

The Dolores Huerta Community Service Award Essay

The Disproportionate Impacts of Human Trafficking on the Latinx Community

Abstract: Human trafficking is a social issue and federal crime of the highest degree, which disproportionately affects, particularly Latinx, immigrants, throughout the U.S. and within the state of California. This work's approach to human trafficking is specific to my experience as an Anti-Trafficking Intern for the Sacramento International Rescue Committee's HOPE (Human-Trafficking Outreach, Prevention and Education) program, and aims to demonstrate and contextualize the knowledge about human trafficking, as well as its intersections with migration, acquired and developed during this internship. Thus, this approach to human trafficking is regionally and organizationally concentrated, within Northern California, and the Sacramento IRC, respectively. Nonetheless, the following pages first define and quantify human trafficking in the U.S. and in California, and explain the elevated vulnerability of the Latinx community to human trafficking (as exemplified by the analysis of labor trafficking in the agricultural sector), in order to both contextualize my experience and learning, and emphasize their relevance on a larger scale. Secondly, the portfolio presents an introduction of the IRC, and its HOPE Program, providing a statistical analysis focused on the overrepresentation of Latinx survivors in its specific client population, as well as an explanation of the motivations and goals for my internship. Thereafter, it details the duties and responsibilities of my role, and their progress, in order to then demonstrate how I successfully met my learning objectives through this experience, as well as its impact on my worldview, and current and future career implications.

Key words: modern slavery, forced labor, international migration, human rights, immigrants

Resumen: La trata humana es un problema social y un delito federal del más alto grado, que afecta de manera desproporcionada a los inmigrantes, en particular a los latinoamericanos, en todo Estados Unidos y en el estado de California. El abordaje de este trabajo a la trata humana es específico a mi experiencia como voluntaria Anti-Trata Humana para el Programa HOPE¹ (Prevención y Educación de la Trata Humana²) del Comité Internacional de Rescate de Sacramento, y tiene como objetivo demostrar y contextualizar el conocimiento sobre la trata humana, así como sus intersecciones con la migración, adquiridas y desarrolladas durante este voluntariado. Por lo tanto, se concentra regionalmente y organizacionalmente, en el norte de California y el CIR de Sacramento, respectivamente. No obstante, las siguientes páginas primero definen y cuantifican la trata humana en los Estados Unidos y en California, y explican la vulnerabilidad elevada de la comunidad Latinx a la trata humana (ejemplificada en el análisis de la trata laboral en el sector agrícola), con el fin de contextualizar mi experiencia y aprendizaje, y enfatizar su relevancia a una escala mayor. En seguida, el portafolio presenta una introducción al CIR y al Programa HOPE, proporcionando un análisis estadístico enfocado en la sobrerrepresentación de sobrevivientes latinx en su población de clientes, así como una explicación de las motivaciones y los objetivos de mi voluntariado. A partir de entonces, detalla los deberes y las responsabilidades de mi cargo, y su progreso, para luego demostrar cómo logré mis objetivos de aprendizaje a través de esta experiencia, así como su impacto en mi visión del mundo y sus implicaciones profesionales actuales y futuras.

Palabras clave: esclavitud moderna, labor forzado, migración internacional, derechos humanos, inmigrantes

¹ El acrónimo corresponde al nombre original del programa en inglés.

² Traducción hecha por la autora.

I. Defining and Quantifying Human Trafficking

Global Scope

If you were to ask passer-bys about human trafficking, you would be hard-pressed to find someone who doesn't consider it a social issue of the highest degree. And yet, few would be able to gauge its scope, let alone define it. In order to first identify, then assist, victims and survivors of human trafficking, with the hope of eradicating it as a whole, it is necessary that we be able to do both. According to the International Rescue Committee, "human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery affecting more than 20 million people world-wide" (*HOPE Program Sacramento*). The International Labor Organization goes as far as to specify that "there are more than 24.9 million human trafficking victims worldwide at any time", and according to California's attorney general, human trafficking "is estimated to be a \$150 billion-a-year global industry" (*Becerra*).

Scope within the United States and California

In 2019, 22,326 victims and survivors of trafficking were identified via the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline alone (*National Human Trafficking Hotline*). It is primordial to note that these statistics cannot paint the full picture, as they only include those who both used the hotline, and identified themselves as being in a trafficking situation, which many victims of trafficking do not³. Nonetheless, the National Human Trafficking Hotline "maintains one of the most extensive data sets on the issue of human trafficking in the United States", according to which California consistently reports the highest number of human trafficking cases from 2015 to 2019 (*NHTH*). According to the hotline's 2019 data, domestic work, agriculture, and traveling sales crews were the top 3 industries for labor trafficking in the U.S., whereas illicit massage and spa businesses, pornography, and residence-based commercial sex were the top three for sex trafficking (*NHTH*).

Human Trafficking Defined

³ Be it because "they agreed to the initial terms of work" prior to experiencing force, fraud, or coercion, or because of cultural differences in the understanding of trafficking, language barriers, or dissuading psychological factors such as hopelessness or distrust (*HPH 4*).

The Trafficking Victim Protection Act⁴ defines labor and sex trafficking in the United States, as follows. It is important to note that before the TVPA, which was created to assist survivors of trafficking in regaining control of their lives, human trafficking was loosely defined, and not a federal crime, in the U.S.⁵ According to the TVPA, sex trafficking consists of “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, [...] induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years” (*HPH 3*). The TVPA similarly defines labor trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery” (*HPH 3*).

Given the association of movement to the term “trafficking”, many “believe that victims of human trafficking must be transported to qualify” (*HPH 3*). But as seen in TVPA’s aforementioned definitions of sex and human labor trafficking, transportation is only one of five potential means of trafficking. The A-M-P Model, derived from these definitions, is useful not only to identify a trafficking situation, but also to understand how the notion that trafficking must involve the transportation of its victims, while prevalent, is a myth.

The A-M-P Model of Human Trafficking

Figure 1. The A-M-P Model (HPH 3)

Aim	Means	Purpose
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⁴ The TVPA, itself a section of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, was passed by Congress in 2000, following the UN’s Palermo Protocol (*HPH 3*)

⁵ “Prior to the to the TVPA, Congress relied on outdated slavery laws, which required physical harm [...] as proof of a human trafficking incident”, when in actuality, “traffickers do not always use force to control their victims” (*HPH 3*).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruit ● Harbor ● Transport ● Provide ● Obtain ● Or so attempts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Force⁶ ● Fraud⁷ ● Coercion⁸ ● Under the age of 18 with commercial sex acts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commercial Sex Acts ● Labor ● Services
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The A-M-P model splits the characteristics of trafficking as defined by TVAP into the categories of Aim, Means, and Purpose. In this model, only one characteristic from each category must be present for a situation to be considered human trafficking (*HPH 3*). Thus, a situation in which a perpetrator recruits, harbors, provides, or obtains a victim through either force, fraud, coercion, (or who is under the age of 18 with commercial sex acts) with the purpose of commercial sex acts, labor or services, is a trafficking situation, even if the perpetrator did not physically transport the victim.

The Vulnerability of Latinx Immigrants

While “human trafficking, both [for] sex and labor, can happen to anyone, anywhere” be they U.S. citizens, foreign nationals, women, men, or children, some populations are more vulnerable and targeted by traffickers at a higher frequency; namely, migrants⁹, immigrants, runaway and homeless youth, victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, war, or social discrimination (*HPH 6*). According to the IOM, there is research-based evidence of connections between migration and human trafficking, the risk of human trafficking to migrants is increased when they use irregular migrations routes, and “undocumented migrants are at a higher risk of modern slavery [of which human trafficking is a form] than those who are documented” (*David et al. 8, 10*). California is home to almost 11 million immigrants, 2 million of whom are undocumented (more than

⁶ Force includes “physical harm through abuse, rape, confinement, isolation, or similar experiences”, and fraud “can pertain to employment offers, living conditions, working conditions, withholding wages, and false promises [which compel] the client into a trafficking situation” (*HPH 4*).

⁷ Fraud “can pertain to employment offers, living conditions, working conditions, withholding wages, and false promises [which compel] the client into a trafficking situation” (*HPH 4*).

⁸ Coercion includes “threatening a person’s life or the lives of family members and loved ones, taking documentation (identification, legal documents, and otherwise) from a person, threatening deportation and arrest, and other psychological manipulation of an individual” (*HPH 4*).

⁹ According to the the National Trafficking Hotline, in 2019, recent migration/relocation was the highest risk factor for labor trafficking, and the third highest for sex trafficking, after substance abuse and runaway homeless youth (Polaris Project)

any other state on both counts) (*PPIC*). Furthermore, 50% of California immigrants are Latin American, and according to Polaris' recent report on trafficking and the Latinx community¹⁰, amongst migrant and immigrant populations nationwide, those from Latin America and the Caribbean are disproportionately vulnerable to trafficking, independently of their immigration status (*PPIC*, "*La cara latina de la trata 4*"). In order to understand the nuances of this finding, it is necessary to examine employer-tied visas and how they increase documented immigrants' vulnerability to human trafficking, a phenomenon most prevalent in the agricultural sector, where it disproportionately impacts Latinx immigrants.

Labor Trafficking of Latinx Agricultural Workers

While trafficking occurs across a range of employment sectors, nation-wide, the agricultural industry has the highest number of immigrant victims of labor trafficking, and Latin American and Caribbean immigrants specifically, represent 30% of the total victims of labor trafficking in the agricultural sector identified by the NHTH from 2015 to 2018 (*The Latino Face 7*). According to recent estimates, in California, which is "not only the largest agricultural state in the U.S., but one of the most productive agricultural zones in the world", 96% of California's agricultural workers are Latino, and 89% are Mexican immigrants¹¹ (NCLR). Furthermore, according to the NHTH's data, Mexican agricultural workers - both immigrant and non-immigrant - made up 46% of the likely victims of labor trafficking in the agricultural sector nationwide in 2015 ("*The Latino Face*" 7). This vulnerability to labor trafficking independent of immigration status, characteristic not only of Mexican agricultural workers, but also of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants overall, has its roots in the structural nature of temporary work programs.

Although undocumented immigrants are extremely vulnerable to human trafficking, contrary to stereotypes, many Latin American and Caribbean victims of trafficking are not undocumented, but rather temporary-work-visa-holders (*Crowe 5*). By design,

¹⁰ Based on the analysis of the National Trafficking Hotline's data from December 2007 to December 2016.

¹¹ According to the National Council of La Raza's data from 2017..

H-2A and H-2B¹² visas are tied to a specific employer, such that these visa-holders cannot leave their job without becoming “immediately deportable”, thus “baking into the system one of the most powerful weapons for traffickers to control victims - the threat of deportation” (Crowe 4). Thus, while temporary workers are documented, temporary guestworker programs and undocumented labor markers share structural conditions “wedded to common employer-side incentives to maximize profit by reducing labor costs in a way that too often results in abuse and even trafficking” (Crowe 5). Both labor trafficking in the agricultural sector generally, and labor trafficking on temporary work visas, disproportionately impact the Latinx community. In effect, the NHTH identified that amongst victims of labor trafficking on temporary work visas¹³, Mexico was the top country of origin, and agriculture the top industry (Crowe 8, 9) . Similarly, Siddharth Kara’s research on labor trafficking in California’s agricultural industry reported that , “trafficking is almost equally prevalent in both the H-2A documented group and the undocumented labor pool”, and that the majority of H-2A workers in the U.S. are from “south of the US-Mexico border” (CAST).

II. Introducing The International Rescue Committee

I conducted my community service as a HOPE Anti-Trafficking Intern at the Sacramento office of the International Rescue Committee. While the IRC is best known for providing emergency aid and long-term assistance to refugees and displaced persons, its Sacramento HOPE Program serves survivors of trafficking, as elaborated in the subsequent section. The IRC is a global organization, headquartered in New York City and with offices in 26 U.S. cities, while working across 40 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Its overarching mission is to help people displaced “by conflict and disaster to survive, recover, and gain control of their future”; and their overall vision is “to lead the humanitarian field” and “shape global policy and practice” through “high-impact cost-effective programs”, and by sharing their “learning and experience” (*International Rescue Committee*). Given the extensive

¹² “The largest temporary work visa programs, designed to fill jobs U.S.-based employers claim they cannot fill with workers already in the country. H2-A is specific to agriculture, and H2-B to other manual labor jobs (such as meat processing, cleaning, construction, and landscaping) (CITE).

¹³ Including, but not limited to H-2A visas.

nature of the organization, each IRC office is generally divided into the following departments: Safety & Wellness, Citizenship & Immigration, Refugee Resettlement, Economic Empowerment, and New Roots (*HPH 1, 2*).

III. The IRC's Anti-Trafficking HOPE Program

The Nature and Scope of HOPE

The Sacramento IRC's HOPE (Human-Trafficking Outreach, Prevention, Education) Program¹⁴ serves survivors of trafficking in the greater Sacramento area and across 30 counties in Northern California (*HPH i*). Its mission is the provision of "comprehensive services to survivors of human trafficking, as well as "training and outreach to increase awareness and identification of survivors", with the vision of "helping survivors build lives that are free from abuse and exploitation" (*HPH i*). The "comprehensive services" referred to in their mission statement are client-centered, trauma-informed services including: long-term case management, housing assistance, food and clothing, immigration and legal assistance, interpretation services, physical and mental health access, education and job training, safety planning, referrals, and benefits assistance (*HOPE Program in Sacramento*).

Demographic Analysis of HOPE's Client Population

¹⁴ While Sacramento's HOPE Program began in 2014, the IRC's service to survivors of human trafficking dates back to 2003, and its leadership of The Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network in Seattle, the establishment of The Arizona League to End Regional Trafficking, and the Florida IRC's federally-funded Anti-Trafficking program in the Miami Region (*HPH 2*).

Figure 2. Type of Human Trafficking

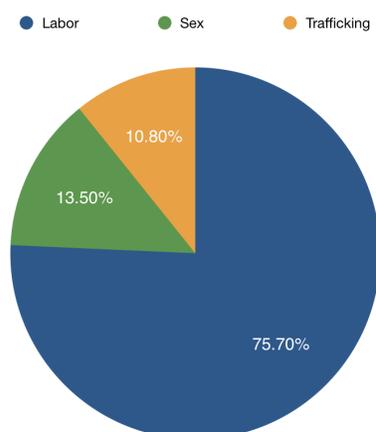
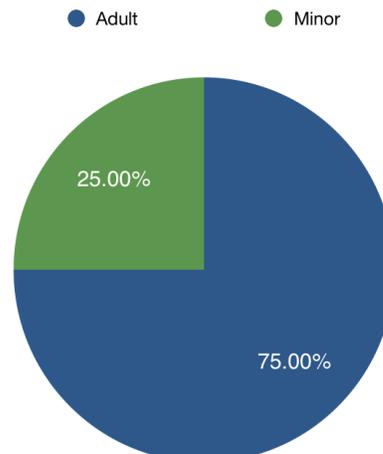


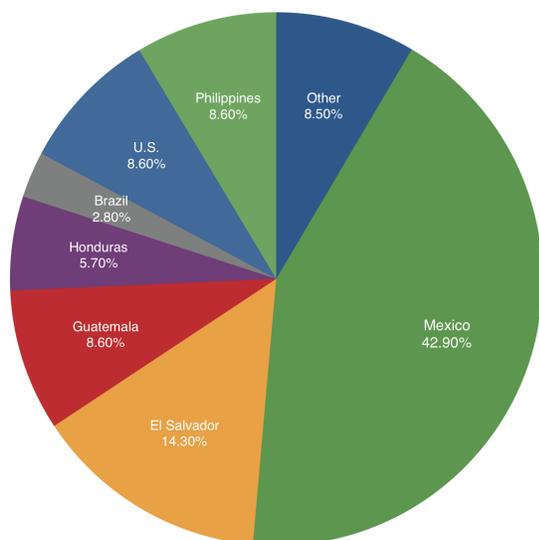
Figure 3. Age of Victims



According to my statistical analysis of HOPE's client tracker data,¹⁵ amongst the survivors of human trafficking the program currently serves, labor is by far the most prevalent form of trafficking, affecting 75.7% of the population. In addition, 13.5% of HOPE's clients are survivors of labor trafficking, and 10.8% are survivors of both labor and sex trafficking. Furthermore, the vast majority of HOPE's clients (75%) are adults, however, it is noteworthy that 25% are minors.

Figure 4: Country of Origin

¹⁵ Derived from HOPE's internal tracker of client data, full data set cannot be shared due to privacy and confidentiality reasons.



The staggering majority of the survivors of human trafficking currently served by HOPE, specifically 91.4%, are immigrants to the United States. Latin America immigrants are particularly overrepresented amongst the survivors of trafficking served by HOPE, making up 75% of their clients. More specifically, 42.9% are Mexican immigrants, 28.6% are Central American immigrants, and 2.8% are Brazilian immigrants. Amongst the Central American immigrants, citizens of El Salvador are overrepresented, making up 14.3% of HOPE's current clients. Immigrants from Guatemala, and Honduras, representing 8.6% and 5.7% of HOPE's population respectively. In addition, 43% of HOPE's total client base is undocumented, and more than half of, specifically 54%, are Spanish-speaking Latin American immigrants who speak limited, or no English. Although immigrants, and particularly Latinx immigrants, have a greater vulnerability to human trafficking, US citizens can also be victims, and in fact, 8% of the survivors of trafficking HOPE currently serves are US Citizens.

V. Internship Motivation

My motivation for this internship first stemmed from my long standing admiration for the International Rescue Committee, and especially their work in the area of refugee

resettlement. Growing up in Germany, the “European Migrant Crisis” hit close to home at a formative stage of my life, both motivating my involvement with a local refugee resettlement initiative, and cementing the importance of non-profit organizations in the protection and empowerment of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. This experience inspired me to seek similar volunteer opportunities upon coming to the U.S., where “government policies continue to sanction human rights violations against migrants and immigrants”, in direct violation of international law, including the Principle of Non-Refoulement, and the enforcement of said policies disproportionately targets Latinx immigrants, particularly from Mexico and Central America (*ACLU, Arenilla 286, Provine 31*). In my research, the IRC set itself apart through its combined focus on long term direct assistance, and shaping policy. Although my contact with the IRC began as early as my sophomore year, unfortunately, at this time, internships were exclusively presential, and the location of their Los Angeles office in Glendale made the commute nonviable for me.

I nonetheless stayed in contact with the Los Angeles IRC, and was thus informed when the IRC’s operations became entirely remote in their adaptation to the pandemic. While I was originally interested in a Vocational ESL Tutoring position within the Economic Empowerment Department, given my experience tutoring UCLA frontline workers in ESL, an opportunity presented in the HOPE Department became available. I was very excited by the opportunity to learn about a social problem I was less familiar with, at an organization I had always admired, and in which I could leverage my language skills and serve the Latinx community.

IV. Internship Goals

Upon starting my role as an Anti-Trafficking Intern with the Sacramento IRC’s HOPE Program, I established two primary internship goals: 1) To develop a profound knowledge of human trafficking, and 2) To develop an understanding of how immigration and human trafficking intersect. The first, and perhaps more obvious, objective was a direct result of my awareness of my inexperience, both theoretical and practical, with the issue of human trafficking. The second was connected to the emphasis on

Spanish-speaking Latin American Immigrants in my introduction to my role with HOPE, as well as my personal passion for, interest in, and academic study of, immigration.

V. Duties, Responsibilities & Progress

Initial Duties & Responsibilities

As an intern for the HOPE Department, my duties and responsibilities progressed over time, and fluctuated based on the clients' needs. In my first week, while I conducted a case review with my supervisor, my primary responsibility was familiarizing myself with the issue of human trafficking, both globally and in California. Through assigned readings and documentaries, I immersed myself in the topic, and accumulated a wealth of knowledge that made me realize that my prior knowledge of human trafficking, and its intersections with immigration, was even more minimal than I had imagined.

Having established a knowledge base of human trafficking, my duties and responsibilities expanded to include case management. As an intern for the HOPE department, I served a fraction of the client base (the HOPE department has multiple caseworkers, including my supervisor, among whom the cases are divided), 66.7% of whom were Mexican or Central American immigrants. Initially, I primarily provided housing assistance and assistance with employment, without direct contact with the clients themselves. In these early stages, I also provided translation services to the IRC, reviewing and correcting the English-to-Spanish translation of the Survivors of Tracking Screening Form, which is used by the organization and community activists to identify victims of trafficking.

Progressed Duties & Responsibilities

My responsibilities then expanded to include direct communication with a client regarding housing assistance, as well as with his family members in regards to employment assistance, and assistance with navigating their immigration status as pertaining to employment, and financial aid and college applications. At this point, I shadowed a benefits assistance call with the aforementioned client, in preparation for my own such call with a Portuguese-speaking client, whom I later helped directly with

her application for CalWorks. My housing assistance duties also expanded to include an increasing number of clients, and most recently, my responsibilities have progressed to include referrals to employment development services for multiple clients, as well as direct assistance for, and communication with, a client pursuing an education and career in the medical field.

VI. Learning Outcomes

An Overview

As previously discussed, my training for this internship and introduction to the cases alone provided me with a wealth of knowledge about human trafficking and its intersections with immigration that exceeded my expectations. My first takeaway from my training was the inaccuracy of the overemphasis on transportation in common understanding of human trafficking, which, as discussed in my introduction, is actually only one of five potential “Aims” of a human trafficking situation under the A-M-P model. I also learned that human trafficking and immigration, and particularly irregular migration, are extremely interconnected, and that human trafficking networks, much like many migrant smuggling networks, are often themselves transnational institutions of organized crime.

1) Migration and Trafficking: The Exploitation of Migrants

In my prior studies of immigration, and specifically Mexican and Central American migration, I had developed an understanding of the exploitative nature of migrant smuggling networks, the extent of the control of organized crime on irregular migration routes in Mexico, and the lack of state control on said routes¹⁶. I reencountered these phenomena under a new perspective, in my assigned reading of the International Organization for Migration’s report “Migrants and Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, and Forced Labor”, which taught me that these features of irregular migration not only increase the risk of exploitation of migrants (physical, psychological,

¹⁶ The two latter phenomena largely due to the increased militarization of the U.S. Mexico Border.

and economic) generally, but also increase the risk of human trafficking, and render irregular migration routes prevalent sites of this crime.

2) Migration and Trafficking: Transnational Networks of Organized Crime

In my study of Central American and Mexican migration, and particularly *The Devil's Highway* by Luis Alberto Urrea¹⁷, I learned that many migrant smuggling networks themselves are trans-national institutions of organized crime. In my HOPE training, I discovered that this very notion is equally applicable to the labor trafficking of Central American migrants to the U.S., through my exposure to a transnational trafficking case, analyzed in the PBS documentary *Trafficked in America*. In this infamous case, a network of Guatemalan human smugglers recruited and transported adolescent migrants for a third-party contractor for a U.S. egg farm in Ohio, where they were forced to work off their debts to the Guatemalan smugglers, and were victims of fraud¹⁸ coercion¹⁹. Part of what made this case so shocking, was its transnational network of perpetrators of labor trafficking, which spanned from a village in Guatemala to an egg farm in Ohio, reminiscent of the network spanning from Veracruz, Mexico, to Phoenix, Arizona, which led the Yuma 14 to their deaths in the Sonoran Desert, exposed in the work of Luis Alberto Urrea.

3) Undocumented Survivors of Trafficking

While my training taught me about the intersections of immigration and human trafficking, in my subsequent work with clients, I learned more about the difficulties undocumented survivors of trafficking face *after* exiting their trafficking situation, which present significant barriers to building lives free of abuse and exploitation, and becoming self-sufficient. USCIS offers two types of immigration visas to survivors of human trafficking and other crimes (T-visa and U-visas, which protect victims of trafficking, and crime victims who have suffered mental or physical abuse as a result of the crime, respectively, and allow them to remain in the U.S. and (or arguably, if they)

¹⁷ Work of non-fiction which narrates the story of the Yuma 14, reconstructed through reports, legal documents, testimonies, correspondence, recorded interrogations and confessions.

¹⁸ Pertaining to living and working conditions, and withholding wages.

¹⁹ Involving death threats to both them and their families, as well as threats of deportation.

assist law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of human trafficking/criminal cases (*HPH 6*). However, the process, like any immigration process, is often “long and tedious” and can “[require] documents and information that many survivors don’t have access to” (*HPH 6*). In fact, out of HOPE’s current clients who are not US citizens, only 8% actually have T-Visas, according to my statistical analysis of the data from HOPE’s client tracker.

Undocumented survivors, in addition to suffering a higher risk of human trafficking because of their immigration status, also face barriers in their access to assistance after exiting their trafficking situation, which I encountered on multiple occasions as a caseworker. For instance, while victims of trafficking are eligible for benefits such as CalFresh under TCVAP, I discovered that many DHS representatives are not informed of this, and turn undocumented survivors of trafficking away, despite their rights to these benefits. I thus learned just how important it is for HOPE and similar organizations to thoroughly inform the clients of their rights, such as those accorded by TCVAP, in order for them to advocate for themselves, as well as the value of accompanying such calls regarding with governmental entities regarding these rights, if the client so desires. Being undocumented also presents obstacles to employment, which is key to self-sufficiency, and even employment development services, which often require documentation, and themselves further the risk of the exploitation of their immigration status by employers. Even survivors who have T-visas, but have not yet received their social security, face obstacles similar to those affecting their undocumented counterparts. For instance, a client in this situation’s first application for FAFSA was rejected on the grounds of their not providing a SSN, despite being an eligible non-citizen by virtue of their T-visa, and following the protocol for eligible non-citizens applying without a SSN.

4) Trafficking Within Communities

Although immigration and human trafficking intersect, and perpetrators of human trafficking often belong to transnational networks of organized crime, a specific case,

which I cannot detail for confidentiality and safety reasons, also taught me that the perpetrators of trafficking are not always the third-party smugglers or employers which obtain the most media coverage, but can even be from a victim's social circle, such as a local church, and involve a gradual build-up of fraud and coercion. This learning experience affirmed the importance of educating the general public about human trafficking in a manner that acknowledges the issue's many faces, and not only those sensationalized by the media, to increase the awareness and identification of survivors.

VII. Post-internship Reflection

Personally, this internship has cemented the importance of intersectionality, and the impossibility of separating social issues into neat, clearly defined categories. While not all survivors of human-trafficking are Spanish-speaking Latin American undocumented immigrants, it is impossible to effectively contribute to anti-trafficking efforts in California without taking into account the overrepresentation of these identities amongst victims and survivors of human trafficking in the state, and the systemic reasons behind it. In addition, this internship has taught me the importance of acknowledging and understanding the transnational dimensions of issues such as human trafficking, further corroborating my belief that transnational issues require transnational collaborations and solutions. These reflections have inspired me to pursue opportunities with organizations whose mission and vision are built upon an understanding of both the intersections of the many social issues affecting the Latinx community, as well as of the need for transnational approaches to these issues.

These values led me to Latina Republic, where I am currently interning as a Latin American Correspondent. Latina Republic works both internationally and domestically, partnering with Latin American NGOs addressing a variety of issues, from hunger and education to gender equality and disability rights, while serving the Latinx immigrant community in the U.S. through initiatives such as their bilingual immigrant integration curricula (*Latina Republic*). In addition, Latina Republic prides itself on its research of root causes and solutions alongside their allies, and on their work to change the narrative surrounding Latin America, through the inclusion of local efforts by NGOs,

artists, activists, and community leaders to solve social problems in the region, as well as the celebration of culture, history, and national patrimony, in its advocacy (*Latina Republic*).

VII. Future Career Implications

While I am still uncertain about my future career, through my internship with Latina Republic, itself inspired by work with the IRC, I am studying a range of social issues across Latin America and the U.S., from immigrant and queer rights, to intersectional feminism and mass incarceration, and discovering a wealth of organizations and individuals in Latin America who dedicate their work to these issues. I am also exploring the world of journalistic advocacy for the first time, which combines my three passions: Latin America, working towards solving social issues, and writing. Through my in-depth exposure to a range of social issues throughout Latin America, and connections with local organizations and individuals working to solve them, I hope to refine my professional focus, while maintaining the encompassing perspective my internships have taught me.

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