newcomer case work, helped with translating, and supported the refugee centre's youth group. When there was a shortage of people to help with organizing meetings, months could pass between them, though typically they were held every 1-2 months, with additional email contact between members if there was an active project. Meetings were scheduled via online Doodle polls that were generally accompanied by an email outlining projects that the meeting would focus on. Once the meeting was set, Ava or Willow would circulate another email asking for additional agenda items. While meetings predominantly took place at the refugee centre, Maria told me that they had occurred at other organizations' locations in the past when they weren't able to get the main room at the centre.

On the day of a meeting, copies of the agenda were available and coffee, tea, and snacks were provided. Depending on the number of people attending the meeting, we would sit in a circle around a table or, if tight for space, make a larger circle around the circumference of the meeting room. Ava emphasized that it was important for everyone attending to be able to see and speak to each other, so that no one felt excluded. At the start of meeting, we went around the room introducing ourselves and providing a brief update on our activities. During this time, new

members would be introduced and individuals might also share case management updates. While meetings typically lasted 2-3 hours, it was not uncommon for this update period to take up half of the meeting time, as members often used it as a launching point for discussing their activities in depth, without having added them to the agenda. While casual in tone, meetings themselves were significant events for Network members, as they played a role in reaffirming everyone's commitment to a common goal, solidarity, and action. They served as spaces where members could engage with and act as Faubion's (2011) "ethical pedagogues", often both receiving and providing affirmation that the work that members' were engaging in aligned with the Network's "matrices of justification".

"Sex Trafficking", Christianity, and Feminism

A closer look at the context of the anti-trafficking Network, the content of meetings, and the behaviour of members helps to illuminate the Network's guiding framework, the diversity of the membership, and the ways that members participated in shaping and were shaped by the Network's ethical world. As I quickly learned when I began to regularly attend Network meetings, member organizations broadly fell into several overlapping groups: religious organizations that saw human trafficking work as an extension of their faith-based outreach and support services for prostitutes¹⁶ and/or eliminating violence against women; radical feminist¹⁷ organizations that considered all prostitution to be sex trafficking and violence against women; and organizations working with migrants, including refugees and migrant workers, in Canada.

¹⁶ Here the term "prostitutes" is used, rather than "sex workers", because it is the terminology the organizations' framing their work this way used when describing it.

¹⁷ The label "radical feminist" was both self-identified with by and ascribed to organizers within the Network whose views on human trafficking aligned closely with those of prominent self-identified "radical feminists", such as Andrea Dworkin (1981), Catherine MacKinnon (1993), Melissa Farley (2004), and Kathleen Barry (1979). The label indicated that the individual and/or organization viewed all forms of prostitution as inherently patriarchal violence against women.

Across these organizations, many expressed a commitment to “social justice values” and all used the language of “human rights” in their publication materials and in Network meeting spaces.

Speaking to me about her approach to anti-trafficking work, Kaila, a member of a Christian anti-trafficking organization that does prayer-based outreach to exotic dancers in Toronto, elaborated on the significance of the Church to her work and to social justice, saying

the biblical basis for social justice... it's actually a really strong theme in the bible, that Christians should be involved in justice... because when you actually do look through the Bible, and there's something called the Poverty and Justice Bible... and they go through and they actually highlight every verse in the Bible where it's written about poverty or justice, often both, and what you can actually see is that it's a theme from the beginning to the end... and it's clear when you go through it that God actually has a heart for the oppressed.

Later, during a Network meeting, Kaila shared this explanation of the basis for her work with several new members, connecting it to the Network's emphasis on human rights and support services, which was positively received. In a similar vein, Ava told me that the refugee centre that largely made the Network possible and supported its activities was funded by a group of nuns. Elaborating, she said that:

for them, helping others is important, it's the Christian thing to do, though, to be clear, they don't really place constraints on the work that we take on, as long as we're doing work that helps others, they're happy, which is good, you know, because a lot of the stances we take on issues doesn't fit within traditional Christian approaches or with other Network groups for that matter. Like, sex work for example, we view it as labour, but that's not a popular position with the Church. It's ok here though.

Ava's words acknowledged disagreement on issues that went against the Christian religious beliefs of some of the Network's membership – in particular, viewing sex workers as both deserving of support and viewing their work as a legitimate form of labour – as well as the significance of Christian beliefs and organizations to the Network. In looking at the overall makeup of member organizations, the majority had religious foundations, regardless of the

approach their work took or whether that work emphasized faith-based service provision. In reflecting on the historical antecedents of the contemporary anti-trafficking movement, these religious underpinnings represent a salient echo of those organizations that campaigned against the mythical “White Slave Trade” of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in, among other locations, the United States and Canada. Campaigning on the grounds of social and moral purity shaped by conservative Victorian era values, historical campaigners succeeded in creating a moral panic that targeted sexualized, racialized, and mobile bodies, legislatively circumscribing the mobility of women and under-girding the passage of racist anti-immigration legislation (Backhouse 1985; Doezema 2010). In Canada, this involved campaigns and legislation targeting racialized women and men, in particular Chinese migrants and Indigenous women, portraying both as potential corruptors of white settler Canadian values and the virtue of young white women (Mawani 2009). Examples of this targeting include sections of the *Chinese Immigration Act* of 1885, which refused entry to any Chinese woman known or suspected to be a prostitute, and amendments to the *Indian Act* of 1876 targeting Indigenous women believed to be sexually promiscuous and engaged in prostitution. Campaigning groups were also often actively involved in church-based humanitarian endeavours, following Christian traditions of religious charity and supporting the moral salvation of the poor.

In some cases, religious organizations that were involved in awareness raising campaigns regarding the “White Slave Trade,” such as the Salvation Army (Murdoch 1994, Ryan 2011), are still in existence and actively engage in contemporary anti-trafficking initiatives, with the Toronto chapter of the Salvation Army providing space for and promoting several Network events over the course of my research. At the same time, while Christian religious beliefs and values influenced the Network and undergirded the work of many members, the Network was

not a blanket copy-and-paste of previous mobilizations around the “White Slave Trade” and, as Ava suggested, member organizations were by no means uniform in their approaches to anti-trafficking work, regardless of their religious affiliations. As I will demonstrate, how this diversity was handled in Network meetings, as well as the ways that members shared and validated each other, instead attests to the cultivation of an ethical world that was influenced by Christian religious beliefs regarding sex, charity, and humanitarianism, as well as interpretations of Western human rights frameworks as tools for achieving equality, and was bound together by an ethos of collaboration across difference reflective of Canadian liberalism and an over-arching commitment to eliminating human trafficking and violence against women.

Returning to the meetings themselves, the introductory phase of a meeting often provided members with a chance to both share their reasons for becoming involved in anti-trafficking work and receive validation for their work from other members. For example, during one meeting Danielle, a Christian minister who created her own anti-trafficking organization within a local church to raise awareness and do case management, told those in attendance that this work was her “calling and sense of vocation, it’s what I know God is asking me to do.” Her work, as she described it, involved “working predominantly with women in prostitution who have had trouble with the law. We provide case management, religious accompaniment, and other services.”¹⁸ When she finished speaking, Kaila told her that her “work sounds wonderful” and suggested that they should collaborate on a project in the future, while another member asked for her contact information so that she could “raise awareness about the services your organization offers.” Others, such as Mira, whose work was introduced in the vignette opening this chapter, introduced herself next as “a feminist, really, but aren’t we all? (laughs) I’m an

¹⁸ “Religious accompaniment” is attending religious services with women, described as not mandatory but as an encouraged supportive service.

activist refusing to accept the status quo; fighting the idea that one person can't change the world." She described her work as secular and rooted in her commitment to "fighting for the human rights of women" and received smiles and an encouraging welcome from all members.

For many, their involvement was rooted in feeling compelled to act based on a growing awareness of injustice, often described as a moment of "awakening". As Kaila described,

I feel like I was moving through my life, pretty comfortably and set, and then our Minister told us a story about his encounter with a sex trafficking victim, this poor girl who he came across, who needed to be rescued. He told us that there are so many more like her out there and that it was our duty to help them. He gave us information too, and it was like a blindfold was removed. I just knew. And once you know, you're awake and you can't go back to sleep. So, I volunteered to help him with his work and here I am.

When I asked her to elaborate on what she meant by a "sex trafficking victim", her description remained vague, characterizing the woman in the minister's story as "someone who clearly needed help, he could see it in her eyes. She was working in a strip club, but, you know, she was doing more than that." For Maria, who instigated the anti-trafficking work at the refugee centre and found funding to hire Ava, she and her husband helped a woman they described as "escaping her trafficker" while doing refugee work in Europe. In her recounting, "the young woman was running along the roadside, trying to get a ride away from wherever she was coming from. She was bruised and trying to escape her trafficker." When I asked about the situation she was escaping, Maria characterized it as a "violent work environment" where her trafficker held her documents, didn't pay her, and sexually assaulted her, but was unclear on whether it was a case of forced prostitution or domestic work that involved sexual violence. Prior to that, they hadn't heard about human trafficking and "did not realize that it was such a problem and here in Canada too." Regardless of their points of origin, all members present at a meeting were validated for being there. Introductions were met with murmurs of agreement, smiles, head nodding, and

encouragement; for those in the room, the most important thing was that everyone present was working towards the same goals: raising awareness about and eliminating human trafficking and supporting victims. Members were unified in having identified the same “ethical substance” that demanded attention; they were impelled to act in order to be in practice the ethical subjects that they imagined themselves to be (Faubion 2011; Foucault 1985, 1986).

Over the years that I was present for these introductions, almost all members described coming to the issue of human trafficking through encounters with information about “sex trafficking” and their growing awareness regarding the urgency of the issue and a need, or impulse, to act. While not all members ascribed to the same definition of “sex trafficking”, “sex trafficking” was regularly defined by Network members as forced prostitution, described by Network member Diane as when a “pimp” would “force a young woman to prostitute herself and give all her money to him.” In the case of persons under the age of 18, as Diane described it, “Back in the day... it wasn’t called human trafficking, it was called juvenile prostitution, so we’ve always done the work... just the language has changed.” This conceptualization of sex trafficking as being closely connected with the involvement of minors in the sex trades is pronounced in Canada. Legislatively, it is illegal for a minor (anyone under the age of 18) to sell sexual services and, as such, minors involved in such transactions are automatically considered to be trafficked due to their legislatively entrenched inability to consent (See Department of Justice, n.d.; Criminal Code of Canada s.268.1 on the age of consent; Criminal Code of Canada s.279 on human trafficking). This sets the groundwork for a conflation of sex trafficking with all underage involvement in the sex trades, regardless of whether such a conflation accurately describes the minor’s situation or perception of their situation. Within the Network, this conflation was then extended to apply to those older than 18 through the use of the term “youth,”

which corresponded to an age range that varied depending on the organization and at times extended all the way from age 14 to 32.

The usage of the term “youth” in trafficking discussions functioned to extend the perception of violated innocence that discussions of the “sex trafficking of children” cultivates to those whom social norms are more likely to hold morally culpable (and thus wanting) for their involvement in the sex trades. It also served as an effective means of avoiding or sidestepping discussions of consent, as well as the agency and rights of sex workers, by allowing listeners to assume that they are talking about “children” rather than 30 year old men or women, a phenomenon that Jennifer Musto (2013) has recorded as also occurring in the United States. As Alexandra Lutnick (2016) has demonstrated in her research on domestic minor sex trafficking in the United States, the conflation of minors in the sex trades with sex trafficking that occurs in legislation, policy, and policing practices actively harms minors engaged in the sex trades, whether their involvement is for survival or other reasons, serving to flatten their experiences and deprive them of self-determination, voice, and agency in discussions regarding policy and what constitute appropriate support services. As Julia O’Connell Davidson’s (2005) research on *Children in the Global Sex Trade* demonstrates, it also draws on and privileges Western conceptualizations of childhood and sexuality that are codified in such international agreements as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Canada is a signatory. For all that such agreements mandate the meaningful inclusion of children in the creation of policy that affects them, in the case of child involvement in the global sex trade and sex trafficking, O’Connell Davidson writes that the result has been

the popularizing of some extremely simplistic ideas about the nature of the problem and appropriate policy responses to it... Presented as a problem of individual morality, child prostitution appears as a fairly straightforward criminal justice and law enforcement issue.

Certainly, it does not raise any complicated or threatening questions about the global political and economic order, or about inequalities of class, gender, race or ethnicity within nations. (2005:45)

A similarly simplistic understanding of “sex trafficking victims”, as well as the involvement of “youth” in the sex trades, was often reflected in the ways the members introduced themselves and their work during meetings, wherein such victims were frequently characterized as being in situations of forced prostitution. While what counted as “force” differed among some members (as I discuss below) and there were those, such as Maria and Ava, that favoured discussions of human trafficking that focused on exploitation in the agricultural, domestic, and construction industries, this did little to diminish the overwhelming emphasis the majority of the membership placed on “sex trafficking” as the primary problem requiring urgent action.

Significant here, too, is the focus at both Network meetings and in the activities of Network members on “youth” and “girls” in Canada. As the vignette that introduced this chapter suggests, concern revolving around the wellbeing of local “girls” and the framing of secondary school-age girls as “at-risk” was pronounced, allowing the topic to function as one of the “easy agreeables” that framed the Network’s ethical world. This concern also points to a point of tension between the way human trafficking in Canada, particularly “domestic” trafficking, is presented publicly and the actual focus of the majority of anti-trafficking work that was undertaken by Network members. Publicly, in both Network events and national discourses (as demonstrated by the *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*), domestic trafficking (trafficking within Canada’s borders) is presented as an issue that overwhelmingly affects Indigenous women and girls in Canada. However, in practice, as Julie Kaye’s (2017) in-depth research on human trafficking and resistance among Indigenous communities in Canada

demonstrates, this public focus has not translated into the meaningful incorporation of Indigenous women, particularly those that have experienced trafficking, in policy creation and the creation and provision of appropriate support services. Instead, anti-trafficking initiatives overwhelmingly focus on international organized crime and prevention efforts directed at youth in urban centres, particularly in wealthier neighbourhoods. Those in paid anti-trafficking positions were also predominantly white and without lived experience of trafficking. Nationally, this has been demonstrated by Bill 158, the “Saving the Girl Next Door Act”, introduced by Conservative MPP Laurie Scott in 2016 and championed by prostitution abolitionist feminist MPP Joy Smith (OntarioPC 2016), author of *The Tipping Point* (2015). The media campaign for this bill overwhelmingly emphasized that “anyone” can be trafficked, depicting “anyone” as predominantly white girls. Within the Network, where petitions in support of this bill were circulated, this was demonstrated by the inclusion of “Indigenous women and girls” as an “at-risk” or “very effected” group in pamphlets, funding applications, and website content, as well as the occasional inclusion of a single Indigenous survivor of human trafficking as a panelist in public events, but an absence of work developed in consultation with, headed by, or focusing on Indigenous women and girls.

The figure of the “Indigenous woman/girl” in both the Network and, in particular, in government discussions and anti-trafficking initiatives thus appeared to serve more as a foil that allowed those using it to claim that they were helping Indigenous women/girls without tangibly doing so. In the era of government “Truth and Reconciliation” commissions and the inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, such efforts are popular and support nationalist myths of a benevolent colonizer (Mackey 1999), while directing funds and efforts to carceral approaches that disproportionately target Indigenous and other racialized populations in Canada

(Kaye 2017) and initiatives that target “saving” predominantly white young bodies. In doing so, they reveal the hegemony of ideologically “white feminist” colonial discourses within both the Network and the broader anti-trafficking movement in Canada. Here, “white feminism” is associated with the historical prominence of white women in the mainstream feminist movement and their claims to ‘speak for all women’ (Maddison & Partridge 2014) which, as Kimberlé Crenshaw points out, frequently supported the adoption of movement strategies and priorities that “either elide or wholly disregard the particular intersectional needs of women of color” (1991:1262). Drawing on Barbara Heron’s (2007) analysis of the use of racialized bodies as backdrops for the development of white feminist subjectivities, the portrayal of Indigenous women and girls as superficially central to human trafficking initiatives that, in Toronto, were predominantly undertaken by middle to upper class white feminists concerned with the “girl next door”, contributes to my analysis of the ethical world of the Network as a space for the pursuit of particular (racially marked) subjectivities.

The emphasis on “sex trafficking”, as opposed to human or labour trafficking more broadly, as well as the frequent and flexible use of the term “youth”, is also significant for the ways that it reflects the limits of recognition that characterized Network meeting spaces, wherein particular kinds of suffering bodies were more frequently recognized as legitimate and in urgent need of support, while others were not. As Elizabeth Bernstein (2010) has noted, there is a long history of Christian religious concern with “fallen women” and prostitution that makes the figure of the sexually exploited and trafficked woman or girl easily recognizable to many religious organizations, making it what Miriam Ticktin (2011) refers to as a “morally legitimate suffering body.” Through a predominant focus on sexual suffering as the most urgent, recognizable, and legitimate, a hierarchy of suffering was upheld that had tangible implications for how “human

rights” and violations of those rights were identified as a basis for ethical action and responsibility. As Allison, who took over an anti-trafficking program at a local church and was relatively new to the Network, explained to me in a cynical tone, “this program was an easy one to get funded, you just mention prostitutes, helping them, ‘saving’ them, and there are pots of money you can access.”

For those whose work was more secular, violence against women and fighting for women’s human rights was often described as something that they grew up with. As Mira recounted,

I was born in the ’80s, you know, and women were fighting to break that glass ceiling. Well, it’s still there and we’re still fighting. We’ve had waves of feminism and it’s not going away any time soon. Violence against women, it’s something we talk about now, people are less afraid of it, politicians can campaign on it. It’s a human rights issue, we all know that now. I mean, our Prime Minister even describes himself as a feminist!

The gendered figure of the sex trafficking victim and her suffering was thus readily legible to Network members, functioning as a universal that allowed people to connect across what Tsing (2005) describes as “disparate particulars”. This meant that while members such as Mira might, as she described in an interview, “hate the Church”, when it came to sex trafficking, they were willing to work together, supporting Ava’s emphasis on “bringing everyone to the table.” Julia Kaye characterizes this as the power of human trafficking to create spaces for “social conservatives and progressives [in Canada] to share the pews” (2017:8). As Bernstein (2010) has demonstrated, the coalescing of these and other “strange bedfellows”, which includes members of the religious right working with atheist and/or anti-religion radical feminists, under the banner of eliminating sex trafficking also characterizes much anti-trafficking work in the United States. In the Network, members were in agreement that eliminating human trafficking was a matter of “human rights” and, for many, “social justice,” and this was reflected in members’ introductions

and the positive responses with which they were received. Thus, the elimination of human trafficking, in particular “sex trafficking”, and support for women’s human rights were fundamental to the ethical world the Network created and sustained, as well as the primary change members sought to achieve in the outside world.

To this end, members of the Network actively engaged in efforts to reshape the world around them, both in collaboration with the Network and independently. Efforts ranged from public awareness raising campaigns and political lobbying to support service provision and outreach, which I explore in detail in Chapter Five, and Network meetings served as a place where member could provide updates, share petitions, collaborate on projects, and share resources. However, as the vignette introducing this chapter indicates, key Network organizers sometimes worked to exert greater authority as ethical pedagogues when they strongly disagreed with the anti-trafficking activities of others and, at times, attempted to change what actions the Network would condone as ethical. These differences and efforts to change the actions of other members demonstrated the different, sometimes conflicting ways that members approached anti-trafficking work, as well as the boundaries and limitations presented by the individual ethical orientations of members and the Network’s guiding framework, and the presence of ethical friction.

Ethical Diversity in the Network

For Christine, a founding Network member but not a primary organizer, eliminating the sex industry, in particular prostitution and pornography, was key to eliminating sex trafficking. A retired law enforcement officer, Christine explained to me that “only when society has realized the harm that it’s causing itself through the sexualization of young girls, through the explosion of pornography that teaches young boys that it’s acceptable to own women, to beat them, to

prostitute them, only then can we get rid of sex trafficking.” Regarding prostitution, Christine advocated for the Nordic Model, which she understood as “making it illegal to buy sex and ensuring that victims have the supports they need to leave.” She worked predominantly on “helping bridge the gap between the police and the community” in regards to sex trafficking and establishing a support services organization that would “help parents and families of girls who have been trafficked become whole again.” In Network spaces, Christine predominantly emphasized her work with families and collaborating with current law enforcement offices to “help rescue and support these victims and their families.” Christine’s emphasis on victims in need of rescue, a sentiment that was common among Network members, echoes the hierarchical dichotomy that Didier Fassin (2011) has noted is present in much humanitarian influenced work, wherein one group clearly identifies themselves as the “givers” and their chosen focus group are the “receivers” of aid.

Enid, a long-time member who represented a national Jewish women’s organization, emphasized a similar outlook to that of Christine, with her contributions to meetings often encouraging more outreach into middle schools and high schools in Toronto to teach young girls and boys about “the warning signs of sex trafficking.” While Enid’s organization did not engage in doing outreach to schools, it did host public education events for the community, including talks by prominent anti-trafficking activists and fundraisers to support the work of dedicated anti-trafficking groups. Characteristic of Enid’s approach to anti-trafficking was an emphasis on needing to “scare young girls away from prostitution”, a point that she made when Mira was discussing the content of her presentations in high schools. While Mira did not agree with the need to “scare” girls, the content of the presentations she shared with the Network emphasized

what she called the “ridiculously high rates of sex trafficking in high schools,” which extended to include instances of sexual assault where there was no financial gain.

Both Christine and Enid, as well as other members that collaborated with them on events, supported carceral approaches to eliminating human trafficking and spoke about trafficking as an offence perpetrated by members of international organized crime syndicates – a view that is also supported at the national level by the government of Canada’s *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking* (2012). These members also shared the view that the sex industry should be eliminated. For Christine, this was because the sex industry was a “hotbed of organized crime” that facilitated violence against women. For Enid, it was “violent, sinful, and full of crime.” While Enid, Christine, and those members they worked closely with sometimes disagreed on issues, such as forms of criminalization and support services, they demonstrated similar ideological beliefs in their conservative and heteronormative approaches to what ethical sexual relationships should look like. This became clear during a meeting focused on developing a curriculum to teach high school students about human trafficking. Providing feedback, Christine emphasized talking about “healthy, age appropriate relationships”, which she described as “monogamous, you know, normal, and if there’s sex it should be age appropriate, he shouldn’t be pressuring her.” Enid, characterizing trafficking as involving “endless, immoral sexual transactions”, emphasized “proper long-term relationships”, frequently using the terms “innocent girls”, “boyfriend and girlfriend”, and “husband and wife.” In contrast, Ava emphasized teaching about healthy relationships by discussing “choice, boundaries, and consent.”

This discussion points to the underlying ethical orientations that informed the anti-trafficking work that Christine and Enid independently engaged in, which placed distinct limits on what a trafficking victim looked like (young, sexually ‘normal’ but abused, prostituted), how

the issue should be understood (individual crimes with a clear victim and perpetrator), and what the solutions could be (carceral, including increased policing). In the context of adhering to ideals of monogamy and a desire for sex to occur within long-term relationships without any elements of commercialization, sex trafficking was an aberration with innocent women and girls as its victims. In this conservative, carceral feminist (Bernstein 2010) framework, there was no room for a discussion of those who willingly engaged in or appeared to advocate for what these members viewed as morally inappropriate behaviours, such as sex workers supporting the sex worker rights movements. As Christine stated in her interview, such persons were “part of the problem,” a categorization that placed them outside the bounds of ethical responsibility.

Important here as well is the way that Christine and Enid’s ethical orientations were incorporated into the ethical world of the Network, for while Mira did not take up all of their suggestions and Ava expressed a very different educational emphasis, everyone’s comments were welcomed and received with encouragement and gratitude. As Christine and Enid’s feedback was repeatedly validated at different meetings over the years, it indicated to other members in the room that their approaches to anti-trafficking work aligned with the Network’s “ethical orientation toward code and practice” (Faubion 2011:69), thus incorporating such praxis into it. Although it may not have appeared that way to an onlooker, numerous Network members strongly disagreed with Christine and Enid’s approaches to human trafficking. As Ava and Melissa’s work, among others, demonstrated, the Network validated and incorporated a wide range of approaches to anti-trafficking into its ethical world.

The work of Ava, Maria, and Willow demonstrated the development of a different approach to human trafficking than those of Christine and Enid, as well as one that has changed over time. As demonstrated by their efforts to incorporate a discussion of the risk of human

trafficking that migrant workers outside the sex industry faced into the Network's first public round table, exemplified by Maria's presentation, the refugee centre that Ava, Maria, and occasionally Willow worked for took an approach to human trafficking that emphasized labour and a diversity of experiences. At the same time, Maria's presentation was the only one at the round table to discuss "labour trafficking", suggesting that they also supported a view of human trafficking as predominantly "sex trafficking". Further, the speakers that presented at this event, as the prelude to this dissertation demonstrates, generally supported approaches to trafficking that mirrored the attitudes of Christine and Enid.

This began to change over the course of my involvement with the Network, as Maria and Ava responded to the criticisms, rooted in the intersectional critiques of feminists of colour such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, that they received from members of the sex worker rights movement and myself in response to the first round table (I elaborate on this change in more detail in Chapters Five and Six). It also continued to change during the time that Willow was working, rather than only volunteering, as a primary Network organizer with the refugee centre, as she took a more intersectional, liberal feminist approach to human trafficking that emphasized harm reduction in the form of, as she often told listeners, "decriminalization of sex work, getting rid of borders, creating more support services that actually provide non-judgemental services, and funding to dismantle the patriarchal bullshit systems that keep us in the dirt." As I began volunteering at the refugee centre during my fieldwork, Ava and I often spoke of the work that she thought needed to be done to end human trafficking, as well as the work she had done in the past. As she described it:

You know, we know we've made some mistakes in the past, and we know this, and we're trying to make things better. I was never comfortable with things being about sex all the time, talking about it the way that we do, because for me, for us, prostitution is not

different from other kinds of labour. It is work, we view it as work. And so I'm trying to make our work more holistic, to talk about labour, about migration, and the things that make people at risk for human trafficking. Because here at the centre, you know, we see what it looks like and it's not all sex. Most of our clients work as domestics or in agriculture or construction. Sometimes there is rape, sometimes that's part of the abuse, but mostly people are being forced to work without pay, or they are paying off a debt that never ends, having their passports taken away, having their status in Canada turned illegal. These are the problems we see and what I want to talk about.

The “mistakes” Ava referred to include the way Shannon was treated at the first round table and the heavy emphasis early Network activities placed on “sex trafficking.” It also connects with Maria and Ava’s response to the essay I submitted following that first round table. Following my entry into the Network and also during my time volunteering with the refugee centre, Ava, Maria, and Willow emphasized that they were open to critique and wanted to rebuild bridges that, in Ava’s words, “earlier mistakes had burned”. Translated into action within the Network, this meant that, unlike Christine and Enid, Ava, Maria, and Willow rarely commented on or spoke about pornography and the sexualization of young girls in Network meetings. Instead, they would provide updates and encourage discussion about helping the non-status migrants whose cases they were managing, as well as others with whom they hadn’t yet come into contact. When they spoke of high schools, it was to emphasize the difficulties non-status youth faced in gaining access to education or the need for better sex education that emphasized consent. They also increasingly emphasized anti-oppression and harm reduction practices, going so far as to ask me to develop a harm reduction framework for the Network that would emphasize non-judgemental, client-centred support service provision and messaging. This was closely tied to the refugee centres’ “human rights and social justice centred approach”, as Maria described it, to “working with migrants and those who have survived exploitation.”

Elaborating on these principles of harm reduction, anti-oppression, human rights, and social justice, Ava told me that it was of the utmost importance that:

we do no harm – even when we think we are helping, when we think we know what needs to happen, we have to listen, because who are we to really know? And if we are doing harm, we must stop, we must find another way, we cannot violate another’s human rights or make things worse for them.

Discussing human rights in our interview, Ava described them as “something we all have, but not something we all get to experience.” Here “human rights” are inherent and universal and “doing harm” is connected to violating a person’s human rights. For Ava, supporting the human rights of survivors of trafficking could not come at the cost of violating, for example, the human rights of sex workers. Connected to this, Ava, Maria, and Willow were unanimously critical of carceral approaches to human trafficking and any legislation that criminalized vulnerable persons in whole or in part, including PCEPA and attempts to eliminate the sex trades. They expressed a distrust of the growing powers of the Canadian Border Services Agency and its ability to turn away migrants at the border that they suspected were at risk of being trafficked. When speaking of sexual exploitation, they generally used the term “sex work” to distinguish voluntary from non-voluntary sexual transactions and supported developing working dialogues with sex worker and migrant worker support organizations. In reflecting on previous “mistakes”, it was both Ava and Willow’s hope that if they could develop an anti-oppression, harm reduction framework it would open an avenue for encouraging members, such as Christine and Enid, to rethink their approaches.

Melissa, a founding Network member who worked as the anti-trafficking project developer and advisor for a religious organization, took a similar approach, emphasizing the need to “respect the human rights of everyone, including sex workers. Those communities could

be valuable allies, they should be valuable allies, but you can't expect that to happen if you refuse to acknowledge their work, that it is work, that there can be choice." Melissa's emphasis on the human rights of sex workers echoed that of the refugee centre and puts forward the same conceptualization of human rights as inherent and universal, equally held by each individual. Through the phrase "including sex workers", she also acknowledged that this view was not unanimous and that, for some, sex workers either lacked human rights, which conflicts with an understanding of human rights as inherent, or that the rights of sex workers could be disregarded, which acknowledges a hierarchy of human rights wherein they are universal but not equal.

The way that human rights were presented by members like Ava and Melissa suggests an ethical responsibility to respect, protect, and uphold all human rights equally and that, while they were still focused on one particular issue, working to support the rights of one group cannot occur at the cost of the rights of another. At the same time, as Melissa discussed with me during our interview, some organizations were limited in the ways this approach could be translated into action. For all that she personally took an intersectional approach to trafficking and supported the sex worker rights movement as both an end in itself and as complementary to efforts to eliminate human trafficking, her activities were constrained by the religious organization that funded her work. As she explained,

It gets into the church politics and stuff too, and you've got a whole 'nother, I mean, the [Religious Order Name] are great, they're one of the most progressive orders and I have found the leadership here to be very responsive.... But to actually show up would upset a lot of the Sisters. And I don't think they would want their name, their organization, associated with that.

Here, to "show up" refers to attending public events or signing public petitions in support of sex worker rights as a representative of her organization. As Julie Kaye's points out, this reluctance is common among those anti-trafficking organizers in Canada that "understand the limits and

harm of a criminalization-centred model...[but] in spite of positions of relative privilege, the default stance of these individuals falls short of resisting dominant structures that perpetuate harm” (2017:8). Thus, while the awareness raising efforts of these individuals may “move beyond the sensational and provide an education, such education too often stops short of acknowledging ongoing resistance or imagining transformation” (ibid.).

Working within these “limitations”, Melissa, as well as Ava, Maria, and Willow, still worked to bring their approaches into Network spaces and influence its ethical world. In addition to involving members in the creation of the anti-oppression framework, conversation topics they took up or updates they provided often emphasized the vulnerability of migrant men, as well as women, and LGBTQ persons to different forms of exploitation in a conscious effort to disrupt the focus on young women and girls that dominated Network meetings spaces. When discussing efforts to prevent and eliminate human trafficking, they also emphasized that human rights violations resulted from inequality and structural violence, in particular gender and income inequality, racism, and other forms of discrimination. As Willow stated in one meeting, “we have to target the government and not just for funding. We have to make them aware that one of the reasons human trafficking happens is because of their failure to provide real funding for support services for disadvantaged communities.” In response, Maria added, “Not to mention, they’re profiting from abusing cheap, temporary, foreign labour. This is a global problem.” Other members attending the meeting responded with the general approval, nodding their heads and smiling, and the conversation turned to expanded support services.

Willow’s emphasis on state responsibility reflects one of the primary characteristics of social movements identified by Juris and Khasnabish (2013b), namely, the perceived failure of state institutions to adequately address a particular issue. Going further, Willow positioned the

state as both cause and facilitator of human trafficking through its failure to support marginalized communities and Maria connected the issue to global labour supply chains that “keep poor people poor so they have to come here to work, that makes them vulnerable to exploitation.” The state was thus presented as a causal factor in the growth of the human rights violation that is human trafficking. This portrayal of the state allowed these organizations to strategically re-deploy the government’s own claims of being a nation that defends and upholds human rights to pressure the government to honour and tangibly demonstrate the truth of those claims by better supporting victims of human trafficking and eliminating trafficking. This strategy simultaneously challenged and relied on the nationalist narrative that Canada, as a country, is a defender of human rights and wishes to remain so. The differing interpretations members had of “human rights” and whether or not their work supported a hierarchical deployment of them did not diminish the use of this framing, though it did shape the messaging that accompanied it. This framing also demonstrated recognition of a reliance on the state to guarantee human rights, suggesting that those that experience rightlessness, as Hannah Arendt (2009) has argued, lack a community willing to grant and uphold their rights. As Harri Englund points out, this creates a situation wherein human rights frameworks may open up possibilities, but they simultaneously limit recognition to those whose voices adhere to and are recognizable within the boundaries, and I would add hierarchies, of human rights discourses (2009:247).

Returning to the approaches of the refugee centre’s employees and Melissa, these government failures were presented as foundational problem areas that would need to be addressed if trafficking were ever to be eliminated. When compared to the approaches of Christine and Enid, who supported carceral approaches in addition to support service provision, the kind of social change these members sought to achieve was broader in scope. Whereas the

work of Christine and Enid could be described as challenging those around them to extend the boundaries of their “circles of we” (Lacqueur 2009) to include aiding narrowly conceptualized victims of sex trafficking, these members challenged others to support aiding all those that suffered as a result of discrimination and inequality produced through broader political and economic hierarchies. As Willow described it, “I’m working on fighting human trafficking, but that’s just one thing, one piece of the puzzle, there’s a lot more that needs to come together, there’s a lot more that we need to change.”

In part, the work of the refugee centre, Melissa, and other like-minded members also sought to disrupt the “giver” and “receiver” hierarchy that was otherwise prominent in the Network and which positioned Network members as “givers” and trafficking victims as passive “receivers”. Their efforts to disrupt this hierarchy was demonstrated by the ongoing emphasis that was placed on needing to have “survivors of human trafficking advising us and guiding our work” (Ava) and encouraging a conceptualization of victims of human trafficking as being whole, agentic persons who were able to evaluate their circumstances and make choices about how to move forward. However, while there was an increase in efforts to gather feedback and information from survivors, mainly through focus groups and surveys conducted by the refugee centre, as of 2016 there was no oversight committee or panel such as Ava had envisioned. Instead, members cited protectionist concerns that the Network itself “isn’t ready” (Ava) and “isn’t prepared” (Melissa) or “formalized enough” (Willow) to ensure that the involvement of survivors in such a role would not be re-traumatizing for them. There were also concerns regarding ways of compensating survivors for their time, as these members were also adamant about not contributing to the exploitation of the labour of others in work that sought to eliminate exploitation. Further concerns included the need to recognize the diversity of survivors, primarily

in terms of individual experiences with different industries, identity politics, and how the views that they might bring to the table could conflict with each other and with the Network itself.

Reviewing the different approaches of members, we can see how the ethical orientations of members informed their understanding of human trafficking, as well as the issues that highlighted their limitations, including: what constitutes good, moral sexual behaviour; the commodification of sex and sexual behaviour; concerns about border control and protecting the nation-state from criminal outsiders; and social justice and harm-reduction concerns grounded in human rights frameworks. The differential emphasis members placed on these issues provided an indication of the ideologies that informed the foundations of how each member independently approached human trafficking work. Despite fundamental disagreements in their approaches, members were never criticized or censured during Network meetings. Rather, conflict was deemphasized by an agreed upon need to work together; an adherence to the accepted axiom of unity or guiding universal that members were stronger together and that this strength was required to achieve the over-arching goal of eliminating human trafficking. However, though conflict was deemphasized, it was not absent and primary organizers sometimes attempted to change the ethical orientations of other members.

“Bringing Everyone to the Table”

In practice, the difference in member approaches to human trafficking, which ranged from neoconservative, radical, and carceral feminist to more liberal feminist approaches, were easy to spot based on the language that a member used, their silence on certain topics, their absence from certain events, and the activities that their organizations engaged in independently of the Network. In meetings, these differences were minimized through the repetition of what I came to refer to as the “easy agree-ables.” These were statements and subjects of discussion that

members could easily assume everyone would agree on (though I don't mean to over-emphasize intent) and would lead to support, congratulations, or other forms of praise and recognition for their efforts. Collectively, this set of agree-ables formed a guiding framework that facilitated the creation of the Network's ethical world by providing points of collective agreement that superseded the disparate ways that individuals interpreted and acted upon these agree-ables. For example, it was unlikely that anti-trafficking activists would object to a statement like "we need to do more to protect young girls from sexual exploitation." Other easy agree-ables included reporting on a fundraising campaign or efforts to lobby local government officials to "support the human rights of trafficking victims" (Mira) or "do more work to eliminate sex trafficking" (Christine). They also included listing the number of victims a front-line organization had encountered since the last meeting or providing updates on cases. Verbalizing these often began during the updates stage of a meeting and continued to occur throughout.

These agree-ables drew on the Network's fundamental universals as axioms of unity to minimize the effect of the disparate particulars (Tsing 2005) that were individual approaches to human trafficking. They served to naturalize particular subjects as common sense and well understood facts, rather than unpack them. For example, despite clear differences in their approaches, when Christine or Willow spoke about upholding the "human rights of victims", a discussion would not follow to clarify what was meant by "human rights" or the limitations or exclusions that would, in practice, be placed on who counted as a "victim". They worked to smooth over the visible expression of ethical friction that might result from the different ethical orientations of members coming into contact. For example, Willow was uncomfortable, frustrated, and ethically opposed to the work that Mira was doing in local classrooms, but during the Network meeting, she focused on discussing referrals that might be useful. During her one-

on-one meeting with Mira, she focused on the need to provide immediate service provision rather than questioning the appropriateness of Mira's presentation content. It was only in her conversation later, with me, that she gave voice to her numerous objections.

Ensuring that topics of conversation were not likely to cause conflict or reveal fundamental differences between members was also taken into account by Ava when she prepared the agenda for a meeting and, as a primary organizer, designed Network projects to be ones that everyone could easily rally to and support. This meant that discussions of, as Ava described them, "hot topic" or "controversial" legislation, such as the hearings for Bill C-36 and its subsequent implementation or the Conservative government's introduction and subsequent enforcement of its "Four and Four" rule,¹⁹ which resulted in thousands of temporary foreign workers not having their contracts renewed, were never formal agenda items or topics of conversation during meetings, despite having important repercussions for those effected by human trafficking.²⁰ At the same time, this did not mean that members never attempted to alter the approaches of other members. Rather, it strongly influenced the forms this would take. For example, when Melissa sought to disrupt the sex trafficking narrative put forward by members like Enid when it circulated during meetings, she did not do so by challenging Enid directly. Instead, she made a conscious effort to ensure that her own words and actions reflected what she described as "a more holistic approach" to the topic in the hope that it would "take root" in the minds and approaches of others. Describing this approach, Ava said "We don't want to scare

¹⁹ The "4in4 Rule", which has since been repealed, limited Temporary Foreign Worker Program workers to four consecutive years of work before requiring them to be absent for four years. Previously there was no limit on the number of years in a row that a worker could be employed in Canada. Implementation of the rule was also accompanied by limits on the number of workers certain industries could hire.

²⁰ Ava and Maria spent a significant amount of time at the refugee centre helping migrant workers who, as a result of having the renewal of their work visas denied due to the four year limit, were experiencing or had experienced conditions of labour exploitation that fit the definition of human trafficking.

them away or have conflict that drives them away, we want everyone at the table. After all, we're all here for the same reason and have something to contribute”.

While they did not voice it during interviews, it seems likely that other Network members, such as Christine or Enid, might have been taking the same strategy towards changing Ava or Melissa's minds. However, not all attempts to encourage or hope that different approaches would rub off on and be taken up by previously otherwise inclined members were so subtle. Spurred by an ever-growing unrest with the way that they perceived the Network as providing de facto support for anti-trafficking activities that were harmful to sex workers, primary organizers Ava and Willow took more overt action to alter the guiding framework of the Network and, in turn, its ethical world. This included Ava's efforts to create an anti-oppression framework that, arguably, would require those following it to ensure their actions did not directly or indirectly harm marginalized communities. It was Ava's intention that the anti-oppression framework would function as a useful tool for, as she described it, “raising awareness among other members about the harm their work might be unintentionally causing, mostly to sex workers, you know, but also to migrants and trafficking victims that might feel judged by their service provision.” It would also provide members with direction on how to reform their actions and, through collaborative development, give them ownership over the process so that they could come to these conclusions on their own.

Through this approach, Ava was consciously trying to convert other members to her ethical orientation through the instigation of ethical friction, indirectly presenting, rather than confronting, other members with the “unintended consequences” of actions that mirrored their own as a means of prompting discomfort with the goal of achieving a reflexive adjustment of their work. When this proved unsuccessful, Willow attempted to bind Network members to the

anti-oppression framework by formalizing the Network, a process that was to involve creating terms of reference and a memorandum of understanding that would require all Network members to ensure their activities were in line with the anti-oppression framework. At times, Willow also expressed to me a desire to “remove” particular members from the Network to ensure that their form of anti-trafficking work did not receive any positive reinforcement from the Network. Though these efforts did not culminate in a noticeable shift in the Network’s ethical world, it did result in several members reconsidering some of their work. It also demonstrated awareness on the part of Network members, in particular primary organizers, of the role the Network played in validating the actions of members by allowing and encouraging their participation in the ethical world of the Network.

Limitations and Exclusions

The Network’s goal of bringing everyone at the table and avoiding conflict supported the majority of members in operating in their own individual silos, unless they made a point of actively seeking out criticism and evaluations of their work. It also represents a form of antipolitics (Ferguson 1990; Fisher 1997) or depoliticization that relies on anti-trafficking work being treated as “above” disagreement or criticism (Musto 2013), allowing harmful trafficking myths and misinformation to be reinforced and spread. During my time with the Network, there were no direct confrontations, critiques, arguments, or ongoing disagreements voiced within Network meetings. As Willow’s meeting with Mira demonstrated, members worked hard to ensure that confrontation did not occur in meeting spaces and, when different perspectives were presented, that they were unlikely to be received as discouragement.

This lack of conflict is directly connected to the efforts of primary organizers of the Network, such as Ava, to, as she described it “hold two sides in tension” as a means of “bringing

everyone to the table”. Here the “two sides” that were referenced by almost every anti-trafficking movement member that participated in an interview are those that support the rights of sex workers and those who see prostitution as inherently violence against women. In practice, this meant that the legality of sex work was not directly discussed in Network meetings.

Significantly, while Ava viewed the Network as “holding two sides in tension”, it is important to recognize that these two sides were still situated *within* the anti-trafficking movement, meaning that sex workers and members of the sex worker rights movement were not represented in Network spaces, regardless of the degree of harm some members perceived the anti-trafficking movement as causing sex workers or the potential for allyship. While this was viewed as a negative absence by some members, such as Melissa and Willow, others, such as Mira, viewed it as the fault of absent sex worker support services and rights organizations for not being willing to “do the work” that would bring them into the space, with little appreciation for why such organizations might find anti-trafficking spaces to be hostile and unsafe to be in.²¹ Still others viewed such groups as “inappropriate” (Diane) and “a distraction from saving actual victims” (Rachel). Since their view of human trafficking focused exclusively on “sex trafficking,” most Network members did not question the absence of migrant worker rights groups from Network spaces. A minority, predominantly made up of members whose home organizations also provided support services to migrants (such as the refugee centre), saw the absence of migrant worker rights groups as a gap that resulted in labour trafficking outside the sex trades being poorly addressed. From the perspective of several migrant worker rights organizations that participated in this research (as discussed in Chapter One), engaging with the anti-trafficking

²¹ Members of sex worker support services and rights organization interviewed that participated in this research generally agreed that they would refuse a seat at the Network if offered. Though some thought it might be an opportunity, most framed it as unpaid labour that would occur in a hostile environment that they did not expect to “feel safe or respected in” (Vanessa).

movement represents a mixed bag that may do more harm than good if it results in increased policing rather than support for the human rights of workers.

Conclusion

As a result of an absence of critique and the desire on the part of the Network's primary organizers to bring as many groups as possible, rather than a prioritization of groups, to the table, the environment of Network meetings was one where members could have their involvement in anti-trafficking work supported and reaffirmed without risk. Philosophical differences on the topic of sex work and conflicting approaches to human trafficking were framed as irrelevant "as long as the needs of survivors are put first, because we are stronger together" (Ava). Thus, "bringing everyone to the table" meant incorporating disparate ethical orientations and approaches to human trafficking into the collective ethical world of the Network, supporting a framework rooted in undefined universals and goals, such as "ending human trafficking" and "supporting the human rights of trafficking victims." Despite the disparate particulars and ethical orientations that it was rooted in, this framework was enough to bring different organizations and individuals into the Network membership and facilitated their collaborative involvement in Network activities. It was a set of agree-ables which everyone participating recognized and endeavoured to work within.

As Willow's interactions with Mira demonstrated, differences in the way that Network members discussed their work in interviews and spoke about other members outside of Network spaces reveal how the Network created and maintained an ethical world within which particular forms of ethical subjecthood were expected and could be performed. Rather than simply being disingenuous, it demonstrated an awareness of the behavioural restrictions that participating and receiving validation in Network spaces required: conflict should be avoided, everyone who

attends should be made to feel welcome, and all efforts to fight human trafficking are received as being of equal merit. It also highlights the ways that the Network's functioned as one ethical world situated within the larger anti-trafficking movement, one that may influence but cannot meaningfully limit or define the scope of anti-trafficking work outside its porous boundaries. Within these constraints, the Network cultivated an ethical world that was distinguished from the 'outside' world within which it was situated, one where disparate ethical orientations could come into contact with each other and work collaboratively.

Underlying the Network's ethical world was a framework that emphasized humanitarian action and the individual as humanitarian. Didier Fassin's extended explanation of "humanitarian" is helpful here, wherein the term connotes the two primary dimensions that are encompassed by the concept of humanity:

the generality of human beings who share a similar condition (Mankind), and...an affective movement drawing humans towards their fellows (humaneness). The first dimension forms the basis for a demand for rights and an expectation of universality; the second creates the obligation to provide assistance and attention to others. (2011:2)

This was reflected in the ways that the language of suffering, support, and responsibility to protect that underlay the agree-ables voiced during Network meetings served to qualify the issues involved and provided reasons for the choices made and actions taken (ibid.).

Tied to this was an ideological adherence to Western human rights frameworks based on universalist understandings of what it means to be human and that being human entails certain 'natural' rights, in all times and in all places (Arendt 2009; Goodale 2009). Here, human rights were envisioned in an individualized fashion, emphasizing the rights of individuals over the collective and contrasting with approaches to, for example, Indigenous rights, which emphasize the rights of the collective over the individual (Gledhill 2003; Kymlicka 2009). In the context of

Canada, the sanctity of human rights is fundamental to national identity (Schneiderman 1998, as reflected through their entrenchment in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the numerous UN Conventions regarding the rights of particular populations that the government of Canada has signed and ratified. In identifying human trafficking as a human rights violation, anti-trafficking movement members positioned it as something that caused harm in a universally identifiable way and presented the solution in terms protecting, upholding, and defending the rights of individual victims. Further, in emphasizing that the Network was “stronger” because of the diverse ethical orientations of members, the ethical world of the Network uncritically drew upon and reflected Canadian nationalism’s value-laden emphasis on multiculturalism or strength through diversity; of being “stronger together” without acknowledging the hierarchies of difference and critical absences that accompanied it (Mackey 1999), including the continued marginalization of stigmatized communities and a lack of critical engagement with the demography of the Network.

Significantly, though the language used by members such as Melissa and Willow might have encouraged it, the ethical world of the Network did not require members to extend their concern to those outside the narrowly conceptualized victim of sex trafficking, as there were no repercussions for not doing so. As a result, a focus on human trafficking as “sex trafficking” and the heteronormative social values that are associated with this trafficking discourse were at home in the Network and a colonial, white feminist focus on local (white) women and girls “next door”, despite paying lip-service to the importance of service provision to Indigenous women and girls, went largely uncontested. Ethically, all that was required was that the suffering of trafficking victims was recognized, humanized, and acted upon. As Jeffrey S. Juris and Alex Khasnabish (2013b) note, to the extent that social movements are challenges to the status quo,

they are also always shaped by prevailing injustices and exclusions. We can see this reflected in the Network through the presence of the hierarchy of suffering (Fassin 2011; Ticktin 2011) and human rights that the work of members like Christine and Enid exemplifies, the minimal attention given to those experiencing exploitation outside the sex trades or who are not female and young, and in the absence of self-identified sex workers or sex worker rights organizations from Network spaces. Thus, through an ethos of “bringing everyone to the table”, all participating Network members contributed to and influenced the ethical world of the Network as a whole, broadening the forms of ethical action that could be validated therein. Through this, the ethical world of the Network became a space that facilitated the pursuit and validation of a wide range of ethically marked subject positions, including that of the (carceral, radical or liberal) feminist, humanitarian aid giver, religious adherent and giver of charity, activist, community organizer, anti-trafficking advocate, responsible citizen, and human rights defender.

At the same time, beneath the surface of this world tensions between the different ethical orientations and actions of members existed and were a site for frequent negotiation. While the ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” strongly influenced the form these negotiations took, with the majority occurring through subtle encouragement rather than Ava or Willow’s occasional more overt attempts, they outlined the ways in which some Network members chafed at the definitions and assumptions of others and the ethical friction that this created. This kind of friction was something that some members, such as Ava and Willow, sought to instigate as a means of transforming what could count as “ethical action” within the Network, sometimes going so far as to leverage their positions as primary organizers and ‘ethical pedagogues’ as a means of more directly shaping the ethical world of the Network and its ‘matrices of justification’ through (unsuccessful) attempts at structural change. Beyond its functional uses,

the points where ethical friction occurred highlighted the boundaries or limits of individual members' ethical orientations, the hierarchies of recognition and suffering that framed them, and the ideologies that supported them, emphasizing the dynamic tensions and negotiation that occur within social movements.

In conclusion, this chapter has worked to apply aspects of Faubion's (2011) Foucauldian approach to ethical domains as a means of identifying and unpacking the guiding framework of the Network and describing the characteristics of its ethical world, together with its limitations. In exploring how the Network functioned to validate a variety of approaches to anti-trafficking as forms of ethical action through an ethos of "bringing everyone to the table", I have emphasized how this form of inclusion simultaneously created exclusions, such as the absence of other groups that were affected by anti-trafficking activities and discourses, while also influencing how ethical friction was engaged with, negotiated, and expressed. In turning to Chapter Four, I compare the Network's ethical world with those envisioned and created by sex worker rights organizers.

4. Sex, Labour, and Rights: The Sex Worker Rights Movement in Toronto

As the sun heats up the small room that we're gathered in, myself and six other volunteers wait a bit longer to see if anyone else will be joining the meeting. Today we're working on a project that will hopefully tackle some of the fallout from the recent passage of PCEPA. With support from Toronto's primary sex worker support and outreach organization, the goal is to develop a training kit that can be used to teach service providers that sex workers might encounter, including health care providers, emergency shelter workers, and legal aid service providers, about how the new laws impact sex workers that are trying to access their support services. Waiting, we browse the harm reduction supplies that are readily available, stocking up on items that are harder to come by or likely to raise eyebrows at the local pharmacy, and begin sharing personal updates. Sarah, one of the project's primary organizers and a long-term volunteer with this organization, writes down dates and times as Alice, a volunteer and service user, shares information that one of her clients, who works as a police officer, gave her about upcoming enforcement efforts. This prompts other volunteers to share information about their recent, overwhelmingly negative, interactions with police.

As Sarah begins the meeting, raids are fresh on people's minds and we discuss the increase in, as Sarah describes it, "rescue rhetoric" and the efforts of anti-trafficking organizations to train service providers to "spot trafficking victims." Mary, a service user and new volunteer, laments that it's creating "yet another barrier to accessing services," emphasizing the point of our project when she asks, "Do I now need to worry about being identified as a trafficking victim every time I go to get an STD check?" Sarah semi-seriously jokes that there should be specific services "for those of us who are being 'anti-trafficked'." (September 2015, fieldnotes)

In further pursuing questions of what shapes social movements, their guiding frameworks, and their members, this chapter explores the meeting and organizing practices of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto. Unlike the anti-trafficking Network, which received government funding to formally 'network' and facilitate collaboration between different organizations that were engaged in anti-trafficking work in Toronto, the sex worker rights movement operated as a more informal collection of organizers, the majority of whom were volunteers connected to one of the four organizations that directly engaged in providing support services to sex workers and advocacy. One of these organizations received formal yearly funding to provide outreach and support services, was a registered charity, and had two employees, one provided outreach services on a largely volunteer basis but sometimes received grants and had no

employees, and the other two organizations did not receive any funding, were run entirely by volunteers, and engaged predominantly in advocacy work, providing online support services when possible. In spite of a lack of funding and paid employees, members of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto consistently engaged in work that was geared towards instigating social change, with efforts ranging from public events to social media campaigns and legal challenges.

The meetings that are the focus of this chapter occurred in a variety of locations across the city and, though some organizational details varied depending on the group that was facilitating the meeting, their underlying structure and guiding frameworks were similar and provided a window into the ethical world of this social movement. By following my discussion of the ethical world of the anti-trafficking movement with this discussion of the sex worker rights movement, I attend to the differences in movement organizing, the guiding frameworks that undergird them, and what this can tell us about the strengths, constraints, limitations, and exclusions that occur within each. Following Marc Edelman's argument that "everyday movement practices embody in embryonic form the changes the movements seek" (2001:289), I pay particular attention to the kinds of spaces that movement members sought to create, the changes they wished to make in the broader world, and their efforts to actively embody the ethical practices the movement promoted in meeting spaces, public events, and their personal lives. Whereas in anti-trafficking Network spaces, the movement's "ethics of care" could be characterized as humanitarian, oriented towards an external suffering other, in sex worker rights movement spaces the majority of those participating had direct experience with the harms they were trying to eliminate, resulting in an "ethics of care" that centered what Anise, a long-time organizer and prominent figure in the sex working community, described as "the whole person,

their emotional well-being and capacity, their heart, their soul, because we are the core of our movement”. Distinct from the “care” that informed the support many members of the Network sought to provide victims of trafficking with, which was characterized by formal support services targeting housing, food, and counselling provided by registered therapists and social workers, the ethics of care described by members of the sex worker rights movement emphasized personal connections and intersectional, holistic support for individual members outside the bounds of professional support services. Rooted in personal relationships, this kind of “care” wove friendships and other relationships into organizing (or wove organizing into these relationships), with examples ranging from sharing housing or meals to, in one case, attending a birth, and not being limited to sharing transit tokens, celebrating birthdays, or going out for drinks together. In this context, I also look to how movement members navigated ethical friction within their movement at the same time as they worked to incorporate an ethics of care that designated movement spaces as ones that were “safe” for members, intended to be actively and inclusively shaped by members’ intersectional experiences of criminalization, violence, stigma, racism, and oppression. Salient to this analysis are members’ interpretations of liberal human rights and labour rights, historical tensions within the movement and efforts to resolve them, and the pressure many movement members felt for themselves and the movement to be “above reproach” (Sarah). This analysis also draws attention to the ways that friction can change over time as the ethical orientations of individuals members shift in response to particular issues, as well as the differing potential outcomes of ongoing processes of reorientation.

I begin by contextualizing the contemporary movement and describing how it developed in opposition to moral campaigns to eradicate sex work that positioned sex workers as both health and social ills, as well as the anti-sex trafficking campaigns, such as those undertaken by

members of the Network introduced in the previous chapter, and discourses that position sex workers as victims without agency. Looking to current organizing efforts, I explore how movement members worked to create what Jeffrey S. Juris (2013) has described as “intentional spaces” for meetings, spaces that foregrounded what Anise described as “radical community care together with radical organizing.” Unpacking meeting spaces and practices, I discuss how organizers worked to center the diverse experiences and individual ethical orientations of members with sex working experience at the same time as they worked to unify the movement as a whole. Here, practices of critical reflexivity were incorporated into organizing efforts, affecting the behaviour of members both inside and outside of movement spaces, as well as providing an avenue for navigating key tensions in the movement, such as the complicated issue of allyship.

The Development of the Sex Worker Rights Movement in Canada

The contemporary sex worker rights movement in Canada has developed in response and opposition to campaigns to eradicate sex work that have positioned sex workers as health and social ills, victims, fallen women, and/or criminals. From prohibitionist legislation rooted in Christian and Victorian era ideals regarding sexual morality and idealized gender roles in the first half of the 19th century, which paired with racialized and discriminatory legislation and policing targeting Indigenous and racialized migrant women in the later 19th and early 20th centuries (Backhouse 1985), to contemporary regimes of criminalization geared towards abolition and wrapped in a foil of paternal protectionism, all attempts to eradicate the sale of sexual services in Canada have failed to achieve their goal. Instead, as scholars and the sex worker rights movement have demonstrated, they have nurtured an environment of criminalization, stigmatization, and discrimination wherein sex workers themselves are at risk of high levels of violence from police and persons posing as clients (Lowman 1989, 2000, 2016;

Pivot Legal Society 2016), in addition to, among other barriers, discrimination in accessing psychological and physical health services, crossing provincial and international borders (Jeffrey 2005; Sharma 2005), maintaining custody of children, and obtaining housing (Parent, Bruckert, Corriveau, Mensah, & Topin 2013; van der Meulen, Durisin, & Love 2013a). Gentrification efforts geared towards evicting workers from urban centres and legal restrictions on working together, working indoors, communicating with clients, and hiring security or drivers, have given rise to the “Killing Fields” of Vancouver (Lowman 2000, 2016; Ross 2010) and created conditions wherein serial killers, such as Robert Pickton, face little risk of being caught and others, such as Bradley Barton, the man who murdered Cindy Gladue, are acquitted (Kaiser 2015).²² While there are those that argue that it is prostitution itself that is inherently violent (Farley 2004; Perrin 2010; Smith 2014), sex workers and allies that are members of the sex worker rights movement see this violence as resulting from criminalization, stigmatization, and discrimination, combined with the intersectional systemic barriers faced by women, in particular Indigenous women, women of colour, and trans women, that result from gender, racial, and income inequalities (Ferris 2015; Golkar 2016; Rose 2015; Hunt 2015).

For many in the Toronto movement, contemporary resistance to stigmatizing and criminalizing presentations of prostitution began in the 1970s, when, in 1972, the constitutionality of Canada’s vagrancy laws was tested and they were revoked (van der Meulen et al. 2013b). Replaced by laws prohibiting solicitation that partnered with the spread of gentrification in the urban centres of Vancouver and Toronto, individual advocates began to organize in the face of increased efforts to remove sex workers from city spaces, rallying, in

²² The acquittal has recently been overturned by the Court of Appeal of Alberta and a new trial has been ordered. Lawyers for the accused are attempting to have the Supreme Court of Canada overrule the over-turning of the acquittal (Kaiser 2015).

particular, around the series of court cases that led up to what became known as the “Hutt Decision”²³ and the introduction of new legislation and bylaws that followed. As Victoria, one of the founding organizers of what became the sex worker rights movement in Toronto, recounted:

So, it's 1983 before Mulroney was elected and there's all these residents' groups, Peggy Miller's sweeping the kitchen floor and she hears on the radio that the next day Toronto Police are having a community town hall kind of meeting and they're going to discuss some new measures to curb street soliciting. And she had just been arrested for bawdy house, so she thought, you know, to hell with that, and she went to the meeting to speak. Never had spoken in public before. And the clerk, you had to get on the speakers list, she told him 'I'm a prostitute,' as we were known then, and he was trying to dissuade her. Meanwhile a reporter overhears what's going on and explains to Peggy how to get on the list, right in front of the clerk so the clerk knows this is going to be written up. She gets on the speakers list and she spoke! I asked her 'what did you say?' and she said, 'I don't know!' because it's just so heady and the flashbulbs are going off, flashbulbs in those days.

So that began it and she was all over the news, prior to internet when media wasn't as fragmented as it is today, so everyone found out, her neighbours, her parents. So, she came out and she realized that she had to begin an organization because she wanted to meet with Pierre Trudeau and Mark MacGuigan, who was I think Justice Minister at the time, but she was told that the federal government does not have to listen to individuals, but only organizations. So, she began CORP.

Reflecting what Victoria described as the “early militarism of the movement”, CORP (Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes) was founded in 1983 in Toronto as a means of challenging Canada's prostitution laws and developing an organized response to increased public focus on their work. It joined the ranks of BEAVER (Better End All Vicious Erotic Repression, later CASH: Committee Against Street Harassment), which formed in 1977, and ASP, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, which formed in Vancouver in 1982. Aiding in

²³ At the centre of prostitution-related debates of the 1970s and 80s was the series of court challenges surrounding the 1975 arrest and charging of Debra Hutt in Vancouver, BC, for solicitation under Section 195.1 of the Criminal Code. Going all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, the case ended in Hutt being acquitted of the charges because the solicitation was not deemed to be “pressing and persistent” and the car that the police officer sought to entrap her in did not constitute a “public place.” Supporters viewed the Hutt decision as a major win, while police and community groups, including CROWE (Concerned Residents of the West End) in Vancouver, rallied against what they saw as a lack of strong legislation to eliminate prostitution. Following the ruling and continued pressure from CROWE and other petitioners, in 1984, BC Attorney General Brian Smith succeeded in getting a court injunction that banned street prostitution from Vancouver's West End by creating a “no-business zone,” leading to the establishment of what became known as the “killing fields” near Vancouver's Downtown East Side (Ross 2010).

organizing efforts and endeavouring to provide a place for the exchange of information and support services, these and other organizations, such as Maggie's: Toronto Sex Worker Action Project started in 1986 and Stella in Montreal formed in 1995, that developed later became key sites for the cultivation of the sex worker rights movement. As CORP's eventual name change to Sex Professionals of Canada (SPOC) demonstrates, these organizations were invested in and responsive to the changing and growing membership of the movement, but they were also located in urban centres, which limited their reach and influenced the priorities of the movement. As Victoria described it,

the internet, when it came, was a boon, because all of the sudden we could connect with people outside the cities so much faster. I mean, a phone tree is a great thing, but you have to know people to become a part of it, and sending letters is slow and there's no guarantee they'll arrive. Now we can put a Bad Date list online and that's amazing. So, the internet helped us to connect with other organizations around the world, I mean, we were already well connected with those in the [United] States, like COYOTE,²⁴ but it helped us get a better idea of the needs of different workers in Canada.

The sex worker rights movement has developed alongside and been shaped by critical feminist theory, in particular debates surrounding emotional and sexual labour and violence against women. Linked to the overrepresentation of LGBTQ persons in the sex trades, in particular trans women of colour who, due to the multiple forms of discrimination they faced, had few opportunities to earn income through other forms of employment (Namaste 2000; Highcrest 1997), the early sex worker rights movement was also influenced by and a driving force behind the fight for LGBTQ rights and against HIV/AIDS stigma in the 1980s and 1990s in both the United States (Miss Major 2016) and Canada (Ferris 2015). We see this reflected in the different ways that the movement has sought to publicly position sex workers, with early presentations leading up to and following the Hutt decision, as well as during the peak of the

²⁴ Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics was founded in 1973 in San Francisco by Margo St. James, a feminist and former sex worker, along with Jennifer James, a Seattle-based professor of anthropology (COYOTE n.d.).

HIV/AIDS epidemic, drawing on the languages of women's and LGBTQ human rights and health and safety to present workers as sexual health experts who were well positioned to educate others on the dangers of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Meaghan 2001). This presentation attempted to push back against those that positioned prostitution and prostitutes as health, social, and moral ills.

Building on this have been intentional changes in the language that is used to talk about the work that those involved in the sex trades do, in particular the change to explicitly label it as “work”. As Emily van der Meulen, Elya M. Durisin, and Victoria Love describe it,

Conceptualizations of sex work as a form of labour, as existing within a sex-work-is-work paradigm, have been developed in Canada and internationally by sex workers, often through labour and harm reduction advocacy. According to sex worker activist Carol Leigh (2004) ... she coined the term ‘sex work’ at a 1978 Women Against Violence in Pornography conference to better describe the diversity of labour performed within the industry. A significant feature of this paradigm is that it permits a shift from conceptualizing sex work exclusively in terms of a gender perspective... to an understanding of how sexual labour is organized within the broader capitalist context, including its class and racial dimensions. (2013b:17)

This presentation also supports a clear connection to discussions of “human rights”, in particular collective labour rights and rights to individual autonomy, health, and safety, and emphasizes the growing significance of human rights language to social movement organizing in Canada that followed the introduction of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in the 1960s.

Responding to Inequality, an Ethics of Care, and Human Rights

Throughout its development, the sex worker rights movement in Canada has also been shaped by ongoing acts of colonialism and violence against Indigenous persons (Kaye 2017), as well as racism targeting Asian (Lam 2018) and Black women (Maynard 2017), in salient ways. As the works of Judith Fingard (1984) and Judy Bedford (1981) demonstrate, Black women have

historically been significantly over-represented in terms of prostitution conviction and incarceration rates in Canada. This kind of racial discrimination in the application of anti-prostitution legislation is also reflected in the 1879 Amendments to the Indian Act of 1876²⁵ and Section 12 of the 1900 Amendment to the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885.²⁶ As Robyn Maynard discusses in her book *Policing Black Lives*,

Black women were vilified by moral reformers in the early twentieth century as being particularly prone to promiscuity – police and court workers feared Black women would seduce and corrupt white settler society... The Edmonton Police used these stereotypes in a push to bar Black migration... (2017:45)

As discussed in Chapter Three and as Jeffrey S. Juris and Alex Khasnabish (2013b) note, to the extent that social movements are challenges to the status quo, they are also always shaped by prevailing injustices and exclusions, and to this end, the sex worker rights movement has not been exempt. As Miranda, a member of the sex worker rights movement for over 10 years and graduate student studying the history of sex worker rights, remarked:

We can't pretend that in this fight we've always been perfect, I know we haven't, no matter how much it might pain us to do admit it. But we shouldn't want to pretend it's been perfect, because in acknowledging that the fight for sex worker rights has historically been extremely white and favoured indoor workers and that we've been working our asses off to change this we're pointing to a major strength! The fact that we have actually been doing the work of making this movement into something inclusive, something where no one gets left behind, that matters, it matters so much.

The presence of these historical exclusions points to ethical frictions rooted in differences in how “sex workers” as a group have been conceptualized by movement organizers and the

²⁵ Criminalized providing any form of housing to an “Indian woman” who has the “intention of prostituting herself therein.” C-34, 1879, An Act to Amend the “Indian Act, 1876.”

²⁶ While the Chinese Immigration Act broadly framed Chinese migrants as undesirable and imposed a ‘head tax’ on Chinese migrants arriving in Canada, this Amendment, which drew on actively publicized racist and xenophobic fears regarding the sexual morality of Chinese persons, refused entry to any Chinese woman known or suspected to be a prostitute. Statutes of Canada. An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration, 1900. Ottawa: SC 63-64 Victoria, Chapter 32. Section 12.

demographic that has been privileged within this marginalized community, which in turn points to different underlying ethical orientations of sex worker rights movement members. Referring to her research experience,²⁷ Miranda elaborated that it was clear to her that the sex worker rights movement has historically benefitted from acknowledging its limitations and engaging with groups of workers who felt left out of the movement. Elaborating, she said:

I think at first people wanted so badly to confront the anti-sex work groups who were portraying us as victims or criminals, and the obvious opposite of the sad, beleaguered hooker was the ‘happy hooker.’ And we see this dichotomy creeping up even now, this idea that its only through a presentation of sex work as marvelous that we would ever be deserving of rights. But that’s divisive, it’s not helpful, it’s not realistic. We should have rights regardless of our level of happiness. So by working hard to listen when other groups say ‘hey, that’s not me, what about my experience?’, by listening to people when they tell us we could be doing better and then doing more to make services more appropriate and inclusive, that’s how we remake the world.

For Miranda, then, engaging with the friction that results from others feeling left out of the movement, which itself results from the actions of primary movement organizers, strengthens the movement. Miranda’s analysis of the movement as being strengthened by its diversity, as well as her acknowledgement of both past and present divisions within the sex worker rights movement, is echoed by the media coverage that circulated when the government introduced PCEPA. Responding to sex worker rights organizer Jessica Lee’s creation of a “Happy Hookers of Canada” campaign, Celine Bisette (2014) wrote in her op-ed for the National Post:

As a sex worker of nine years and a fellow advocate of decriminalizing the sex trade in Canada, I was dismayed to learn of Lee’s attempt to divide sex workers into categories of either happy or unhappy...The reality is that people working in our industry have diverse experiences...What Lee fails to understand is that critiquing her political strategy is not an attempt to prevent her from sharing her personal experiences. Rather, it is an attempt to strengthen the sex worker rights movement by encouraging everyone involved to question their tactics and ensure that they are including the perspectives of everyone who will be affected by Canada’s new prostitution laws...All of our stories matter and we all have a

²⁷ At the time of writing, Miranda’s research has not yet been published. With permission, I include her insights using a pseudonym.

right to stay safe. There is no need to highlight the experiences of ‘happy hookers’ in a fight against Bill C-36, because happiness is not the most important factor in this debate – safety is.

The current movement is thus strongly influenced by an ever-growing awareness of the history of discrimination targeting racialized and low-income workers in Canadian society at large and how this has been (and continues to be) reflected in some forms of sex worker rights organizing. As Shawna Ferris notes in her research on street level sex work in Canada, while many sex worker rights groups regularly underscore the high number of Indigenous women involved in the survival sex trade, as well as the higher rates of violence they face, “sex worker activism in Canada remains primarily a white enterprise” (2015:136). Together with Bisette’s op-ed, this highlights a primary point of potential difference in the ethical orientations of members of the sex worker rights movement: how best to represent the movement and sex workers. The dominant response from primary organizers in the Toronto movement was that a holistic and diverse presentation of sex work, as well as support services that foreground the needs of the most marginalized workers, was the ideal course of action. However, while this response was emphasized during the time of my fieldwork, it is important to note that it is a response that has developed over time, resulting from the ways that some members of the movement have engaged with differences in the ethical orientations and positionalities of both sex workers and sex worker rights movement members and the friction that accompanied these differences. Further, while some movement members were satisfied with the progress made to date, others felt that much more work needed to be done to support and represent sex workers of colour and Indigenous sex workers, with current efforts to make the movement truly intersectional not going far enough.

Responding to historical frictions, a growing awareness of disparities in service provision and advocacy has encouraged the development of a form of critical reflexivity in organizing that emphasizes intersectionality and is geared towards addressing historical wrongs as well as any prevailing exclusions of workers from the movement. With Indigenous women and Two-Spirited persons being over-represented in more precarious areas of the sex trades (Ferris 2015; Hunt 2015), some local organizations have translated this awareness into a focus on developing culturally appropriate support services for Indigenous sex workers, including peer support groups led by elders, the foregrounding of Indigenous sex workers in public events, and attempts to secure long-term funding specifically for supporting Indigenous workers (Maggie's Toronto 2012). Similarly, prompted in part by the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and Canada and the alliances that have been cultivated between Black Lives Matter movement members and members of the sex worker rights movement more broadly, the intersectional barriers and forms of discrimination faced by Black sex workers in Toronto, as well as other sex workers of colour, have been increasingly brought to the foreground of organizing efforts (Golkar 2016).

A growing awareness of differences in the ethical orientations of movement members, the ways that these stem from different positionalities along the lines of race, class, and legal status, and the gaps in participation and service provision that have resulted, culminated in significant changes within the sex worker rights movement in Toronto prior to my entry into it. As Anise described, "it's taken a lot of work to get people to be more aware of the blind spots in the movement. Black sex workers, for example, why aren't we in more leadership positions? It took a lot of pushing to start this conversation." Here, "pushing" involved getting other (mostly white) movement members to evaluate their own organizing practices and look for ways that

they, intentionally or otherwise, reduced the participation of Black sex workers, and getting others to recognize the hierarchies and forms of discrimination that were present in their organizing activities and to make changes.

Similar efforts around issues of exclusion in support service provision and advocacy led to the creation of two organizations that operated semi-autonomously from the other organizations in the Toronto movement which focused on the needs of racialized migrant sex workers. While the work of making space for and incorporating racialized migrant sex workers into the sex worker rights movement largely occurred before my entry into the field, the need for its creation points to a prior absence in advocacy and service provision for these workers and the intense, frictional work that was undertaken to expand the boundaries of the movement's ethical world. During my fieldwork,²⁸ the outcome of these efforts was evident in the pronounced focus within the movement's main sex worker support services and rights organization on collaborating with these new organizations to direct attention to the needs of and barriers faced by migrant sex workers. This involved acknowledging that these workers often bore the brunt of anti-trafficking efforts and, in addition to the barriers presented by racism and criminalization, often experienced barriers to accessing support services as a result of language barriers, precarious immigration status, and a long-recognized lack of representation in the broader sex worker rights movement (Brock et al. 2000; Lam 2018). It also included supporting the development of an outreach organization and its sister organization, an advocacy group, which focused predominantly on the support service and advocacy needs of migrant sex workers in the city. Following their development, both organizations worked in close collaboration with the

²⁸ It is important to note that, as a cis-gendered, white ally with citizenship in Canada, my analysis of current ethical frictions related to race and status-based discrimination is limited, as I was likely not exposed to or included in all ongoing discussions among movement members of colour regarding the degree of continued marginalization sex workers of colour and those without status faced within the movement.

primary sex worker support organization and its pre-established base of volunteers, incorporating awareness raising pieces into publications, public events, and policy submissions.

Thus, as Bisette (2014) and Miranda's discussion suggests, the movement's guiding framework has developed in response to both public misperceptions and misrepresentations of sex work, as well as historical conflicts rooted in racialized and less privileged workers actively being or feeling excluded from the movement. Responses to the friction produced by exclusions and conflicts have predominantly taken the form of striving to unify the movement across differences while foregrounding the needs of the sex working communities' most vulnerable members, requiring more privileged workers, such as Lee, to work through any underlying biases they might have so that mutual accord can be reached and no one is left behind. As Alice described it, "Under no circumstances will we throw less privileged workers under the bus as a way to secure rights for more privileged workers. Absolutely not." The result was a complicated and dynamic ethical world where a reflexive, intersectional approach to issues of privilege and exclusion was emphasized and members were expected to be open to criticism and continually re-evaluating how their ethical orientations informed their organizing to ensure that it did not reproduce the stratification, inequality, and oppression found in the outside world. While, as Alice emphasized and the work of Ferris (2015) and Maynard (2018) demonstrates, there was still substantial work to be done, race was increasingly centralized in organizing discussions, particularly around hiring practices and the creation and provision of support services. This was intimately tied, as I discuss below, to the ethics of care that was central to the ethical world of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto and its efforts to continually improve itself as it sought to instigate similar changes in non-movement spaces.

Building on this ethics of care are the universals or axioms of unity (Tsing 2005) that bound movement members to a common cause; namely, the decriminalization of sex work in Canada and achieving respect and acknowledgement that “sex workers’ rights are human rights” and “sex work is work.” These two assertions were central to movement organizers and frequently adorned signs at public events and organization websites, as well as being frequently repeated in both formal and casual conversations. Unlike the anti-trafficking Network in Toronto, which formally united to achieve the more vaguely defined goal of “eliminating human trafficking”, allowing for a wide-array of different conceptualizations of the problem and how to solve it, the over-arching goal of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto was more clearly defined. The primary differences between members revolved around how actively and directly they engaged with issues of inclusion and marginalization in their organizing efforts and how this translated into the activities that they believed would be most beneficial for making progress towards achieving the movement’s broad but clearly defined goals.

The sex worker rights movement’s objectives also demonstrated a blending of conceptualizations of “human rights” as individual and collective (see Chapter Two), wherein violations were experienced by individuals (as the Hutt decision highlighted) that collectively constituted a working “community” or “population” that formed the basis for appeals to collective labour rights that were directed at the state (as the Bedford case emphasized). Following Arendt’s (2009) analysis of human rights, this reflects an acknowledgement of the need for “human rights” to be guaranteed by a state. While appeals for “labour rights” suggested a conceptualization of human rights as collective, as opposed to only individual, these appeals were distinct from conceptualizations of collective rights put forward by Indigenous groups, which are generally rooted in the establishment of a distinct “culture” and collective cultural

rights (Kymlicka 2009).²⁹ Rather, appeals to “labour rights” drew on histories of unionization and collective bargaining outside the sex trades, as well as efforts to put sex work on the agendas of major Canadian unions and unionize sex workers (Clamen, Gillies, & Salah 2013), combined with an emphasis on individual rights to safety and security of person that were rooted in the Western liberal interpretations of human rights enshrined in the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, discussed in Chapter Two.

Here, “human rights” are individual and inherent, as well as something that should be realizable by everyone equally, and “labour rights” are specific human rights that, as Bisette (2014) notes, should apply to all workers equally based on their status as both humans and workers. Key to this dual rights claim was the conscious deployment of the figure of the sex worker as a *worker*, rather than a victim or criminal. This framing relied on the claim that the inherent human rights of sex workers were being violated through a lack of recognition of their humanity and the legitimacy of their occupation and undergirded a significant number of the public presentations that took place during my fieldwork. While many members of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto participated in and contributed to discussions regarding how to legally challenge PCEPA through the national efforts of the Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform, organizers focused predominantly on the intersectional barriers to safe work environments faced by migrant sex workers in Toronto were also actively setting up meetings with major unions in the city. In doing so, the two-pronged approach to establishing sex workers as being entitled to human rights and labour rights was combined with a third requirement: the recognition of migrant rights. This third requirement highlighted the diverse needs of sex

²⁹ See Kymlicka 2009 and Gledhill 2003 for a more in-depth discussion of collective Indigenous rights claims.

workers, as well as the need to push for recognition on multiple fronts and the salience of intersectional approaches to organizing that I take up below.

The language of “human rights” that members of the sex worker rights movement drew on thus had a strong legal component, tied to formal recognition of sex workers as labourers and ideas regarding workplace health and safety, but it was also paired with what movement members, such as Anise, described as the need to “undo the dehumanizing way that people think about us, as either victims or perpetrators, as in need of rescue or locking up.” In this way, interviews reflected how many Toronto movement members understood the denial of sex workers’ human rights as a denial of their humanness, which required members to simultaneously work towards the recognition of “sex workers” as humans requiring and deserving of equal treatment and as workers with “labour rights.” The emphasis on gaining recognition as workers also demonstrated a resistance to attempts to cultivate public recognition of their humanity at the cost of their agency, which Miranda and Anise described as being viewed “as victims.”

The emphasis on Western legal conceptualizations of “human rights” in the sex worker rights movement was also a point of tension for those movement members that viewed them as overly reliant on government structures, the same structures that were identified as responsible for the structural violence that sex workers and other marginalized, stigmatized, and criminalized groups faced. As Jen described her ideal world,

I mean, I’m also anti-capitalist and more politically anarchist minded, so if I’m imagining my dream world, I do believe we should abolish the prison system as it stands now and develop systems for transformative justice. We have to have decolonization, self-determination for Indigenous peoples. Relying on the government, relying on their systems, we’re never going to achieve real equality. We need to rebuild from the ground up.

The emphasis on legal human rights frameworks and conceptualizations that framed the ethical world of the sex worker rights movement thus existed in tension with the anarchist politics of some members, as they required relying on governmental structures that were also seen as responsible for innumerable harms. As Sarah Hunt (2015) explains, this human rights framework is also inherently limiting, as it negates or makes ineligible those who do not qualify as “human” within legal human rights frameworks. Regarding Indigenous sex workers in particular, Hunt writes that “Rights claims depend on presenting ourselves as bounded and legitimate beings within existing socio-legal categories” (2015:27). As discussed in Chapter Two, this draws attention to the central limitation of these kinds of socio-legal human rights frameworks being used as a primary solution to issues of violence and oppression: that they simultaneously open up possibilities and create structural limitations wherein the only voices that count are those that adhere to the boundaries of human rights discourses (Englund 2009:247). In contrast to the generally uncritical use of human rights language and frameworks in the Network, as discussed in Chapter Three, this tension, paired with recognition of the politics of compassion (Fassin 2008; Ticktin 2011) that supports the dehumanization of sex workers in much of Canadian society (Ferris 2015), was engaged with by many members of the sex worker rights movement and culminated in the cultivation of a form of organizing that engaged in what Jeffrey Juris (2008), drawing on Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato’s (1992) work on new social movements, describes as a “dual politics”. Here, movement members worked to intervene in and influence dominant political spheres while simultaneously working to create the embryonic foundations of the more utopian world they ultimately desired to realize according to the guiding framework of the movement. They were, similar to Arturo Escobar’s description of social movements, not simply oppositional or power serving, but “practicing an innovative politics of challenging,

shifting, and sometimes accepting established forms of power”, engaging in struggles over meanings and socio-economic conditions, resistance and accommodation, synthesis and innovation (1992:412-415). In this context, the over-arching framework of achieving legal and social recognition that “sex workers’ rights are human rights” intertwined with the ethics of care that permeated movement meetings. In doing so, the ethical world of the movement was continually (re)created and maintained.

Meetings: Creating Intentional Spaces

sex workers create community with each other because we cannot find it in other places due to judgement, stigma, and discrimination. It is not people in the sex sector who deny us services, discriminate against us, incarcerate us, query us with inappropriate personal questions, or desire to know the details of our personal difficulties. We are a part of a community of sex workers where it is possible to access support that many of us cannot find elsewhere. This is not to say that relationships with others in the sex sector are always positive, without conflict, or uniformly helpful – they are not – but solidarity exists among sex workers where many positive things can develop. Sex worker-led organizations are critical to giving form to and encouraging this social solidarity here and elsewhere. Through social relationships, we create understandings that support and empower us, rather than shame us. It is this community and solidarity that produces positive changes for sex workers, not laws that prohibit sex work or programs that deter or exit people from the activity. (Rose 2015:61)

This quote from academic, sex worker, and rights movement member Ava Rose’s (2015) article on the sex worker rights movement in Canada points to several aspects of sex worker rights movement spaces that I explore in detail in this section, including how such spaces were intended to be ones where sex workers, who made up the majority of participants in meetings, could experience a sense of community and escape from the stigma and discrimination that was too often experienced outside of them. Returning to the meeting vignette that opened this chapter, it demonstrates some of the ways that meeting spaces were often as much about organizing future advocacy efforts as they were about the day-to-day struggles that criminalization and discrimination presented to the majority of movement members: the open

availability of a wide array of free safer sex supplies; free harm reduction supplies; and discussions about how to avoid undesirable contact with police.

The rest of the meeting continued this interweaving of community care with movement related organizing. The meeting itself began about twenty minutes past the scheduled start time, a point that did not surprise anyone as meetings rarely, if ever, started on time and there was a general understanding that if people were late or unable to attend it wasn't because they didn't care. Rather, it was because they lacked the capacity (whether emotional, physical, or time related) or, sometimes, the financial ability to attend. The reality that everyone who attended these meetings was a volunteer that was also juggling some combination of work, school, and family obligations, with childcare costs and the potential for losing out on paid work creating a significant financial burden for some, was openly acknowledged. This was highlighted every time someone would try to schedule a meeting more than a week or so in advance, as Alice described,

you can't expect everyone to be able to follow through with attending a meeting, even if they committed to it a month ago, because, honestly, paid work has to take priority for the majority of people here. If I've got something planned and a client wants to book, especially if it's near the end of the month and rent is due, I'm going to book the client.

Addressing other financial costs, meetings at funded organizations generally provided transit tokens to those who needed them to ensure that getting to and from the meeting didn't strain their financial situation. Food was also provided as often as was possible. In the case of meetings hosted by the one organization with secure funding, this might mean take-out. For many meetings though, funding was not available and food was brought in to the extent that individual members were able to donate it.

Turning to the structure of meetings, whether held in someone's home or hosted by the one organization with office space, they generally did not occur on a set schedule. While some groups, like the advocacy group for sex worker rights, initially endeavoured to meet on a monthly basis, this was rarely sustainable due to unpredictable schedules and the voluntary nature of membership. Instead, smaller working groups would meet to complete work on specific projects, with larger meetings occurring when there were major updates or planning to be done. Each working group would generally designate someone to be in charge of planning out and trying to schedule meetings, but formal agendas were rarely used. Meeting content was guided by the specific project that was being worked on, such as the PCEPA working group that was developing training sessions for service providers. During meetings, someone who had brought their laptop would volunteer to take notes or, for more formal meetings, "minutes", which would later be circulated to everyone in attendance and anyone who couldn't attend but was part of the group. Meeting frequency ranged from once a week to every few months and project work was supplemented with communication via email, social media, and casual in-person hang outs.

In terms of setting up the space, circular seating arrangements were always used, whether in an organization's meeting space or held in someone's home. In the case of the latter, members would arrange themselves on couches, chairs, or sit on the floor on pillows if there wasn't enough space on the furniture, with an emphasis on everyone being able to see each other and feeling welcome and included. Meetings then typically began with everyone (re)introducing themselves and letting the group know how they're doing on a personal level. This might include, for example, sharing if they're particularly stressed about something, have had trouble sleeping, are going through a difficult time, or have good news to share, and generated responses from other members conveying support, compassion, sympathy, and/or shared excitement,

depending on what was shared. In the meeting that opened this chapter, during updates Alice went on to share that she was “freaking out about a test” that she had to write later that week, to which others in the room that were also students expressed sympathy and a short conversation about exam schedules and trying to balance work with school followed.

Similar to the work-related update and introduction portion of anti-trafficking Network meetings, the process of sharing personal updates and (re)introductions often took up the first hour of a given meeting. Through this process of sharing personal updates, which contrasts with the work-related updates that Network members shared, sex worker rights movement members emphasized what they perceived as the importance of caring for and supporting each other. As Alice later discussed with me, “it’s important to recognize that we’re all whole people. Just like no one is ‘just a sex worker,’ contrary to what the media might think, no one here is just an organizer, we’re whole humans, not just partial.” This connects to the movement’s ethics of care and emphasis on the need to “humanize” sex workers in order to gain access to human rights protections, the implication being that if they are not able to be seen as human, they cannot make successful claims on the existing human rights frameworks that require being recognized as “human” as a prerequisite for having “rights.” By encouraging those participating in meetings to bring their “whole” selves into the space and openly share about their lives outside of movement spaces, meeting organizers like Alice were working to foster the community that Rose (2015) describes, where members could both organize and access support that they may not be able to find elsewhere. This interweaving of care with the movement and the growth of the movement through providing such care connects to what Sergio Gregorio Baierle (1998) notes in his research on the development of new ethical-political principles in popular Christian movements in Porto Alegre, Brazil. For Baierle, movement members do not meet just to gather in a gesture

of Christian solidarity, although that too was a valid reason. Rather, they “meet because they need to, because they have needs and it is in discussing their needs that they construct collective interests, discover causes and consequences, learn to speak, to listen, to plan. Their actions produce concrete changes that improve their lives” (1998:135).

Further cultivating this ethics of care, introductions included sharing preferred names. This served to remind everyone of the importance of remembering to use the name a person gives in a particular meeting space and not assuming that a person will use the same name in all environments. This meant that if you saw another member on the street, you should wait and provide them with an opportunity to (re)introduce themselves or otherwise indicate the name they are using at a given time. The practice reflected the reality that anonymity and the use of pseudonyms could be a crucial means of protecting oneself from the effects of criminalization and stigma, as well as providing a means of separating work from activism from family. Everyone also shared their preferred pronouns as a means of creating a safe and gender-reaffirming space that recognized the diversity of those gathered, the presence of LGBTQ and gender non-conforming persons in the sex trades, and reinforcing the ethics of inclusivity, care, and non-discrimination that the movement advocated. Those with sex working experience often mentioned it, while volunteers that self-identified as allies shared their reasons for participating. These disclosures functioned as a means of legitimating and vetting a person’s presence in the space, with the disclosure of sex working experiences providing unquestionable legitimacy and allies needing to demonstrate that they were not naïve voyeurs likely to unwittingly insult or violate the anonymity of the workers present. In all cases, the member leading the meeting was someone with experience in these kinds of organizing spaces and would lead by example, so that new volunteers would know what was expected of them when their turn came. If a step was

forgotten, such as not sharing ones preferred pronouns, another member would mention it before the process of introductions got too far along, often saying something along the lines of “Oh, you forgot to share your pronouns”. In this way, meetings also created spaces for new movement members to learn about the kinds of action that were condoned in the movement and the implications this had for achieving and occupying particular ethically marked subject positions. As discussed in Chapter Two and explored in the context of the Network in Chapter Three, particular kinds of behaviour, language, and action could be validated in meeting spaces through the responses of other meeting members and, in particular, those that occupied the position of ethical pedagogue, which in this case were the meeting leaders and more experienced movement members. Unlike the Network, where a wide variety of ethical orientations and the actions that followed from those orientations were permitted under an ethos of “bringing everyone to the table”, these movement spaces required members, particularly those without sex working experience, to closely adhere to the movement’s ethics of care and guiding framework.

Meetings were thus strongly influenced by the personal experiences of organizers with sex working experience and their desire to create environments that not only supported organizing for the rights of sex workers, but also supported individual members of the sex working community as “whole humans”. In this way, members of the sex worker rights movement created “intentional spaces” (Juris 2013) within which movement work could occur and members could, ideally, feel cared for and supported and which directly influenced the movement’s ethical world. As Jeffrey S. Juris describes, “intentional spaces” are often created in social movements when organizers are working to address long-standing tensions between “directly democratic forms of organization and the goal of racial and class diversity” in social movements (2013:40-41). They are also sites of symbolic reclaiming and resistance that inscribe

the possibility of being, living, and creating “something else” within the social. These efforts are often made in response to issues of representation, connected with grassroots and academic critiques that criticize social movements, particularly those in the global North, for having a predominantly white, middle-class composition (ibid., Martinez 2000; Starr 2004). They also connect to a recognition that popular “open space” models of organizing that seek to bring as many parties into the conversation as possible, such as the Network’s anti-trafficking spaces which emphasized “bringing everyone to the table”, are often limited by the ways that “structures of privilege and inequality erect ‘invisible’ barriers to participation that are masked by discourses of openness, making it likely that powerful groups will predominate” (Juris 2013:45). In contrast, models of organizing that pursue the creation of “intentional spaces” may emphasize having a particular balance of power and race and class composition that is central to the movement (ibid.).

In the case of the sex worker rights movement, organizing spaces were developed with the intention of ensuring that the movement continued to be, as Anise, Miranda, and Jen described, “by and for sex workers” and supported the guideline that there be “Nothing About Us Without Us.” In addition, Anise, like Alice, emphasized that movement spaces needed to be “safe spaces of community care”, referencing the importance of “checking in with everyone to see how they’re really doing.” Central to this was a recognition on the part of many movement organizers, as Miranda’s earlier mentioned discussion indicated, of issues of representation within the movement and the underrepresentation of more marginalized workers in organizing spaces. In particular, outside of specific support and organizing groups, such as the Indigenous drumming group, it was not uncommon for meetings to consist entirely of white, cisgender indoor workers and allies. To this end, many movement members made concerted efforts to

foreground the voices and capacities of the most marginalized in the sex trades, in particular trans women of colour, Indigenous, and other racialized sex workers, street level workers (where trans and racialized workers are over-represented), and migrant workers, in movement spaces, including meetings and events. This was demonstrated when the working group that was planning an upcoming National Day of Action was reviewing potential MCs, speakers, and performers, where part of the discussion went as follows:

Jen: So do we know who might be available to speak and MC the event?

Alice: I think Brenda might be able to, maybe Anise or Mary?

Victoria: I think we should reach out to Anise and Mary first. Anise is better positioned to speak about the importance of working with Black sex workers and collaborating with Black Lives Matter and Mary heads the Indigenous drumming group, the trans peer support group, and the street outreach. Maybe we can also ask her if the drumming group would be up for performing?

Jen: Ok, we'll start there. Next, the migrant sex worker group has a skit they've put together and can perform, should we also ask them to introduce it? Maybe Brenda or Suki?

Alice: Maybe both? Suki can better speak to their outreach as well.

Jen: Great. Now, in terms of media, I was thinking that myself, Anise, and Mary should be our go-tos for this, we want to make sure that we're really emphasizing our priorities and the different issues various groups are facing...

In seeking to balance the reality that those with the most capacity were also generally those with the most privilege, organizers worked hard to find ways of creating movement spaces that did not replicate the systems of oppressions that they were trying to change and that prevented people from being active in formally "open" spaces. Responding to both historical and current frictions related to these issues, there was a strong emphasis on prioritizing the needs and representation of racialized workers, demonstrated here by organizers seeking to foreground the work of Anise and Mary, as well as street level and migrant workers, in both meetings and the media. Movement spaces were also intended to privilege and prioritize those with sex working experience who the movement was "by and for". Practically, this involved: limiting the roles that allies could take on within the movement; ensuring that hiring practices privileged those with sex

working experience and coming from more marginalized situations; thinking critically about who spoke publicly and to the media about a sex worker rights organization's work with the goal of making space for and foregrounding the voices of racialized and trans workers; and creating spaces exclusively for sex workers to come together and talk about work and their personal lives, to find support, and to engage in organizing activities.

There was also an emphasis on “horizontality”, or “horizontal” organizing, a term popularized by grassroots autonomous movements in Argentina, in organizing efforts. Such efforts are “characterized by non-hierarchical relations, decentralized coordination, direct democracy, and the striving for consensus” (Juris 2013:40-41). In the context of the sex worker rights movement, this was demonstrated through efforts to come to cross-organizational consensus on the particularities of, for example, calls for legislative reform. As Alice described:

we're in contact with other sex worker rights organizations and movement members across the country and together we try to come to consensus on what exactly we want the government to change. We are calling for decriminalization, everyone agrees on that, but what do we want things to look like after that happens? Do we support any forms of regulation? What about age restrictions? What will human rights for sex workers look like in practice? There's a lot to work out and we definitely have disagreements, but we also all want to improve our working conditions and for that we need a realistic plan that we can sell the government on.

The guidelines also necessarily impacted the subject positions that members could pursue within the movement and demonstrated the difference in both the multitude of subject positions one might occupy and the limitations placed on who could occupy particular positions in a way that contrasted with those that were achievable and validated within the anti-trafficking Network's meeting spaces.

Complicating Inclusion: Allyship

As this discussion of intentional spaces suggests, in a movement that was “by and for sex workers”, but which was also a movement where those with sex working experience often had limited capacity to volunteer their time and energy, the roles and position of allies were a complex point of friction that illustrated the challenges of aligning ethical orientations with practical issues of capacity. Connecting to decision making processes, decisions that were made in sex worker rights movement spaces that I, identified as an ally,³⁰ participated in were done in a way that privileged the votes and voices of sex workers over allies. This was done through such means as differentially weighting votes so that the votes of sex workers counted for more than the votes of allies and ensuring that the one funded organization that provided support services and engaged in advocacy had a board where the majority of positions were held by persons with sex working experience. Beyond this, not all meetings or support groups were open to allies, particularly those that focused on providing direct support service provision to current or former sex workers. As the preceding discussion suggests, these efforts were made not only to demonstrate ethical consistency, they were also rooted in issues of safety and a desire to protect sex workers from emotional, verbal, and carceral violence in the form of micro-aggressions or more blatant attacks. As Jen, who volunteered for the funded support service and advocacy organization, described its history,

This organization was founded by sex workers to provide the services that we weren't getting elsewhere. From the beginning, we've been by and for sex workers and that means we hire people with sex working experience, strongly advocate for peer-to-peer support services, and from the top-down, from the board to the volunteer support workers, sex workers have and will always be the majority.

³⁰ For a more detailed discussion of my status as an ally and position within the sex worker rights movement, see the Methodology section of Chapter One.

Returning to ally participation, beyond the desire to ensure the sex worker rights movement was sex worker led, sex working movement members reported that there have been instances of people disingenuously presenting themselves as allies as a means of gaining access to sex workers for personal gain, such as publishing a newspaper article, blackmailing workers with threats of ‘outing’ or ‘doxxing’ (revealing their legal names and involvement in sex work to outsiders, potentially along with their personal contact information and location), or gathering information that would later be manipulated to support carceral and anti-sex work agendas. As Jen described it, some self-identifying allies with good intentions have also been known to “be more work than they’re worth” to the extent that they bring naïve ideas about sex work and the reality of sex worker rights organizing into movement spaces, leading them to potentially unknowingly use harmful language (such as whore or prostitute) or ask inappropriate questions (“So why do you do sex work? Do you like it? What’s it like?”). Allies could also be unreliable, making commitments in moments of enthusiasm that they were unable to fulfill and then “fading away” rather than being upfront about their capacity. When discussing this with Alice, Miranda, and some other meeting members, Alice shrugged, saying “Well, it’s not their life now is it? Criminalization doesn’t directly affect them, so they have fewer reasons to stay in the fight, different priorities.”

Attitudes towards the involvement of non-sex workers in the sex worker rights movement, beyond attendance at public events and/or signing petitions for decriminalization where more names and bodies helped create an impression and provided safety, were complicated and not uniform, with tension between the limited capacity of many sex working organizers, the potentially larger capacity of allies to take on and complete tasks, and an overall lack of resources. As Alice elaborated in an interview:

We don't have resources and a lot of sex workers are not in a position where they can donate resources or are in a position where they can give resources. So I think allyship, in terms of organizations, is extremely important. And I guess it can feel sort of, I don't know, looking at it from an inside perspective it's so experience based and it's by and for [sex workers], so it may feel like someone who doesn't have experience is not welcome, but having to prove themselves or something like that. And I may have said that before, like that it should only be sex workers, before seeing the way that the organization works and we're not, we need allies who are actually able and willing to help because it's not happening for us otherwise... if people were actually paid to be there it would be different, if that was their job. But it's not. So I think that's why organizations like [different sex worker rights organization] are so strong, it's because they have eight plus employees."

Here, the lack of funding available to the sex worker rights movement, in contrast to the anti-trafficking Network where most members were paid employees, and the benefits of having paid employees to help with organizing work is highlighted. The organization that Alice was referring to was based in Montreal, Quebec, and produced a significant amount of bilingual public education materials and resources that the Toronto movement drew upon but did not have similar resources to produce. This lack of paid employment opportunities for those with sex working experience to provide support services to other workers and engage in advocacy efforts was strongly connected to ethical friction relating to the role of allies in the Toronto movement. Here, the desire to have the sex worker rights movement be self-reliant and self-sustaining from only the labour of those with sex working experience, a desire that was strongly tied to the movement's guiding framework that foregrounded and positioned sex workers as fully capable humans, existed in tension with the realities of unpaid labour, emotional exhaustion and burnout, as well as the goal of social movements to recruit new members and instigate change in the world around them.

Many members of the sex worker rights movement that self-identified as allies expressed awareness and acceptance of this friction during my research, understanding it as part of the

movement itself and that not all spaces are “for allies.” As Kyle, who was also involved in several other social movements, noted:

All of the sex worker rights work I’ve done has been far more deferential than other activist work I’ve done, and I mean it does pose questions or difficulties around what is one’s role as a non-sex worker in [that] space...I mean the takeaway, that feeling of the limits of my participation, and they are *real* limits, and by that I mean I get why they are there and they are not even necessarily implicitly imposed, but they are just the product of the type of relationships that people have. (emphasis original)

Here the “relationships that people have” refers to the experiences sex working members of the movement have had with the world ‘outside’ the movement, as well as in other sex working organization spaces where allies predominate, and how this has resulted in the cultivation of particular limitations and modes of participation in meeting spaces, reflecting the boundaries and limitations of participation that existed in this ethical world. These limitations connected to the construction of movement spaces as “intentional spaces” and directly responded to the ways that some non-sex working movement members (with ethical orientations at odds with the movement) had historically sought to use sex workers and the sex worker rights movement as a means of achieving their own individual goals, including the pursuit of (predominantly white) feminist subjectivities, as discussed in Chapter Three. Thus, while sex working members of the movement were able pursue a variety of subject positions, including that of ethical pedagogues, allies were not and, while these limitations were generally accepted, understood, and supported by allies as necessary and intrinsic to the guiding framework of the movement, frictions still existed and some allies withdrew from actively participating in movement as a result.

Another example of this was the organization of the 2016 Desiree Alliance Conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana. I attended the conference together with Anise and other members of the sex worker rights movement from Toronto, organizing a panel on intersectional

sex workers organizing in Canada that was geared towards discussing ways of overcoming barriers to diversity and inclusivity within the movement through a focus on anti-Black racism, economic stratification, and the “whorearchy.” The conference was explicitly “by and for” sex workers, with the goal of sharing information, organizing, and supporting the sex worker rights movement. To this end, attendees without sex work experience were not granted admission to all conference spaces and there were frequent reminders during presentations that the conference was not being held for the benefit of allies or non-sex working attendees, but for sex workers. This took the form of formal verbal reminders during presentations, more informal reminders that were given voice to by sex working participants inside and outside of panels, and explicit guidelines for researchers and journalists that required them to receive verbal and written consent from conference participants for the use of quotes, images, or other materials.

The organization of our own panel reflected the conferences’ emphasis on privileging the voices of sex workers, with me doing the bulk of the background organizing and planning and the speakers on the panel being self-identified sex workers of colour. The conference space, though anyone could register and the event was publicly advertised, was not an “open” space, but an “intentional” one, wherein those without sex working experience who presumed that their presence or forms of “allyship” would win them instant praise were quickly disabused of the notion. One particular demonstration of this, which I have received permission to recount here, was a presentation by a queer-friendly BDSM organization, given by presenters that did not self-identify as having sex work experience, which focused on the benefits that could come from their allyship with the sex worker rights movement. The presenters had an array of pamphlets and other materials laid out for perusal, one of which featured a tongue in cheek BDSM scenario where one of the individuals was dressed as a police officer. When Anise challenged the

presenters on the appropriateness of bringing materials that portrayed joking and positive relationships with police to a space where many present have had violent and otherwise negative experiences with police and other government authorities, the presenters doubled down on their insistence that fostering “healthy” and “positive” relationships with the police was one of their central strategies and one that the sex worker rights movement would benefit from working on. Not insignificantly, the weekend prior to the conference there were massive protests in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, against police violence towards Black communities and conference organizers were openly planning and advertising a supporting protest to take place later in the week. As Anise lamented to me after we walked out of the presentation, these elements combined to make the response of the presenters “come off as uninformed, insensitive, and ridiculously tone deaf”, leading to the widespread dismissal of the organization by Anise as “the right kind of allies.”

Tensions around allyship and being the “right kind” of ally point to a key contrast between the guiding framework of sex worker rights movement and that of the anti-trafficking Network. Whereas the Network (as discussed in Chapter Three) navigated ethical friction by emphasizing an ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” and, in doing so, fostered an ethical world that was exclusive in its attempts to be inclusive, bringing together diverse anti-trafficking advocates at the expense of including members of the sex worker rights movement or migrant worker rights movement, the sex worker rights movement was intentionally exclusive through its emphasis on being “by and for sex workers” and positioning of allies as supportive but not guiding members. The ethical world of the sex worker rights movement was thus characterized by a cognizance and reinforcement of insider/outsider distinctions, both within the movement through open discussions of the role of allies and outside of it through engagement with the struggles many workers faced in their daily lives. In the context of discussions of inclusion,

within these intentional spaces, inclusion emphasized the diversity of those movement members with sex working experience, rather than the diversity of all present. For allies, this was expected, even if it was, at times, unpleasant. As Lacy, an ally who had been organizing in Toronto for two years at the time that I met her, explained to me,

Sometimes I feel uncomfortable or insecure in meetings, like when we're all sharing and I'm afraid I'm going to say the wrong thing. But when I think about it, I imagine that this is maybe what it feels like to be a sex worker in our society, you know, uncomfortable in certain spaces and afraid to say the wrong thing. So to be here in this space that's not, you know, 'for me', it's my choice. Like Alice said, it's not my fight, so being here, even when it's uncomfortable, that's what it sometimes means to be an ally. My comfort is not the priority here and that's how it's supposed to be.

Returning to Edelman's description of social movement practices as embodying "in embryonic form the changes the movements seek" (2001:289), the issue of allyship in the sex worker rights movement and tensions around inclusion point to the more substantial social changes that the movement sought to achieve: a world wherein all individuals are appreciated and treated as whole humans and the creation of these kind of intentional spaces becomes unnecessary. As Alice described it,

What I want is to get to a point where I can be me wherever I am without being afraid of discrimination or someone being offended by my work. I want to be able to come to a meeting and just get the project underway. I don't want to need this space, but right now, I do, because I rarely find it anywhere else.

Challenges: Capacity, Reactionary Organizing, and Being "Above Reproach"

For all that movement members strove to create safe and inclusive organizing spaces, the definition of what a safe and inclusive space looked like continued to change as individual members diversely encountered, identified, and came to understand new and existing forms of stigma, discrimination, and oppression. Evidence of this is pronounced when reviewing the

history of the erasure experienced by Indigenous and trans identifying sex workers (Fletcher 2013; Hunt 2013; JJ 2013), as well as other racialized and non-female identifying workers (Crago & Maynard 2017; Redwood 2013), and more recent attempts to remedy this erasure through a re-centring of the experiences of more marginalized sex workers (for example, van der Meulen et al. 2013a; Ferris 2015). In organizing, this has been reflected through the creation of a peer-to-peer support group for Indigenous sex workers in Toronto that began in the early 2010s, conversations in organizing meetings that critically took up issues of optics and the need to center the voices of more marginalized workers in a meaningful way without perpetuating tokenism, struggles to create a peer-to-peer support group for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) sex workers, and the growth of movement support for and attention to the needs of migrant sex workers in the city.

As Miranda's earlier discussion suggests, these changes were in response to internal frictions linked to differing ethical orientations among movement members. For Mary, an Indigenous trans sex worker, outreach worker, and long-time member of the sex worker rights movement, growing public awareness about the working conditions of many Indigenous sex workers following the arrest and trial of Robert Pickton in British Columbia created a space for these tensions to be addressed. As she explained,

Pickton, it rocked our community to its core. It really put a spotlight on the challenges Indigenous sex workers face as a result of colonialism and racism in Canada. It also triggered a big public outcry and fueled the popularity of this image of Indigenous sex workers as only victims, and that was really disempowering. But it also showed the weaknesses of the sex worker rights movement at that time and support services for sex workers in general, which were both underfunded and really white. So, we started having these conversations that we really needed to have and started working really hard to address those weaknesses, to make the movement by and for *all* sex workers. (emphasis original)

At the same time, challenges around the development of additional support services and organizing spaces that meaningfully supported more marginalized sex workers were complicated by issues of capacity, wherein those that were the most marginalized were often also those with the least capacity to assist in organizing or facilitating such services, as well as ideas about what those services should look like in practice. As Anise explained, “We only have so much capacity, so much we can emotionally give, so much energy, so many hours in a day. We need to take care of ourselves and make sure we continually ask ourselves ‘Do I have the capacity for this? Do I need to rest?’ because burn out is a constant struggle.” This was exacerbated by a lack of funding for sex worker support services more broadly, which contributed to an inability to appropriately compensate workers for the labour required to create and sustain a peer-to-peer support group for a given group of workers. Added to this was the reality that those with the most capacity would, for reasons connected to a lack of relatable life experiences, not be appropriate persons to lead such groups (that is, having a cisgender, straight, white, indoor sex worker facilitating a support group for racialized, predominantly outdoor workers, several of which identify as trans, is, as service users have pointed out, not an appropriate or desirable arrangement).

For example, there was a significant desire on the part of Anise and other racialized, sex working movement members to create a support group specifically for BIPOC sex workers in Toronto, but there were very few BIPOC sex workers connected with the movement that expressed having the capacity to facilitate or get such a group off the ground. This was, in large part, due to the intersecting challenges and oppressions that these workers faced, as well as such persons often being involved in several different social movements that differentially connected to the multiple overlapping subjectivities that they occupied. For example, Anise, who identified themselves as “wearing a lot of hats” self-identified as “a Black person, a gender-queer-queer, a

student, a parent, a sex worker, and an immigrant” who in any given month was attending “meetings for Black Lives Matter, parent-teacher meetings, #NoBorders rallies, and fighting for sex work decrim,” along with trying to cobble together an assortment of “irregular, unreliable, paid [speaking] gigs.” Thus, despite a growing awareness of the needs of racialized sex workers, a lack of structural supports limited the degree to which this gap, and the frictions relating to it, could be engaged with and resolved. As a result, it continued to be a point of friction within the movement, though the amount of friction varied over time. In this context, Anise’s ethical orientation, as a result of their life experiences and wearing many different “hats” at the same time, allowed them³¹ to identify and challenge the status quo of meeting spaces that were “not as inclusive as they think they are, not as safe as we want them to be”, and challenged other movement members to critically reflect on their ethical orientations and organizing efforts, in particular how issues of representation and service provision for racialized workers could be improved given the structural constraints that the movement faced. They found ways to improve movement spaces by drawing attention to particular issues, such as the previous absence of child care during meetings, and suggesting ways to further reduce the barriers faced by racialized workers to accessing support services and participating in organizing. As these suggestions were engaged with, validated, and taken up by other movement members they contributed to reshaping the ethical world of the movement and its organizing practices, demonstrating the ways that the orientations of individual movement members can influence the social movements of which they are a part.

Anise’s personal experiences, which were strongly linked to, in their own words, “sitting at the crossroads of multiple intersections,” also played a significant role in fostering diverse

³¹ Anise used they/them pronouns

coalition building beyond the boundaries of the sex working community (for example, fostering ties with Black Lives Matter Toronto), demonstrating some of the ways that the sex worker rights movement was strongly shaped by the experiences of individual members both within and beyond sex work. At the same time and for those same reasons, Anise was unable to donate their time to help enact some of the changes they were suggesting and a lack of funding stood in the way of creating a paid position. Other less marginalized workers who would not necessarily be the most appropriate ‘faces’ of such a group but who could potentially undertake the behind-the-scenes leg work to help make it possible grappled with their own differentially strained capacities, agreeing that there was a problem and work that needed to be done, but not able to take on the project without financial support in place for reasons that ranged from financial strain to familial obligations to emotional capacity and burn out.

Focusing on internal critiques, sex worker rights movement spaces contrasted significantly with the anti-trafficking spaces facilitated by the Network discussed in Chapter Three. In sex worker rights meeting spaces, members honed in on the ethical orientations of other members by highlighting issues of oppression, stigma, and discrimination in the language that other members used and the actions they undertook and were not afraid to directly challenge each other in the moment or afterwards if they identified something that they perceived as not in line with the ethical world of the movement. For example, if someone misgendered another person, they were promptly corrected. Similarly, if a member reinforced a stereotype about a group of sex workers, such as the myth that most migrant sex workers are trafficked, conversation would pause while that stereotype was unpacked. In this way, friction was directly engaged with and disagreements were connected to and (re)framed as stemming from different experiences of oppression, stigma, and discrimination, with solutions being linked to the

necessity of intersectional care in organizing. The critical reflexivity that this encouraged connected to the ethics of care the movement supported, wherein creating inclusive spaces where all sex working members felt welcome, safe, and respected was paramount. In comparison, Network meeting spaces emphasized an ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” that worked to unify members via the shared goal of fighting human trafficking, deemphasizing the tensions that resulted from members’ different hierarchies of suffering and ethical orientations beneath a veneer of cooperation. These different approaches created different forms of censure within these ethical worlds: in the Network, members resisted disagreeing or critiquing each other, leading to a performance of harmony that was at times in tension with individual ethical orientations; in sex worker rights movement meetings, some expressed a fear of saying something offensive and spoke less as a result, revealing a tension between meeting spaces that encouraged members to participate as “whole humans” and individual concerns over whether they were the “right kind of ally” or movement member.

Focusing on the sex worker rights movement and movement spaces, this approach was strongly rooted in a social justice-based interpretation of “human rights” that recognized structural inequalities and emphasized the right of all individuals to feel welcome, safe, and supported in spaces that were geared towards compensating for and rallying against these inequalities. In this context, “rights” existed in a hierarchy, wherein one member’s “right to free speech,” for example, was ranked below the right of those that were identified as more marginalized to feel safe and respected in a given space. Such “hierarchies of rights”, as Mark Goodale (2009) describes them, also reflected hierarchies of suffering and a desire to protect the most vulnerable at the cost of those perceived as less vulnerable and influenced what could be recognized as acceptable ethical action within and outside of the movement. In contrast to the

wide range of activities that were validated as forms of ethical action within Network meeting spaces, sex worker rights meetings required members to support and engage in actions that critically reflected on and inclusively supported sex workers using an intersectional lens that highlighted and sought to redress such hierarchies. The ethical frictions and tensions that were present when these hierarchies were being actively engaged with and negotiated, such as occurred when members disagreed on organizing priorities or a member was unaware that their words were experienced as hurtful by another member, demonstrated the processes of negotiation that occurred and, as Sally Engle Merry (2009) notes, how the ways in which “human rights” are understood and translated constructs the possibilities for action. In a movement where the majority of members experienced some degree of marginalization as a result of their participation in sex work, movement spaces thus became settings for dynamic engagements with and reflection on these more individual human rights hierarchies that were connected to broader, external hierarchies that dehumanized them collectively.

Responding to, in Juris & Khasnabish’s words, “the failure of state institutions to address their needs and concerns” (2013:380) on a collective level, many movement members were thus exceptionally vigilant regarding the possibility of perpetuating or reinforcing through their individual behaviour social or institutional norms that had been identified as harmful by themselves or other movement members, applying these standards to behaviour within and outside of movement spaces. This is not to say that movement spaces were, as a result, homogenous and free of the influence of all such norms, which included racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, sexism, and discrimination based on education background, criminal record, HIV/AIDS status, and work location (such as indoor or outdoor), but that

members emphasized cultivating an awareness of them and working to create movement spaces that were free of them.

An awareness that the sex working community and the sex worker rights movement were not (yet) free from all forms of discrimination at all times and in all places, was reflected in the popular use of the term “whorearchy” by movement members. The term was used to both disparagingly describe the various hierarchies that could be found within the sex trades (such as indoor/outdoor and those based on race, class, and education, all of which favour cisgender, white, educated, private indoor workers) and to draw attention to moments when it became problematic in sex worker rights organizing. The multifunctional use of the term within movement spaces reflected the critical analysis that movement members sought to cultivate in movement spaces and was strongly connected to individual participants’ ethical orientations and experiences with such hierarchies outside of movement spaces.

Tying into the critical reflexivity undertaken by movement members that focused on the movement itself and the ongoing work of critically self-reflecting on movement organizing practices was the strongly felt reality that the sex worker rights movement was not a “popular” movement. As Anise described it,

We are the ugly disease ridden step-sister of the feminist organizations in Toronto, nobody wants to have anything to do with us... because of their lack of understanding in feminist rights and that feminist rights isn't just about maintaining the status quo of the prudish woman or the sexually liberated woman, but that the sexually liberated woman can make decisions, she has autonomy to make decisions about her sexual liberation and that does include her participation in sex work... while they support the woman's right to choose abortion, choose marriage, not choose to have kids, choose to have kids, they are not able to see sex work as work... So we face a lot of stigma, we face a lot of backlash, we do not get financial support, we do not get moral support, we do not get resources, we cannot stand arm in arm with some of our friends and allies because they work for organizations that don't support us.

Other movement members, such as Jen and Alice, mentioned experiences of being repeatedly accused of being members of a mythical “pimp lobby”, of supporting “the prostitution of children”, and of supporting “the patriarchy and violence against women”. This was tangibly demonstrated when, following the government hearings on PCEPA, some organizations challenged the public health funding that one sex worker support service organization that supported decriminalization was receiving on the grounds that the government was directly supporting “the prostitution of children” by funding the organization. The sex worker rights movement was also constantly confronted with significantly more “popular” (as determined by viewership, reader comments, circulation, and the prevalence of such articles) depictions of “sex trafficking” victims that often uncritically conflated human trafficking with sex work. As Jen explained, this meant that significant work was required to change public opinion and gather support for the sex worker rights movement.

One result of this was that members of the sex worker rights movements were very aware of a need to be “above reproach” in the public presentation of the movement and in internal movement spaces, lest additional fuel be given to the hegemonic discourses that were already arrayed against them. Some members, such as Kyle, characterized this as resulting in “reactionary” organizing, where the movement was always in the position of “responding” to what others were saying, but never in the position of determining the conversation. As Kyle elaborated when comparing their participation in sex worker rights organizing to other social movement work:

Dare I say it seems more ad hoc in some respects. More like reactive, and I don’t really mean to use this in the negative connotation that it sometimes has, but more reactionary rather than setting the agenda. So things are always in response to the next things that the government does or this other person does. Maybe it feels almost like a defensive position

at all times, which is maybe not that distinct from much activism at all, but I would say that I feel a slightly greater degree of that.

In a similar conversation, Miranda suggested that this defensive or reactionary position was linked to the criminalization of sex work, the lack of funding for support services for sex workers (and to support sex worker rights more broadly), and the way that conversations about “sex work as work” tended to directly challenge numerous social norms that people took for granted and were uncomfortable talking about, combining to create additional barriers that had to be overcome before a conversation about “sex work as work” could even begin.

Constantly engaging with and responding to inaccurate and harmful discourses and government decisions related to sex work, as well as the critical work that more marginalized groups of sex workers undertook to create spaces for their involvement in the sex worker rights movement, has led to thorough and ongoing critical engagements with issues of sex, gender, labour, and social norms by many members of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto that have solidified and strengthened the movement’s platforms. At the same time, the need to be “above reproach” has meant that movement members had to always be willing to do the work of constantly evaluating, reflecting on, and working to improve movement spaces and themselves, in addition to doing the largely unpaid work of organizing itself. This was something that many movement members were aware of and found to be not only “exhausting” (Alice), but also “thankless” (Anise) and leading to feelings of “inadequacy and insecurity” (Miranda), linked to a fear of “saying the wrong thing to the wrong person, or in the wrong space” (Kyle). This applied not only to fears of speaking to the media or researchers, but also to a recognition and expectation of consequences for anything identified as a misstep. In the case of the media, this could mean accidentally outing oneself or someone else as a sex worker. In meeting room spaces,

this could mean forgetting to use the right name or pronoun of another organizer. Such missteps were also perceived as being able to occur “in private”, outside of meeting spaces or media interviews, with such missteps potentially impacting a member’s involvement in the movement or the perception of the movement held by ‘outsiders’ if the misstep became public knowledge. Intense social pressure coming from ‘outside’ the movement thus contributed to and influenced the pressure to be above reproach in all things, in all times, and in all places, which was experienced by members within movement spaces and in their personal lives. This sentiment contrasts starkly with experiences expressed by anti-trafficking movement members participating in spaces organized by the Network, wherein movement members ran little risk of being challenged regarding their words or actions, reported feeling “pumped” and “positive” during and after meetings (Melissa), and expressed facing few or “no barriers” to their anti-trafficking work (Diane).

In having this discussion, I do not mean to suggest that such pressure led movement spaces to be the opposite of supportive, welcoming, and safe. Though there were times when censure came swiftly and could seem harsh or unfair, the overall environment, through a commitment to an ethics of care, fostered an emphasis on “active learning” that was broadly supported across the diversely marginalized membership. As Sarah elaborated:

We have to be open to being wrong, to making mistakes, and it has to be ok to make them, because we’re all learning here, no one’s perfect. I think, maybe, the bar is too high sometimes, that we expect too much from people, that they’ll know the ‘right words’ and everything that comes out of their mouth and through their body language will radiate perfection. But that’s not the case and we know it’s not. We know there’s work to do, that the whorearchy is real, that the movement needs allies and persons with experience and that no one walks through that door perfect. We lose sight of that sometimes, that we’re all learning, and I think it’s because when people get called out it can become really personal, especially when the world out there is, for a sex worker, a place where it’s not ok to make mistakes. And I mean, I don’t want people to get hurt as a result of someone else’s mistakes, because the stakes are high and when you’ve experienced someone calling you a

‘no good slut’ or ‘dirty whore’ more times than you can count, you can, and rightfully so, get a little touchy about it, but we’re in this together – from the streets to the Hilton – and we’re all learning, we have to be kind to ourselves and each other, because we get enough shit in the outside world.

The sentiment that “we’re all learning”, paired with the recognition that meeting spaces needed to be safe and the ways that personal experiences influenced how a person responded to someone else’s mistake, highlights a point of tension within movement organizing. This tension was less about the subjective ethical orientations of individual members, as it was in the anti-trafficking Network, and more about the reality of engaging in “unpopular” organizing and the constant pressure to respond to campaigns, programs, government legislation, and other social movements that opposed the goals of the sex worker rights movement and had significantly more funding and ability to influence hegemonic discourses on sex, gender, and labour. It was also reflective of the different positionality and experiences of sex working movement members. While this supported increasingly nuanced discussions and analysis of both the movement and the diverse experiences of sex workers, it was also necessitated by pressure to be above reproach as a perceived requirement of attaining the “human” status that would allow access to “human rights.”

Conclusion

The sex worker rights movement in Toronto created intentional movement spaces that supported horizontal organizing and worked hard to fill the gap left by the government’s refusal to recognize and support the needs of sex workers. These spaces cultivated a distinct ethical world, characterized by an ethics of care that emphasized supporting sex workers as “whole humans”, intertwined with the over-arching goal of achieving social and legal recognition of “sex work as work” and human rights, both collectively in terms of labour recognition and

individually in terms of individual freedom to choose to engage in sex work, for sex workers. This combination of human rights and a critically reflexive ethics of care responded to an understanding on the part of movement members that it was their collective dehumanization that was responsible for both the lack of recognition of their work as labour and the violation of their individual rights, which they inherently held by virtue of being human, that they experienced as sex workers. This interpretation of human rights positioned the state as supporting this dehumanization through criminalization, as well as the body responsible for recognizing, protecting, and supporting human rights both legally and socially. In responding to the state's failure to recognize, protect, or support the rights of sex workers, the sex worker rights movement worked to fill the resulting void of care, while simultaneously fighting for recognition. At the same time, tension surrounding a recognition of hierarchies of rights and suffering, as well as the limitations of the socio-legal human rights frameworks that the movement sought to use to improve the lives of sex workers, contributed to complex and dynamic engagements with issues of oppression and goals for transforming the world within and beyond the movement.

The movement itself, along with individual movement members, experienced a multitude of pressures that inhibited the movement's ability to determine and lead the dominant narrative on sex work in Canada. In addition, these pressures, which also required the movement to be above reproach, demonstrated the unequal landscape the movement was forced to navigate. Movement members were actively aware that the "deck is stacked against us" (Jen), so to speak, and that changing public and federal opinions regarding sex work was a massive undertaking. Such work included challenging social norms regarding sexuality, appropriate gendered sexual behaviour, monogamy, relationships, consent, victimhood, labour, and agency, as well as, in the

words of Alice, “the tender sensibilities” that maintained legislative and social dominance in Canada and contributed to the ongoing criminalization of sex work. While actively working to balance the provision of support services to those working in the sex trades and sex worker rights advocacy, organizers responded to dominant narratives from a variety of angles, including performances, social media campaigns, boycotts, newspaper op-eds, public events, marches, independent publications, and collaborations with sex working and non-sex working academics to organize round tables and publish in academic and policy venues. I turn to these forms of public education advocacy in the next chapter, where I examine the discursive encounters that took place between and across the sex worker rights, anti-trafficking, and migrant worker rights movement and the “ethical friction” they created.

5. Discursive Encounters: Knowledge Production, Public Education, and Representation

Many movements are deeply involved in producing analyses and insights not only about how best to achieve social change, but also about how the current dominant system is perpetuated and reproduced. (Casas-Cortes et al. 2008:37)

This chapter approaches the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements as sites of knowledge production and communication, recognizing and exploring the ways that movement members worked to craft and control the public representation and perception of each movement. Producing and communicating knowledge about both the movement itself and its focus population(s) (e.g., sex workers, migrant workers, or trafficking victims) through the development of public education materials, interactions with the media, and other awareness raising activities was one of the primary activities that all of the social movements I worked with engaged in, with some member organizations existing solely for the purpose of engaging in knowledge production and communication activities, and contributed to the world making practices of each movement. Here, I explore how these movements employed a variety of representational strategies, including imagery, performance pieces, and policy briefs, as a means of communicating their own representations of their movement and intentionally engaging with other social movements through discursive encounters, as well as the ways that these activities contributed to and reflected the ethical world of each movement and the ethical orientations of individual movement members. Connecting material processes of organizing with the discursive goals of members, I explore how knowledge producers and communicators imagined their audiences and tailored their strategies in the hopes of achieving particular effects, engaging with and (re)deploying ethical friction as a tool for instigating change. In doing so, I also unpack the ways that members of the sex worker rights and migrant worker rights

movements have increasingly found themselves encountering and needing to engage with the outcomes of public education efforts undertaken by members of the anti-trafficking movement and how this has (or has not) influenced their own organizing.

In exploring how priorities, goals, and strategies were developed and the ways that organizers, at times, actively sought to speak back to the discourses propagated by other social movements, I look at both the material processes of organizing, wherein members gathered together in person or digitally to collectively work on public education materials and organize events, and the discursive outcomes, the narratives that each movement engaged with, (re)imagined, and (re)distributed. I pay attention to how movement members perceived the outcomes of other movements' public education efforts, when and how they identified its possible impact on their own movement's work, and how they incorporated this analysis into their own knowledge production and communication efforts. To describe this process of taking in, synthesizing, and responding to the work of other social movements without directly engaging with those movements, I use the term "discursive encounters." This term draws on Michel Foucault's (1980, 1997) theories of knowledge and power, as well as his conceptualization of discourse as constructed and reproduced as social reality by dominant institutions, agents, and systems.

As Chris Bruckert and Stacey Hannem (2013), highlighting the salience of Foucauldian discourse analysis for understanding the impact of structural stigma and the abuse of police authority in relation to sex workers in Ottawa, note, power plays an integral role in shaping knowledge and that shaped knowledge dialectically transforms the structures and institutions of power that give rise to 'truth.' With this dialectical and interdependent relationship between power-knowledge in mind, we can trace how 'truths' about certain populations emerge from the

application of power, which can then transform the practices of institutions (for example, legal, political, and health care institutions) which in turn can begin to engage in various strategies of biopolitical management, supporting a re-producing of discursive 'truth' in the process (Bruckert & Hannem 2013:298). The creation, reinforcement, and negotiation of these 'truths' is intimately connected to the world making practices of each social movement, as they directly inform the guiding frameworks and universals that unite movement members, forming the basis for what can be considered ethical action. This chapter begins with this frame of analysis, using it to outline the knowledge production and communication efforts of the Network, in particular how 'truths' are created and reinforced through processes of negotiation, wherein they are both reinscribed and troubled, within the Network, highlighting points of ethical friction and resistance. These points of ethical friction within the Network become even more apparent when we turn to the knowledge production and communication efforts of the sex worker rights movement, which often actively resisted the hegemonic 'truths' that were circulated through the Network. The knowledge production, communication, and contestation efforts of the sex worker rights movement influenced some of the friction within the Network at the same time as it served to emphasize the differences between the two movements. It is this uneven and frictive process of consumption, negotiation, creation, and dissemination that most interests me here, as it provides a window into the active processes through which social movements create, engage with, and resist hegemonic 'truths' and diverse guiding frameworks.

In focusing on "discursive encounters", I am interested in exploring a more limited set of interactions than broader studies of discourse might engage in, focusing on moments of encounter, intentional engagement, and (re)production, as well as how uneven distributions of political and social "power", means, and circuits of production influenced these efforts and

contributed to the uneven *movement* of these movements. Beyond seeking to emphasize the heavily discursive nature of knowledge production practices that these social movements engaged in, I also use this term to reflect on the ways that movement members talked about this facet of their organizing. Across all three social movements, there were participants that frequently used the terms “discourse” and “popular narrative” to talk about some of the goals they were hoping to achieve, barriers to achieving those goals, and/or things they wanted to change about their own or other movements. In doing so, they often simultaneously emphasized the interactional dynamic that I’m seeking to highlight by describing these discursive practices as “encounters.”

For example, Alice, a member of the sex worker rights movement, described the goal of a public education project as “a direct challenge to anti-trafficking discourses”, while Jen, another member, spoke of needing to “change the popular narrative about sex work, you know, take control of the discourse that circulates about us and be the ones with the power to define it.” When discussing cross-movement coalition building in an interview, Jacob, a member of the migrant worker rights movement, said that

a challenge for us, in building coalitions with the sex worker movement, is overcoming the cultural assumptions that people have about who is a prostitute, about what different kinds of labour can look like. There’s a discourse to be dealt with, you know, and we’re still unpacking what that means for us.

Here “discourse” is, at a minimum, understood as a “popular narrative” or story that informs the assumptions a person not well-acquainted with a particular social issue might have. Attesting to the educational background of some movement members, several participants also referred to academic uses of the term “discourse” that were rooted in Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse, power/knowledge, and regimes of truth. While discussing the passing of Bill C-36 into

law in her living room, one long-time member of the sex worker rights movement shared with me a highlighted page from Julie A. Gorlewski's (2011) *Power, Resistance, and Literacy*, wherein Foucault's characterization of discourse as "a form of power that circulates in the social field and can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance" (cited in Gorlewski 2011:10, cited in Diamond & Quinby 1988:185) was underlined. Another day she took Jo Doezema's (2010) *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters* from her shelf while we were working on a resource list to distribute at an upcoming event. Inside, Doezema's discussion of discourse was highlighted and marked with a note that read "Foucault and Discourse, Power, Myths, etc."

As a term, then, "discursive encounters" connects to the power of discourse as perceived by participants and the engagement of participants with different discourses. In exploring these discursive encounters, I connect them to this dissertation's larger focus on ethics in social movements by exploring how the discourses that these movements employed connected to the ethical orientations of movement members and the guiding frameworks that members collectively sought to uphold and have others take up, with their effectiveness seen as playing a key role in recruiting new members to the movement and swaying public and political opinion in policy discussions. The discourses that were popular within a given movement were also frequently drawn upon by members when they interacted in-person with members of another movement – a discussion I take up in more detail in Chapter Six – and, as such, are an important aspect of the ethical friction that differentially occurred between these movements.

In looking at the knowledge production practices that were part of these discursive encounters, I focus on the differential engagements with anti-trafficking discourses by the anti-trafficking, migrant worker rights, and sex worker rights movements. I begin by establishing the basis for recognizing the anti-trafficking movement as a site of knowledge production, in

particular the production of anti-trafficking discourses, and exploring examples of knowledge production undertaken by movement members that were commonly referred to as “public education” efforts. In doing so, I briefly review critical feminist academic critiques of the anti-trafficking movement, which aids me in positioning this chapter as focused on the anti-trafficking movement as a site of knowledge production and discursive encounters, rather than on the content of the knowledge that is being produced, for which ample research already exists. Reviewing these academic critiques also provides a point of reference for the critiques that the sex worker rights movement and some members of the anti-trafficking Network used to challenge and engage with hegemonic trafficking discourses, as well as highlighting the barriers members of both movements faced in accessing and disseminating such critiques.

I then turn to the interactions of the migrant worker rights movement with anti-trafficking discourses, which can be characterized as a combination of utilization, acceptance, and avoidance, framed by the movement’s efforts to obtain support services for migrant workers, the involvement of some major immigration support organizations in both anti-trafficking and migrant rights work, and efforts to craft an influential, labour rights oriented public perception of the needs of migrant workers. Turning to the sex worker rights movement, I discuss the awareness of movement members of the importance of changing and controlling narratives about sex work and how this was approached through a variety of different forms of public engagement and education. In particular, I look at the emphasis members placed on discursively responding to and challenging anti-trafficking discourses through professional and satirical reformulations of the public education materials produced by members of the anti-trafficking movement.

Connecting this more concretely to discussions of ethical friction, a concluding point of focus for this chapter is the collaborative creation of a policy brief that began at the beginning of my fieldwork and, instigated by members of the sex worker rights movement, incorporated research and feedback from the migrant worker and sex worker rights movements, together with the work of sex work, migration, and labour researchers. In exploring the creation and circulation of the policy brief, I focus on the policy brief's purpose as a document that challenged hegemonic anti-trafficking discourses. Building on this, I discuss how the policy brief, itself a tangible outcome of knowledge production, has been understood and used by members of the anti-trafficking movement to instigate ethical friction within their own movement.

Knowledge Production and Communication

In outlining their approach to analyzing social movements as sites of knowledge production, Maria Isabel Casas-Cortes, Michal Osterweil, and Dana E. Powell (2008) write that recognizing social movements as sites of knowledge production is key to recognizing participants as experts to conduct research “with”, rather than objects to conduct research “on”. They argue that this recognition is necessary in order to engage with movements “not simply as objects to be explained by the distanced analyst, but as lively actors producing their own explanations and knowledges” (2008:21). Knowledges, conceptualized by the authors as “knowledge-practices” that emphasize the concrete, embodied, lived, and socially situated character of “knowledge”, are diversely constituted by social movements as they actively engage in co-producing, challenging, and transforming hegemonic discourses through stories, ideas, narratives, ideologies, theories, and expertise, as well as critical and political analyses of their particular contexts (2008:20-22). Following this emphasis on the engagement of social

movements with hegemonic discourses, the authors take a Foucauldian approach that connects discourses to “regimes of truth”, arguing that:

whether through direct and explicit contestation of ‘expert’ discourses, or through proliferating a variety of alternative ways of knowing and being, including alternative economic, social and cultural models, the production of knowledges by movements intervenes in important operations of power. (2008:46)

The benefits of analyzing social movements through such a lens include gaining a better understanding of the ways that they influence politics and encourage new subjectivities and ways of being in the world (2008).

Building on this, Cymene Howe’s research on the struggle for sexual rights in Nicaragua argues that:

In an era in which political practices – from communitarian impulses to liberal rights – move rapidly across borders, understanding activists as a class of mediators who actively craft and situate political ideals allows us to understand not only activists’ values and the settings of their struggles but also the points of ‘friction’ (Tsing 2005) at which globally disseminated rights and concepts of sexuality become reformulated in local contexts. (2013:3)

To this end, her work pays close attention to the ways that sexual rights activists “pedagogically craft, intellectually engineer, and dialogically engage with audiences and with other activists” (2013:167). I want to highlight here the recognition of and focus on activists as aware of, mediating, and intentionally engaging with audiences that include policy makers, the general public, and other activists, as well as the emphasis on the ability of activists to engage in intellectual engineering, two points which I focus on in this chapter through my discussion of knowledge production practices and discursive encounters. To this end, I follow Howe’s example in focusing on how “the mediational work in these processes demonstrates not only how activists attempt to institute social change, their sites and acts of intervention, but also, and just

as importantly, the epistemological work and knowledge production that is foundational to these politics” (2013:125).

As Teresa P.R. Caldeira (2015) notes, social movements are engaged in both knowledge and *cultural* production, with the historical context of movements influencing strategies of production and resistance, particularly for those groups that have been relegated to the peripheries. In such peripheries, being attentive to “transgressions”, in all their myriad potential forms, from appropriations of public or private space to, as members of the sex worker rights movement exemplified, satirical performances, can illuminate both the range of production practices that movement members engage in and how they imagine their audiences. Building on this, I connect the diverse knowledge production and communication practices that movement members engaged in to the guiding frameworks their movement’s employed, exploring how these frameworks were reflected in knowledge production and communication practices, how they were influenced by and responded to ethical friction, and the processes of negotiation that we can observe occurring during moments of discursive encounter. In doing so, I highlight the limits, boundaries, and constraints that these movements faced in communicating and expanding their ethical worlds, as well as the limits of friction as a strategy for instigating the change movement members wished to see in the world around them.

Knowledge Production in the Anti-Trafficking Movement

About one year into my regular involvement with the Network, Enid, a long-standing member representing a religious women’s organization who attended almost all Network meetings and events, announced during a Network meeting that her organization was going to be hosting a talk by Victor Malarek, a prominent Canadian anti-trafficking and anti-prostitution activist and journalist, and that all Network members were invited to attend. Very little about the

event itself was shared beyond a brief verbal endorsement of Malarek as “an expert on sex trafficking who really knows how to drive the message home!” and Enid hinting that it had taken a lot of organizing and fundraising to be able to host their guest speaker, suggesting that the cost of compensating Malarek for his time, catering the event, and booking the space was substantial. This organization engaged exclusively in awareness raising public education activities and the goal of the talk was to raise awareness in her religious community about sex trafficking. To support the event, a poster advertising the event was later circulated on the Network’s listserv.

At the same meeting, Cheryl, one of the Network’s founding members whose work focused on providing support services to survivors of forced marriage, as well as raising awareness about forced marriage as a form of human trafficking, provided an update on her organization’s most recent project: providing free training to service providers about forced marriage. The training and awareness raising project, which was instigated “by a group of survivors working with and receiving support services from the organization” (Cheryl), got off the ground about six months later. It involved survivors facilitating or co-facilitating workshops geared towards training support service providers about forced marriage and how they could better tailor their services to the unique needs of survivors of forced marriage. Survivors were involved at every stage of the project’s development and Cheryl often stated that one barrier they repeatedly faced from service providers was a lack of awareness that forced marriage happens in Canada, that it is a form of human trafficking, and that, despite stereotypes that present forced marriage as being a Middle Eastern problem, it happens across all communities. Key to the project was that the survivors doing the workshops would receive an honorarium for their time and effort, a goal which other members of the Network were strongly supportive of. While Cheryl was active in contributing to, attending, and volunteering to help facilitate Network

projects, her organization's project, which was advertised to service providing organizations that were likely to come into contact with persons in or having escaped a situation of forced marriage, was independent of the Network and was presented to the group as an update.

Following Cheryl's update, Melissa, who represented a religious organization of nuns but was, she emphasized, "not a nun", engaged those present at the meeting in a discussion about a public event she was planning that would coincide with the upcoming Pan Am Games in Toronto. As a member who had been with the Network for over one year, Melissa was familiar with most of those present at the meeting, myself included, and often solicited feedback from the group on projects her organization was involved in. She also actively volunteered to help plan and facilitate Network events. While her project was not formally a Network project in that it did not receive Network funding, would not use the Network logo, and would not rely on Network members for volunteers, it was discussed in detail at Network meetings throughout its development, during its launch, and afterwards, and one of the primary organizers and founders of the Network attended and spoke at the launch of the project. Melissa's organization was exclusively focused on public education and this particular project involved the creation of a large, public outdoor installation in downtown Toronto that invited those passing by to enter and learn about human trafficking. As an anti-trafficking advocate, as discussed in Chapter Three, Melissa was committed to social justice, harm reduction, and sex work decriminalization. She was strongly opposed to the conflation of sex work with human trafficking and was determined to create a public education effort that both "raises awareness about and de-myth-ifies human trafficking." While she noted that the religious nature of her organization prevented it from formally and publicly allying itself with the sex worker rights movement, Melissa was committed to undertaking her work around human trafficking in a way that "reduces harms,

rather than causes it,” a phrase which she used to refer to her awareness, recognition, and general support of the critiques about the anti-trafficking movement that came from the sex worker rights movement.

To this end, Melissa’s project sought to “re-make and re-vamp” a similar public education project called Gift Box, which was developed for the 2012 Olympic Games in London and received support from the UN. In discussing the project at the Network meeting, Melissa asked members about the proposed content. Some members, such as Enid, provided feedback that focused exclusively on “sex trafficking,” to which Melissa politely responded with thanks and emphasized that her goal was to discuss “all forms” of trafficking. Others discussed the inclusion of examples from various non-sexual labour industries, including live-in caregiving and construction, with several support service organizations offering to share stories they had collected from survivors, to be shared with permission. Most members present at the meeting expressed their plans to go see the installation when it was ready to go and to share the petition that would accompany it – a petition to the Ontario Premier to act to stop all forms of human trafficking – throughout their networks.

In discussing the project during our interview, Melissa noted that the original London version was heavily focused on “sex trafficking and sexual exploitation” and that she wanted to change that, saying,

we were really focusing on that forced labour piece because we knew that what you hear on the news all the time is all about sex trafficking, sex trafficking, sex trafficking, and we really thought we’re going to educate and raise the profile of human trafficking and we want people to understand that it’s more than that. And that a lot of the research shows that the other forms of trafficking, there are higher instances of those than sex trafficking. So, we really wanted to make people aware of that.

For Melissa, this meant incorporating text featuring multiple human trafficking stories, as told by survivors, onto the inner walls of the installation, along with artistic images, and trying to ensure that these stories and images put forward a diverse picture of human trafficking. To this end, she included stories of domestic and international human trafficking, featured male and female victims, and included a story about labour exploitation in the hospitality industry.

Discussing the images that accompanied the original London installation, which featured victims behind prison bars, Melissa said,

It just reinforces all of those sorts of stereotypes of being physically restricted or physically tied up, which of course a lot of the times people who are trafficked aren't being physically chained, they're being coerced through lots of other means. So, we thought that the bars made people who are being trafficked seem really helpless as well. We didn't like that.

To develop new artwork for the project, the working group connected with a professor at an Ontario college whose art class drafted up various ideas for the project. As Melissa described them,

One of the groups was really focused on wanting to mimic what they assumed was the experience of being trafficked and they wanted the installation to be entirely closed with one little door where you went in and then there was a window with bars and we were like 'we don't really want that'... [another group] had one of those typical photos, they had like a woman with a child with the price tag on them. Woman wrapped in like cellophane on Styrofoam like she's a piece of meat... So we talked with the students about what would be appropriate pictures that wouldn't, again, sort of further exploit the human beings.

Melissa's goal was to include both diverse stories and images that avoided the harsh stereotypes, such as bars, bruises, and chains, that are common to anti-trafficking campaigns and posters, such as the one Enid circulated to advertise Malarek's talk. To this end, the final images for the installation ranged from a woman's legs and high heels paired with a story of sexual exploitation to a man's hands paired with a story of exploitation in a restaurant. The project was, as Melissa described it, a success, as she elaborated,

So, a lot of what we heard was ‘I didn’t know this was a problem, I didn’t know this was a problem here,’ or if people were aware they would say ‘I had no idea that it was more than sex trafficking.’ If people were aware of trafficking at all, 9 times out of 10 they only knew about sex trafficking... Like movies and documentaries and stories, it’s always, always sex trafficking. So, I do think that we made a valuable contribution there in terms of making people aware that it’s an issue and it’s more than they think.

Instigating social change and crafting acts of intervention were central to the anti-trafficking goals of the Network and much of its membership, with Network members placing a resounding emphasis on the importance of raising awareness about human trafficking as a means of eliminating the problem. To this end, Network meetings commonly included at least one update from a member on their public education efforts. Public education efforts took many forms, with member activities ranging from free public talks to visual campaigns at transit shelters to fund-raising galas, and included events organized by Network members that were independent of the Network itself or events planned by the Network. In the case of the former, the Network’s logo, funding, and organizational capacity were not involved and, though independent organization of events by member organizations were most often developed and implemented without feedback from the broader Network, the advertising of such events on the Network listserv was commonplace. The goal of such circulation was to raise awareness of the event or campaign and, depending on the target audience, encourage attendance, rather than gather feedback or assistance. To this end, Network meetings and the listserv did not serve as a means of censorship or criticism of independent events and there was no expectation that such events would adhere to the anti-oppression mandate that formal Network organized events were expected to uphold.

The range of public education efforts that members undertook also highlighted questions of audience and intent, with some efforts having broader mandates than others. In the case of

Enid's event, by emphasizing the presence of someone she considered to be a "local celebrity" and her desire to educate her religious community about "sex trafficking", her imagined audience and intent were clear. Melissa's project, on the other hand, had a more complex goal and audience in mind. Whereas Enid's goal in sharing her event with Network members was to sell more tickets to the event and reach an audience outside of her immediate church group, Melissa worked to incorporate Network members in planning the project. While doing so, she repeatedly emphasized that she didn't want to reinforce "harmful, limited, and inaccurate" stereotypes about "sex trafficking". Rather, she wanted to "raise the profile of human trafficking" and have people understand that it's "more than that", with "that" being the harmful, limited, and inaccurate representations of trafficking that characterize sex trafficking discourses. These efforts demonstrated that Melissa had multiple audiences in mind during the development and implementation of her public education project: members of the general public that would pass the display on the street and members of the anti-trafficking movement that continued to adhere to harmful, limited, and inaccurate representations of human trafficking.

Returning to the discussion raised in Chapter Three regarding Melissa's efforts to change the ethical orientation of other Network members through her own words and actions, the Gift Box project was a key attempt at doing just that. By using Network meetings as a place to work on developing and planning the project, her "more holistic approach" to the topic of human trafficking was centre stage. She was thus able to outline and walk other members through her approach, which she knew contradicted the approaches of some of the other members present, without directly confronting or critiquing anyone. In doing so, she drew heavily on the language of anti-oppression, harm reduction, and human rights, thereby using some of the Network's key universals to connect with other members while instigating ethical friction based on the different

hierarchies of human rights and suffering those other members held. Elaborating further on audiences Melissa desired to capture with her project, she also developed a petition that Network members and those who encountered the Gift Box on the street were asked to sign. Once gathered, these petitions were delivered to her political audience, the office of the Premier of Ontario, a delivery that triggered a meeting between the Premier, Melissa, another organizer for the project, and Ava and Maria from the Network. Beyond this, Melissa expressed the hope that members of the sex worker rights movement would not find fault with the project, expressing that “it’s my hope that we can do this right, right to the point that those in the sex worker rights movement don’t see us as the enemy and instead see us as a potential ally.”

In imagining these multiple audiences and working to connect with each of them, Melissa’s project illuminated some of the tensions within the anti-trafficking movement and the Network, as well as the influence of anti-trafficking discourses on the lives of sex workers and laborers outside the sex trades. Her project also demonstrated some of the ways that anti-trafficking movement members sought to reshape broader anti-trafficking discourses, highlighting an awareness of both movement members and multiple “publics” as potential audiences. Turning to the Network’s public education efforts, these predominantly took the form of public roundtables and speaking events held one to three times a year and drew on funding the Network, as a grassroots collection of organizations, received from the City of Toronto.

Advertised as “public” roundtables and often featuring an array of public service employees, the generalized public that was being targeted was broadly imagined by primary organizers. At a minimum, it included everyone in the community that did not yet know about human trafficking but, in the minds of Network members, should. Beyond this, primary organizers Ava and Maria frequently emphasized a desire to educate support service providers and those who were “likely

to come into contact with survivors” (Ava). This was reflected in the way that the Network advertised the event. As Ava described it,

First, we circulate it on our listserv, which includes all the Network members. Then we ask that everyone circulate it to the organizations and communities that they are a part of. We also send invitations to MPs and any contacts we have at the City of Toronto and Queen’s Park. We also post on our Facebook page and sometimes Twitter.

To an extent, then, while Network organizers desired to reach a broad and diverse “general public” audience, in practice organizations that were already involved in some aspect of anti-trafficking work were most likely to attend.

As Melissa indicated through her summary of popular anti-trafficking narratives as involving young women, chains, bars, and bruises, the existence of popular images of human trafficking and a dominant media narrative about sex trafficking was widely acknowledged in interviews with Network members, with members themselves having different ideas about the accuracy and value of these images. Some members, such as Melissa, actively worked to “correct” the narrative and present the public with a “more accurate understanding of human trafficking in Canada.” Others, such as Enid, actively reinforced the dominant sex trafficking narrative by amplifying the voices of those, such as Malarek, that actively contributed to its creation. Another member, Diane, who had been involved with the Network since shortly after its founding and worked for one of the largest youth support service providers in the province, acknowledged that some people criticized campaigns her organization created that featured, in her words, “powerful stories” of sex trafficking. The campaign in question featured images of young women and girls with facial bruises and text, with a young woman’s voice telling the story depending on the media format, which told a story of sex trafficking that included detailed descriptions of sexual violence. In an interview about the “emotional power” of this provincial

public education campaign, which included radio, television, and public transit ads, Diane emphasized that drawing public attention to the worst examples of abuse was vital to raising awareness about trafficking, saying: “You have to shake people, wake them up, you have to make them care.”

As Ava, who was one of the Network’s founding members and had been involved in supporting migrants with varying degrees of legal status in Canada for over 13 years, shared in her interview,

Community, like students, like when we go to do presentations in universities, I get that they don’t know, like from the questions I get personally after the presentation, they are not aware [of human trafficking]. They watch movies, they heard something here and there, but still for them it’s kind of illusionary. But also, this image of chains and bruises and whatever, is fueled, it’s only in movies, not only, but in many movies.

When discussing the information and images that her organization, (and through her organization, the Network), shared, she described it as a learning process, with mistakes that were made along the way, saying “it’s still a learning process and you learn. And many times, for example, we do it unconsciously, but also to attract attention, because this attracts attention. But now we are very, for a few years now, we are very conscious of what we put in images and we accept critiques and we try.” Here, when Ava says that “we do it unconsciously but also to attract attention” she is referring to what she later described as the “shock value” of sharing stories, such as Diane’s organization does, and creating images about human trafficking that get the strongest emotional response from the audience and reinforces sex trafficking stereotypes “with chains and bruises.”

During my time volunteering with Ava’s organization, she often talked about the tension between increasingly wanting to talk about labour exploitation, which for her included sexual

and non-sexual labour exploitation, and needing to use the language of human trafficking, in particular the dominant sex trafficking narrative which she increasingly identified as harmful, to attract the funding that would support service provision to those experiencing or having left situations of labour exploitation. As she said in her interview,

for funding purposes you have to use it... so for the purposes of funding we use 'human trafficking.' However, as I said, now in our presentations, whenever we go, I try to make clear what we are standing for and the division between sexual exploitation and labour exploitation, for us, it's artificial.

Ava's emphasis on labour exploitation and presenting a "more accurate" picture of human trafficking to the public, like Melissa's project, is an example of the pairing of harm reduction and public education that is characteristic of the more recent awareness raising events that the Network had been formally involved with. In contrast with the Network's 2013 public roundtable described in Chapter One, which heavily emphasized the popular and hegemonic sex trafficking narrative that the work of Enid and some other Network members' independent efforts continued to support, more recent Network efforts were shaped by an active recognition of and engagement with the dominant anti-trafficking narrative and critiques levelled against it. In part, this engagement with critiques of Network activities resulted from in-person encounters, such as the critiques Shannon raised during the 2013 roundtable discussed in Chapter One and other encounters that are the focus of Chapter Six. At the same time, it was also discursive, prompted in part by social media campaigns that critiqued anti-trafficking organizations and efforts, as well as by a growing number of academic critiques that organizers encountered when doing or soliciting research on human trafficking.

Academic Critiques of the Anti-Trafficking Movement

Awareness of academic critiques of anti-trafficking efforts and the anti-trafficking movement more broadly have played an increasingly prominent role in informing and reforming the Network's formal activities, as determined by primary organizers such as Ava, but have not been widely taken up by the Network's broader membership, as demonstrated by Enid's awareness raising efforts. The academic critiques that had begun to influence parts of the anti-trafficking movement in Toronto predominantly came from the wealth of intersectional academic literature that constitutes critical anti-trafficking studies, a body of scholarship that is increasingly drawn on and contributed to by members of the sex worker rights movement. This literature provides numerous detailed analyses of how the anti-trafficking movement produces, reinforces, and benefits from hegemonic anti-trafficking discourses, as well as the impact of those discourses on other marginalized groups, such as racialized migrants (Sharma 2005) and local, migrant (Brock et al. 2000; Jeffrey 2005), and Indigenous sex workers (Hunt 2015), including youth (JJ 2013), in Canada. The growing, uneven influence of this academic literature on Network members, as well as the ways that it is engaged with by the sex worker rights movement, makes it useful to briefly review here. In addition, many scholars contributing to critical anti-trafficking studies have provided analyses that positions anti-trafficking organizers as complicit in the production of anti-trafficking discourses. This aids me in positioning my own research as focusing less on the content of the knowledge produced – for, as discussed in Chapter One, ample research on this topic already exists – and more on the anti-trafficking movement as a site of knowledge production and discursive encounters.

To this end, Jo Doezema's (1998, 1999, 2010) work on the historical antecedents and contemporary iterations of anti-trafficking discourses provides an excellent place to begin, for

her writing made the revised list of reading materials that Ava was in the process of developing during the course of my research and which was shared during several Network workshops and round tables. Doezema links the propagation of early anti-trafficking narratives in the United States to the campaigns of prostitution abolitionists and other social purity campaigners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, arguing that such campaigners actively and effectively crafted and propagated mythical, stereotyped accounts of innocent, helpful, and naïve young women and girls being trafficked in the “White Slave Trade” to the detriment of racialized and marginalized women. Her text *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters* (2010) highlights the ways that anti-White Slave Trade campaigners used public rallies, posters, and newspaper pieces to propagate these accounts and how this shaped public and political perceptions of a phenomena that, in retrospect, has been debunked by historians.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Christine Bruckert and Colette Parent (2002), as well as Elya M. Durisin and Rob Heynen (2015), locate the renewed concern with human trafficking in Canada in the 1990s, and credit women’s rights organizations with instigating the spread of this concern through awareness raising campaigns that included public events, fundraisers, and pursuing media coverage. This concern echoed the growth of global public and political attention to the issue (Hua 2011; Agustin 2007), and responded to pressure from the United States, applied through its 2003 ranking of Canada as “Tier 2” in its *Trafficking in Persons Report*.³² Drawing attention to the heavy emphasis on the sanctity of childhood and innocence in US discussions about human trafficking, Jennifer Musto (2013) argues that anti-trafficking campaigners frequently use age to sidestep discussions of sexual consent and that a focus on underage youth has helped human trafficking panics and accompanying discourses to “go mainstream.” Miriam

³² See note 14.

Ticktin's (2010) analysis of the outcomes of anti-trafficking campaigns in France demonstrates that anti-trafficking organizations actively reinforce and propagate anti-trafficking discourses through the submission of funding applications and the publication of visuals that depict trafficking victims as young, often white or light skinned, women or girls and perpetrators as large, adult, racialized men. Looking at the situation globally, Laura Agustin (2007), whose work also made Ava's reading list, has documented the ways that the narratives anti-trafficking organizations draw on, (re)construct, duplicate, and extensively propagate have contributed to the establishment of a "rescue industry" that is dependent on the continued (re)circulation of anti-trafficking discourses and does little to tangibly support persons in exploitative situations.

Susan Dewey's research in Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and India demonstrates the artificial and constructed nature of such discourses in her analysis of the ways that anti-trafficking organizations have constructed the trafficked woman to be "a sort of hollow body, an empty figure to be filled up with the assumptions of the relatively privileged staff members at most international organizations, governments, and nongovernmental organizations" (2008:164). Her work effectively highlights the malleability of anti-trafficking discourses that has made human trafficking a useful foil for a diverse array of ends, including garnering political popularity and supporting corrupt criminal justice systems, bringing an equally diverse array of anti-trafficking advocates under its banner. Examining one set of these "strange bedfellows" in the United States, Elizabeth Bernstein's (2010) work looks at how evangelical and feminist anti-trafficking activists have come together through a shared commitment to carceral paradigms of gendered social justice and militarized humanitarianism as appropriate forms of state engagement, promoting carceral approaches to trafficking despite disagreements around the politics of sex and gender.

Highlighting the diverse uses of anti-trafficking discourses, Nandita Sharma (2005) demonstrates how the language of anti-trafficking is used to justify racist and xenophobic immigration controls in Canada through a prominent emphasis on immigration and international organized crime in public education materials. Kamala Kempadoo (2012), in her discussion of sex trafficking discourses and contemporary abolitionism, notes that,

the sex trafficking approach does not operate independently, but has developed in conversation with, or has drawn its power from, other movements and narratives. Building from the white slavery and sexual slavery narratives, it too depends upon the history of black people in the Americas to speak about conditions of forced labor, and similarly reproduces the uneasy, often exploitative, historical relationship between white feminist and black emancipation movements.” (2012:xv)

Kempadoo’s edited volume (Kempadoo et al. 2012) *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered, 2nd Edition: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights* was also on Ava’s list, with Ava emphasizing to me that “although I have not read all of it yet, I know it’s an important one because it talks about the people who are left out and we see those people, we see those who don’t fit.” For similar reasons, Denise Brennan’s (2014) ethnography was included, as it discusses life after experiences of trafficking in the U.S., showing the continuum of exploitation that undergirds the U.S. economy while countering sex industry panics and demonstrating how carceral, deportation-based approaches to anti-trafficking undermine efforts to find and support trafficked people.

In developing her resource list, Ava was increasingly aware that critical feminist academic literature on human trafficking was not broadly circulated within the Toronto anti-trafficking movement or within the Network. The project of creating the reading list itself connected with Ava’s reaction to critiques she received, including those articulated by Shannon at the event and submitted by myself afterwards, a reaction that she characterized as “a

realization that I still had so much to learn.” To build it, she drew on the academics that volunteered with or worked out of the refugee centre that employed her, including myself, the occasional work-study student, and a long-term employee who was also working on her graduate degree at a local university. Ava’s goal in creating this reading list was to connect academic discourses on the anti-trafficking movement to the movement itself. In a conversation we had over lunch, she expressed her frustration over the lack of circulation and availability of these materials, which often came with steep price tags and could only be found in university libraries. This, paired with the texts containing significant amounts of academic jargon, meant that there were multiple barriers to accessing and disseminating the materials she wanted to share with the Network.

It is important to note that, while members of the Network frequently spoke of their own research efforts, these were predominantly limited to personal experiences, reading newspaper articles about human trafficking, and reviewing policy documents published by other anti-trafficking organizations. As Mira, whose Network participation and public education efforts were discussed in Chapter Three, described in an interview about doing research on human trafficking:

I looked at the Canadian Women’s Foundation a lot and I used their resources because for some reason they, I guess it’s just opinion, but I consider them a trusted source so I used their information and read a bunch of reports. I volunteered with and started coming to the Network meetings, I spent some time with other members of the Network who work more along the front line... I don’t have any front-line experience here... It’s mostly just with the Network.

Mira’s words demonstrate how the Network was treated as a space for not only producing knowledge about human trafficking, but also learning and sharing information about it, with members relying heavily on the experiences of front-line service providers and reports generated

by non-academic organizations engaged in anti-trafficking work, such as the CWF. How then, have these academically based critiques made their way to members, such as Ava or Melissa, who also relied heavily on other Network members and the reports published by other anti-trafficking organizations and coalitions?

Introduction to academic critiques and analysis of the anti-trafficking movement was a result of discursive encounters with discourses and public education efforts that challenged the dominant discourse of the broader anti-trafficking movement, as well as those which have directly targeted organizations within the Network and the Network as a whole. Examples of these encounters, some of which I unpack below and in the next chapter, included: reading the essay I submitted to the Network (described in Chapter Three); encountering posts on social media platforms, such as Twitter or Facebook, that disparaged anti-trafficking activists as having “white saviour complexes”; attending events on human trafficking that included a panelist sharing critical anti-trafficking studies research; having one of their events protested; or having speakers at their own events share information that challenged the assumptions of organizers. Network members often had one of three responses to encountering discourses that challenged their own views of the work they were doing and the knowledge they were producing: ignoring it; engaging with it; or doubling down on their own point of view. Here, I am particularly interested in the activities of those who chose to engage with “outside” discourses and the dynamics of these discursive encounters. To better understand the various groups that were party to such encounters and to appreciate the diverse ways that other social movements have been differentially impacted by and, in turn, engaged with the discursive knowledge produced by the anti-trafficking movement, I now briefly turn to the migrant worker rights movement, before exploring the more pronounced efforts of the sex worker rights movement in Toronto.

The Migrant Worker Rights Movement: Uneven Utilization, Acceptance, Avoidance

Building on feedback received through an anonymous online survey of participants in the Network's first public roundtable, the Network's second roundtable, occurring in 2014, worked hard to incorporate more information about how migrant workers in Canada were affected by and could be victims of human trafficking. As Ava explained during one of our early conversations:

Here at [organization name], the majority of our work is with people who have precarious migration status or no legal status in Canada, so supporting these migrants has always been our primary concern and we try to bring this perspective into the Network by always emphasizing that trafficking can affect anyone and that migrants working in temporary foreign worker programs or in less legal positions are vulnerable to exploitation. These are the people we see most in our work. But, you know, it's hard because other people don't understand, they just think about sex. Even other groups working with migrants, they hear 'trafficking' and they say, 'that doesn't happen here, that's a prostitution thing,' but we know, if we look at the definition, that people in these industries experience trafficking too.

Ava went on to express her frustration at not being able to find more groups working with migrant workers that were willing to speak at the Network's anti-trafficking roundtables.

Significantly, when Ava did manage to secure Ahkil, a speaker from a prominent grassroots organization that was connected to the migrant worker rights movement, Ahkil used the platform to present the reasons why his organization refused to use the language of human trafficking in the work that they did. He told the audience that his organization:

has spent the last year working on how to talk about this issue of human trafficking and at the current stage of our work we do not talk about trafficking. Trafficking implies that we are talking about a kind of exception, but we are talking about the temporary foreign worker programs. We are seeing the largest numbers of migrants coming into the country are temporary foreign workers and it's not about a single bad employer, it's that exploitation and abuse are part of the system... Once our community members are deemed temporary foreign workers these persons are exempted from basic protections, the entire system [is] geared towards deriving the maximum amount of labour for the maximum amount of profit. The Canadian government is the largest trafficker of them all. Trafficking speaks about this as a criminal justice issue, but the biggest problem is the legislation that

we already have... when we see anti-trafficking legislation in practice, if you are deemed to not fit into the narrow category of trafficked then you will be jailed and deported. Anti-trafficking legislation is not a systemic change! It keeps things at the level of the individual, it is broken.

As he spoke, the audience went completely silent, with no outbursts of applause that had characterized previous pro-anti-trafficking movement presentations. As he continued with his presentation, he elaborated, saying:

We don't say trafficking because it furthers this idea of victims with the solution being good-will and charity. As a migrant worker organization, we use different words. We speak about struggle, about resistance and change. We believe utterly in letting the people who experience those borders determine their futures. We respect their choice and we have to honour that. Despite the assaults and abuses, people are engaging in a thousand daily acts of resistance and the language of trafficking too easily reinforces 'victim and abuser.' Migrant workers don't need to be pulled up, we just need to walk alongside them.

At the end of his presentation, an audience member asked him for more information and Akhil emphasized that he would leave materials behind for distribution. Unpacking this moment, we can see how Akhil's presentation confronted members of the Network with a significantly different conceptual framework for understanding issues of labour exploitation and human trafficking. While he used the word "trafficking" he did so to a very different effect, directly challenging its presumed effectiveness as a means of addressing exploitation and its usefulness as a universal around which people should unite and mobilize for change. He presented a picture of an alternative ethical world, that of the migrant worker rights movement, as one that was incompatible with the human trafficking movement at a fundamental level. In response, the audience was silent. Unlike the response of audience members to Shannon at the first round table, which included interrupting, shouting, and other forms of disrespect, Akhil's speech led to a moment where the outcome was remarkably unclear: Did audience members agree with him?

How were audience members reconciling Ahkil's radical reframing of their work with their own perceptions and intentions?

As Ava began applauding, which triggered a small echo of applause from the audience, Ahkil stepped down from the podium, making way for Ava as she suggested a brief lunch break before resuming. While a break had been scheduled on the event agenda, it was clear that she had also read the room, which was still largely silent. During the break, it remained unclear how audience members had received Ahkil's presentation. Unlike the break following Shannon's questions, during which numerous audience members critiqued her and expressed their displeasure at her presence at the event, audience members at this round table barely mentioned Ahkil or the content of his presentation. Having been presented with a different political and ethical approach, it was as though the ethical friction had proved to be too great for an immediate response. In encountering frameworks that were so different from their own, change and transformation were impeded; the limits of discursive encounters had been, for the moment, reached.

Beyond his presentation, the material Ahkil left behind remained and began to inform Ava's reading list and the materials she drew on when developing Network events. The materials themselves were an example of the outcome of knowledge production efforts within the migrant worker rights movement, as was the talk itself, with Ahkil using his presentation as a means of both challenging the dominant anti-trafficking discourse that characterized the previous roundtable and educating the audience on the needs and language of the migrant worker rights movement in Ontario. While the majority of Network members that were present for his talk did not demonstrate an engagement with the alternative frameworks they were introduced to in their work going forward, his presentation marked the beginning of a stronger emphasis on the part of

the Network's primary organizers, in particular Maria, Ava, and Melissa, on addressing the needs of migrant workers more broadly within the Network's anti-trafficking work.

Two years later, I spoke with Ahkil in the context of his work with a different migrant worker rights organization and we discussed the continued prominence of the anti-trafficking movement and pressure for migrant worker rights organizers to take up the language of trafficking. He emphasized that things were now at a point where the organization "has to come up with a formal response, we can't ignore it anymore, they won't let us", but that he didn't know how they would come to consensus or put together a formal statement. Elaborating, he said:

We're aware of the issues; that the discourse has caused a lot of harm and led to a lot of criminalization and deportations. At the same time, there are organizations in our [migrant worker rights] coalition that are asking 'Can we use this? Can it help?' so we're trying to find out if it can, because if there are ways we can use this discourse to gain access to temporary visas or residency, even if it's got problems, we owe it to the workers to try to do whatever we can to help them stay, to get them protections. So, at this point, I honestly don't know, I can't say if we'll ever be happy with it and I don't think we will end up using it. For now, at least, I'm staying away from it, I don't want it associated with our work because saying 'trafficking' doesn't get you a human rights tribunal like we got in Southern Ontario. Labour rights and human rights, that's what we need.

His sentiments were echoed by another migrant worker rights organizer, Eve, who had been involved in organizing for migrant worker rights and providing support services to temporary foreign workers in Ontario for over a decade. Describing a recent national conference put on by the Canadian Centre for Refugees, Eve remarked on how the roundtables and workshops that were historically places for planning national campaigns for migrant worker rights and discussing issues migrants were facing, as well as barriers to service provision, had been dominated by a top-down emphasis from event organizers and funders on needing to raise

awareness about the human trafficking of migrant workers in Canada. Referencing the attitudes of migrant workers towards the language of trafficking, Eve said,

it doesn't help, the language doesn't speak to [workers] and they don't identify with it, so why are we trying to force people to use it? It's so strongly associated with criminalization, with victimhood, not human rights. We come together to plan, to talk about human rights and fighting for labour rights, and all they wanted to talk about was human trafficking, as if pointing that spotlight there was going to do anything but bring restrictions.

In these discussions, Ahkil and Eve presented an interpretation of “human rights” that was not commensurable with the interpretations used by many in the anti-trafficking Network. As Ahkil's presentation suggested, as well as Eve's emphasis on disliking the imposition of “top-down” frameworks on their work, for these migrant worker rights organizers “human rights” were connected to a bottom-up or grassroots approach to organizing. In this context, workers themselves identified and articulated their needs and were then supported by migrant worker rights organizers who were often the children of migrants or migrant workers themselves – a point which contrasted with the majority of anti-trafficking movement members in the Network, none of whom identified as having experienced or being related to someone who had experienced trafficking. Actions for the human rights of migrant workers actively drew on legal definitions of human rights enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to mount legal challenges to the government as a means of forcing them to recognize their responsibility to protect the rights of these workers.³³ Similar to the interpretations of human rights that informed the sex worker rights movement in Toronto, the goals of the movement were to both establish that migrant workers are “human” and that, on those grounds, they have “rights” that must be protected by the Canadian government, which benefits from their labour. For organizers like

³³ This has been demonstrated by the several Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario cases that found that the rights of temporary foreign workers in Canada were violated on numerous occasions. For example, Adrian Monrose was awarded compensation for racial discrimination in the workplace (Learn 2013) and two sisters from Mexico were awarded compensation after being subjected to “a sexually poisoned work environment” (Mehta 2015).

Eve, human trafficking movement members may use the language of “human rights” but “all they wanted to talk about was human trafficking”, criminalization, and victimhood, indicating to her that they weren’t actually interested in “human rights” the way she understood them. For Eve, framing those in situations of exploitation as “victims” does not grant humanity, but undermines it, making rights conditional on individuals being recognized as “victims” rather than “humans”. Here the disparate particulars that underlie “human rights” as an axiom of unity are too great to overcome; the ethical friction of supporting interpretations of “human rights” that are “not really” human rights limits change or transformations in each movement’s guiding framework, thereby limiting coalition building through a reduced ability to communicate across these differences.

At the same time, these differences do not prevent all forms of change or transformation as not all organizers found them insurmountable. Ava’s organization, which also identified itself as supporting and being involved with the migrant worker rights movement, used the language of trafficking “for the funding”, which suggested that, for some, the intention that underlays the language matters more. Other organizations that provided support services to migrant workers and were involved in the migrant worker rights movement have utilized trafficking discourses as a way of drawing more attention to the needs of migrant workers. As Jacob, a volunteer of two years with a prominent international migrant worker rights organization that focused on supporting and advocating for workers from the Philippines, discussed during our interview:

We have seen some groups around Canada, such as [organization name] in Vancouver, begin to talk about trafficking as a way to draw attention to the sexual harassment and exploitation that live-in caregivers in Canada are vulnerable to, but which does not receive much attention because it is a government program that benefits a lot of wealthy families. They see that there is all this attention on victims of sexual exploitation, on sex trafficking, and maybe they think ‘ok, yes, that’s what we’re seeing, sexual exploitation, it’s sex trafficking too, so we need to use that language to get support and resources for these

women.’ So we see that and we understand, but we don’t really use the language ourselves because it hasn’t translated into real help. That’s why, when you asked me about the interview, I was hesitant, because I don’t do work around trafficking, I do work around migrant rights. So, we don’t, you know, go to anti-trafficking events and we don’t really see those people at our protests or rallies either.

These discussions demonstrated an awareness of the power and influence of anti-trafficking discourses in Canada, as well as the potential risks and rewards of utilizing it, and revealed some of the limits of discursive encounters. Each organizer described their organization in ways that demonstrated an awareness of and desire to manage the public’s perception of their work, which then directly informed their knowledge production and communication efforts. There was a clear emphasis on the importance of language to public perception and, by choosing particular words with an awareness of how they connected to broader discourses about victimhood, human rights, sex, labour, and exploitation, an engagement in cyclical processes of knowledge consumption, production, and communication. This was reinforced through the awareness raising materials that the migrant worker rights movement in Ontario had developed, which often included images of workers being active, together with the products of their labour, such as fruit, garments, or agricultural images, visualizing the tangible contribution of their labour to Canadian industries.

With an awareness of the power of anti-trafficking discourses, there was also the fear among migrant worker rights groups that trafficking discourses would derail or undermine migrant worker rights language, resulting in criminalization rather than labour rights, as reflected by the distancing many migrant worker rights organizers engaged in to distinguish their work from “anti-trafficking.” This distancing also manifested itself over the course of my research as a hesitancy on the part of migrant worker rights organizers to participate in research interviews, with those that did participate, such as Jacob, often emphasizing that they “don’t do trafficking

work” or were “not experts about trafficking.” The different interpretations of my research project, which I presented to participants as looking at the anti-trafficking, migrant worker rights, and sex worker rights movements in Canada, demonstrated tensions and boundaries that were drawn between social movements as members worked to manage perceptions about the work that they did and the goals of their movement.

Discourses associated with a particular issue were perceived by members of different social movements as informing the possible solutions that could be envisioned and signifying the ethical orientation of advocates. As Akhil told his audience of anti-trafficking activists, from where he’s standing, ‘trafficking’ “furthers this idea of victims with the solution being good-will and charity” and emphasizes an individualizing understanding of the problem that focuses on “victims and perpetrators” rather than systemic, structural forces. In contrast, using the language of “labour rights”, which has a more collective emphasis, is associated with workers as active, resilient agents that we can “walk alongside.” To reinforce his position, Akhil also brought public education materials developed by his organization, which included a brief list of academic resources and policy materials for those who wanted to learn more about the work of his organization. The introduction of these materials and the discourses that they put forward were new to many in the Network, as they came from ‘outside’ the anti-trafficking movement, and as Ava reviewed them with me she commented on how they “are challenging, you know, some of the ways I am used to thinking.” Efforts to involve speakers, seen by some members of the Network as relevant but still “outside” the anti-trafficking movement, have been one way that critiques of the anti-trafficking movement and anti-trafficking discourses entered into Network discourses. Another way has been through the (often uninvited) efforts of the sex worker rights

movement to challenge the hegemony of the anti-trafficking movement when it comes to public representations of sex work and sex worker rights in Canada.

The Sex Worker Rights Movement: Unavoidable Engagement

The influence and involvement of the anti-trafficking movement in conversations about sex work in Canada has been repeatedly demonstrated through the case of *Bedford v. Canada*, the hearings regarding and subsequent passage of the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* (PCEPA), and the continuation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Operation Northern Spotlight, which branded itself as an anti-trafficking and community trust building operation but continues to be widely condemned by the sex worker rights movement and experienced by sex workers as a form of state violence and intimidation (Smellie 2017). For sex worker rights organizers, such as Victoria, who have been involved in sex work and sex worker rights organizing since the contemporary movement began to grow in the late 1970s and early 1980s, anti-trafficking discourses are just "the latest tactic in a string of attempts to eliminate the sex industry." For others, such as Sarah, who has been involved in sex worker rights organizing in Toronto for 10 years, the anti-trafficking movement is "well intentioned, but misdirected, as well as frequently unwilling to listen because of personal biases against sex work." For Lucy, a sex worker and activist who has been on the receiving end of Operation Northern Spotlight targeting, as well as publicly outed by anti-trafficking activists who posted her legal name and picture online and labelled her both a victim and a member of the 'pimp lobby', she now half-jokingly self-identifies as having been "anti-trafficked by ignorant evangelicals with nothing better to do than obsess about sex while they pat themselves on the back for saving the womens [sic]." Natalie, who has been involved with the sex worker rights movement on and off for over five years, lamented over coffee one day of how she went to do an interview with a journalist

and “all they wanted to talk to me about was trafficking.” This was just after the conclusion of *Bedford v. Canada* and she had been told she would be asked about sex worker rights and what the future of sex work in Canada could look like.

Across the movement in Toronto, regardless of individual views about the reality of trafficking, whether it existed, and how it could be addressed, participants continually emphasized and drew attention to the ways that “trafficking” dominated public discussions about sex work in Canada. Towards the end of my fieldwork, things had gotten to the point where anyone publicly speaking about sex worker rights expressed the need to be prepared to field questions about trafficking, with some considering developing media training workshops to assist organizers with feeling prepared to enter into the public arena. As a result, knowledge production and communication efforts undertaken by members of the sex worker rights movement often included addressing or responding to anti-trafficking discourses and the representations of sex work that they presented, demonstrating the extent to which the sex worker rights movement encountered, engaged with, and resisted discursive Network representations of sex work.

One form these engagements took was satirical performances that aimed to simultaneously mock those seeking to “save” sex workers and present the audience with a window into the impact this had on workers. Early in my fieldwork, while volunteering for a migrant sex worker rights advocacy group in Toronto, I was involved in the development and debut performance of one such skit. The idea for it came up during a subcommittee meeting for the “Public Education Working Group,” of which I was a part, while we were brainstorming how we could be involved in the upcoming National Day of Action in Support of Sex Worker Rights. Originally, we had been working on pamphlets and fact sheets that aimed to ‘debunk’ myths

about human trafficking and raise awareness about the harmful impact of anti-trafficking raids on migrant sex workers in the city. The fact sheets were something we had been working on for months and, while we were still hoping they would be ready for the upcoming event, we weren't sure they'd be polished enough for public distribution. Wanting to make sure we had something to distribute or present, one organizer suggested turning the content of the fact sheets into a skit that we could perform. The idea took off and we spent several weeks working on the dialogue and practicing our performance.

The general plot was a bylaw officer check on an Asian massage parlour triggered by an anti-trafficking activist who had "identified" the parlour as a site of sex trafficking based on racialized stereotypes and a "signs of trafficking checklist" distributed by several local anti-trafficking organizations. The check leads to the bylaw officer contacting police and CBSA, the massage parlour's workers being harassed and fined, and condoms being used as evidence of sex work occurring on the premises. Focus points included presenting the anti-trafficking activist as a pearl-clutching do-gooder giving out flowers to remind the massage workers of their worth – an open critique of the efforts of anti-trafficking organizations to present sex workers with outreach bags as a form of empowerment. The involvement of three government authorities demonstrated the collusion between law enforcement agencies that leads to intimidation and the deportation of migrant workers, a practice that violates Toronto's Sanctuary City policy. The use of condoms as evidence drew attention to the discriminatory practice of identifying and arresting sex workers based on the presence of safer sex supplies. The skit also presented some of the strategies that migrant sex workers employed to create safe working environments and how racist stereotypes of Asian women, language proficiency, and sexual agency resulted in a safe workplace being perceived as a sex trafficking den. Performed outdoors in a public park in

Toronto during the National Day of Action, the skit catered to a crowd that was predominantly sex workers and sex worker rights organizers, but that also included several anti-trafficking activists on the fringes. The skit was so popular that it was performed at an event later that year addressing the exploitation of migrant workers more broadly. As of writing, it continues to be performed at other events as a way of pushing back against and demonstrating the harms of hegemonic anti-trafficking discourses.

Returning to the development of the fact sheets and other public education materials that members of this working group had hoped to distribute, a primary theme during their development was taking popular anti-trafficking phrases and images and turning them on their head. For example, public education materials produced by anti-trafficking activists in Toronto often listed “indicators” of sex trafficking, which ranged from a lack of English language proficiency to having tattoos. In response, we developed a fact sheet that listed an assortment of other explanations for having tattoos (such as personal artistic preference) or a lack of English language proficiency (newcomer to Canada; tourist; ESL student). Anti-trafficking campaigns also often used images of young women with a dark figure in the background to indicate their trafficked status. In response, we developed images that juxtaposed a cartoon recreation of one of these images on one side with a ‘zoomed out’ image that showed that the dark figure in the background was a police officer. The target audience for these campaigns was broadly imagined, as Kyle, a volunteer with the migrant sex worker rights organization, explained: “We want to reach anti-traffickers, that’s for sure. But it’s also important to provide a counter-narrative to the general public, to policy workers who might pass by one of our posters and think twice about whatever new anti-trafficking project they’re thinking of funding.” As a result, forms of

communicating knowledge took on a variety of forms, from skits to postering to social media campaigns to formal publications.

At another sex worker rights and support services organization in the city, a much larger project was initiated to push back against anti-trafficking discourses: the creation of a policy brief that mimicked an extremely influential and oft-cited anti-trafficking (and anti-sex work) policy brief created by the CWF. Instigated by the sex worker organization and developed under the supervision and direction of committee member Dr. Kamala Kempadoo, in collaboration with myself, a representative of the sex worker rights organization, and other academic-based collaborators,³⁴ the primary contrast between the two briefs was that the sex worker rights brief was firmly rooted in academic research and community consultation with groups impacted by anti-trafficking discourses (such as the local and migrant sex workers and other migrant workers), while the CWF's document was rooted in moralizing arguments and research that had been critiqued by numerous academics and other researchers. Additionally, to ensure that the brief, entitled *Challenging Trafficking in Canada* (2017), did not reinforce the conflation of sex work with trafficking, as well as to address how different marginalized groups were being negatively impacted by anti-trafficking initiatives, migrant worker and sex worker rights and support services organizations across Canada were consulted.

The policy brief was thus a direct challenge to the hegemony of the anti-trafficking movement in policy discussions that impacted already marginalized communities. It was also an

³⁴ As a Professor known within the Toronto sex worker rights movement as a critical anti-trafficking studies scholar and ally of the sex worker rights movement, the sex worker organization approached Dr. Kamala Kempadoo to direct and supervise the creation of the policy brief. As I was already a regular volunteer with the organization and preparing to begin my fieldwork, I was approached by the organization to serve as the organization's representative and collaborator on the project. In developing the brief, Dr. Kempadoo involved one of her graduate classes in conducting the necessary research. The project was also joined by another graduate student under Dr. Kempadoo's supervision. In addition, a member of the sex worker organization's Board joined the project to serve as a representative, while my role developed into that of researcher, writer, editor, and coordinator.

example of knowledge production that attempted to overcome the barriers marginalized communities faced in having their own experiences and research accepted as “knowledge.” In doing so, the instigators of the project demonstrated their awareness that the battle for representation they were engaged in was not being fought on a level playing field and that the criminalization, stigmatization, and marginalization of sex workers provided policy makers and the broader public with ample excuses to dismiss those voices that challenged the more polished presentations of the anti-trafficking movement. To this end, the policy brief interwove quotes and feedback from marginalized community members and the organizations that supported them with academic research on human trafficking in Canada, grounding the academic critiques discussed earlier in this chapter in the lived experiences and knowledge of those affected. The goal of producing and communicating knowledge in this way was to combine the often-dismissed arguments of marginalized communities with academic research as a way to leverage the respectable expert status so often afforded to the latter to amplify the voices of the former.

Large amounts of time and energy went into ensuring that the brief itself did not perpetuate harmful stereotypes, with many hours being spent selecting the images that the brief would include to ensure that they sent the “right” message. The intended audience for the brief was anti-trafficking activists and government policy makers, two groups that sometimes overlapped, and those involved in the project wanted to ensure that if they succeeded in reaching their target audience the knowledge they sought to convey would not be misinterpreted or easily dismissed. To this end, the brief used the word “trafficking” in its title and advertised itself as a policy document that focused on “human trafficking in Canada”. This strategic discursive positioning was chosen to facilitate the brief being viewed as just as relevant to anti-trafficking discussions as other similarly positioned reports, such as the one produced by the CWF. Upon its

completion, the brief was actively shared across social media and via email by organizations that were consulted and by the sex worker rights activists and organizations.

The Effects of Discursive Encounters

Discursive encounters impact the groups that are part of the encounters differently, with some being able to go on doing their work unimpeded and others finding themselves constantly having to engage with and respond to the discourses produced by other movements. In this way, discursive encounters differentially impact and influence the knowledge production and communication activities of social movements. Tracing the impact of the policy brief, outlined above, illuminates this further. During the early stages of the brief's development, I was also volunteering on a weekly basis with the refugee centre that was the primary organization behind the Network and I often spoke with Ava and Willow about the projects that I was working on with the sex worker rights movement. Openly supportive of these projects, they were both particularly interested in, as they put it, "the potential" of the policy brief for the Network. Over lunch, they elaborated, with Willow describing how they were:

looking for new ways to help reform the Network, you know, to rebuild it so that it's not so bad. I'd really like to, actually, set up a more formal framework and get the Network to a place where all participating organizations have to follow the anti-oppression framework in their independent actions if they want to remain members. You know, with terms of reference and a memorandum of understanding that they have to sign onto. But, you know, it's so hard to get people there. You remember what happened with the LGBTQ roundtable? How you spoke about criminalization as harmful and the need to really put clients first in providing support services? Well, there was a lot of pushback, so we both got an earful. So, they're not there yet, you know? Well, some of them are, and they'll be happy about this too, but the others, they need more gentle pushing, more reasons to change their minds about things. This, this we can use to help push them, to give ourselves firmer ground to stand on that they can't ignore so much, you know? We can say 'Look, this is what we're going to do and this will tell you all of the reasons why!' And wouldn't that be nice?

Willow's goal, then, was to use the policy brief as "an unbiased, authoritative document" to push for change within the Network. This change, as discussed in Chapter Three, involved navigating the internal tensions produced by trying to "bring everyone to the table" through ethical friction between members engaged in anti-trafficking practices that were identified as harmful and those who supported anti-oppressive harm reduction approaches to eliminating trafficking, including the decriminalization of sex work and various forms of migration. The policy brief, itself an example of knowledge production responding to powerful anti-trafficking discourses that the sex worker rights movement could rarely avoid encountering, was thus seen by several members of the Network as creating productive ethical friction between members. Received as both unbiased and authoritative, the policy brief was something that could allow Network members that supported it to avoid being labelled as biased or directly criticizing the practices of other members. Further, because the brief targeted human trafficking policy, rather than sex work or migrant worker policy, it was firmly positioned as a relevant policy brief that would be more difficult to ignore than one that advertised itself as focusing exclusively on, for example, the criminalization of sex work. When we last spoke, following the formal publication of the policy brief, Ava informed me that the policy brief was now a part of her resource list that was circulated to new Network members and that she often brought copies of it with her to meetings with policy makers or emailed it to them afterwards. Within the Network, several of the organizations that, like Ava, were already supportive of anti-oppressive harm reduction approaches to anti-trafficking work also distributed it to their membership, though it is unclear the extent to which differently minded organizations within the Network did the same. Beyond this, Ava was also contacted by a local college to develop a summer course of human trafficking in Canada and the policy brief was to be included in the curriculum, extending the reach of the

brief beyond the bounds of the sex worker rights movement and their sympathizers and introducing it to a broader college audience.

To this end, the policy brief provided the sex worker rights movement with a means of “moving” in anti-trafficking organizing, policy development, and political spaces, as well as reaching audiences with an interest in human trafficking in Canada, without having to be physically present to give their arguments or risk being dismissed because of their positions on sex work. As Anise described it, the policy brief “was like a submarine, so we can get in there all stealth-like and they [anti-trafficking activities and policy makers] think its going to be something that just agrees with them and then, you know, they better hold on because it’s a whole-lotta something else.” It was thus a clear (and, as of the time of writing, reasonably successful) attempt at overcoming the uneven means and circuits of production the sex worker rights movement was faced with, providing a way of engaging with, resisting, and negotiating hegemonic anti-trafficking discourses and the ‘truths’ they supported. At the same time, it highlighted the tangible barriers that members of the sex worker rights movement faced in trying to meaningfully engage with the anti-trafficking movement on their own terms and the disparate power imbalance between the two movements when it came to influencing the course of each others’ knowledge production efforts.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the knowledge production and communications efforts of social movements through a discussion of discursive encounters and their differential impacts on each movement. In discussing the public education efforts of these movements, I have approached them as forms of knowledge production that echoed the guiding frameworks of movement members, with communication efforts shaped to catch the attention of particular

audiences. Taking anti-trafficking discourses and their impact as a point of focus, I have looked at the tensions and negotiations that underlay the construction and propagation of hegemonic ‘truths’ about human trafficking, as well as the discursive encounters these discourses are involved in. In doing so, I have highlighted not only the ways that groups are differentially impacted by these discursive encounters, but also how they actively engaged with and responded to them and how activities influenced and reflected the ethical worlds of these movements. Further, in following the development of the policy brief *Challenging Trafficking in Canada*, instigated by a sex worker support organization as a response to and part of discursive encounters between the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements, I have looked at how such encounters instigated and highlighted the presence of ethical friction. Beyond this, we can also see how encounters are not a one-time event, but continue to develop over time, building on previous events and diverse knowledge production and circulation practices. To explore this further, the next chapter looks at how in-person encounters, which drew heavily on and were also involved in discursive encounters, served to demonstrate, as well as instigate, ethical friction within and between social movements.

6. Personal Encounters and Ethical Friction

While Chapter Five explored the discursive encounters between the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and migrant worker rights movements, in particular practices of knowledge production and communication, this chapter focuses on the in-person encounters between and within movements. Over the course of my fieldwork, the content and outcomes of these encounters varied, at times resulting in unexpected moments of allyship and at others constituting moments of disruption that, to participants, differentially highlighted issues of erasure, privilege, and strategies of resistance, with interpretation often heavily dependent on the participant's self-identified subject position(s) within the encounter. Encounters took place in a variety of settings, sometimes spontaneously, sometimes meticulously planned, and often drew heavily on the discursive debates and analyses that were developed and deployed in the knowledge production practices described in the previous chapter.

In exploring these encounters, my aim is to highlight their complexity and the powerful potential they hold as moments of, arguably, predictable ethical friction that could have very unpredictable outcomes. Further, by looking at multiple in-person encounters that occurred over the span of several years, together with the ongoing discursive encounters within and across these movements, the varying effects these encounters have had on movement members and the ways that some effects took several years to come to fruition can be better appreciated. In doing so, I move beyond a surface level analysis of these encounters as conflicts or disagreements, though they may involve them, and connect these moments of encounter to the individual ethical orientations of movement members, how they negotiated their own subject positions and sought to manage the orientations of other members within their own movement, and the generative potential of being challenged by the guiding frameworks of other social movements. To

illuminate the lines of ethical division in some of these encounters, I focus on the approaches of different movement members and their social movements to thinking about sex work, in particular their interpretations of labour, exploitation, and human rights. Using individual encounters as an entry point, this chapter moves beyond the moments in time when they occurred to explore the antecedents, as well as the processes of change (or lack thereof), negotiation, and engagement that followed them.

To begin, I establish some of the expectations that members of these social movements, in particular the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements, had of in-person encounters and the events that paved the way for their development. Following this, I explore several of the cross-movement encounters that occurred over the course of my research, connecting participants' expectations, experiences, and reflections relating to these events to my framing of the ethical worlds of these social movements and the friction between and within them. In doing so, I draw on the work of social movement researchers, including Sarah Maddison and Emma Partridge's (2014) work on the productive role of conflict in social movements, to connect some of what occurs in these encounters to broader social movement strategies for instigating social change and the development of movements themselves. I then dig into the messy, uneven changes and generative potential of these encounters and how social movement members positioned themselves and strategized within them.

“The Feud”

It's not something that we talk about, really, at meetings anymore, because, when we first created the Network, the feud between those of us that support sex worker rights and decriminalization and those who think of trafficking and sex work as the same thing, it was explosive, like, people on opposite sides of the room yelling at each other explosive. We had this one meeting in particular, and things had been building for a bit, and then there was, how do you say, the straw that breaks the camel's back? Well, it broke and after that people left the Network, people from both sides of the fight left. So now we don't talk

about it so much directly, we just want everyone to be able to work together, to bring everyone to the table, because we're stronger together. (Ava)

As Ava, an employee of a local refugee centre and one of the founding members and primary organizers involved with the Network, discussed the Network's history with me, I heard the familiar echoes of feminist debates surrounding sex work in her descriptions. The event she was describing, which she and other Network members commonly referred to as 'The Feud,' occurred within the Network very early in its history. At its core, The Feud was grounded in different feminist ideologies regarding sexual labour discussed in Chapters Three and Four, including: prohibitionist or radical feminism, which views the sale of sexual services as inherently exploitative and a form of sexual slavery; and sex positive or liberal feminism, which supports a view of sex work as work and decriminalization. The former position informed the actions of Network members like Christine and Enid, who conflated sex work with human trafficking, while the latter informed the actions of Network members like Ava and Melissa, who sought to make clear distinctions between the two. At the time of The Feud, the ethical world of the Network was in its infancy and the ethos of "bringing everyone to the table" had yet to be developed. In this context, disagreements over the conflation of sex work with human trafficking culminated in a verbally explosive event.

The impact of The Feud on the ongoing development of the Network and its activities was demonstrated by the adherence of members to the Network's ethos of "bringing everyone to the table," which I discussed in Chapter Three, as a means of avoiding direct conflict. At the time of my research, The Feud had become something of a legend in the Network's history, often serving as a touchstone for members wishing to summarize or acknowledge the debates around anti-trafficking in two words. Even those Network members that were not present during The

Feud were aware of its significance and could imagine its content. Mira, a relatively new Network member, used the term immediately when one of our conversations came around to barriers or challenges to her anti-trafficking work (“Oh, The Feud! The Feud, well let me tell you...”) and she used it to frame the barriers she had encountered in her organizing. As she described them, “The only barrier I really encounter, and I don’t really encounter it much to be honest, is when people start butting heads over ‘The Feud.’” Using air quotes and pausing for additional emphasis, she continued, saying,

It’s all about respect, for me, and in the end that’s always going to be the bottom line. You have to respect people’s choices and you can’t say you’re a feminist and then turn around and tell a woman she’s making the wrong choice. It doesn’t matter if that’s your opinion, it’s not your choice, it’s hers. And I won’t ever apologize for holding that position, I’m unapologetically feminist. But, you know, in my day-to-day work, I rarely encounter it, it just doesn’t come up, people at Network meetings don’t seem to have any issues with the work each other are doing and that works for me.

For Melissa, a long term member who supported decriminalization and harm reduction approaches to anti-trafficking work, The Feud was not unexpected because “we hadn’t yet figured out what it would take to work together.” For her, it was an important part of recognizing that there were a lot of different beliefs and motivations bringing people to the table and its occurrence allowed those that remained to rework the framework of the Network so that, within Network spaces, people could come together to work towards a shared goal. She emphasized that she “wouldn’t go out for coffee” with a particular Network member that supported the criminalization and abolition of prostitution, but she valued the space the Network provided for different people to come together. In the long run, she hoped that those Network members that favoured criminalization and abolition would come around to a harm reduction, anti-oppressive approach closer to her own, though she emphasized that “we can’t expect it to happen all at once. We learned that with The Feud – you can’t force it.”

Within the ethical world of the Network, where an ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” predominated, overt face-to-face verbal challenges were largely absent. Instead, as discussed in Chapter Three, some members, such as Ava and Melissa, sought to cautiously and gently prompt other Network members to think in ways that challenged their ethical orientations through non-confrontational means. To this end, they instigated ethical friction by connecting to members through accepted universals (such as the value of anti-oppression frameworks) and then, using this point of commonality, presenting projects and public education materials (such as the policy document discussed in Chapter Five) to, hopefully, lead the other member to re-evaluating and reorienting their own work. This strategy was one of the primary ways that members, such as Ava and Melissa, navigated conflict and negotiated change within the Network. The perception of unity and historically overcoming disagreements that posed barriers to anti-trafficking organizing, despite the continued existence of diverse ethical orientations towards trafficking work that the work of Network members demonstrated, connects to a common tension in social movement organizing. As Lynn Stephen’s (2005) work demonstrates, the essentialism involved in presenting a united front to non-movement members is a means of presenting outsiders with a powerful collective entity that is capable of instigating and following through with coherent plans for social change. Through this unity, movements resist attempts to “divide and conquer” that might diminish their support and ability to achieve their goals. At the same time, she notes that, as anti-essentialist critiques point out, this strategy risks erasing salient differences. Still, as her work and the actions of Melissa and Ava demonstrate, this does not mean that internal negotiations do not occur or that members do not actively engage with these tensions.

With *The Feud* as a historical reminder of the ways that confrontation could tear apart potential collaborations, an ethic of avoiding direct conflict pervaded Network spaces. At the same time, a primary goal of the Network was to educate and engage the public in discussions about human trafficking, a process which included the facilitation of large public events and roundtables. It was at such events that the Network's ethic of conflict avoidance was directly challenged by members of 'the public', in particular members of the sex worker rights movement, creating the moments of encounter that I turn to now.

Disruption

The first moment of encounter between the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movements that I was present for occurred during the Network's first public anti-trafficking roundtable. As detailed in the prelude to Chapter One, the encounter occurred when Shannon, a member of a local sex worker support services organization, questioned the approaches of a prominent anti-trafficking activist that the Network had brought in from Ottawa. As an audience member, I noted how Shannon raised her hand and patiently waited for permission to begin speaking so as not to interrupt the presenter. Previous audience members had done the same thing, though when they spoke it was often in praise of the presenter's efforts or for clarification on a particular approach. When Shannon was handed the microphone, I expected something similar, another moment of praise. However, the questions and concerns Shannon raised instead worked to disrupt the dominant anti-trafficking narrative that was present at the event and I could feel the tension beginning to rise in the room as this disruption became clear to other audience members, the speaker, and the organizers. Shannon spoke clearly and in a measured tone, saying that she was "concerned" about the particular police outreach efforts the speaker was encouraging, elaborating on some of the harmful consequences such efforts have already had on

sex workers in Toronto. The speaker responded by cutting Shannon off mid-sentence and reiterating her strong support for the police efforts Shannon was questioning. During the formal question period, Shannon again attempted to raise her points while others cut her off and spoke over her, ending with her voice being over-ridden by two male police officers who spoke so loudly it was impossible to make out the words Shannon was speaking into the microphone.

This encounter had an impact on many Network members, as well as members of the sex worker rights movement that were absent from the event and learned about it later from Shannon. As Ava described:

It was poorly handled, the whole thing, it shouldn't have happened that way, we really weren't prepared, we didn't expect it. [Shannon] shouldn't have been interrupted and she should have been treated better. We really need those voices at the table, we need to be able to work together, and I think how we handled it, that it did a lot of harm to that possible relationship. To be honest, I didn't think about her points before she said them, I hadn't considered them. I knew it bothered me that trafficking talks almost always focus on sex and I wanted the event to also talk about labour, but it didn't really occur to me how those kind of actions, actions that as [organization name] we don't engage in, were being received so much. It was a wakeup call, you know, and I've tried very hard since then to try to make our events better, more inclusive, less harmful. I'm trying to listen.

Similarly, Melissa's take on the encounter was that "It was important; I think it needed to happen, because if no one says anything than we just end up in a feedback loop and if we're causing harm, then we need to know it and we need to change."

Conversely, for Julie, a long-time Network member who was present for The Feud and presented a position on sex work as distinct from human trafficking but still undesirable, Shannon's presence "wasn't appropriate, she shouldn't have been there or said anything." Speaking with me several years after this event about a more recent encounter, one that involved the formal inclusion of a sex worker rights organizers panel at a large anti-trafficking event in

Toronto and the disruption and distress it caused a significant number of anti-trafficking movement members in attendance, she elaborated, saying,

it's like what happened before, at the round table. Some spaces should just be kept focused [on trafficking]. When you bring in these combative, argumentative groups, it's just upsetting to so many people and it dilutes the focus, the ability to get anything done. There's a time and a place, and I'm not saying they aren't raising important points or that they aren't without any merit whatsoever, but these events are not the time or the place. It's not productive. It's not what people are there for.

Thus, for some members of the Network, the encounter with Shannon came to represent an important moment of disruption that began to reshape and influence their future anti-trafficking activities, while for others it was an example of unwelcome, out of place, and disruptive conflict, likened to The Feud. For both, it represented a significant disruption of the status quo, an unexpected moment of direct conflict that did not 'fit' in post-Feud Network spaces. It is important to note that the disruption and conflict that Shannon was involved in (and came to represent for some Network members) was not initially characterized by any of the hallmarks of direct conflict that characterized The Feud: Shannon did not raise her voice or use language that was likely to be interpreted as offensive or combative; she followed the format of audience participation for the event, waiting for a microphone and not interrupting others, even when, as the encounter continued, several others interrupted her; and she did not curse, name call, or describe any of the speakers in an inflammatory or dismissive way. In short, she was "above reproach"³⁵ (to the extent that any member of a sex worker rights organization could be in the view of the general public).

Instead, the component that was disruptive was the presentation of a different interpretation of the actions being described and encouraged, the friction that resulted from two

³⁵ See Chapter Four for a detailed discussion of the pressure to be "above reproach" and its influence on sex worker rights movement organizing strategies.

seemingly opposing guiding frameworks coming into contact. Despite having goals in common, including the elimination of sexual exploitation and violence, the ways that each understood the issue at hand influenced, as Ahkil asserted in his discussion in Chapter Five, the solutions each imagined were possible. While both were using the language of human rights to frame their arguments, it was clear that what “human rights” meant and looked like, who was included, excluded, and could be affected, differed greatly. Unlike the response to Ahkil’s invited talk, which occurred at an event several months later and also disrupted anti-trafficking narratives, the audience’s response and that of many Network members to Shannon was not silence but censure.

From an organizing perspective, Shannon’s presence at the Network event, her silence through the majority of presentations, and then the disruption her questions instigated is an example of one of the organizing tools that members of the sex worker rights movement deployed. It combined elements of knowledge production and communication, demonstrated by the information Shannon tried to convey while speaking, and targeted engagement that had the explicit goal of presenting and confronting an audience of anti-trafficking movement supporters with knowledge that their efforts were causing harm. The specificity of the selected audience distinguished this form of engagement from those that occurred in parks or involved temporarily occupying busy intersections and using a megaphone to inform those halted by the demonstration about their movement’s needs and goals, which were other strategies that the sex worker rights movement employed. As Charles Tilly (1999) has noted, it is difficult to evaluate the “success” of any given movement action, though tracing its antecedents and results help us better appreciate the function these actions serve for those members within the movement and those outside of it.

In interpreting and unpacking this encounter, Network members drew on their experiences with The Feud, revealing how this previous point of conflict within the Network set the stage for expectations of how encounters between anti-trafficking movement members and sex worker rights movement members would likely play out. For Shannon, as well as many members of the sex worker rights movement who were not present for but later heard about the encounter, what happened represented a thwarted attempt at “trying to communicate on their level, in their spaces, on their terms.” Going into the event, as Shannon later discussed with me, she had expected to encounter resistance if she spoke up or critiqued any of the content, but did not expect the environment to become “so hostile so fast.” As she described it,

Anyone who knows anything about anti-trafficking work and how anti-sex work it overwhelmingly is, would probably expect me being at the event and daring to speak at it as something that would not end well, so I expected it. But at the same time, I feel an obligation to disrupt those spaces, to go in there, even when it feels unsafe, because you know they’re always inviting the police and we all know how safe that makes sex workers feel, but to go in there and to say *something*, because they are literally hurting us, the harm is undeniable. And the other thing, the reason why I felt like I should go, is on the one hand I’ve had enough, and on the other hand, I’m pretty privileged, I’m a dancer, I can go in there and still go to work and get a license to dance, so my sex work, they can’t arrest me on the spot. So I went, and, well, you were there so you saw how well that turned out, and I was so upset after, like really upset. So if anyone asks, you know, I feel like telling them to not bother even trying to talk sense into any of them, to not even bother with those events, because it’s such a waste of time and energy and they don’t want to listen anyways.

While Shannon did not go to any future Network events and made a point of warning other sex worker rights movement members to avoid them because of the welcome they were likely to receive, many sex worker rights movement members also took it as a sign of the impermeability and strength of the anti-trafficking movement. To this end, the event both reinforced expectations among sex worker rights movement members that they would be poorly treated in anti-trafficking events and highlighted the need to continue to ‘disrupt’ them because otherwise, in Shannon’s words, “the train will just keep running full speed ahead and we’re just

ties to the tracks.” It also demonstrated that the powerful united front (Stephens 2005) that the anti-trafficking Network presented to outsiders was received as such, as Shannon experienced the response she received as unified and overwhelming. However, as Ava and Melissa’s responses indicated, the individual responses of Network members were also erased in the encounter and the event as a whole would come to strongly influence their organizing.

Building Bridges

Following this encounter, Ava worked hard to incorporate more diverse voices into the next public roundtable and the following year undertook planning an event in consultation with Brenda, a prominent member of the Toronto sex worker rights movement. The event was to focus on LGBTQ youth and migrants to Canada and their vulnerability to human trafficking and, in speaking with me about it, Ava expressed that “in many ways it is a result of the mistakes that we made with the first roundtable,” referring to the absence of and hostility towards sex worker voices that the encounter with Shannon demonstrated. As Ava elaborated, “it didn’t sit right with me, so I’ve been trying to find ways to figure out how to do things better, but also in a way that doesn’t create another Feud or alienate other members of the Network.” She was well aware that bringing in sex worker rights advocates to speak at an anti-trafficking event would likely “ruffle some feathers” and once described it as a way to “test the waters, to gauge people’s reactions, because this is the direction we need to move.” Stimulating ethical friction was thus a conscious goal of the event, with the amount of friction that was generated – the number of feathers that were ruffled and to what degree – helping to inform Ava of what next steps would need to be taken and what pace change could happen at in order to keep the bulk of the Network together while still reorienting the ethical orientations of some members. In this way, Ava demonstrated her awareness of the difference between her own orientation and that of the broader Network, as

reflected in Network activities and meeting spaces, and how ethical friction could be used as a tool for navigating conflict and renegotiating the ethical world of the Network.

For Ava, achieving this particular reorientation was a matter of harm reduction as well as “human rights”, wherein any harm that anti-trafficking efforts were causing to other groups, in particular already marginalized groups such as sex workers, was a violation of their human rights and, as such, unethical. This approach relied on an interpretation of “human rights” as inalienable and individualized, as well as an awareness of how hierarchies of compassion (and therefore human rights) functioned as barriers. For Ava to continue engaging in anti-trafficking work that harmed the human rights of others was thus ethically unconscionable, though at the same time this was in tension with her desire to “bring everyone to the table” and the “human rights” of Network members to adhere to different beliefs than she did. As introduced in Chapter Two and further discussed in Chapter Three, this tension can be understood as connected to the differences between the liberal feminist and politically oriented social justice approach to human trafficking, with its emphasis on intersectional approaches to understanding and identifying structural causes of violence and oppression, and the carceral feminist, ‘humanitarian’ ethical orientations held by some members of the Network, which emphasized an apolitical, hierarchical intervention to relieve the suffering of others as identified by the aid givers. It also connects to the tensions Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1991) work elucidates, between single-axis rights seeking projects and those that employ an intersectional analysis, as within the predominantly single-axis rights seeking project of the Network, Ava was attempting to bring in an intersectional approach to the work being done.

To this end, Ava’s efforts to reorient the ethical orientations of other Network members demonstrated her own hierarchy of human rights, wherein the rights of Network members to

follow their own beliefs was acceptable until it was perceived as violating the rights of marginalized persons. While Ava conceded that there were some Network members that were “not ever going to come around to this way of thinking”, she felt that there were enough that would that it would eventually result in broader shift within the Network, leading to future activities being more intersectional, inclusive, and fostering allyship with marginalized communities that could contribute to the elimination of trafficking. In this respect, Ava’s intentional instigation of ethical friction and the risk of conflict that came with it connects to Sarah Maddison and Emma Patridge’s (2014) analysis of intersectionality theory and the potentially productive role of conflict in social movements. Focusing on relationships between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous feminists in Australia and using an agonistic framing of processes of social movement collective identity (re)formation, they argue that conflict within social movements “has significant potential as a creative force” (2014:31), particularly when it involves intersectional challenges to a hegemonic white feminist status quo.

Building on this, an important element of the LGBTQ youth and migration event was pursuing dialogue and meetings with members of Toronto’s sex worker rights movement, a task that, in Ava’s words, “was a very difficult one, because a lot of damage has been done.” Armed with good intentions, Ava invited Brenda to a meeting with herself and Maria to speak about the potential panel. As I learned later, the meeting did not go as planned, but was overall positive and gave Ava and Maria a lot to think about. Recounting it for me, Ava said:

Brenda came and sat down and before we could even get into the details of the panel we wanted to do, Brenda, she says to us ‘Who the fuck do we think we are?’ for doing anti-trafficking work and being, she said, ‘so clearly ignorant of how much harm we’re causing.’ And I was shocked, you know, but it was a good question. Who do we think we are, doing this work, what makes us qualified? And really, it really made me think that it’s likely that we have caused harm unknowingly and that it is our responsibility to know. So the panel, it’s going ahead, but it’s not going to be quite as we had planned, so I really

don't know how other members of the Network will feel about it.

As Ava elaborated, it became clear that while she had been planning to make the event one that would “ruffle some feathers,” following her meeting with Brenda she felt that it would be a more radical departure from previous events than Network members would be prepared for. Speaking to Brenda about the same meeting, she laughed and told me that,

I wasn't about to lie to them and pretend that we're all friends and all that bullshit. The road to hell is paved with good intentions and I'm tired of being dragged along theirs because they want to pat themselves on the back for helping save us from ourselves. So, I told them what I honestly think about their work and they realized that actual dialogue requires relinquishing some control over the content. I have no interest in being anyone's puppet. So, we'll see what happens.

Later that year, the event went ahead, with both Brenda and myself involved in much of the planning. Significantly for Ava, this was the first roundtable that occurred without a lot of input from other Network members and it was the first event for which the Network was denied funding from the City of Toronto. As the event came together, Ava negotiated the tension she expected the event to cause within the Network by deciding that it would be advertised as an event put on by her organization, not the Network, though it would still be advertised to Network members. As Ava's organization was the Network's hub, the majority of Network members still treated it as a formal Network event, but Ava felt that she retained a greater degree of autonomy over the content because it could be positioned as “the refugee centre's position” rather than the Network's. It was also the first event that police were not invited to participate in as speakers or audience members, a point that Brenda insisted on.

The content of the event was a stark departure from previous ones, with Ava asking me to present an academic overview of critical feminist research on anti-trafficking work as a means of bolstering the presentations of Brenda and another invited guest speaker, an overview that she

expected would present critiques of anti-trafficking work. A focus on migration and labour, whether sexual labour or other forms of labour, was clearly emphasized in the flyer through the title of the event and presentation sub-titles. Advertised within both the Network's anti-trafficking community and the sex worker rights movement, the event had the most 'mixed' audience of all the Network's public events, with over a dozen members of the sex worker rights movement attending and making their support and presence visible by speaking with Brenda before things got started and wearing red umbrella pins that signified their support for the sex worker rights movement.³⁶

As the event got underway and myself, Brenda, and a third panelist discussed how the anti-trafficking movement had impacted different marginalized and stigmatized communities, three audience members very audibly left the event, causing Ava to look concerned and Brenda to smile. Listening to Brenda speak, "human rights" were at the foreground, framing each of her key points. She repeated popular phrases from the sex worker rights movement, including that "sex workers' rights are human rights" and "only rights can stop the wrongs." Throughout her talk, she spoke of how individual sex workers were experiencing human rights violations through the actions of police undertaking "trafficking raids", including Operation Northern Spotlight, which previous Network events had encouraged. She also spoke of a need for broader support for the labour rights of sex workers, emphasizing that "strength and safety can only be realized when we no longer have to work underground" and that "this is the best way, the only way, to really help those that are in situations of exploitation." Here, individual human rights and collective labour rights were brought together, emphasizing both the "humanness" of sex workers and the

³⁶ The red umbrella is a symbol widely used within the sex worker rights movement. According to the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE), it was first used in Venice, Italy in 2001, it symbolizes "protection from the abuse and discrimination faced by workers everywhere but it is also a symbol of our strength" (ICRSE n.d.).

legitimacy of their labour. This was contrasted with the individual rights focus of anti-trafficking organizers who, in Brenda's description, "imagine they are saving individual victims while ignoring the cost, the ways that they are harming whole communities." In quoting from the published public education materials created by some of the anti-trafficking organizations that were present, Brenda rhetorically asked the audience how they could so fiercely defend the human rights of some in a way that "grievously denies and actively harms the human rights of others", effectively drawing on and re-deploying their own interpretation and usage of human rights language to demonstrate how it conflicted with her own.

During the question period, several Network members asked what recommendations Brenda had for improving their anti-trafficking work. Her response was swift:

Stop. Stop doing it. Stop using the language. It's not helpful and we have other words and other laws that are already more than enough if we choose to enforce them. You're vacuuming up the very limited resources that are out there for support service providers and that's not ok. Above all, you need to check your personal morals at the door, get off your high horse and listen, because what you think a person wants and needs doesn't matter. All that matters is what they tell you they need. It's not your job to judge them, to make them feel judged. Just because you wouldn't do what they're doing, because you'd make a different choice, doesn't make you right.

This response was met with applause from the sex worker rights supporters and movement members in the room, but it also prompted a follow-up question directed at me. "But Nicole," the audience member asked, "What do you think?" From her tone it was clear that she was expecting me to have a different answer and that, as the academic, my text-based knowledge could (and by some, would) be used to dismiss or undermine Brenda's experiential knowledge. Brenda and Ava knew it too, we had all expected it and it was the primary reason for including me on the panel as a presenter. In response, I said that I agreed with Brenda, that an anti-oppressive, harm reduction, client-centred approach required individual support providers to leave their personal

biases at the door and put the needs of the client, as they expressed them and not as they were assumed, first. I saw the heads of several Network members shake in disagreement and reiterated that we had copies of a resource list (similar to Ava's resource list) available for those that were interested in learning more, as well as a list of all of the academic sources that I had used in my presentation. As the event drew to a close, both Brenda and Ava expressed agreement that the event had gone well or "at least as well as could be expected" (Brenda).

Uneven Change

Several days later, I received an email from Tara, one of the Network members who had shaken her head in response to my answer. In it she informed me that she was disappointed that I had "gotten caught up in the moment" and "lowered myself" through my agreement with and support for Brenda's injunction. While she knew that the event was an effort to incorporate "other voices" into discussions about anti-trafficking, she did not expect me, "a member of the academic community," to engage in or encourage such "inflammatory" behaviour, as, according to her, was demonstrated by Brenda during her presentation and the question period. She assured me that she was "not the only one disappointed with the event" and that she hoped it would not happen again. In reflecting on this email and speaking with Ava, who had also received several complaints about the event from Network members, the language of "respect" came to the foreground. In the words of these members, the dialogue that I had engaged in was not "respectful", Brenda's presentation was "abrasive, disrespectful, and inflammatory", the "tone was inappropriate and not conducive to proper discussion," and the event was "unpleasant." Speaking to Brenda about these complaints, she was unsurprised, saying:

Of course they're going to use respectability politics, of course they're pissed off, they're being confronted with the reality of their actions and they don't want to let go of their power. But you know what, you don't get to push people down and then complain about it

when they fight back. You don't get to silence people, to yell over them, and then tell them, when they're finally given a microphone, that they're speaking too loudly. You don't get to do that, to critique the way people resist oppression when you're the one oppressing them.

For Brenda, then, the way that she presented the issues and the strength and conviction with which she spoke were in proportion to the increasing amount of harm that sex working communities were experiencing as a result of anti-trafficking initiatives. The ethical friction that continually resulted from anti-trafficking efforts coming into contact with sex working communities, from the clashing of these different interpretations of human rights, had generated a powerful desire on the part of members of the sex worker rights movement to find ways to speak back, disrupt, and resist what are being identified as efforts to oppress. At the same time, there is not always agreement on what form this should take. While many agreed with Brenda speaking on the panel and being involved in its organization, Miranda was skeptical, suggesting that “although I know we need to push back and find platforms, wouldn't the really radical thing have been insisting that the anti-traffickers give us their funding so that we can pay sex workers to do the event organizing, advertising, etc.? I'd just rather not get in bed with them.” For Anise, the greater concern was “running the risk of just being appropriated, of ending up as tokens so that later when they apply for funding they can say ‘Look, we're so inclusive, we're supporting the most marginalized!’ and there's no real change. It's just hollow.”

For Brenda, her involvement and presence at the event constituted a means of resistance and an opportunity to disrupt and push back against a social movement that she identified as actively harmful. Presented with a platform from which to speak to a roomful of anti-trafficking movement members, who for her represented the broader anti-trafficking movement, and being given a wide measure of control over the content of the event, Brenda perceived her actions as

taking control of anti-trafficking spaces and reclaiming them. In this setting, she was not going to apologize for telling those present things they might not want to hear. In the end, her strategy proved effective in some ways, in that she instigated ethical friction that impacted many of those present and helped open the door to cross-movement dialogue and allyship between the refugee centre Ava worked for and the sex worker rights movement. At the same time, her approach offended some Network members, prompting them to leave rather than engage in a potential uncomfortable conversation and to avoid similar events in the future, suggesting that they were most “comfortable” in the ethical world of the Network that followed the exclusively inclusive ethos of “bringing everyone to the table”, wherein “everyone” does not include sex worker rights movement members advocating for change, and that they would not support changes to the Network’s guiding framework that threatened this comfort. For Brenda, this outcome was irrelevant because “there was never any chance they were going to listen to me anyways”, while for Ava it was troubling because she’d “hoped everyone would listen, even if they were shocked, because these are important conversations that we shouldn’t keep avoiding.”

Speaking with Network members over the course of the year following the event, the overall reception and impact of the event varied immensely. Some members, such as Sandra, viewed the event as an attempt by Ava to soothe her own conscience, a result of her having taken critiques from the sex worker rights movement “too seriously and too personally.” Sandra didn’t expect a similar event to happen again because it was “too divisive” and “we don’t need another Feud.” She also expressed her belief that the event served to demonstrate “once again” that attempts to work with “those kinds of activists are doomed to failure because they are just going to be inflammatory and not actually contribute to productive discussions.” The re-framing of anti-trafficking work that Brenda presented and her use of “human rights” as a universal to

connect through was, in effect, too far apart from Sandra's interpretation of the term, demonstrating some of the limits of ethical friction as a means of generating change and "human rights" as a universal capable of bridging all gaps.

Others, such as Allison, a social worker and front-line support worker working out of a church-based anti-trafficking program, were profoundly impacted by the event. Discussing it with me during our interview about eight months later, she said:

[The presentations] just explained everything so well, you know, and, even though I was relatively new to this job then, I could already see that an agenda of criminalization, it's just not helpful. Our clients, they're predominantly homeless people, many of them engage in survival sex work, exchanging it for food or shelter or whatever they feel they need most. I think that promoting an agenda of criminalization just makes everything worse. We know enough to know that by now. It pushes people underground, it makes them less safe. So at the event, it just, you know it just clicked, it made it really clear to me that anti-trafficking, what it means to so many is really this approach to dealing with sex work, but not in a helpful way, in a patronizing way, in a way that doesn't help us get the infrastructure we need to actually support the people who need it most. So I'm done.

For Allison, being "done" meant working to reduce the presence of the anti-trafficking program that employed her and towards eliminating it altogether, turning the funding it received towards broader support service provision through the church's drop-in programs. As it was, she emphasized that there was already a difference between "what my job is on paper and the job that I actually do. Because it makes no sense for me to sit in this office and only provide support to certain people, to spend my time going out and giving trafficking presentations at schools, not when there are people waiting here who could use my support." In connection with this, Allison stopped attending Network meetings and focused on efforts to collaborate with local and migrant sex worker rights organizations when opportunities arose. In effect, Allison's ethical orientation changed to the point where it was no longer compatible with the ethical world of the Network.

From the perspective of many within the sex worker rights movement, the event served as a means of gauging the openness of the anti-trafficking movement to critique and potential allyship. As Lucy, who identifies as having been “anti-trafficked,” described the event: “It was a bit of a submarine show wasn’t it? Like I think a lot of them didn’t know what they were getting themselves into – it was their arena right? Their turf! – and then BAM!” she laughed, then continued, “No wonder some of them left, having their tender sensibilities offended by the presence of a sex worker who dares to speak her mind. How dare she not sit quietly and be spoken for.” In the minds of several sex worker rights movement members, it cemented Ava’s organization as one that was involved in anti-trafficking but was also “one of the ok ones” (Lucy). This status was reinforced in several sex worker rights movement meetings when anti-trafficking events or advertisements came up in the discussion. At such times, people would often ask “Which one is doing it? Who’s organizing it?” Once the name of the anti-trafficking organization behind it was shared, the next question would often be “What do we know about them? Are they ok or terrible?” As a result of my familiarity with most of the anti-trafficking organizations in the city, the question was often directed to me (either in the meeting or via email) and I would share the organization’s history of events and their stance on sex work. If it was Ava’s organization, often someone else would be quick to recall the event Brenda spoke at and that was enough to establish positive credibility. In Lucy’s words, Ava’s organization “put in the effort, you know, they didn’t just say they think sex workers should be involved in the discussion, they actually made a physical space for that to happen.”

In the year that followed, when sex worker rights events and decriminalization petitions were being circulated, Ava’s organization would be on the list of recipients and would generally sign on in support, sometimes going so far as to circulate the petition on the Network’s listserv.

Among those in the Network that responded positively to the event, it also prompted increased interest in sex worker rights events, particularly when they intersected with issues of migration, as a local migrant sex worker rights and support organization's work often did. The event was thus exceptionally generative in terms of opening the door to dialogue and potential coalition building between some members of the Network and members of the sex worker rights movement, highlighting the "potential" of conflict that Maddison and Partridge (2014) espouse. However, at the same time, a tangible change in the Network's ethical world, as demonstrated by the content of meetings and the activities of other Network members either in those spaces or in their independent anti-trafficking efforts, did not appear to have occurred. While Ava's organization was more willing and open to publicly supporting the efforts of local and migrant sex worker rights organizers, including attending events and signing public petitions, within the broader Network these efforts were still received by many members as being "independent" from the Network as a whole, rather than reflective of it. This is not to reduce the generative impact of the event, for whether the response was positive or negative a response was indeed generated, but to acknowledge that the success of this attempt at encouraging dialogue and coalition building was uneven and difficult to measure.

It may be that, as more of the Network's membership engage in independent dialogue with those involved in the sex worker rights movement or as members of the sex worker rights movement continue to "disrupt" (invited or otherwise) anti-trafficking spaces or otherwise instigate dialogue, that these uneven changes will lead to broader ones. At the same time, as Brenda pointed out, sex workers and members of the sex worker rights movement are at a disadvantage in seeking out this kind of dialogue and coalition building, as too many anti-trafficking organizers are willing to diminish the contributions of sex workers to the conversation

when they object to anti-trafficking frameworks (as demonstrated by the audience members that re-asked their questions to me when they didn't agree with Brenda's answers). To this end, sex worker rights organizers have actively pursued building coalitions and allyship with other human rights-based movements, including: local and migrant labour movement organizers and unions; those advocating for the rights of homeless persons; prison abolition advocates; Black Lives Matter Toronto; feminist and pro-choice service providers, such as Planned Parenthood Toronto; and various LGBTQ organizations. Take Back the Night 2015, an annual night time march that seeks to highlight the prevalence of violence against women, provides an example of this kind of collaboration and coalition building.

In 2015, Take Back the Night was a collaborative event between the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, who organized the event annually, and Black Lives Matter Toronto. For members of the sex worker rights movement, Take Back the Night was historically contentious, with some event organizers working to exclude sex workers and others welcoming them. As Anise explained,

There's been some confrontations before, where we'd come with our red umbrellas and our organizations signs and we'd be asked to leave because 'We weren't invited.' Weren't invited? It's Take Back the Night! It's open! Anyone can join! What they really meant was we were giving the event the wrong image; they didn't want to be seen as supporting us. Classic whorephobia.

However, in recent years, this had been changing and the 2015 march became an event with, as Anise emphasized, the potential to meaningfully connect Black Lives Matter Toronto with the larger feminist movement, which opened the door to incorporating other marginalized groups in the event. To this end, members of the sex worker rights movement that were also members of Black Lives Matter Toronto worked to incorporate the voices of Black sex workers into the pre-march rally as speakers and ensured that sex worker rights groups were welcome in the march itself. Describing this collaboration, Anise said,

We know Black people experience racism. We know sex workers experience discrimination. Therefore, we know that Black sex workers face not just discrimination because they're sex workers, but also racism because they're Black. Black Lives Matter supports all sorts of marginalized folks, queer folks, poor folks, immigrant folks, so supporting sex workers, many of whom also sit at these crossroads, it just makes sense.

Participants in the rally were thus presented with a diverse picture of who is impacted by racism and sexual violence that resisted historical exclusions.

In such encounters, identity-based strategies were used as a means of both unifying and encouraging diverse representation. As Anise phrased it, "Black, yes, but queer and hustling and without status, rich or poor, these issues affect all of us and not one of us will be liberated until we all are." Reflecting on the work that went into building this bridge and whether or not it opened the door to future collaborations, Lucy concluded that by presenting a united front, the march "definitely pushed some boundaries and I don't think it closed any doors, but it's hard to say because if people were pissed, they could have just left or marched elsewhere. Either way, I'd say it was a success. It brought a lot of people together and helped raise awareness."

Commenting on the organizing itself, the primary barrier was identified as "whore stigma" (Lucy) and "whorephobia" (Anise), rather than an unequal power relationship where the actions of one movement were perceived as tangibly contributing to violence against another. Here, points of commonality were enough to provide a strong basis for dialogue and if things did not progress, the environment was perceived as less likely to be "toxic" or "harmful" (Shannon).

Turning to collaborations between the migrant worker rights movement and sex worker rights movement, "whorephobia" was frequently identified as the primary barrier. As Yuki, an organizer with a migrant sex worker rights advocacy group, described it, "we have to get past their discomfort with talking about sex and acknowledging it as legitimate labour. The stigma, it's so strong, you know, people don't want their organization's reputation to be 'tarnished.'" To

this end, the needs of and barriers faced by migrant sex workers as migrant workers, rather than only sex workers, was used as the primary point of connection between groups. As Jacob, a migrant worker rights organizer discussed these coalition building efforts,

we have cultural barriers to overcome with the workers we work with and the organizers, but speaking about experiences of migration, about the struggle and isolation, about wanting to support your family, and about the work that that takes, not the details of employment, not the sex per se, but making sure it's framed as labour, that's where we can build connections.

To help foster these coalitions, representatives from the migrant sex worker advocacy group and outreach group actively worked to arrange meetings and give presentations to migrant worker rights groups, emphasizing labour, racism, and marginalization as universals to connect over. Migrant sex worker rights movement members also made a point of attending public events put on by migrant worker rights organizers and invited them to events they hosted. In all cases, the language of “human rights” and “labour rights” that the sex worker rights movement drew upon (discussed in Chapter Four) was used as a means of establishing a universal that could bridge the disparate particulars beneath, albeit with mixed results. It is important to re-emphasize here that not all attempts at coalition building were immediately (if at all) successful, as attempts to build common ground with the anti-trafficking Network demonstrated, as ethical friction does not produce predictable results. Similarly, not all successes lasted or materialized into reliable sources of ongoing support, particularly when these connections relied on key, unpaid individuals who may move, experience burn out, or otherwise withdraw from their position within a movement. This was the case when one of the key organizers involved in both a migrant sex worker rights organization and a migrant rights organization moved to another country for work. Having been the primary bridge between the two organizations, her absence left a void

that was not immediately (or, at the time of writing, ever) filled and communication between the groups reduced dramatically almost immediately.

Unequal Access: A (Partially) Unexpected Encounter

Following the event that Ava organized, further attempts to incorporate sex worker voices and the concerns of the sex worker rights movement into Network spaces were not immediately forthcoming. However, outside the Network, the retirement of previous employees and hiring of new ones into supervisory roles at the CWF led to an unexpected invitation for members of several local sex worker rights organizations to present their perspectives during a City of Toronto funded anti-trafficking event. The invitation was instigated by a member of the CWF contacting a local sex worker rights organization to get their feedback on the work they were doing, to which the sex worker rights organization responded that the CWF's publications, funding distribution, and anti-trafficking activities were actively denying sex workers a voice or space in anti-trafficking conversations, as well as contributing to the increased criminalization (and therefore harm) faced by sex workers. In an attempt to put actions to their "good intentions" (Jen), the inclusion of a panel on sex worker voices and experiences of anti-trafficking efforts was included into the event agenda a little over two weeks before the event took place. Though I was unable to attend, I was in digital contact with several of the presenters and audience members as it unfolded and several Network members spoke with me about it afterwards. Unlike the event Ava planned, this one was much larger in scale, occurring over the course of two days and involving multiple panels that focused primarily on sex trafficking in Toronto.

As word spread among anti-trafficking advocates at the event that there was to be a panel talking about sex work and sex workers experiences with anti-trafficking efforts, tempers rose and several dozen anti-trafficking movement members attempted to organize a walk-out or

boycott of the sex worker rights organizers' panel. Describing the experience to me via Facebook Messenger as it was happening, Kelly, a long-time sex worker rights movement member, wrote that "It feels like they're about to bring out pitchforks and torches. If one more rich white lady trys [sic] to talk over me or tell me I don't belong here I'm gonna lose it. Please tell me we're going for drinks afterwards because this is absurd." She later updated me, writing that "its [sic] finally over and I don't think I can stay here another minute. Scratch that, I don't think they're going to LET me stay here another minute." As we spoke the next day over coffee, Kelly told me that while there were audience members that supported the panel and were glad they were there, the ones that wanted them to leave were much louder. Speaking to Network members about the event, the reaction closely mirrored responses to Ava's LGBTQ event, with some supporting it as an important step in the right direction and others, as Diane's earlier described response indicates, condemning it as inappropriate.

This event was the last one to incorporate sex worker voices before a very large announcement was made by the Ontario government: \$72 million dollars was being dedicated to anti-trafficking efforts in Ontario (Ministry of the Status of Women 2016). Closely tied to this announcement was another that was recently made by one of the largest youth support organizations engaged in anti-trafficking work in Canada: the launch of a \$10 million multi-year anti-trafficking initiative, with a significant portion of the funds coming from the \$72 million announced by the province. The news was prominently featured across local newspapers, as well as some national ones, though little detail was given as to what the provincial money was going to be used for. The announcement itself came as a shock to many Network members because the youth organization involved was a Network member of long standing and had not shared any information or indicated that such a large project was about to be launched. An event to discuss

the new initiative was soon held, featuring a significant amount of press, members of the Ontario government and City of Toronto MPs, as well as a large number of anti-trafficking advocates and representatives of organizations engaged in anti-trafficking work. The event was hosted by the youth organization and was invite only, with no one allowed in unless their name was on the guest list.

Learning about the event a little over a week before it happened via an invitation that was leaked to one of the sex worker rights organizations I was working with, I approached the organization hosting the event and asked for an invitation. This organization had participated in my research up until that point and was also active in the Network, but these connections did not secure me an invitation as I was promptly denied. The explanation was that, while the organization was providing the space, it was a Ministry event. Elaborating, my contact wrote “I would suggest you connect with the Ministry about invitations, they are usually really rigorous around numbers and invitees.” Having been asked by one of the sex worker rights organizations if I could pursue the matter and hopefully “get one of us in the door”, I contacted Ava to see if I could attend with her, but she said all of the spots had already been taken by two other members of her organization and herself.

As days passed, those in the sex worker rights movement that were interested in the event pressed their contacts within the City of Toronto and provincial government to get their names on the invitation list. Eventually, an individual with political influence who supported the sex worker rights movement and agreed with the importance of having movement members at the event was able to get five of our names on the list. Dressed “office professional” (Jen), we attended as representatives of the sex worker rights organization and secured seats in the front row. As we mingled before the event started, several members of the anti-trafficking movement,

some of whom were involved in the Network and had participated in my research and others who were not involved with the Network or my research but whom I was nonetheless familiar with, exclaimed that they were “surprised” to see me. Upon recognizing the members of the sex worker rights movement, which included the Executive Director and Board Chair of the sex worker support services and rights organization that Shannon worked with, more exclamations of surprise were heard. At the same time, others, such as Ava, expressed happiness that members of the sex worker support services organization had managed to gain access to the event and looked forward to hearing their thoughts afterwards. Notably absent from the event were any representatives of migrant worker rights organizations, with the exception of Ava’s, which was included for their prominent role in organizing the Network.

As the event began, news stations started recording and everyone was seated. Government officials, including the Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues, the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Minister of Community and Social Services, and the Attorney General spoke broadly of their plan to “End Human Trafficking in Ontario.” Their plan involved funding support services, in particular the organization that was hosting the event, to create an emergency shelter for victims of sex trafficking; broad, but unspecified, support for the provision of other support services; support for public education and prevention efforts; and support for police investigations and prosecuting traffickers. Each speaker repeated, almost verbatim, that “human trafficking is a deplorable crime and human rights violations”, with several also emphasizing that “trafficked persons may develop ‘trauma bonds’ with their traffickers, and may not view themselves as victims.” Human trafficking outside of “sex trafficking” was given minimal mention, while the sex trafficking of Indigenous women and girls was frequently repeated.

As the speakers concluded, the audience applauded and the floor was opened up for questions from the media. The first three questions focused on low rates of prosecution, police efforts to combat human trafficking, and whether police would be receiving more funding dedicated to fighting human trafficking, to which several of the speakers responded that a need for better coordination had been identified and was going to be a key focus moving forward, that police would receive increased funding, but also that there was a need for a broader approach to combatting human trafficking, which included increased support services for victims. Another question emphasized “sex trafficking along the 401 [highway]” where “girls are being trafficked” and reiterated a focus on carceral approaches and increased policing. Following more media questions and answers that reiterated an emphasis on policing, Jen, a member of the sex worker support services organization that I was attending with, raised her hand to speak and asked “Will you take questions from the floor eventually?” To this she was told “Let’s do media first and then we’ll have an opportunity to mingle and talk more then.” She replied that “I actually have an important question,” and stood up to speak, despite the event facilitator shaking his head and speaking over her. Once she stood up, the room quieted and she continued with her question, saying:

So I’m hearing a lot about supports for survivors and victims, that’s great, but I wanted to hear more about concrete supports that will help in prevention efforts. Things like increasing the minimum wage, increasing ODSP [Ontario Disability Support Program] and Ontario Works, increasing affordable housing, increasing supports for homeless youth, especially LGBT youth. The other thing I didn’t hear much about supporting people who are victims, who are survivors, who are coming from criminalized communities, such as people living with precarious status, as well as people working in the sex industry, as well as drug users. These are all particularly vulnerable communities who, because of their criminalized status, are unable to come forward. So what kind of protections are you offering those groups and what kind of concrete prevention efforts, not just media campaigns, but concrete efforts are you making to address those issues?

The Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues responded by saying,

That's a very important question, because when we look at the profile of a victim of human trafficking they are often our most vulnerable citizens. They could be citizens without status, as you said, often young women and boys who are the vulnerable in our society and these traffickers, they prey on them, because they don't have homes, because they don't have resources... and that's exactly what we're trying to address. The strategy actually has a part on supportive housing, as well as more support for services for youth... but we know this is a complex issue across government and we know that victims of human trafficking get in a cycle that's really hard to get out of. A trauma bond is often formed with the promise of the trafficker to get them out of a cycle of poverty and cycle of abuse, so it's very complex, as well as to the social determinants of health, those things that you mentioned. So we're very committed to looking at all of that and we'll be releasing all of the details of the nine areas of Ministry investment.

As soon as the response ended the facilitator immediately closed the event, saying "Thank you everybody" and the room applauded once more – there would be no more disruptions at this event. The details of the nine areas of Ministry investment and the actions that were to be undertaken in the name of anti-trafficking were never made available online or circulated to everyone on the guest list. The information that was available online following the event consisted of a brief overview of the talking points the speakers had already shared and though the list of prevention efforts says that the funding will "improve community services like housing, mental health services, trauma counselling, and job skills training", no further details are given (Ministry of the Status of Women 2016).

"Difference within common cause"

Glancing around the room when Jen began speaking, it was not hard to see several audience members rolling their eyes and shaking their heads. As she spoke though, many in the room also looked interested in what she had to say. Speaking to Ava afterwards, who had seated herself behind our group, she immediately began telling me how much she appreciated Jen's question and asked to be introduced. Many others also came up to make introductions and, though a lot of mingling occurred, there were no further opportunities to ask the speakers any

questions. For Jen, this was as she expected. Over coffee later that week, she recounted how she “figured they weren’t actually going to make time for any real questions, so I wasn’t going to let the moment pass. It was a formal event and we were obviously there because we got on the list, so I thought it was unlikely that they would shut me down once I got started.” She also emphasized that she “knew what kind of language was expected and how to play ball.”

Here, playing ball meant she intentionally avoided using language that might immediately identify, and thus potentially be used to discount her voice from the event, herself as belonging to the sex worker rights movement or as a representative of an organization that supported sex workers. Having attended the CWF event and experienced (not for the first time) how numerous anti-trafficking activists that identified her as a sex worker or sex worker rights activist were willing to boycott, walk-out, or otherwise disregard her words before hearing them, she used her relative anonymity within the room to her advantage. When she spoke of the overlapping structural and systemic challenges that marginalized groups broadly faced, she did not emphasize that sex workers often experienced many of these forms of marginalization concurrently or highlight how anti-trafficking efforts target sex workers. Instead she used the language of “vulnerable communities”, reflecting the speakers’ repeated use of the term “vulnerable” to describe potential trafficking victims. She also did not directly critique the overwhelming emphasis on policing and criminalization, another point that would likely give others in the room “an excuse to ignore me.”

Jen’s choice of strategy proved to be an effective way to get others in the room to listen and consider her words, prompting some to think beyond the narrow confines of policing, prosecution, and short-term shelter beds as ways to, as the event proclaimed, “End human trafficking in Ontario.” At the same time, it drew attention to historical disagreements that led

some audience members to roll their eyes when she spoke. Upon investigating, I learned from Ava that two of them had previously been members of the Network but had left following their involvement in *The Feud*. The event itself also highlighted issues of access by having a very restricted guest list and an expected audience, as well as a format geared towards eliminating unwanted questions or critiques. Attention to the issues that migrant workers faced, particularly those in government managed temporary foreign worker programs, and their vulnerability to human trafficking was minimal and representatives from organizations that supported migrant workers were not invited, apart from Ava's organization. Whether such organizations would have attended if invited is unknown, but the absence of invitations emphasized the government's adherence to the hegemonic trafficking narratives repeatedly critiqued by both critical feminist academics and social movement organizers in the migrant worker rights and sex worker rights movements.³⁷

In unpacking these encounters, it becomes apparent that the presence (or even spectre) of sex worker rights movement members in anti-trafficking spaces that were designed and intended to support a particular ideology, one that was presumed or known to be in opposition to the beliefs that members of the sex workers rights movement were assumed to hold, presupposed a potential to generate ethical friction that could escalate into conflict. An awareness of this potential led some members of both the anti-trafficking and sex worker rights movement to seek to intentionally leverage and make use of this friction, with the goal of instigating change within their own social movement's ethical world or the ethical orientations of others. Similarly, it prompted others, such as the Ministry organizers of the provincial event, to attempt to eliminate this potential. In the case of the Network, ethical friction was predominantly instigated by Ava,

³⁷ See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of these critiques.

with support from Melissa, Willow, and other members, through the use of anti-oppression and harm reduction languages, as well as attempts to cultivate a dialogue with members of the sex worker rights and migrant worker rights movements.

Within the sex worker rights movement, a desire to continually improve organizing spaces by making them more inclusive, safe, welcoming, and supportive of its most marginalized members with sex work experience, responded to individual members' intersectional experiences of oppression and worked to embrace the ever-present potential for improvement. Here too, ethical friction played a role, helping to identify areas for improvement when members expressed being uncomfortable or feeling unwelcome in a space, as well as contributing to burn-out and emotional exhaustion. Movement members were also aware of the ways that their presence in non-sex working spaces had the potential to make others uncomfortable and that it must also be taken into account when moving in those spaces. In both the sex worker rights movement and the Network, there was an awareness that too much friction could overwhelm, resulting in backlash, open conflict, or individuals digging in their feet, and that an insufficient amount would result in little traction being gained. Further, different forms of instigating ethical friction could be combined to help achieve a particular goal, as Ava's attempts to use both the LGBTQ event (which created enough friction to cause backlash), together with the deployment of anti-oppression and harm reduction language in Network spaces and events, to achieve her goal of reducing the prominent emphasis on carceral solutions to human trafficking and minimizing the harm sex workers experience from anti-trafficking efforts.

These encounters, the events that preceded them, and those which followed also demonstrated some of the ways that ethical friction was connected to conflict, though, as discussed in Chapter One, while friction can culminate in conflict it is not synonymous with it.

While Maddison and Partridge (2014) focus on the productive potential of conflict in social movements, Giuseppe Caruso points out that conflict, which can sometimes be dismissed as personality clashes, can escalate and point to issues that are much larger than the idiosyncrasies of interpersonal relationships (2013:242). In such scenarios, “conflicts have the tendency to make involved parties so self-absorbed that they are unable to adapt to their surroundings and they tend to create a hierarchy based on differential social, political, and cultural capital where one conflict rises above and denies reality to the others” (ibid.). Such conflicts can lead to communication breakdowns, as demonstrated by the Network members walking out of the LGBTQ event, and lead to feelings of exhaustion and frustration, as demonstrated by Shannon’s response to her treatment at the first Network round table. Conflicts, complete with their antecedents and outcomes, are dynamic, providing opportunities for development and growth at the same time as they can create barriers to engagement. By attending to the frictions that undergird conflicts within and between social movements, we can identify the guiding frameworks and ideologies that contribute to them, shaping and influencing the social movements of which they are a part, as well as impacting those that they encounter.

In addition to its potential contributions as a frame of analysis, ethical friction was used as a political strategy or tool which required an awareness of the ethical orientations of those being targeted and that, depending on the intensity, could have multiple outcomes. Here Tsing’s (2005) discussion of universals, generalization, and friction provides additional insight into processes of identifying points for intervention in the ethical worlds of others and the disparate particulars that contribute to the creation of friction. Describing processes of generalization, Tsing writes that:

generalization to the universal requires a large space of compatibility among disparate particular facts and observations. As long as facts are apples and oranges, one cannot generalize across them; one must first see them as ‘fruits’ to make general claims. Compatibility standardizes difference. It allows transcendence: the general can rise above the particular. For this, compatibility must pre-exist the particular facts being examined; and it must unify the field of inquiry. The searcher for universal truths must establish an *axiom of unity* – whether spiritual, aesthetic, mathematical, logical, or moral principles. Second, tentative and contingent collaborations among disparate knowledge seekers and their disparate forms of knowledge can turn incompatible facts and observations into compatible ones... (2005:89, emphasis original)

In my discussion of the Network’s ethical world in Chapter Three, I suggested that universals that obscured the individual ethical orientations of members allowed some with conflicting and/or opposing beliefs to work together. Turning to the encounters discussed in this chapter, we can see how individuals worked to connect through universals and then tried to change the particulars that undergirded and guided their work. For example, in the LGBTQ event, Brenda actively drew on the language of “human rights” as a universal and then worked back to the particular actions that demonstrated the different, contradicting interpretations of “human rights” that guided them, emphasizing the disparate particulars – the single-axis humanitarian approaches compared to the intersectional, harm reduction approaches and the hierarchies of rights and suffering that existed therein – that were being obscured by the universal. To use Tsing’s metaphor, “human rights” were fruit, while criminalization and decriminalization were apples and oranges; the different understandings of what “human rights” looked like, who was having their rights supported and realized, and who was not, illustrated points of difference within the discursive terrain of human rights. Similarly, at the provincial event, Jen drew on the support for “vulnerable groups” and “prevention efforts” as an entry point for discussing the particular strategies that were going to be supported through funding and infrastructure, highlighting that, while everyone present may agree on the need to support “vulnerable groups”,

there were very different ideas about what that support should look like and the impact it could have.

In doing so, the potential for what Tsing refers to as “Difference within common cause” (2005:246) comes to the foreground as a basis for collaboration. In the context of the provincial event, Jen was willing to put aside her individual objections to the anti-trafficking movement if it meant gaining support for much needed structural supports that would broadly help many sex workers, as well as other marginalized groups, such as long-term affordable housing and raising the minimum wage. Were her concerns to be followed up on or serve as a bridge between herself and those in charge of the anti-trafficking initiative, it might constitute, drawing on Tsing, an example of “collaboration with difference: collaboration with friction at its heart” (ibid.). For Tsing, such collaborations do not necessarily produce a communal good but are a place to start opening up the meanings of working together, with collaborators who may or may not have common understandings of the problem and the product reaching for barely overlapping understandings of their situation, in so doing opening up the possibility of making new objects and agents possible (2005:246-247). For Jen, such collaborations were attempts to navigate uneven landscapes of political power and privilege as a means of prompting changes that would support the human rights of sex workers, deploying malleable universals and presenting herself in such a way as to avoid instant dismissal.

Conclusion

Paying attention to the presence and strategic instigation of ethical friction in these encounters provides an entry point for recognizing and unpacking the hierarchies of human rights, compassion, and suffering these social movements differentially supported, engaged with, and resisted. It highlights the ways that individual ethical orientations inform the ethical worlds

and world making activities of social movements, as well as the dominance of particular human rights discourses over others. In doing so, it emphasizes both the malleability and restrictiveness of human rights frameworks, while demonstrating that a recognition of “humanness” is a prerequisite that may need to be fought for and established in order for “rights” to be granted. This contradiction between the hegemonic ideology of human rights as inherent based on one’s membership in the biological category of “human” and the reality that, as Arendt (2009) argues, human rights require a state or community willing and able to recognize and protect them, is central to both social movements themselves and encounters between them.

Exploring these encounters helps to illuminate the ethical worlds of each, as well as the malleability of the universals that are used for coalition building and, too, how ethical friction can be instigated by breaking down those universals into particulars. In so doing, the ways that human rights are differentially interpreted, experienced, and deployed comes to the foreground, drawing attention to the limits of human rights frameworks in these contexts. As Sally Engle Merry has emphasized, understanding how ideas about “human rights” function in these contexts also aids us in identifying how rights are being “translated” in local contexts, allowing us to unpack the cultural assumptions about the nature of the person that these ideas are embedded in (2009:2). In doing so, hierarchies of suffering, compassion, and worthiness come to the surface.

These encounters also demonstrated the ways that ethical friction could be managed and used strategically, as well as the practical barriers that prevented its instigation, such as issues of access that contributed to strategies of silencing and erasure. In doing so, they demonstrated the key role that friction could play in strategies of resistance, challenges to power, and as a means of provoking social change, in addition to the ways that the ‘movement’ of social movements can be constrained by uneven access to social, political, and economic power. At the same time,

these encounters demonstrated the unpredictability of friction and that, among the multiple outcomes that it can produce, it can lead to coalitions, backlash, or little more than emotional exhaustion and burn out, with movements sometimes moving further apart, falling apart, or fizzling out.

Connecting to discussions of discursive encounters and knowledge production and communication efforts in Chapter Five, ethical friction was also a tool used by these social movements to bring non-movement members closer into alignment with the social movement's ethical world, encouraging a re-thinking of one's ethical orientation and its implications. At the same time, creating this form of friction required the simultaneous reinforcement of particular universals, such as "human rights", or categories, such as "vulnerable groups", pointing to some of the limits that anthropologists have highlighted in their critiques of human rights frameworks as an effective means of escaping subordination. Elaborating on these limits, Merry writes that "the human rights system challenges states' authority over their citizens at the same time as it reinforces states' power", promoting ideas of individual autonomy, equality, choice, and secularism while displacing alternative visions of social justice (2009:4-5). As tensions both within and between these social movements have demonstrated, these limitations were engaged with to varying degrees, while a central tension between "human rights" and differential recognitions of "humanness" continued to inform the ethical worlds of movement members and the possibilities for change that they imagined.

7. Conclusion

This dissertation has explored social movements, interactions within and between them, and how human rights frameworks were differentially imagined, produced, and interpreted by them. In doing so, I have unpacked discursive and in-person encounters between the anti-trafficking, sex worker rights, and, to a lesser extent, migrant worker rights movements, focusing on the ethical worlds that each created through their efforts to remake the world around them and the ways that ethical friction differentially functioned as a force that could lead to conflict, instigate change, and illuminate hierarchies of human rights and humanness within and between movements and movement members. In doing so, I have sought to answer such questions as: How and why do movements that, on the surface, are pursuing similar issues (namely, the elimination of violence against women and workers) and drawing on the language of human rights so often find themselves speaking past each other? And, how are “human rights” being differently imagined and how does this shape ideas of ethical action and the solutions that can be imagined?

In engaging with these questions, I have brought together diverse bodies of literature, connecting the anthropologies of humanitarianism, ethics, and human rights with research on social movements and critical feminist anti-trafficking studies. While some of these literatures, such as the anthropology of humanitarian and human rights, already substantially overlapped with each other, by bringing them into conversation with research on social movements I have expanded the application of theories on ethical domains, making a case for their salience to research on social movements more broadly. As Chapter Three demonstrated, the guiding frameworks that inform the ethical worlds of social movements, as well as the ethical orientations of individual members, actively influence the kinds of issues or “human rights

violations” that can be identified and shaped the solutions that can be imagined within those spaces. These ethical worlds are also dynamic sites of negotiation where some external cultural norms and oppressions are challenged and resisted while others persist, limiting forms of engagement and participation. In exploring the negotiations that took place and the tensions that existed within the Network, I drew on the concept of ‘ethical friction’ as a means of illuminating the boundaries or limits of individual members’ ethical orientations, the hierarchies of recognition and suffering that framed them, and the ideologies that supported them.

As Chapter Four explored, the existence of tensions and negotiations in social movements can lead to the creation of “intentional spaces” and “dual politics” (Juris 2008) wherein movement members engage with existing political and judicial mechanisms to challenge oppression while simultaneously recognizing the inherent limitations of these systems, including the role they have played in creating and sustaining historical and contemporary structural violence, and undertaking the work of imagining and creating, in embryonic form, alternative ethical worlds. In exploring these spaces and the ethical world of the sex worker rights movement, I discussed the ethics of care that undergirds the movement, including its antecedents and current challenges. In doing so, I compared the conceptualization of care that predominates in the anti-trafficking Network, one which emphasizes a form of humanitarian ‘care’ wherein particular bodies are identified as in need of ‘receiving’ professional support services which were then to be provided by appropriate ‘givers’; the ‘care’ that members of the sex worker rights movement endeavoured to provide, which was rooted in personal relationships, interweaves friendships and other relationships into organizing (and vice versa), and emphasizes ideas of holistic community care and the safety of sex working members.

Within the ethical world of the sex worker rights movement, hierarchies of suffering, compassion, and oppression were actively engaged with, fostering a kind of critical reflexivity that consumed both organizing and personal emotional resources as a means of developing intersectional, inclusive spaces and support services for sex workers. Here, the limited financial resources of the movement combine with a general feeling of needing to be ‘above reproach’ to shape the various forms of organizing that members engaged in, including what issues were prioritized and the role of allies in a movement “by and for sex workers”. Comparing this resulting ethical world with that of the Network and how tensions were negotiated within each movement, the sex worker rights movement actively honed in on issues of oppression, stigma, and discrimination; those whose behaviour could be corrected or improved to more closely align with the movement’s goals were promptly informed of it. In contrast, the ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” that was emphasized in Network meeting spaces simultaneously unified members and downplayed the tensions that resulted from the different hierarchies of suffering and ethical orientations that existed beneath the veneer of cooperation. These approaches also reflected differences in the ideologies and politics that informed them, with the sex worker rights movement drawing on intersectional identity politics largely developed by women of colour, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), and the anti-trafficking movement organizing its spaces and membership according to a liberal politics of inclusion informed by Canadian nationalist narratives of multiculturalism and difference. These approaches created different forms of censure within these ethical worlds: Network members performed harmony and resisted disagreeing or critiquing one another, creating a space where the productive potential of engaging with these tensions was constrained; in sex worker rights movement meetings, fear of

saying the wrong thing could lead to limited engagement or members withdrawing from organizing.

In unpacking these different approaches to negotiating tension within the ethical worlds of each movement, different interpretations of “human rights”, as well as the hierarchies of compassion, suffering, and oppression that informed them, came to the foreground. In the case of the Network, the individual ethical orientations of members, which included diverse interpretations of human rights and identification of rights violations, combined with the Network’s ethos of “bringing everyone to the table” to support a general focus on “sex trafficking” and the heteronormative social values that are associated with this trafficking discourse. Despite this general emphasis, individual Network members, such as Ava and Melissa, repeatedly sought to instigate friction as a strategy for changing the ethical orientations of other members with the goal of having them conform to a more intersectional, social justice-based approach to human trafficking, wherein structural violence and diverse forms of oppression could be recognized and anti-oppressive, harm reduction approaches supported.

Within the sex worker rights movement, the ethics of care that emphasized supporting sex workers as “whole humans” intertwined with the goal of achieving social and legal recognition of “sex work as work”. The critical reflexivity that was fostered in organizing meeting spaces combines with intersectional interpretations of oppression and human rights to reflect an understanding on the part of movement members that it is the collective dehumanization of sex workers that is responsible for the lack of recognition of their work as legitimate labour, as well as the violation of their individual rights, to which they are entitled to by virtue of being human. Movement members thus sought to establish both the “humanity” of sex workers as a prerequisite for rights recognition, as well as the legitimacy of sex work as

remunerable labour. At the same time, members sought to both recognize and engage with hierarchies of rights and suffering that existed within and outside of the movement, fostering complex and dynamic engagements with issues of oppression and goals for world-making within and beyond the movement.

Chapter Five explored the world making practices of social movements through the lens of movement knowledge production and communication practices, with particular attention paid to the discursive encounters between the sex worker rights, migrant worker rights, and anti-trafficking movement. Taking anti-trafficking discourses, their (re)production, dissemination, and influence as a point of focus, I drew on the work of social movement researchers to theorize the significance of these practices of knowledge production and communication and connected this to my conceptualization of ethical friction to analyze how these practices demonstrated a means of engagement with and communication of the guiding frameworks of each movement. In focusing on the uneven, frictive process of knowledge consumption, negotiation, creation, and dissemination, as well as the uneven distribution of political and social “power”, means, and circuits of production, this chapter also illuminates the active processes through which social movements create, engage with, and resist hegemonic ‘truths’. In doing so, I draw attention to the ways that knowledge production and dissemination is a means through which social movements can (and can not) “move” in different spaces, as well as the creative strategies that movements employed to challenge limitations to this movement, such as the instigation of an anti-trafficking policy brief by members of the sex worker rights movement, and efforts that were made to limit the “movement” of anti-trafficking discourses, such as the refusal to further propagate the language of “anti-trafficking” that Ahkil espoused.

Building on these discursive encounters, Chapter Six explored in-person encounters between social movements, highlighting their complexity and the powerful potential they hold as moments of arguably predictable ethical friction that can have very unpredictable outcomes. I emphasized the salience of appreciating the antecedents that could influence these encounters, such as *The Feud within the Network*, and connected these moments of encounter to the individual ethical orientations of movement members, how they negotiated their own ethical positions, and how they sought to manage the ethical orientations of other members within their own movement. Touching on the work of social movement researchers on the conflict within social movements, I dug into the generative potential of these encounters and the messy, uneven changes that sometimes resulted. In doing so, I explored how different social movements navigated terrains of uneven social, political, and economic power and influence, including the awareness some movement members had of how to reach broader audiences through the strategic use of “universals” and the instigation of ethical friction as a political tool.

Attention to ethical friction in the context of the existence of these uneven landscapes and the strategizing they require some movements to engage in in order to gain access to them allowed me to unpack the hierarchies of human rights, suffering, and compassion that sustained them, as well the ways such hierarchies are reflected, engaged with, resisted, and challenged by other participants in those spaces. It helps outline the ethical worlds of the social movements involved and the ethical orientations of individual movement members, highlighting the malleability of the universals that are being used for coalition building, the implications of diverse interpretations of “human rights”, and the disparate particulars that reveal the limitations and exclusions that accompany these interpretations. Taken together, this approach contributes to the anthropology of humanitarianism and ethics by expanding upon theories of ethical domains

and hierarchies of suffering to incorporate the insights that can be gathered by attending to social movements as sites of ethical world making and social change. It also connects the work of social movement researchers, already intertwined with the anthropological work on human rights, to conceptualizations of ethical action, which both pushes analysis of social movements further and challenges the limits that are present within the anthropology of humanitarianism, including its overwhelming focus on particular types of, predominantly medical, humanitarian intervention, by presenting social movements, the worlds they create, and the interventions they craft as important sites for future anthropological research on ethics.

Having drawn on the significant discourse and ideological analysis work that has been undertaken by scholars in the interdisciplinary field of critical anti-trafficking studies to understand the broader positioning of the anti-trafficking movement and its impact in Canada, this dissertation is positioned to contribute a new lens through which the actions of the movement can be analyzed and its far-reaching impact on other social movements understood. By focusing on the ethical as a specific point where friction can occur, I point to its potential as a site for instigating change within the anti-trafficking movement and the individuals that make up its membership. In looking at the ethical world of the movement, I also highlight the constraints that some members face in instigating meaningful change. Providing an in-depth and nuanced analysis of the anti-trafficking movement is also of benefit to the migrant worker rights and sex worker rights movements, as the hegemony of anti-trafficking discourses in Canadian politics has increasingly been imposed upon them. While the potential of this dissertation to contribute to the research on the migrant worker rights movement is minimal due to the barriers faced during fieldwork, it is well positioned to make a meaningful contribution to the field of sex work research through its examination of the barriers the movement faces, which include those created

as a result of anti-trafficking initiatives, as well as those that result from an ongoing lack of funding.

Beyond contributions to academic scholarship, though, a primary goal of this research has been to contribute to the marginalized communities that made it possible. To this end, I am committed to ensuring that the insights gained from this research are made accessible outside of academic libraries. At a minimum, this will include offering to provide and help organize presentations based on the research findings for each of the movements that contributed to this project, in particular the sex worker rights organizations that contributed to this research and guided its direction. Individual chapters will be translated into accessible and open-source summaries, with the offer to collaborate on the development of fact sheets and other materials for broader circulation. Regarding eventual academic publications based on this research, opportunities to co-publish with members of the sex worker rights and migrant worker rights movement will be pursued and access to any resulting single author or co-authored articles or other texts will be shared with participants. Copies of the dissertation in its entirety will also be made available, paired with the aforementioned chapter summaries. Through these efforts, it is my hope that the insights gathered can be directed towards building bridges and greater collaboration efforts between these social movements, in particular between the sex worker rights and migrant worker rights movements, for the labour struggles they face have much in common. It is also my hope that these research findings can contribute to the mandatory review of the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*, which the government is required to begin in 2019.

Beyond this, new questions arise relating to the impact of social movements, both on the broader societies they are a part of and on other social movements, as well as what is required for

meaningful changes (and, further, what counts as “meaningful”) to occur and be sustained. Since the fieldwork for this dissertation took place, several changes in the sex worker rights, anti-trafficking, and migrant worker rights movements have served to further demonstrate the limitations, as well as the potential, of human rights frameworks as a means of building coalitions and achieving lasting social change in Canada. As I write, the current federal government has yet to pursue revisions to legislation criminalizing sex work in Canada, despite election promises to review the legislation and propose changes. To this end, sex worker rights movement members continue to prepare for a potential court challenge to the legislation, seeking to have the laws thrown out as the Supreme Court did with the previous ones. Waiting on informal promises that the legislation will be reviewed given by various Ministers, many movement members are skeptical that any changes will be made without a formal challenge. This skepticism has increased as the federal government has launched a national consultation on human trafficking in Canada that has yet to formally consult with sex worker rights organizations across the country, in addition to the continued funding and support for Operation Northern Spotlight, despite objections from sex worker support service organizations across Canada.

Within the Network, formal events have been fewer in number since 2016, though meetings continue to occur several times a year. The Network has been moderately successful in getting a human trafficking helpline off the ground – one of the core elements of the response model the Network was originally funded to develop – but issues around advertising the helpline and training operators remain. A soft launch of the helpline yielded zero callers, but this has not deterred Network members from pursuing a helpline as a way to address trafficking in Ontario. In terms of funding, the Network has continued to receive government funding for anti-trafficking work. In line with her desire to disengage from “sex trafficking”, Ava’s organization

has continued to emphasize addressing trafficking as a labour issue, with a focus on the risks faced by migrant workers in Canada. To this end, she successfully secured funding for developing resources and support services specifically to address human trafficking among migrant workers in Ontario. However, within Network meetings, an emphasis on sex trafficking remains.

Coalition building and collaboration between Ava's organization and sex worker support services and organizations in Toronto have not yet culminated in further events or the creation of additional support services. Despite a desire on the part of Ava's organization to collaborate with the one funded sex worker support services organization to provide enhanced support services for youth in the sex trades, including emotional support, resume building, and job training, a lack of funding and organizational support prevented this endeavour from being realized. A lack of funding and volunteer capacity also led to a cessation of activities undertaken by the migrant sex worker rights advocacy group, though an online presence has continued and many volunteers remain active in the sex worker rights movement more broadly. Collaborations between the sex worker rights movement and progressive feminist-based organizations and groups, such as were pursued during Take Back the Night 2015, have led to publicly promoted events and opportunities. In particular, the most recent Slut Walk Toronto march was a collaboration between organizations belonging to the sex worker rights movement and feminist activists that worked to build awareness among Slut Walk's younger demographic about the barriers sex workers faced, as well as draw more volunteers and activists to the sex worker rights movement. Planned Parenthood Toronto also formally partnered with a sex worker rights and support services organization to study the needs of youth involved in the sex trades in Toronto, including availability of support services, police relations in the context of underage workers being

classified as “trafficked”, and the effects of criminalization. Planned Parenthood also prioritized hiring researchers and focus group facilitators with sex working experience, supporting and legitimizing the experiential knowledge of sex workers.

Turning to migrant worker rights organizers, resistance to the language of human trafficking has become more solidified and pronounced, with some organizations beginning to resist collaboration efforts with other organizations, such as Ava’s, while those organizations continue to formally engage in anti-trafficking work. At the same time, Ava’s efforts to disengage from “sex trafficking” work to focus more exclusively on advocating for the needs of migrant workers is helping to reduce this barrier to collaboration as she focuses the funding she receives on support services for these workers. Efforts to increase connections between the migrant sex worker rights organizations and migrant worker rights organizations have continued to occur, but the lack of funding for these initiatives means they rely on volunteers, who have diminished in numbers due to burn out and the fluctuating availability of primary organizers. At the same time, some formalization of support for migrant sex workers has occurred within the primary sex worker rights and support services organization in Toronto, a direct result of securing additional funding and being able to hire additional workers to take on this work. While the program is still in its infancy, there is hope that it will be the beginning of an ongoing expansion of support services and advocacy for migrant sex workers.

What, then, is required to create and sustain change and what other barriers exist to it being achieved? How do we identify the moment when something has been ‘achieved’, particularly when the diverse ethical worlds of social movements and orientations of social movement members suggests that reaching consensus presents its own set of complications? How do we overcome the limitations of these different interpretations of “human rights” and the

hierarchies that accompany them? Further, if being granted “human rights” requires both the recognition of “humanness” and a government and society willing to respect and uphold those rights, with both of these largely dependent on hierarchies of humanness, suffering, compassion, and oppression, are human rights-based frameworks capable of achieving the changes that social movements diversely seek to cultivate? If we decide that they are not, what other frameworks might be used to create a more just and equal world and how might we come to a greater consensus of what that world would look like? Answering these questions is beyond the scope of this dissertation and they are not questions that are original to it. Several of the social movement members that participated in this research raised similar questions and it is with Sarah’s response that I conclude:

It doesn’t matter that we don’t have the answers, what matters is that we have the chance to try and create spaces where we can imagine a world that is otherwise, because that imagining, that refusal to be constrained or to limit the possibilities, that’s, I think, where change can really begin.

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