



The Importance of Considering Local Context When Attempting to Address Human Trafficking: A Qualitative Study with Service Providers and Advocates in Hawai'i

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Keywords: Human Trafficking, Sex Trafficking, Labor Trafficking, Hawai'i, Immigration, Qualitative Analysis, Public Policy

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Recommended Citation: Gleason, K.D. Baker, C., Carangan, A., Espinueva, J., Herrera-Mendoza, A., Lukacinsky, D., Remis, A. (2016). The Importance of Considering Local Context When Attempting to Address Human Trafficking: A Qualitative Study with Service Providers and Advocates in Hawai'i. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 7(3), pages 1-13. Retrieved Day/Month/Year, from (<http://www.gjcpp.org/>).

The Importance of Considering Local Context When Attempting to Address Human Trafficking: A Qualitative Study with Service Providers and Advocates in Hawai'i

Abstract

This study explores how challenges to addressing human trafficking are shaped by the local context in the U.S. State of Hawai'i. Human trafficking consists of a variety of practices (e.g., sex trafficking and labor trafficking) and potential victims groups (men, women, and children of both international and domestic origin), all of which occur in Hawai'i. In order to explore the local context of trafficking in Hawai'i, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with service providers and advocates ($N = 13$) from three islands (O'ahu = 6; Maui = 3; Hawai'i = 4). Analyses of these interviews found that participants listed a number of challenges that were specific to the context of Hawai'i. Challenges related to the unique local geography, cultural diversity, and sociocultural context, all of which may shape local practices and discourses related to human trafficking, are discussed.

Introduction

Human trafficking is an issue of national importance, but is also an issue that touches communities at the local level. This study sought to examine the local context of human trafficking in Hawai'i from the perspective of service providers and advocates. Specifically, this study focuses on the unique challenges these stakeholders face in their efforts to address trafficking in the state. In the U.S., the last decade has seen the development of fairly comprehensive trafficking policy and interventions (Brennan, 2010; DeStefano, 2007; Potocky, 2010b); however, examining how these policies and interventions take shape within the local context is also important. One-size-fits-all approaches to human trafficking are not likely to account for local contextual variation. Understanding the local context can better ensure that efforts to address trafficking are sensitive to the situational needs of different communities.

Literature Review

While practices of forced labor and forced prostitution are certainly not new, at the end of the 20th century these phenomena began to generate a new level of collective international concern, particularly regarding

the ways they reflected the growing globalization of the world economy. Migrants from developing countries sought access to job opportunities in more prosperous regions, and immigration policies tightened. This created new routes of irregular migration and a population of vulnerable migrants, some of whom began to fall prey to situations of forced labor or forced prostitution (Caraway, 2005). Additionally, the demand for cheaper products in developed countries, coupled with the move of corporate manufacturing overseas led to the flourishing of forced labor practices in some developing countries being used to manufacture products for these multinational companies (Bales, 2004). Perhaps in order to reflect this growing global character, in the 1990s advocates increasingly began giving these forced labor and forced prostitution practices the label of "human trafficking" (DeStefano, 2007).

The term "human trafficking" can be confusing and covers a collection of phenomena that are at best loosely related. In the U.S., people can be trafficked in situations of forced labor or they can be trafficked in the sex industry (Brennan, 2008). There are populations of both international victims of

trafficking (non-citizens) and U.S. citizens who have been “domestically trafficked,” most of whom are women and girls who have been involved in the sex industry (DeStefano, 2007).¹ Currently, the major U.S. policy document defining human trafficking for legal purposes (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, 2000) considers any commercial sex act involving an individual under the age of 18 to be sex trafficking. This particular policy has produced a large group of young “domestic” trafficking survivors who may never have left their hometown. Thus, the term “trafficking” can be confusing and problematic because it covers a wide range of activities (sex or labor) and a wide range of populations who may be vulnerable to exploitation (e.g., immigrant laborers, immigrant women and children, U.S. citizens in the sex industry, and homeless and runaway youth), all of which are present in the context of Hawai‘i.

Given this variability, it may be misleading to refer to trafficked persons as a single “population.” Research to date seems to reveal that, in fact, trafficking cases have been extremely idiosyncratic (e.g., Bales & Lize, 2005; Brennan, 2005). Trafficked persons and their traffickers have been demographically diverse in age, ethnicity, source country, and education. The ways traffickers have exploited their victims have also been extremely diverse, ranging from large groups of trafficked persons being forced into prostitution, panhandling, or factory or agricultural work to one or two trafficked persons being used as domestic workers or restaurant staff (Bales & Lize, 2005). In Hawai‘i, one of the first trafficking cases to gain attention was a Tongan pig farmer who exploited a handful of fellow

Tongans to work on his pig farm and for his landscaping business (Bales & Soodalter, 2009).

This variability limits the kinds of research that can be conducted, as often generalizability is illusive. Brennan (2005) concludes that researchers can draw some “general portraits” based on these diverse cases of trafficking, but that “indeed, some trafficking cases are so vastly different from one another that it may not be instructive to draw many connections among them” (p. 39). Gozdziaik and Collett (2005) noted that often because of the diversity and relative scarcity of trafficking cases, researchers are forced to choose between “an in-depth study of a particular geographic region” and “a more scattered approach.” In the case of the former, it is more difficult to draw generalizable conclusions; in the case of the latter, the diversity of detail and context may be lost.

To date, much of what has been written about human trafficking in the U.S. has examined it at the national level and has been based on “official” cases that have been documented by the courts or in newspaper articles (Bales & Soodalter, 2009; Gozdziaik & Collett, 2005; Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005). Many of these early studies were aimed at exploring the characteristics of trafficking, its victims, and its perpetrators (e.g., Clawson, Small, Go, & Myles, 2003; Richard, 1999). Understanding the needs of trafficking victims and how to meet those needs has been a strong focus throughout research efforts (e.g., Aron, Zweig, & Newmark, 2006; Clawson et al., 2003; Coonan, 2004), as has examining the effectiveness of policy (e.g., Bales & Lize, 2005) and programmatic approaches (Potocky, 2010a) to addressing trafficking. Much of this research has documented a range of challenges to addressing human trafficking that seem fairly consistent across different sites in the U.S., including challenges related to finding appropriate housing for victims (Clawson et al., 2003), challenges related to developing collaborative

¹ However, there have also been some cases of domestic labor trafficking. For example, Bales and Soodalter (2009) and DeStefano (2007) both describe a particular case in which African American homeless men were exploited in a forced labor situation.

relationships between services providers and law enforcement (Bales & Lize, 2005), and challenges related to locating victims of trafficking (Clawson & Dutch, 2008), among others.

To provide a more in-depth and contextualized perspective, this study examined challenges related to addressing human trafficking in Hawai'i, with a focus on those challenges that might be unique to or magnified in the local context. The purpose is to illustrate the importance of considering the historical, geographical, and cultural context in which human trafficking exists and to bring this consideration to bear when implementing policies and practices designed to address the issue. What this kind of contextualized approach sacrifices in terms of generalizability, it makes up for in being able to identify areas on which local advocates and policymakers can focus their limited resources to address the reality of the challenges they face in their particular community.

Human Trafficking in Hawai'i

Hawai'i's geography, the presence of several high profile trafficking cases, and its unique sociohistorical context make the state particularly interesting with regard to how local context may shape human trafficking. Hawai'i is geographically isolated from the mainland of the U.S. by thousands of miles of ocean. Despite its geographical remoteness, Hawai'i is not immune to the effects of human trafficking, and in fact, may possess some characteristics that make it particularly susceptible to trafficking. In the literature on human trafficking there often appears a list of regional characteristics thought to create increased risk for trafficking, including: tourist areas, areas with military bases, areas with large immigrant communities, border areas, major ports of entry, and areas conducive to interstate travel (Clawson et al., 2003; Richard, 1999). As Hawai'i meets several of these characteristics, most notably tourism, military bases, and large immigrant

communities, it could be considered a "hot spot" for trafficking.

Indeed, Hawai'i has had a number of high profile human trafficking cases in the last 10 to 15 years. In addition to the case involving the labor exploitation of Tongan workers on the Waianae Coast in 2003 (mentioned earlier; Bales & Soodalter, 2009), local service providers also provided assistance to some of the victims, mostly Chinese and Vietnamese women, of a very large 2001 labor trafficking case involving an American Samoa garment factory (Bales & Lize, 2005). Most recently, in two separate labor trafficking cases, Aloun Farms (2009) and Global Horizons (2010) were accused of exploiting Thai and Vietnamese agricultural laborers on Hawai'i farms. The Global Horizons case was touted to be the largest labor trafficking case in U.S. history (The Associated Press, 2012). However, charges were dismissed in both cases (Niesse, 2011; The Associated Press, 2012).

In addition to several recent incidents of potential human trafficking in Hawai'i, a few aspects of the local sociohistorical context are worthy of note. Hawai'i, while having the full status of statehood since 1959, has had a complex history of colonization and exploitation. Of specific relevance to human trafficking is the islands' plantation era, in which tens of thousands of immigrant laborers were brought from Japan, China, Korea, the Philippines, Portugal, and other places to work on sugar plantations. Much of Hawai'i's current population is descended from members of this immigrant workforce who eventually settled and prospered in the islands. However, Merry (1999), in analyzing historical legal documents from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, found that during this plantation era time immigrant and migrant workers often experienced problems with "low pay, grim working and living conditions, brutal treatment by lunas (overseers), and quasi-slave contract labor systems [that] drove each group of

immigrants out of the plantations as quickly as possible” (Merry, 1999, p.125). Her analysis of these legal documents also highlighted the subtle ways the colonial legal system acted to uphold the power and rights of landowners at the expense of the various immigrant labor forces. Thus, instances existed in the state’s recent past of what might now be classified as labor trafficking. This is not to say all migrant labor practices during the plantation era of Hawai‘i’s history were instances of human trafficking, or even that all were inherently exploitative, but the islands have a complicated history related to migrant labor. This complicated past provides a backdrop for and likely influences today’s conception of human trafficking in the islands. It is helpful to keep this history in mind when considering the preconceptions different stakeholders may bring to their discussions of human trafficking. Given this history, it is unlikely that national discourse and policy related to human trafficking arrived in Hawai‘i to find it a blank slate.

Methods

This study examined the challenges of addressing human trafficking at the local level in Hawai‘i by conducting qualitative interviews with local service providers and advocates. Local service providers were chosen because they have a more sophisticated understanding of trafficking than the public and are influential stakeholders with regard to how local human trafficking policy is implemented.

Participants

Local service providers ($N = 13$) were interviewed from three different islands in the state (O‘ahu = 6; Maui = 3; Hawai‘i = 4). Interviews were conducted in person from March to September of 2013 and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants included advocates ($n = 2$) and service providers who have helped or are likely to help human trafficking victims with legal services ($n = 6$) or social services ($n = 5$).

Participants who had experience with or knowledge related to both sex trafficking and labor trafficking were recruited for the project (sex = 5, labor = 5, both = 3). The majority of the participants were women ($n = 10$).

There was a wide range in the participants’ years of experience with human trafficking related issues. Those on neighbor islands (Hawai‘i and Maui islands) had little direct experience with human trafficking because the relatively few trafficking victims identified on those islands were typically referred to O‘ahu for help. Many of these individuals did have several years of experience in related areas, such as domestic violence or immigration relief services, but were fairly new to human trafficking issues. Several participants, mostly located on O‘ahu, had been involved with human trafficking issues since shortly after the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) was enacted in 2000.

Measures

Participants’ thoughts about human trafficking in the islands were solicited using semi-structured qualitative interviews. Generally, the questions focused on how participants’ work in the area of human trafficking has changed over the years and their perspectives on what could improve their work in this area. Several initial questions gathered background and contextual information, including “In what area of human trafficking do you have experience working?” and “How long have you been involved with human trafficking issues?” These initial questions were generally followed by questions asking participants about the challenges they face in their work with regard to human trafficking. Follow-up probes related to challenges included questions about challenges specific to Hawai‘i or to neighbor islands if these issues were not spontaneously mentioned. Participants were also asked a series of questions exploring their ideas about how to

best help victims of human trafficking, how to best prevent human trafficking from occurring in the islands, and what changes they have seen over the years in how human trafficking is addressed in the state.

Analysis

Each interview was examined using phenomenological qualitative analysis techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). First, the interview content was grouped into four major *a priori* categories. These categories were based on the question structure of the interviews:

- 1) Participant opinions about the best way to help human trafficking victims (Helping)
- 2) Challenges to addressing human trafficking in Hawai'i (Challenges)
- 3) Participant opinions about the best way to prevent human trafficking (Prevention)
- 4) Changes in how human trafficking has been addressed in Hawai'i (Changes)

After this initial coding according to broad interview question topics, each of the four major categories (Helping, Challenges, Prevention, and Changes) was analyzed using NVivo software to categorize the interview content into *in situ* themes and subthemes to systematically explore interviewee responses to the interview questions. This occurred in an iterative process; provisional themes and subthemes were developed and then refined as more data were analyzed. To ensure each theme and subtheme accurately reflected the content provided by participants to the maximum extent possible, each was re-examined, discarded, combined, or refined at multiple stages during the analysis process. Of the four main *a priori* categories, the Challenges category was the most robust, yielding multiple themes and subthemes. For this article, we have chosen to focus on understanding the specific challenges Hawai'i faces in addressing human trafficking (for a

report detailing the findings on the full study, see Gleason, 2015).

Results

Among a list of other challenges mentioned in the interviews, many of which have been cited in the literature (e.g., Brennan, 2010; Clawson et al., 2003), including difficulties maintaining continuous funding, lack of adequate emergency and long-term housing options, or issues related to effectively identifying victims, participants discussed three main challenge areas they thought were particular to the local context of Hawai'i: challenges of geography ($n = 10$), challenges of cultural diversity ($n = 7$), and challenges related to the sociocultural context of Hawai'i ($n = 7$).

Theme 1: Challenges of Geography

Hawai'i is a chain of volcanic islands in the Central Pacific, about 2,500 miles of ocean away from California. Seven of these islands are inhabited and are organized into five counties (the City and County of Honolulu, Maui County, Hawai'i County, Kauai County, and Kalawao County). Many of the participants (10/13) discussed Hawai'i's geographical context as presenting particular difficulties for trafficked persons and those attempting to help them. The fact that Hawai'i is a geographically remote set of islands creates a situation where: 1) patterns of both sex and labor trafficking are different from those in much of the U.S.; 2) trafficked persons and vulnerable populations are often isolated on a particular island; and 3) statewide collaboration is much more difficult, resulting in uneven policy implementation.

Differing Patterns. Because of its unique geography, several participants perceived the patterns of trafficking in Hawai'i to be very different from those on the mainland. One participant in particular noted the importance of considering how trafficking in Hawai'i may be different from many states on the mainland:

And we've found out also that trafficking differs between each cultural group, with labor or sex trafficking, and also geographically in the United States. What we've seen here does not join with sometimes what happens in the mainland United States. It's different. And I think it's taught us to look at each case on a case by case basis then. And, you know, the so-called experts on the mainland may not be so much experts here because it's significantly different...I know when like mainland trainers come, law enforcement here doesn't seem very receptive to what's being taught because it's not what they see here.

This participant discussed the fact that whereas on the mainland many migrant workers come to the U.S. across the Mexican or Canadian borders, in Hawai'i, workers must fly in by airplane on either travel or agricultural visas. Some then become undocumented by overstaying their visas, and many feel tied to the employers who sponsored their entry. Thus, in Hawai'i, labor trafficking victims may fall prey to abuses in terms of how they were recruited to come work in the U.S., how they are treated by employers once they arrive, or whether they are coerced by threats related to confiscating documents or reporting lapsed immigration status. This kind of exploitation can be very subtle and is often difficult to recognize.

Additionally, sex trafficking in the islands may be different from other locations in that it is thought to involve the movement of victims between islands and between Hawai'i and the mainland of the United States. When these victims are moved off island, it poses a special challenge in that it effectively separates, often by thousands of miles, victims from their families and those who might try to help them. At least one participant also discussed the problem of sex tourism in the state. That Hawai'i's economy

is largely centered on tourism may make the state particularly vulnerable to sex tourism, which is thought to create a greater prevalence of sex trafficking. The passage above demonstrates the need to consider these local understandings of and experiences with human trafficking. If this kind of contextualized understanding is not demonstrated, local stakeholders may be less receptive to outside training, advice, interventions, and policy.

"Not an easy place to get away." In addition to the potential for differing patterns of trafficking in Hawai'i, the experiences of trafficked and formerly trafficked persons in the islands is likely also impacted by the geographical context of the state. One major concern among interviewees was that in Hawai'i, in order to travel between islands, counties, or to leave the state, individuals must possess valid identification to pass through airport security. As many trafficked and formerly trafficked persons are undocumented immigrants or have lost their documents while being trafficked, they are vulnerable to being stranded on an island without the ability to leave. Often the communities on these islands are small, and formerly trafficked individuals may have little opportunity to distance themselves, either physically or socially, from their traffickers. The limited ability of some immigrant workers in Hawai'i to leave the community in which they experienced exploitative practices is certainly an important challenge to consider when attempting to address human trafficking in the state. Additionally, in both the areas of sex and labor trafficking, achieving post-trafficking anonymity in these small communities can be difficult for formerly trafficked persons. For example, according to one participant:

I can say specific to Hawai'i, it's an island. So trying to have safe houses with confidential locations is hard to manage. It's hard for the survivors when they're trying to get back on

their feet to be able to go anywhere without running into a customer or a pimp...It's hard to separate yourself from it because it is such a small community here.

This lack of anonymity can have serious consequences for the livelihood of formerly trafficked persons:

And then the other problem is working. Once they did get their papers, like, they're certified and they got to go get their employment authorization, a lot of the farmers that could employ them are very leery about hiring former trafficking victims. 'Cause they weren't sure whether- they didn't wanna get caught in being considered a trafficking operation. So we had a hard time sometimes re-employing them.

Uneven Policy Implementation. Finally, as an island chain, Hawai'i faces unique challenges related to the distribution of resources among different islands. The "neighbor islands" of Hawai'i (Hawai'i, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Moloka'i, and Ni'ihau) are very different contexts compared the City and County of Honolulu (located on the island of O'ahu), the main hub of state policy and resources. The neighbor islands are relatively isolated rural communities, and much of the expertise, funding, service programs, and other infrastructure related to addressing human trafficking are located on O'ahu. Almost all of the participants from the neighbor islands (Maui and Hawai'i islands) cited lack of resources as a big challenge facing those who would like to address human trafficking on neighbor islands. Coordinating statewide attempts to address human trafficking has proven difficult because travel between islands requires airplane flights and is costly, time-consuming, and tedious. This often results in an uneven distribution of resources and knowledge - centered on O'ahu - and leaves the rural neighbor island communities

relatively isolated from the state human trafficking support and infrastructure systems.

This uneven distribution of resources and knowledge has perhaps contributed to a widespread misconception that human trafficking does not exist in the state. While 11 of the 13 participants described the myth of "it doesn't happen here" as a challenge to addressing human trafficking, this challenge seemed particularly acute on the neighbor islands. For instance, according to one participant:

So I think other counties, I think if we send our prosecutor over and he says, "We don't have this problem on [Neighbor Island X]," then we don't get any information coming back, right? [INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. So you think at some level there's an idea that there's not that much human trafficking here?] On [Neighbor Island X] and other neighbor islands too.

Theme 2: Challenges of Cultural Diversity

Another state-specific challenge is that the ethnic make-up of Hawai'i's immigrant and migrant labor population is more diverse than the typical mainland state. Squarely located in the middle of the Pacific, Hawai'i is as likely to receive immigrant and migrant workers from Mexico, Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Federated States of Micronesia, or other Pacific Islands. The Federated States of Micronesia alone, which has an agreement with the U.S. government that enables its citizens to have unrestricted travel and residency in the states, is a collection of many small island cultures with several different languages. Altogether, this diversity makes it difficult for service providers to access appropriate translation services, as well as for advocates to target effective outreach programs to the wide range of immigrant groups present in the islands. Furthermore, it poses a challenge to service providers, who may not be knowledgeable

about the cultural practices, norms, and understandings of all the groups they encounter. This increases the chances of misunderstandings based on culture and language differences. One participant also discussed the particular challenge of sourcing social service workers and interpreters from small ethnic communities (such as those from Micronesia) where either victims or traffickers may have some personal connection with potential interpreters:

Luckily we had a male person who spoke Thai. He learned it in the Peace Corps, and so he was a neutral person. Hawai'i is kinda small and the people know each other. And so there's a lot of stuff that people don't wanna share. So the worker can learn a lot of information. And whoever that worker is hopefully doesn't compromise confidentiality. And finding someone like that, that's kind of neutral, is very difficult.

Theme 3: Challenges Related to Sociocultural Context

Finally, about half of the participants ($n = 7$) mentioned concerns related to having less institutional support for addressing human trafficking in Hawai'i than in other states. In several instances participants discussed concerns and observations that there was a certain level of acceptance of human trafficking-related practices (such as labor abuse, prostitution, or domestic violence) within some segments of the community in Hawai'i. One participant discussed how the definition of human trafficking covers a "range of activities [that] are broad and some would be more tolerated and some less tolerated." If this is true, it is important to understand what practices may be more tolerated and why. Trafficking-related practices with a level of acceptance by some segments of the community were identified in both the areas of sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

With issues related to sex trafficking, several participants discussed the acceptance of prostitution in their communities and linked this to challenges in addressing human trafficking. For example:

But it's so normal or mainstream for men to go to the hostess bars. And I'm talking dignitaries. Like, one of the challenges that we have with that, I feel like even our politicians, our cops, our prosecutors, go to hostess bars. Now whether they participate in the 'cause the hostess bars, it's drink, you buy a girl a drink, she sits at your table, spend time together, that kind of thing. And then there's the whole behind the scenes prostitution that's going on. So some of our most, you know, high end of authority officials go to these bars and so it's really—that's we don't talk on [this island] about human trafficking.

So they try to pass legislation for that [stiffer penalties for pimps], and it's always opposed by the DA's office over there, which is, you know, just that's the weird dynamic that I was talking about. Like other [places]...on the mainland, the DAs were the ones that sponsored that legislation. Like, they wanted to be able to impose stiffer penalties. But in Hawai'i for some reason, they're the ones that oppose the legislation.

While these concerns were not present in every participant interview, a significant handful of participants did express concerns over the willingness of local authorities to address sex trafficking. Whether these impressions are completely true or not, they represent a view that those in power have an interest in ignoring or denying human trafficking and related practices.

Concerns about the acceptance of certain trafficking-related practices were also present in the area of labor trafficking, and a

few participants drew a connection between a potential acceptance of labor exploitation and the island's plantation era history:

But, my experience is that those law enforcement don't realize that at all. They think it's, especially in Hawai'i, where most of our ancestors were plantation workers. They're like, "Hey if our grandparents did it, why not?" Well, they weren't happy and they were exploited too, you know...So yeah. Um, law enforcement is not what they're cracked up to be.

They don't see the seriousness. I'm assuming it's the same for the labor department, that people are maybe willing to work for less money, harsh hours, harsh working, thinking, "Well, my dad did it, my grandpa did it, so therefore why am I, what gives me the right to say it's not right?"

Additionally, as Hawai'i is a relatively small community, often landowners and agricultural businesses can have prominent and powerful positions. One participant listed several large local agribusinesses and hotels rumored to have committed varying degrees of labor abuse toward their immigrant and migrant employees. Even if authorities are not directly connected to these local businesses, there seems to be some suspicion that employers may have influence over them. While not mentioned by every participant, this concern that people in authority are not adequately addressing issues of human trafficking in Hawai'i was mentioned by at least one participant on each island.

Concluding Thoughts

For service providers, advocates, and researchers interested in addressing human trafficking, systematically considering the local issues that may influence either the actual trafficking practices or the local perceptions of those practices is critically important to understanding how to best

leverage resources to help trafficked persons and prevent future trafficking. Community psychologists are perhaps uniquely situated to respond to this need for highlighting and addressing local issues and perceptions related to human trafficking. Three of our core competencies ("Competencies for Community Psychology Practice," n.d.) are particularly useful in drawing attention to the need to consider local context when attempting to address issues of human trafficking. First, a strong focus on ecological perspectives can call attention to the multiple nested settings in which human trafficking is situated, thus helping stakeholders recognize that trafficking policies are situated both within a national legislative and political context as well as within a complicated web of local perceptions, policies, and politics.

Second, community psychology's focus on socio-cultural and cross-cultural competence is useful for sensitizing researchers, practitioners, and advocates to the different ways local stakeholders, advocates, authorities, and potential victim populations might understand human trafficking. Human trafficking, as a complex and multifaceted problem, tends to be viewed differently when understood through various cultural lenses. Researchers and advocates will need to competently "bridge" these diverging viewpoints in order to address the issue. Finally, as a highly charged and often politicized issue, human trafficking advocacy and research requires the core competency of ethical and reflective practice. To effectively navigate and bridge the many different local perspectives surrounding the issue of human trafficking, community psychologists will need to be adept at recognizing their own values and viewpoints related to these issues and to reflect on how to proceed in an ethical manner.

In the case of Hawai'i, this kind of exploration has resulted in the consideration of unique challenges related to geography, cultural diversity, and sociocultural context. These

features likely shape trafficking practices (e.g., moving trafficked persons between islands) and victim experiences and needs (e.g., potential to encounter former traffickers in the community, restricted ability to travel), and thus must be taken into consideration when planning service provider responses and when implementing human trafficking policies in the state.

In the local context of Hawai'i, the participants of this study highlighted several ways the patterns of human trafficking seen in the islands were different from those seen on the mainland. Policymakers, service providers, and advocates in Hawai'i need to account for these differing patterns. In order to do this, it is critical to develop better coordination and more evenly distributed infrastructure to effectively address the problem of human trafficking across all of the islands. In particular, agricultural labor trafficking is a potential concern on several of the neighbor islands that heavily rely on farming industries (e.g., sugar, coffee, macadamia nuts). The authorities, service providers, and the general public on these islands would benefit from a more systematic attempt at disseminating training and information about human trafficking and from better coordination and communication with their counterparts on O'ahu.

Dedicating more effort and funding to develop a better coordinated interisland anti-trafficking system would have a number of benefits. First, with more support and training, neighbor island counties would be better able to locate and identify potential instances of trafficking in their rural and remote areas. Second, interisland coordination among service providers could help relocate individuals and families who have experienced trafficking or other forms of exploitation, allowing them to achieve geographical and social distance from the communities in which they were exploited. And finally, a better system of interisland coordination would facilitate the sharing of

resources and expertise related to the diverse cultural groups in the islands. For example, organizations that have cultivated ties to particular ethnic communities could be mobilized to help and support potential victims on any island in the state.

One of the most significant concerns highlighted in this study was a failure or reluctance in some parts of the community to recognize the potential for human trafficking abuses. It can be difficult to advocate for victims and enact policy when much of the general public and those in power do not perceive a problem. When human trafficking is seen by the general public as rare instances of extreme abuse, it may be difficult for them to recognize the less extreme forms of abuse that are the products of exploitative contexts conducive to human trafficking. One way to address this problem would be to expand how the public views the problem, thereby generating more support for addressing human trafficking on all islands.

Identifying, targeting, and quantifying a range of abuses that particular *vulnerable populations* face would help advocates establish convincing need for intervention or change without being limited to discussing only those who have already presented as human trafficking victims. The vulnerable groups targeted for this kind of exploration could include specific immigrant populations, runaway or juvenile justice involved teens, and women in the sex industry. For example, Zhang, Spiller, Finch, and Qin (2014) examined the prevalence of labor trafficking and other labor abuses among a vulnerable population of migrant workers in the San Diego area. In targeting a broad general population of vulnerable individuals, they were able to document the presence of a range of abuses, including but not limited to trafficking practices, experienced by these individuals. A similar approach to documentation in Hawai'i, gathering information from both immigrant groups and vulnerable youth or women presenting at

legal and social service agencies, could provide numerical data related to the exploitation these groups experience (trafficking and otherwise). This kind of research would make it difficult to continue deny the presence of trafficking in the islands, making it a powerful tool in garnering more support for addressing human trafficking.

Of course, there are many barriers to addressing these issues, including limited funding for trafficking-specific personnel and services and logistical issues related to coordinating across islands, among others. It is important to acknowledge the significant difficulties faced in addressing these recommendations. They are in no way meant to minimize the great work that has already been accomplished or the rather large hurdles that would need to be overcome to enact them. Rather, the above recommendations represent suggestions for continued efforts to address human trafficking in the islands, with full acknowledgement of the effort and hard work that has already shaped trafficking services and advocacy in Hawai'i.

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