

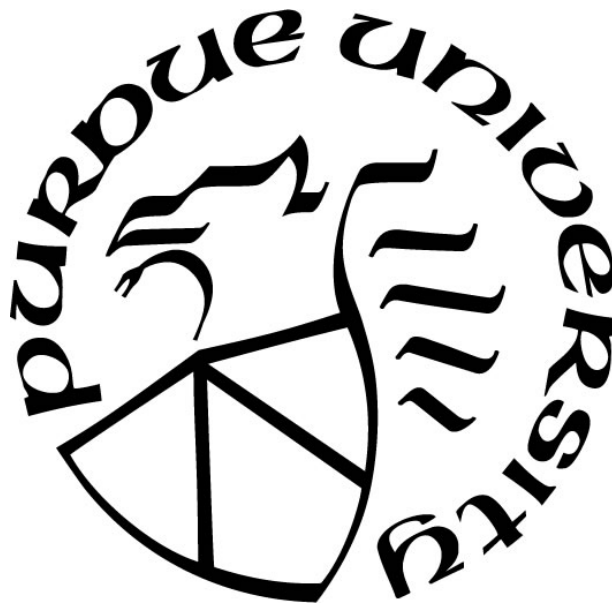
**EMPOWERMENT ‘AT WORK’:
EXAMINING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS
SERVING SURVIVORS OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

by
Danielle J. Corple

A Dissertation

*Submitted to the Faculty of Purdue University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of*

Doctor of Philosophy



Brian Lamb School of Communication
West Lafayette, Indiana
May 2019

**THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

Dr. Patrice M. Buzzanell, Chair

Brian Lamb School of Communication

Dr. Stacey M. Connaughton

Brian Lamb School of Communication

Dr. Natalie Lambert

Brian Lamb School of Communication

Dr. Kevin Stainback

Department of Sociology

Approved by:

Dr. Bart Collins

Head of the Graduate Program

To all survivors of trauma and those who labor alongside them

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I reflect on the process of writing this dissertation, I must acknowledge the overwhelming truth that God just ‘made it happen.’ I look back and feel as if I’ve been carried along on his current, and I arrived at the shore with a manuscript in my hands. Along the way, he took care of job losses, job prospects, financial anxieties, family crises, and staggering moments of grief. I am reminded of the words of one of my interview participants, “And when things looked like it was not gonna be resolved, He resolved it as only He can, in an excellent way.”

God made it happen through the efforts and support of many, many people. While there are several I am especially indebted to, I am reminded of another interviewee who referred to “the human wall of community” as the key to emotional healing. Perhaps it’s the key to dissertating as well. I am especially indebted to my advisor, Patrice Buzzanell, for her wisdom, sacrifice, frankness, and unflappability—everything I needed throughout this process. Ever since I waltzed into your office five years ago, with no knowledge of your prestige or busyness, you’ve been committed to my professional, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Thank you for giving me a unique gift—knowing that someone is always in your corner. This knowledge alone has done so much to buoy me through both degrees.

I am also deeply grateful for my other faculty mentors and committee members. Cheryl Cooky, while we never thought our research project would take over four years, I am so thankful for how that time has nurtured our relationship. I am deeply grateful for your generosity, hospitality, refreshing bluntness, and excellent taste in wine. Carla Zoltowski, what a joy it has been to work for you. You model what it means to be ‘wholehearted.’ You have shown me God’s kindness through your compassion and support over a challenging few years. Every time I eat an apple fritter or see a Brene Brown book, I think of you. Stacey Connaughton, I cannot

thank you enough for all the ways you have mentored me and ‘stood in the gap’ when I needed it. Kevin Stainback and Natalie Lambert, I am so thankful for your teaching and your thoughtful feedback on my work and my dissertation manuscript.

Jasmine Linabary, you get your own paragraph. My informal advisor, my close, close friend. You embody what it means to care equally about research, teaching, and service—somehow pioneering new and deeply meaningful ways to do all of them. Your ability to see the best in academia has kept my quickly-cynical heart afloat and encouraged through days of disillusionment and frustration. Your willingness to stop everything and lend your library-esque mind to my work is the only way I’ve completed this dissertation—and so many other projects before it. Thank you for everything.

To the tribe who forms the rest of my human wall of community—my dissertation writing group, Motivation Militia, small group, friends, and family—I am indebted to you all. Meghana Rawat, your companionship, cooking, and constant encouragement have been such a joy and some of the best medicine for the difficulties of this past year. Jess Pauly, thank you for modeling kindness above everything and for your ever-readiness to process issues of faith and work. Meg Knigga, I cannot begin to articulate my gratitude for you, for what God has done in our friendship to the praise of his glory. I am so thankful for how you have taken an interest in this project, but most importantly how you have always taken an interest in my heart, my spiritual wellbeing, and my love of pastries.

To my husband, whose unwavering support has made this dissertation and degree a reality, thank you. Thank you for always waking up early to work next to me when you could have kept sleeping. Thank you for taking a relentless interest in my dissertation, giving such valuable and grounded feedback on my ideas. Thank you for supporting my desire to purchase an

8-foot white board to sketch out these ideas—as well as host a party to celebrate its installation in our living room. More importantly, thank you for helping me push toward what matters most—not work, not progress, not publications, not opportunities, not even ‘my potential’—but people. Your desire to love and serve others has helped anchor me during a season where I’ve been tempted to turn inward, isolated, and selfishly interested in my own work. Because of your faithfulness in loving God, loving me, and loving other people, we can look back at the last five years and see how God has multiplied our time and resources, and created a truly rich and beautiful time in Lafayette together.

For my parents, I’m grateful beyond words. You have poured your lives out for this work. You have raised me in a family culture of social justice and self-sacrifice for others. Thank you for modeling how to unite your heart *and* your mind in your ministry. Thank you for supporting me, praying for me, and also choosing to love our little Lafayette world.

Finally, thank you, survivors, for sharing your stories. May we all continue to listen and learn from you. Thank you to all of my participants who labor in the difficult but important work of recovery, healing, and restoration. May God grow and multiply your efforts.

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ABSTRACT

Author: Corple, Danielle, J. PhD

Institution: Purdue University

Degree Received: May 2019

Title: Empowerment 'at Work': Examining Economic Empowerment in Organizations Serving Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

Committee Chair: Patrice M. Buzzanell

Despite assumptions of sex trafficking as a form of 'international smuggling,' commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) is on the rise in the United States. Increasing numbers of nonprofit organizations are emerging to provide holistic services to CSE survivors, including medical care, housing, psychological treatment, education opportunities, life skills training, and more. However, few provide the vocational training and employment experience necessary for women survivors to sustain financial independence long-term. As a result, increasing numbers of nonprofits in this sector have begun social enterprises, training and employing survivors in their homegrown businesses as a form of 'economic empowerment.' The prospect of commercial revenue is also an attractive possibility for traditional, donor-based nonprofit organizations. Thus, while organizations seek to provide 'economic empowerment' opportunities for survivors, developing alternative revenue streams may be a way of economically empowering the organizations themselves.

Little is known about effective programs for survivors of CSE, let alone those that offer vocational training and employment opportunities. Furthermore, research on nonprofit commercialization shows mixed results; some studies link commercialization to mission 'drift,' and others highlight the possibilities of social enterprise to strengthen and further the organization's mission. Thus, this project examines the discursive-material construction of individual and organizational economic empowerment at nonprofits that serve survivors of CSE.

By combining multiple qualitative methods, this study examines 18 organizations that both serve CSE survivors and engage in (or plan to engage in) business activities. In doing so, this project also explicates what tensions emerge in these processes, and how organizational members frame and respond to them.

The findings reveal the ways in which organizational and individual organizational economic empowerment is discursively-materially constituted. By defining organizational economic empowerment as “the discursive-material processes by which organizations mobilize resources to meet their mission,” this study first discusses the construction of “mission,” arguing that CSE organizations position the “market as the mission but so much more.” This project then discusses resource mobilization, arguing that CSE organizations discursively-materially leverage their organizational hybridity to mobilize resources to achieve their social missions. The findings also explicate individual economic empowerment, arguing that it has three primary components: (re)gaining agency over one’s body and finances, engaging in meaningful work, and sustaining long-term economic independence. This study also examines the tensions that emerge from constructions of both individual and organizational economic empowerment, as well as how organizational members frame the tensions and respond to them.

This study also contributes to theorizing of organizational and individual empowerment, specifically the role of materiality, embodiment, and contradictions in constructing empowerment. Its practical contributions include strategies for nonprofits seeking to develop enterprises, as well nonprofits providing services to CSE survivors. In sum, this study adds knowledge and insight to an area where scant information exists—how nonprofits operate businesses to offer economic opportunity to survivors of economic exploitation.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Sex trafficking is the second fastest growing branch of organized crime in the United States. Legally, it refers to the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons” using “force, fraud, or coercion” for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation (UNODC, 2004, p. 42). Despite assumptions of trafficking as a form of human smuggling, much trafficking occurs without transporting individuals across country borders. In fact, increasing numbers of cities in the United States are recognizing the rise of commercial sexual exploitation in their own communities, wherein family, partners, pimps,¹ or friends profit from the forced sex work of others (e.g., Ivanson, 2017).

In response, increasing numbers of nonprofit organizations are providing services to survivors of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) (Macy & Johns, 2011; Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2015). These CSE aftercare organizations provide housing, meals, medical treatment, mental health care, twelve-step programs, among many other therapies and services. However, few organizations address the economic vulnerability that contributes to survivors’ exploitation in the first place (Wilson, Critelli, & Rittner, 2015). When survivors exit CSE programs without vocational training or employment experience, the “lack of options and poverty are identified as causing relapse into CSE” (Wilson et al., 2015, p. 75).

¹ Pimps, or traffickers, are those who profit financially from the prostitution of another person. However, these terms typically refer to those who do so as a primary source of income and in a strategic and organized fashion. Kennedy et al. (2007), in their study on the recruitment techniques of pimps, cite the legal definition of pimp as “someone who obtains customers for a prostitute,” yet they point out that “The reality of most pimps, however, is that they use manipulation, threats, and violence to keep prostitutes from leaving the trade and live entirely off the women they recruit” (p. 5).

As a result, a new crop of CSE nonprofits is emerging. These hybrid organizations offer wraparound services for survivors of CSE *and* operate businesses that facilitate the ‘economic empowerment’ of survivors through vocational training and employment opportunities. Some of these organizations originated as traditional residential² programs who developed cottage industries to support the economic empowerment of CSE survivors. Others are workforce development social enterprises that focus on training and employing women while offering wrap-around services to support their overall healing and reintegration into the community.

Not only does developing a social enterprise offer benefits to survivors, but it offers an attractive potential revenue stream for these nonprofits, especially as CSE organizations attempt to provide high-overhead, holistic services in a precarious nonprofit funding environment. For example, Anne’s House, a traditional, donor-based nonprofit supporting sexually exploited girls and young women, closed its doors in January 2018 as part of a “larger re-evaluation of the way donor dollars are spent” (Schoenberg, 2018). A member of the organization’s advisory council cited the death of three “longtime donors” and the inability of the director to fundraise due to a serious illness (Schoenberg, 2018). The closure of Anne’s House highlights the alarming consequences for nonprofits who cannot raise enough funds to support their costly services (e.g., Parker, 2017). As a result, many CSE organizations are drawn to the prospect of commercial revenue streams that come from social enterprises. Thus, while these nonprofits seek to

² Services for survivors of CSE vary, especially as adult victims are often referred to services designed for other forms of gender-based violence (e.g., domestic violence shelters) (Roe-Sepowitz & Hickie, 2017). However, Macy and Johns’ (2011) typology of ‘aftercare’ services for domestic minor survivors of CSE mirrors the service delivery models of many adult survivor organizations. Generally, these services address: immediate needs, such as “basic necessities (e.g., food, water)” and “secure, safe shelter and housing”; ongoing needs, such as “physical health care, mental health care, legal and immigration advocacy, substance abuse services”; and long-term needs, such as “job and life skills training” (Twigg, 2017, p. 261).

economically empower survivors of trafficking and prostitution, they may also seek their own organizational economic empowerment through commercialization practices.

Thus, examining economic empowerment at both the individual and organizational level is an urgent need. Little research exists on effective therapies or programs for survivors of CSE (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014; Gerassi, 2017), let alone ‘economic empowerment’ initiatives tied to the organization’s social enterprise. Furthermore, not only have few studies examined the commercialization of CSE organizations, research on the impact of nonprofit commercialization in general shows mixed results. Some studies indicate that nonprofit business practices increase opportunity for organizational growth and sustainability; others identify evidence of ‘mission drift’ (Maier, Myer, & Steinbereithner, 2016), the phenomenon in which organizations begin “losing sight of their social missions in their efforts to generate revenue” (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014, p. 82). Although this debate about commercialization has become the “crucial question” for nonprofit management studies (Maier et al., 2016, p. 65), the field remains “characterized by polarized and inconclusive findings,” indicating the importance of further research, especially in the context of nonprofit/social enterprise organizations employing survivors who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation (p. 79).

Through a multi-method qualitative analysis of several CSE organizations, this project explicates the concept of economic empowerment at multiple levels of organizing. In doing so, this project contests current conceptualizations of organizational empowerment in communication research, theorizing how nonprofit organizational empowerment is constituted through material-discursive tensional processes. By taking a specifically feminist new materialist approach, it extends current communicative understandings of empowerment by analyzing the entanglement of discourse with the embodied and material nature of individual and

organizational (economic) empowerment. Finally, this project aims to provide useful knowledge for organizations and individuals serving survivors of gender-based violence, outlining organizational processes, tensions, and responses to these tensions by organizations across the traditional nonprofit/social enterprise continuum. Thus, this project has implications for both organizational communication scholars as well as practitioners, following calls from organizational scholars to make their work more useful for human service organizations (Lewis, 2012).

Economic Empowerment in Nonprofit Organizations

Traditional conceptualizations of organizational empowerment define it as processes and structures that facilitate the empowerment of organizational members, such as flatter organizational hierarchies or policies that promote participatory decision-making among employees (e.g., Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Stohl & Cheney, 2001). However, this definition positions organizational empowerment as the empowerment of an individual within an organizational context, rather than the empowerment of the organizing collectivity itself (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). As individual empowerment is only one component of organizational empowerment, existing studies of organizational empowerment lack a broader, more holistic understanding of how the *organization* experiences or pursues its own empowerment.

More specifically, this study examines how nonprofit organizations pursue economic empowerment through commercialization efforts. Existing research on the commercialization of service-provision nonprofits is fragmented and contradictory (Maier et al., 2016). Not only do some scholars claim that commercialization does not taint the mission of the nonprofit (Froelich, 1999), others say that it can significantly promote the larger goals of the organization (Young,

1998). For example, in the case of fair-trade organizations, by paying producers a fair price, the organization uses commercialization to meet their mission of creating more equitable trade relationships with individuals in developing countries (Webb, 2007). However, others argue that commercialization of services can lead to mission drift, and/or erase an emphasis on community building, advocacy, or structural and cultural change (Baines, Cunningham, & Fraser, 2011; Keevers, Treleaven, Sykes, & Darcy, 2012). For example, Frumkin and Andre-Clark (2000) discuss how a homeless shelter began a business to train and employ jobless clients, but after meeting challenges employing residents with severe needs, the organization shifted its focus to those considered more ‘employable.’

Given the confusion surrounding the impacts of nonprofit commercialization—and that many critical analyses are theoretical in nature—scholars have called for further empirical research on the commercialization of nonprofit organizations (Maier et al., 2016). As these impacts are likely intensified for nonprofits who involve those they serve in their business practices, tie ‘economic empowerment’ to their business models, and work with individuals who have been previously economically exploited, these conditions make for an important site for examining commercialization processes and implications, particularly as they appear to be growing in organizations that support survivors of CSE.

Economic Empowerment for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

Economic empowerment is a growing interest among those who research and provide services for survivors of gender-based violence (Renzetti, Follingstad, & Fleet, 2014).

Researchers have noted the importance of financially empowering survivors of CSE specifically, as low socioeconomic status and poverty make women particularly vulnerable to exploitation and re-exploitation (Gerassi, 2017). Psychologists and social workers are calling for holistic

therapy models that provide financial training and resources to survivors (Kaufman & Crawford, 2011; Macy & Johns, 2011; Wirsing, 2012). Although economic empowerment programs have been successful with international CSE survivors (e.g., Wilson, Critelli, & Rittner, 2015) and appear to hold promise for U.S. domestic abuse survivors (e.g., Renzetti, Follingstad, & Fleet, 2014; Renzetti, 2017), little to no studies examine economic empowerment in CSE organizations, let alone those that are connected to the business structures of the organization. Among concerns of market encroachment on the missions and operations of nonprofits, economic empowerment for survivors of CSE warrants even further attention.

Methods

This project takes a feminist new materialist (e.g., Barad, 2003) approach to examining the discursive-material construction of economic empowerment at the organizational and individual level. In doing so, my methodology draws on multiple epistemological traditions (Van der Tuin, 2009), emphasizes complexity and contradiction, the entanglement of materiality-discourse, and researcher moral responsibility. More specifically, I combine the ethnographic methods of in-depth interviews, organizational text analysis, and observations to analyze 18 organizations that both serve CSE survivors and engage in (or plan to engage in) business activities. The two largest organizations are ethnographic case studies, in which I observed organizational events, interviewed multiple organizational members, and analyzed organizational documents. For the remaining 16 organizations, I interviewed members of their leadership teams and analyzed publicly available organizational documents. Combining these qualitative methods is well-suited to the ‘thick description’ necessary for explicating the layers of meaning of economic empowerment and its processes and outcomes. Furthermore, an ethnographic approach facilitates the analysis of both discourse and materiality through its emphasis on embodied

experience (Conquergood, 1991) and analysis of sensory data, as well as its focus on the discursive sense-making of local actors and textual analysis (Csordas, 1999). As communication researchers conceptualize empowerment as primarily discursive (e.g., Papa et al., 2000a; Papa, Singhal, & Papa, 2006), analyzing both discourse and materiality offers a fuller picture of economic empowerment at multiple levels of organizing.

Contributions

This project makes several theoretical contributions. First, as conceptualizations of empowerment within communication privilege its discursive elements, this project extends understandings of the material and embodied nature of empowerment, and shines a spotlight on the importance of examining materiality in communication research due to the deeply embodied nature of trauma and the material-economic preconditions for commercial sexual exploitation. Similarly, this project challenges existing communicative theorizing of nonprofits, highlighting the role of materiality in constructing nonprofit communicative phenomena, particularly the ‘market-mission’ tension.

Third, this project challenges existing conceptualizations of organizational empowerment within communication research, and adopts a communicative approach to examining organizational (economic) empowerment. In doing so, it responds to calls from communication scholars to make nonprofit organizations the focus of inquiry rather than merely the context (Kirby & Koschmann, 2012; Lewis, 2005), and to develop new theorizing related to nonprofit organizations. Furthermore, by examining tensions within economic empowerment at multiple levels of organizing, it creates a more holistic and complex portrait of economic empowerment and its potentials and constraints. Doing so responds to recent calls from communication scholars to more thoroughly conceptualize empowerment as multi-faceted and “crystalline “(Dykstra-

DeVette & Canary, 2018), in order to better understand its implications, particularly for marginalized groups.

This project also makes several practical contributions. By providing information about how nonprofits seek to facilitate individual economic empowerment for survivors of CSE, it offers insight for practitioners providing care to CSE survivors. These pragmatic considerations are particularly needed given the growing number of CSE aftercare organizations and the dearth of research on effective programs for this population (Schmidt, 2014). Similarly, by examining nonprofit commercialization, this study provides valuable insight into how nonprofits pursue economic empowerment, tensions that emerge in the process, and how organizational members frame these tensions and respond to them. Given the turbulence of the nonprofit funding environment, this information can help organizations develop strategies to seek their own economic empowerment and meet their social missions.

Summary and Overview of Chapters

The first chapter offers an introduction to this project by discussing the need for further research on organizational and individual empowerment in nonprofit organizations providing services to CSE survivors. It also identifies the metatheoretical and methodological approach of this study, and discusses theoretical and practical contributions. Chapter 2, the literature review, describes my metatheoretical orientation in greater depth and outlines existing research related to empowerment, drawing out key conceptualizations and characteristics of empowerment from past scholarship. Next, I introduce a tension-centered approach, describing how this theoretical lens shapes my understanding of the multi-level, tensional, discursive-material construction of empowerment. In the remaining sections, I discuss existing research on organizational empowerment, organizational economic empowerment, and organizational economic

empowerment in the context of CSE organizations. I then discuss individual empowerment, beginning with women's empowerment, then women's economic empowerment, and finally women's economic empowerment in the context of CSE and CSE organizations. This chapter concludes by outlining the research questions that guide this study.

In Chapter 3, I explain the methodological approach to this project. I begin by revisiting this project's metatheoretical foundation, tracing how elements of feminist new materialisms—specifically materiality/embodiment, contradiction, and moral responsibility—inform my methodological decision-making in specific ways. Then I justify and outline the particular qualitative methods proposed for this study, explaining how interviews, organizational document analysis, and participant observation enables me to examine the construction of economic empowerment at multiple levels of organizing.

In Chapter 4, I discuss findings that address the first research question: “How is organizational economic empowerment discursively-materially constituted?” By defining organizational economic empowerment as “the discursive-material processes by which organizations mobilize resources to meet their mission,” I first discuss the discursive-material construction of “mission,” arguing that CSE organizations position the ‘market as the mission but so much more.’ Then I discuss resource mobilization, arguing that CSE organizations discursively-materially leverage their organizational hybridity to mobilize resources to achieve their social missions. I then outline the organizational tensions that emerge within this construction, how organizational members frame the tensions and respond to them.

In Chapter 5, I address the second research question by explicating the discursive-material construction of individual economic empowerment. I argue that individual economic empowerment has three components: (re)gaining agency over one's body and finances, engaging

in meaningful work, and sustaining long-term economic independence. Like Chapter 4, I then discuss what tensions emerge from this construction, how organizational members frame the tensions and respond to them.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I discuss the theoretical and practical contributions of this project. I outline this study's contributions to theorizing of organizational and individual empowerment, nonprofit communication and the market-mission tension specifically, and understandings of embodiment and materiality in organizational communication research. I also describe this study's contributions to nonprofit practice, particularly for those leading or employed at CSE organizations. To conclude, I discuss the limitations of this study and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I discuss the metatheoretical and theoretical approaches informing this project, and then review prior research relevant to the proposed study. First, I outline my metatheoretical perspective, discuss existing theorizing of empowerment, and outline its various conceptualizations and characteristics. I then introduce the theoretical lens for this work and review organizational and individual empowerment in the context of CSE organizations and survivors.

Meta-theoretical Approach: Feminist New Materialisms

This dissertation draws on new materialisms, specifically feminist new materialisms, within communication and related fields to ground its meta-theoretical approach. Recently, feminist communication scholars (e.g., Harris, 2016; Putnam & Ashcraft, 2017; Ellingson, 2017; Linabary, 2017) have adopted theorizing in other disciplines that specifically examine materiality and explore its intersections with discourse. These fields of study have been termed feminist new materialisms (Grosz, 1994; van der Tuin, 2009), posthumanist feminisms (Barad, 2003; Barad, 2007), and feminist postconstructionism (Lykke, 2010), among others. Although communication scholars have been slower to uptake these ideas (Harris, 2016), many are calling for increased attention to materiality in communication theory and research (e.g., Ashcraft, 2014; Putnam, 2015; Putnam & Ashcraft, 2017).

In recognizing the entanglement of materiality and discourse, new materialisms fall at the intersection of realism and social constructivism (van der Tuin, 2009). While there are multiple approaches to theorizing this relationship between “words and worlds” (Harris, 2016, p. 157), I follow feminist philosopher Karen Barad’s approach, agential realism. Barad (2003) defines

agential realism as a “*causal relationship between specific exclusionary practices embodied as specific material configurations of the world* (i.e., discursive practices/(con)figurations rather than “words”) *and specific material phenomena* (i.e., relations rather than “things”)” (p. 814; italics in the original). In her (meta)theory, Barad makes an ontological and epistemological argument for the mutual agency and entanglement of materiality and discourse. She argues:

The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. (Barad, 2003, p. 822)

In this way, Barad does not erase the importance of discourse and its performativity, instead she argues for its agentic intra-action with materiality.

Feminist New Materialisms in Communication Theory and Practice

For communication research specifically, taking this approach *forces an attention toward materiality and embodiment often absent in communication scholarship*. After the linguistic turn within the humanities and social sciences, scholars placed heavy theoretical and analytical emphasis on the role of discourse in constructing social reality, often obscuring or erasing the constitutive role of materiality (Barad, 2007). Due to the communication discipline’s historic roots in discourse, rhetoric, and language, communication scholars are especially implicated in this enterprise. Barad and other new materialists have critiqued these approaches, and push scholars to go beyond mere discourse in analyzing and understanding social phenomena. Thus, communication scholars who adopt Barad’s approach conceptualize communication as “not about wielding symbols toward material effects. It is, rather, the agentic process through which matter and discourse intertwine and become felt and known. Communication is how discursive-

material permutations become ‘real-ized’” (Ashcraft & Harris, 2014, p. 138). Furthermore, this demands an attention to power as manifested in materiality. As Harris (2016) states:

Theorizing materiality is also important for understanding power. As communication scholars argued nearly 2 decades ago, failure to attend fully to the material world can “hide political inequities by glossing over the material details of oppression and the mechanics of power” (Lannamann, 1998, p. 6) and “leave critique behind” (Cloud, 1994, p. 159). (p. 155)

The relevance of a feminist new materialist approach to communication research is highlighted in this particular project, as understandings and possibilities of empowerment, though highly discursive (e.g., power of dialogue, consciousness-raising), are also tangled up in powerful material realities such as physical violence and poverty. Examining empowerment in the context of sexual abuse and exploitation must contend with the material structures of power that produce vulnerabilities for certain groups as well as grapple with the deeply embodied nature of trauma and trauma recovery.

Second, taking this approach *creates a moral/ethical responsibility on the part of the researcher*. Although new materialisms are regularly stripped of their feminist roots (Linabary, 2017), Barad is expressly political in her theorizing of discourse and materiality. In discussing “how matter comes to matter,” Barad (2003) argues that power is constructed through discursive-material assemblages, and our being in the world comes to bear on these intra-actions. As she argues, researchers have “an ethical obligation to intra-act responsibly in the world’s becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad, 2007, p. 178). While this researcher responsibility is explored more thoroughly in Chapter 3, this perspective privileges voices from the margins in understanding empowerment, making an intersectional, contextual, and ground-up approach important for conceptualizing both organizational and individual (economic) empowerment.

Finally, taking a feminist new materialist approach *also embraces contradiction and dilemma*. These contradictions operate on both metatheoretical and practical levels.

Philosophically, new materialisms attempt to bridge traditionally realist and social constructivist paradigms. Barad (2007) claims that discourse and materiality are ontologically and epistemologically fused together, operating as a dialectic, a “both-and” instead of an “either-or” relationship between poles (Mumby, 2011; Putnam, 2015). However, this metatheoretical orientation has profound practical implications. In her approach, feminist dilemmatic theorizing, Harris (2016), draws on feminist new materialisms to demonstrate how feminist scholarship must embrace contradiction—seeking to both *understand* the social world and *change* it for the better. She exposes the insufficiency of either purely constitutive and realist approaches to creating social change, claiming it cannot take place without positioning these paradigms in a dialectical, dilemmatic relationship. She states:

Neither “communication reflects the world” nor “communication shapes the world” is adequate. If communication merely represents the world—that is, words are separate from the material environment—then communication has neither violent capacity nor capacity to intervene in violence. To the other extreme, if communication is purely constructive, it never touches violence because violence, too, becomes a construct. (pp. 164-165)

Thus, by embracing the constitutive-realist / discourse-material contradiction, communication scholars can examine how communication structures our world *and* creates space for change. Furthermore, recognizing the dialectical relationship between discourse and materiality is important for understanding empowerment as an inherently contradictory concept, as well as mobilizing these understandings toward social change.

Conceptualizing Empowerment

To examine how economic empowerment is discursively-materially constructed at both the organizational and individual level, it is important to review how empowerment has been conceptualized. As empowerment is a complex and contradictory concept that requires a holistic approach to understanding, this review first discusses ‘empowerment’ generally before examining economic empowerment specifically. In the following sections, I first discuss prevailing definitions of empowerment and outline its various characteristics. Then I focus on organizational empowerment, organizational *economic* empowerment, and examine this concept within the context of nonprofit commercialization and CSE aftercare organizations. The subsequent section follows a similar outline in which I first discuss individual empowerment, individual *economic* empowerment, specifically in the context of women’s empowerment, and then discuss these concepts in light of research on survivors of gender-based violence.

Defining Empowerment

Although empowerment has been studied for many years in many disciplines, it remains a contradictory and contested term (Calves, 2009; Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2018). Many derive their definition from the work Paulo Freire (1990), who explains empowerment as the process by which individuals perceive they can transform their circumstances, believing their situation “not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting—and therefore challenging (p. 73). Psychological approaches to understanding empowerment draw on this definition, positioning empowerment as similar to the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Bormann, 1988; Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1995, 1997; Papa, Singhal, Ghanekar, & Papa, 2000a; Papa et al., 2000b; Shefner-Rogers, Rao, Rogers, & Wayangankar, 1998).

However, many have critiqued this psychological, individualized understanding of empowerment, claiming that the concept has been appropriated and stripped from its social justice roots. Batliwala (2007) traces the linguistic origins of empowerment back as early as the Protestant Reformation, then to social movements in the subsequent centuries, and finally to its reinvigoration during the mid 20th century, when it was mobilized by movements such as liberation theology, black power, and women's rights (Batliwala, 2007). Scholars rooted in the academic traditions of these social movements (e.g., critical race, feminist) theorize empowerment in relationship to larger socio-cultural-political power structures. For example, feminist definitions "reveal empowerment as a form of resistance within systems of unequal power" (Parker, 2003, p. 259), and explore empowerment vis-à-vis forms of external and internalized oppression (Rowlands, 1995).

These varying definitions begin to reveal one of its defining features: *the multiple levels and dimensions of empowerment*. In addition, empowerment is also *contextual, communicative, and complex/contradictory*.

Empowerment is Multi-Level and Multi-Dimensional

Although empowerment is typically conceptualized at the individual level (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), it can also be attributed to groups at various levels, such as collectives, communities, or organizations" (Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2018; Rogers & Singhal, 2003; Rowlands, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995). For example, Rowlands (1995) claims empowerment is either personal, relational, or collective, and Zimmerman (1995) identifies three levels of empowerment: psychological, organizational, and community. Although these typologies split up the various levels of empowerment, these planes intersect and influence each other. For example, Alinsky (1972) argues that the community must be mobilized for 'true empowerment' to occur at

the individual level. Recognizing the multi-level nature of empowerment makes layered analyses of empowerment necessary for richer, more holistic understandings of the concept and its possibilities for social change.

Furthermore, there are multiple kinds of empowerment that operate across these levels. For instance, Jones (2017) introduces the concept of cultural empowerment, which “relates specifically to how a group achieves goals that are generally important to and valued by the entire group” (p. 326). Then, within her definition, she identifies four dimensions of cultural empowerment, including economic empowerment, legacy empowerment, community empowerment, and social justice empowerment. These dimensions intersect and feed into each other, operating across micro, meso, and macro levels. Thus, even though this study specifically explicates the dimension of economic empowerment, understanding one component is central to understanding empowerment more generally.

Empowerment is Contextual

Empowerment at any level is necessarily shaped by its context. Empowerment in one setting, at one point in time may be disempowering in another (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; LeRoux-Rutledge, 2008; Narayan, 2005). As empowerment is “subject to and framed by discourses, ideologies, and political and economic constraints” (Jones, 2017, p. 341), these forces shape the experiences and subjectivities of individuals in differing social locations. For example, feminist scholars Luthra (2003) and Riaño (1994) explain that the complexity of empowerment mirrors the complexity of the various axes of power that oppress marginalized groups (i.e. via race, class, gender, sexuality). The situated nature of empowerment highlights the importance of taking an intersectional approach to its analysis.

Empowerment is Inherently Communicative

In many of its early conceptions, empowerment was considered a fundamentally dialogic process (e.g., Albrecht, 1988; Freire, 1973). Through conversation with others, individuals can come to an understanding of their powerlessness as well as possibilities for change (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Rogers & Singhal, 2003; Young, 1994). Continued communicative interaction between self and others, particularly at the community level, is often considered necessary for sustained empowerment (Alinsky, 1972; Rogers & Singhal, 2003). Communication scholars have contributed to understandings of empowerment by demonstrating how empowerment is an inherently communicative process (Papa et al., 2000a; Papa, Singhal, & Papa, 2006; Riano, 1994; Rogers & Singhal, 2003). Within communication, researchers have examined empowerment in media (e.g., LeRoux-Rutledge, 2008; Luthra, 2003; Riano, 1994), health communication (de Souza, 2011; Oh & Lee, 2012), and organizations (e.g., Albrecht, 1988; Buzzanell, 1994; Chiles & Zorn, 1995; Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2018; Gill & Ganesh, 2007; Pacanowsky, 1988). Despite the recognition that empowerment is “rooted in communication, democracy, and community building,” Dykstra-DeVette and Canary (2018) argue that “more work must be done to understand the culturally situated nature of these terms, how they are taken up in practice, and what implications they may have” (p. 4).

Empowerment is Complex and Contradictory

Research has demonstrated how empowerment is deeply complex. As its multi-dimensional, contextual, and communicative nature demonstrate, empowerment is not a simplistic or unitary concept. In addition, it is a dynamic and non-linear process (Batliwala, 1994; Papa et al., 2000a)—ebbing and flowing, and often “desperately slow” (Rowlands, 1995, p. 105). Empowerment is also shot through with contradiction, especially attempts to “organize

empowerment” (Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2018). For example, communication scholars have revealed how organizational structures designed to facilitate participation and agency can constrain the very empowerment they seek to produce (e.g., Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; D’Enbeau & Kunkel, 2013; Stohl & Cheney, 2001). Linabary’s (2017) study of an online women’s empowerment organization reveals how material-discursive practices that support the inclusion and participation of some are perceived by others to be exclusionary. International development has been roundly criticized for its paradoxical practices (Batliwala, 1994; Rowlands, 1995; Luthra, 2003), as traditional, paternalistic approaches to development often reproduce the same—or construct new—power structures that oppress the groups they seek to ‘empower.’ As Luthra (2003) states, “Ironically, many of the projects that deploy a rhetoric of women’s choice, women’s empowerment, or in the older colonial guise, women’s uplift, exacerbate the very conditions that restrict the exercise of power in women’s real-life circumstances” (p. 49). In order to conceptualize the contradictory and power-laden nature of empowerment, Dykstra-DeVette and Canary (2018) draw on contradiction scholars (e.g., Mumby, 2005) and postcolonial scholars (e.g., Shome & Hedge, 2002) to propose the concept of “crystalline empowerment.” They argue:

Just as the reflections in a crystal change in different conditions, a crystalline metaphor of empowerment prioritizes the legitimacy of views and attitudes emerging from different cultural locations, always urging us to take another look to see new perspectives. The metaphor of empowerment as crystalline prioritizes different perspectives by foregrounding the differential, disparate perceptions of individuals in different social locations. (p. 14)

Rather than seek to resolve the tensions inherent within empowerment, Dykstra-DeVette (2018) recognize that they are inevitable. However, a postcolonial perspective recognizes that these paradoxes are saturated with power, and therefore scholars and practitioners need to evaluate which versions of empowerment are silenced or made salient at any given time. This

conceptualization of empowerment acknowledges the multiple characteristics of empowerment discussed thus far: its multiple levels and dimensions, its contextual/intersectional nature, its communicative construction, and most importantly, its complexity and contradictions. This metaphor is elucidative for a project examining the construction of empowerment at multiple levels of organizing, as the understandings of staff, CSE survivors, and other stakeholders will likely form a fraught and complex portrait of empowerment. A crystalline metaphor recognizes these disparate perspectives—operating at multiple levels and dimensions—and embraces the inevitable tensions that emerge in empowerment processes.

Theoretical Lens: A Tension-Centered Approach

As the existing literature on empowerment illustrates, individual and collective forms of empowerment are inherently contradictory and tension-filled. At the organizational level, these findings echo the claims of theorists in organizational communication who take a “tension-centered approach” to understanding organizational phenomena. Tension is an umbrella term used to describe conflicting ideals that result in “stress, anxiety, discomfort, or tightness in making choices, responding to, and moving forward in organizational situations” (Putnam, Fairhurst, & Banghart, 2016, p. 69). Organizational communication scholars argue that tensions are the natural “outgrowth of the complexity and ever-changing process of organizing,” and are therefore inherent to organizations (Putnam & Boys, 2006, p. 562). Whereas management and functionalist approaches to organizational studies often seek to resolve conflicting or competing ideals, organizational communication scholars advocate for embracing tension as an ontologically-defining feature of organizing (Putnam et al., 2016), and in particular, examine how tension acts as a locus for creative possibility within organizations.

Organizational tensions emerge in various forms, such as contradictions, dialectics, or paradoxes. Contradictions refer to “polar opposites that are interdependent, define each other, and can potentially negate one another” (Putnam et al., 2016, p. 10). In this way, opposites in contradictions (i.e., open vs closed, freedom vs control) are not discrete, but are mutually defining and therefore challenging for organizational actors to navigate. Dialectics are similar to contradictions; however, dialectics refer to an ongoing, dynamic relationship between opposite poles that implicate each other. Unlike contradictions, dialectics involve a push-pull relationship between opposites. In many cases, this interplay of opposites is a source of creativity and dialogue, generating innovative ideas and solutions (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981). Paradox occurs when contradictions persist and evolve over time, often creating ironic or absurd dilemmas for organizational actors. In a paradoxical situation, choosing either pole is counterproductive, often placing an individual in a double bind. As a result, paradoxes often result in “surprising or ironic outcomes and inconsistencies, for example, situations that lead to inefficient efficiencies, equity programs that legitimate discrimination, and democratic systems that restrict participation” (Putnam et al., 2016, p. 11-12).

According to Putnam and colleagues (2016), organizational tensions generate a variety of outcomes, including vicious and virtuous cycles (spirals of events with either positive or negative outcomes), double binds and paralysis (a feeling of ‘damned if you do, and damned if you don’t’), unintended and unanticipated outcomes, enabling and constraining actions, opening up and closing off participation, and transforming and reproducing organizations. Therefore, rather than seek to resolve tensions, organizational researchers should examine the ways in which organizational members come to understand and respond to them (Ashcraft & Tretheway, 2004). For example, in a study of correctional officers, Tracy (2004) discusses how members’

discursive framing of organizational tensions shapes their responses. She describes how organizational actors frame tensions in one of three ways, as contradictions, dialectics, or paradoxes/double binds. Her study highlights the productive possibilities when tensions are interpreted as dialectics, as doing so often results in creative or transformative responses to organizational phenomena.

A tension-centered approach is particularly useful for this study, as empowerment is inherently contradictory concept. Organizations are ontologically tension-ridden entities, particularly when pursuing an aim (organizational economic empowerment) fraught with tensions of its own. In fact, communication scholars have begun to take a tension-centered approach to theorizing the nature of market-mission dynamics within nonprofit organizations, arguing that this tension is an inherent aspect of mission-driven organizing within a market economy (Sanders, 2012, 2015). Thus, a tension-centered approach is aptly suited for understanding the discursive-material construction of organizational economic empowerment within organizations that use commercialization to pursue their social aims.

Furthermore, as CSE organizations seek to facilitate the individual economic empowerment of CSE survivors, tensions emerge within attempts to “organize” empowerment, or the “particular organizational communication practices aimed at empowering clients” (Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2018, p. 16). As Dykstra-DeVette and Canary (2018) explain, “discursive tension exists within the presentation of action. Who empowers whom? Who is the actor and who is the passive recipient of power?” (p. 11). These questions are essential for understanding how individual economic empowerment is constructed within CSE organizations. Thus, taking a tension-centered approach foregrounds the contradictory nature of attempts to

facilitate individual empowerment, and aims to understand what tensions emerge within the construction of individual economic empowerment in CSE organizations.

Finally, taking a tension-centered approach is deeply practical. As the theory claims, organizational tensions are inevitable. Rather than seek to resolve the tensions, organizations should seek understanding of how organizational actors frame tensions, respond to them, and to what effects. As Ashcraft and Tretheway (2004) argue, a tension-centered approach enables the “development of organizational theories that are at once more complex and responsive to actual practice” (p. 171). By examining how organizational actors frame and respond to tensions within processes of individual and organizational (economic) empowerment, this study aims to provide practical insight into (a) what tensions exist within these processes and (b) varying approaches for addressing them.

Organizational Empowerment

In this next section, I discuss organizational empowerment specifically, drawing on literature related to organizational empowerment and nonprofit commercialization to examine economic empowerment within nonprofit organizations.

Organizational empowerment is typically conceptualized as the structures and processes by which organizations provide an empowering *context* for its members. For example, Valsania, Moriano, and Molero (2016) define it as the “implementation of structures that promote the distribution of autonomy and decision-making among the staff and provide the basis for employees’ engagement in proactive behaviors” (p. 137). Similarly, communication scholars study organizational empowerment as organizational and communicative practices that enable or constrain employees’ participation or autonomy (e.g., Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Stohl & Cheney, 2001).

While the empowerment of individual members is an important part of broader organizational empowerment (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), individual empowerment is only one component to organizational empowerment. Very few studies examine the empowerment of organizations *themselves*, especially in the context of nonprofit organizing. Thus, the conceptual slippage around “organizational empowerment” may best be clarified by noting the difference between *empowering* organizations (i.e. those that facilitate empowerment among members) and *empowered* organizations, those that pursue their own empowerment through various organizational processes (Gerschick, Israel, & Checkoway, 1990; Swift & Levin, 1987).

Analyzing whether organizations experience empowerment is important for theoretical and practical reasons. Doing so enables communication scholars to respond to calls for the study of nonprofit organizations as the *sites* of inquiry rather than merely the contexts for examining organizational phenomena (Kirby & Koschmann, 2012; Lewis, 2005). By studying organizational empowerment specifically, communication scholars can work to make their nonprofit scholarship more useful, as it has been critiqued for “not necessarily tackling problems, puzzles, and possibilities that those in practice would find relevant and important” (Lewis, 2012, p. 187). Investigating organizational empowerment could foster better understanding for how organizations can reach their mission and increase the well-being of those they serve. This is useful for organizations, and it is also useful for society, as more “efforts to build the capacity of organizations to gain the resources and power needed to create social change are necessary” (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2003, p. 142).

Furthermore, examining how an organization pursues empowerment is important for better understanding how empowerment operates at multiple levels. Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) have critiqued traditional conceptualizations of organizational-empowerment-as-context

for its “individualistic bias,” or the “tendency to reduce complex person-in-environment phenomena to individual dynamics” (p. 129). Over-emphasizing individual empowerment can place undue emphasis on individual agency, neglecting the enabling and constraining nature of contextual forces. In the context of survivors of gender-based violence, an examination of external factors is essential to understanding the construction of both vulnerability and empowerment. Furthermore, as has been discussed, empowerment does not occur in a vacuum—thus, empowerment at multiple levels is necessary to sustain empowerment for an individual or community long term. As Rowlands (1995) argues:

while individual empowerment is one ingredient in achieving empowerment at the collective and institutional levels, concentration on individuals alone is not enough. Changes are needed in the collective abilities of individuals to take charge of identifying and meeting their own needs as households, communities, organisations, institutions, and societies. (p. 106)

Finally, examining organizational empowerment is an important area for communication scholars to develop theory that informs practical efforts to facilitate empowerment in individuals, organizations, communities, and societies. Whereas Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) claim that taking an organizational approach to empowerment enables empowerment theory to go beyond its individualistic bias, communication scholars can further these contributions by taking a communicative approach. Doing so responds to recent calls for scholars to take a communicative approach to the study of nonprofit organizations in order to provide unique insights into nonprofit organizational phenomena and better contribute to the broader field of nonprofit studies (Koschmann, Isbell, & Sanders, 2015). Koschmann et al. (2015) articulate what this communicative approach entails and offers:

Researchers who bring a communication perspective to nonprofit studies will explain a variety of nonprofit phenomena through a framework of human interaction, they will explore how important nonprofit concepts are constituted communicatively and the different interests represented in those processes, and they will examine how the

communicative existence of nonprofit organizations shapes the lived experiences of key stakeholders—all of which promise to add valuable insights to the nonprofit literature and complement other fields that compose the interdisciplinary study of the nonprofit sector. (p. 215)

Thus, examining organizational empowerment as a communicative phenomenon creates space for how empowerment is constructed through communication. Furthermore, by taking a tension-centered approach, this study also examines how organizational empowerment is inherently contradictory, where these tensions emerge and how organizational members respond. Doing so is deeply practical, as explicating tensions enables practitioners to understand where organizational members experience stress or discomfort and how they respond.

Defining Organizational Empowerment

This project, while taking a communicative approach to organizational empowerment, draws its base understanding of organizational empowerment from community psychology. Psychologists Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) define organizational empowerment as “organizational efforts that generate (psychological empowerment) among members and organizational effectiveness needed for goal achievement” (p. 135). Thus, while individual member empowerment is one component of organizational empowerment, the larger focus is on organizational mission, and implementing the appropriate processes and acquiring the right resources to fulfill that mission. In discussing these processes of goal attainment, Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) draw on organizational ecology to argue for the examination of an organization vis-à-vis its external environment. They argue that doing so “focuses our attention to levels of analysis beyond the individual (i.e., corrects for individual bias) and provides a lens for examining the confluence of factors that characterize empowered organizations” (p. 135). Thus, they argue there are multiple dimensions to organizational empowerment:

intraorganizational, interorganizational, and extraorganizational. The intraorganizational component refers to the internal processes and functioning of an organization.

Interorganizational involves the relationships organizations forge with other organizations, and the extraorganizational component refers to an organization's capacity to influence its external environment, such as developing innovative services or alternative organizing forms, or changing policy. Taken together, organizational empowerment could be considered most 'optimized' when empowering processes and outcomes exist at each level.

Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) summarize existing literature to identify some of the different processes and outcomes that contribute to empowerment for organizations. At the intraorganizational level, processes such as employee social support and group-based belief systems foster empowerment (Minkler, Thompson, Bell, & Rose, 2001; Peterson & Speer, 2000), and existing studies point also to empowerment-related outcomes such as viability and resolved ideological conflict (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990; Riger, 1984). At the inter-organizational level, accessing the social networks of other organizations can lead to empowering collaborative outcomes (Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999; Bartle, Couchonnal, Canda, & Staker, 2002). Finally, extraorganizational practices such as initiating community actions could lead to outcomes such as change in public policy or practice (Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer, & Adams-Leavitt, 1995; Fawcett et al., 1995).

Defining Organizational Economic Empowerment

In Peterson and Zimmerman's (2004) review of research, the empowering nature of resource acquisition and management is a common refrain. These findings reflect the claims of resource mobilization theory in social movement literature, which argues that social movements

must identify, acquire, and deploy resources to be successful (McCarthy & Zald, 1973).³ As social movements often do so in the form of nonprofit and professional social movement organizations, resource mobilization is not only central to meeting the mission of the organization, but to achieving the larger social movement goals. Thus, the salience of resource management is seen at every level of organizational empowerment; intraorganizational processes can lead to resource identification, whereas interorganizational efforts can lead to resource procurement (Zimmerman et al., 1991). Then, the management of these resources—in combination with other empowering organizational processes—can lead to resource implementation at the community level (Zimmerman et al., 1991).

In sum, particularly for nonprofit and human service organizations, identifying, acquiring, and mobilizing financial resources is central to meeting their organizational goals. *Therefore, in this study, organizational economic empowerment is defined as the discursive-material processes through which an organization mobilizes resources to meet their organizational missions.* More specifically, this project examines how organizations use commercialization in the resource mobilization process to meet organizational goals. The relevance of organizational economic empowerment has been highlighted in the last twenty years, as nonprofit organizations have become increasingly business-like and entrepreneurial in their efforts to both manage dwindling resources and further their organizational goals (Lewis, 2012). However, it remains a key debate within nonprofit management studies whether these entrepreneurial efforts lead to mission achievement or mission drift (Maier et al., 2016). In other words, whether or not business-like behavior, particularly commercialization, facilitates organizational economic empowerment is unknown.

³ Although this resource mobilization theory identifies resources such as personnel and space in addition to funding, the emphasis remains on material and financial resources.

Not only is examining nonprofit commercialization crucial for understanding the possibilities and constraints of organizational empowerment, it is inextricably linked to the possibility for empowerment in those the organization seeks to serve. As empowerment research demonstrates, the empowerment of the organizational and individual are bound together, and thus for empowerment to be successful at the individual or organizational level, it should exist at both. This interplay showcased in organizations that provide aftercare to survivors of gender-based violence and tie their commercialization practices to ‘economic empowerment’ initiatives for the populations they serve. While individual ‘economic empowerment’ is discussed in further detail later in this chapter, it is important to review existing research on nonprofit organizations seeking their own economic empowerment and how commercialization either enables or constrains their mission attainment.

Thus, the following sections review the literature related to “nonprofits in business,” first defining ‘business-like’ NPOs and commercialization specifically, then reviewing existing research on the causes and effects of business-like behavior in nonprofits. In this I draw out the central tension between mission attainment and mission drift, and then discuss this tension in light of the social movement to end violence against women and the nonprofit organizations designed to serve survivors of gender-based violence.

Pursuing New Forms of Economic Empowerment: Nonprofits Becoming Business-Like to Achieve Organizational Goals

Being ‘business-like’ as a nonprofit can take a number of forms, typically determined according to that organization’s particular goals. In their 2016 article, “Nonprofit Organizations Becoming Business-Like, A Systematic Review,” Maier and colleagues draw out key concepts used in the literature to describe processes of business-like organizations. They discuss terms

such as “corporatization,” which denotes a change in “governance structure” (Maier et al., 2016, p. 70), in which nonprofit organizational forms are reconfigured to resemble corporate models, or nonprofit organizations are merged and subsumed by a larger corporation (Alexander & Weiner, 1998; Horwitz, 1988). Second, some nonprofits engage in “marketization,” in which organizations engage with stakeholders in increasingly market-driven, exchange-oriented ways. Bracketed beneath marketization are the processes of consumerism and commodification. Consumerism involves the “changed attitudes of beneficiaries, funders, or volunteers” toward perceptions of selves as consumers of ‘products’ or ‘services’ supplied by the nonprofit organization. Commodification refers to the process of quantifying and/or ascribing monetary value to the services or outputs of NPOs (Maier et al., 2016). In addition, organizations also engage in “professionalization,” or the belief that “experts should be in charge” (p. 71). Professionalization manifests when organizations seek out more ‘qualified’ personnel, or emphasize the importance of particular education or licensing credentials.

The final key concepts, conversion and commercialization, relate to nonprofits adopting business-like goals. Conversion occurs when organizations officially transfer their legal status from nonprofit to for-profit. Commercialization involves the creation and reliance upon revenue streams to support nonprofit operations (Salamon, 1993). Both of these practices can be summarized with the term economization, which captures the increasing monetary emphasis by NPOs in organizational decision-making (Hoffman, 2010).

Centering Commercialization

Although this project focuses particularly on the practices of commercialization (e.g. developing goods or services to be sold by the nonprofit), all of these key concepts are interconnected and relevant to whether or not an organization is economically empowered. For

instance, pressures from stakeholders for NPOs to engage in marketization can lead to commercialization, which can then manifest in the visible commodification of nonprofit goods or services. Furthermore, these terms capture larger organizational and industry trends and processes that influence the construction of an organization's goals or 'mission.' Thus, they are important for understanding how, why, and to what effect nonprofits engage in commercialization activities, particularly as it relates to whether or not they operate as forms of economic organizational empowerment.

Furthermore, commercialization in particular highlights the organizational hybridity characteristic of the third sector. As nonprofits seek out revenue streams, the 'nonprofit' organizational form itself becomes blurry, as it bleeds into for-profit models such as social enterprises or social entrepreneurship organizations. Given the diversity of organizational forms within the third sector ecosystem, scholars question whether the 'nonprofit' term is useful anymore (Frumkin, 2002; Lewis, 2012). However, due to the widespread cultural adoption of the term 'nonprofit' I use this term in this proposal, even though participants may choose to identify their organization to different stakeholders in different ways (e.g., as a social enterprise).

Causes for Business-Like Practices

There are many external forces that have pushed nonprofit organizations to become business-like. On a macro-scale, researchers discuss how discourses and ideologies of neoliberalism (Liebschutz, 1992), managerialism (Harvie & Manzi, 2011), and economic rationalism (Pusey, 1996) shape the decisions of nonprofit governing bodies to become business-like. In addition, economic shifts and specific civic and political reforms have also influenced nonprofits (Kerlin & Pollack, 2011; Liebschutz, 1992). For commercialization specifically, the dearth of funding available to nonprofits and general economic pressure are key causes for

organizations becoming entrepreneurial (Kerlin & Pollack, 2011; Salamon, 1999). In this sense, developing revenue streams enables nonprofits to diversify their funding sources, potentially ‘empowering’ them to rely less on donor support, and develop more potentially sustainable funding models.

On a meso-level, research highlights how inter- and intra-organizational forces also create or perpetuate business-like practices among nonprofits. Studies emphasize how governing boards (Stone, 1989), organizational cultures and ideologies (Choi, 2012), and the mission and focus of organizations all contribute to the adoption of business-like practices. This literature also suggests that business-like behavior, rather than simply enable organizations to survive in a precarious funding environment, may also help nonprofits reach particular human service or mission goals. In other words, business-like behavior developed ‘within’ the organization can be compatible with or extend organizational goals, and therefore potentially operate as a form of economic empowerment. As in the case with the fair trade movement, NGOs developed business models to support trust-based, non-exploitative trade relations with coffee farmers (Webb, 2007). This example demonstrates how achieving the organization’s mission (empowering coffee farmers) necessitated specific business practices.

However, although commercialization can enable organizations to meet their social missions, doing so introduces new tensions into the nonprofit organizational operations, often fundamentally altering the nature of the organization, and potentially altering the organization’s goals. As Dart (2004) states, commercialization activities inevitably result in:

more attention to market discipline, market-focused social innovations, efficiency and reduced cost structures, and (broadly) focusing on the financial bottom line than was typical or commonplace in the nonprofit funding and service environment. (p. 293)

Hence, some scholars describe the glowing possibilities of business-like behavior for nonprofits, even describing it as the empowering process the social sector needs “to lift itself up out of its own poverty cycle” (Goerke, 2003, p. 319). Yet others warn of market-based mission creep, wherein the organizational goals themselves eventually are altered. In this case, commercialization does not operate as economic organizational empowerment, as the organization has put the commercialization cart before the mission horse.

Effects of Business-Like Practices

As a result, scholars have begun researching the effects of commercialization on the operations and mission of organizations. Existing research highlights how the nature of the effects varies depending on the kind of organization, as well as other conditions, such as its field of work, when the organization develops revenue streams, and other contextual factors (Maier et al., 2016). For service-provision organizations, the results are mixed. Some claim that commercialization does not result in ‘mission drift’ (Froelich, 1999), and that some efforts significantly promote the mission of the organization (Young, 1998). However, others disagree, noting that the commercialization of services erase an emphasis on community building, advocacy, or structural/cultural change (Baines et al., 2011; Keevers et al., 2012), and transform beneficiaries into customers. However, many of these analyses are theoretical and critical in nature, leading scholars to call for increased empirical studies on the effects of commercialization for populations served by nonprofits (Maier et al., 2016). Furthermore, as many factors influence the success of commercialization, scholars argue that “research should go beyond documenting conflicts or harmonious combinations and aim to identify the organizational and environmental factors that promote one or the other” (Maier et al., 2016, p. 79).

More recently, communication scholars have begun examining the market-mission tension within nonprofit organizations. In contrast to the aforementioned research that often approaches market-mission concerns as an ‘either-or’ tension, Sanders (2015) draws on contradiction scholars in organizational communication to argue that “is an inherent feature of all nonprofit organizations that cannot be resolved without compromising the purpose of the nonprofit sector or violating the responsibility to be financially solvent” (p. 209). Thus, rather than seek to ‘choose a side’ and/or resolve the tension, he argues that examining the “communication practices of organizational members offers a more productive way to examine the mission-market tension” (Sanders, 2015, p. 210). Thus, by drawing on tension-centered approaches to studying organizational phenomena, this study follows Sanders’ call, seeking out the tensions underlying organizational economic empowerment, especially how organizational members interpret and respond to them. This approach, while shedding light on the (dis)empowering effects of commercialization, does not position commercialization as inherently debilitating or productive. Rather, it examines how commercialization operates in organizational economic empowerment processes and what tensions emerge. Doing so seeks to trace out “what it means to be nonprofit-like in a market economy, allowing for explanations of how nonprofit organizations simultaneously manage—of necessity—competing, contradictory concerns” (Sanders, 2015, p. 210).

Thus, further research is needed to understand how commercialization operates within the process of ‘organizational economic empowerment,’ especially as the market-mission tension fundamentally underlies this process. Examining commercialization is especially relevant for nonprofits who involve those they serve in their business practices, tie ‘economic empowerment’ to their business models, and work with individuals who have been previously economically

exploited. These conditions make for a rich and important site for examining commercialization processes, particularly as they appear to be growing in organizations that support survivors of exploitation.

Economic Empowerment in Organizations Supporting Survivors of CSE

While I have discussed nonprofit commercialization and economic empowerment more broadly, in the next section I position this topic in the context of organizations that support survivors of gender-based violence. I first define commercial sexual exploitation and its relationship to the movement to end violence against women. By tracing the tensions between the economic constraints and the missions of anti-gender-based organizations, I seek to provide important context for the emergence of CSE aftercare organizations and their modern commercialization attempts.

Defining sex trafficking/commercial sexual exploitation (CSE).

According to the United Nations, human trafficking is the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons” through “force, fraud, or coercion” for labor or sexual exploitation (UNODC, 2004, p. 42). Although commonly assumed to be an international phenomenon, sex trafficking is increasingly prevalent within the United States. However, due to its covert nature and the lack of consistent data collection methods, generating reliable and accurate prevalence statistics is challenging (Gerassi, 2017). In 2016, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center received 7,572 hotline calls reporting domestic trafficking cases; 74% of which were sex trafficking. Additionally, of those arrested for prostitution or commercial vice crimes in 2012, 56,575 are believed to be misidentified victims of sex trafficking (Farrell &

Pfeffer, 2015). Yet, these statistics only capture some of the more visible survivors, with the majority of cases likely going undetected or unreported (Gerassi, 2017).

Sex trafficking is difficult to identify in part due to the complexities of defining “force, fraud, or coercion.” For example, pimps often lure highly vulnerable individuals, such as orphans, runaway youth, those who are socially and economically disadvantaged, illiterate, undocumented, or have physical or mental disabilities (Wilson & Butler, 2014), into exploitative relationships through “seduction, promises, and the belief that the abuser is actually their boyfriend” (Lloyd, 2011, p.74). Yet, once engaged in street-level prostitution, individuals find it very challenging to leave (Nixon, Tutty, Downe, Gorkoff, & Ursel, 2002; Kennedy, Klein, Bristowe, Cooper, & Yuille, 2007). One study reported that 88% of surveyed prostitutes desired to leave sex work (Farley & Barkan, 2008). Moreover, many individuals who entered street-level prostitution did so because they felt they “had no choice” (Kennedy et al., 2007, p. 2). For example, nearly 84% of exploited women have experienced homelessness, engaging in “survival sex” in order to make ends meet (Heil & Nichols, 2015). Family members may also pressure women to work in the sex industry in order to support themselves or others in the family (Gerassi, 2017).

In addition, many survivors suffer “(often untreated) substance abuse, PTSD, and depression” (Gerassi, 2017, p. 8). Almost 80% of survivors claim to have been addicted to drugs at some point (Farley, Cotton, Lynne, Zumbeck, & Spiwak, 2008), whether selling sex to support an addiction (Hudson & Nandy, 2012), being forced to abuse substances by a pimp or trafficker (Reid & Piquero, 2014), or using drugs as a coping mechanism to withstand the physical and psychological violence of their exploitation (Syvertsen et al., 2013). Due to these complexities,

following Gerassi (2017), I use the phrase commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) as a term to capture several forms of sexual violence, including:

individuals who are sex trafficked, which occurs when an adult is induced through force, fraud, or coercion to perform a sex act for money or anything of financial value as well as women who participate in either of the following when a power differential is present (i.e., class, race, ability/disability, gender, or status): 1) survival sex- the exchange of sex for money or something of financial value or 2) prostitution- the unlawful promotion of or participation in sexual activities for profit, including attempts or the solicitation of customers or transport of persons for prostitution purposes. (p. 2-3)

Defining CSE Organizations

Although commercial sexual exploitation is nothing ‘new,’ awareness and prosecution of sex trafficking has increased in the last twenty years, particularly since the passing of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act in 2000 (Roe-Sepowitz, & Hickle, 2017). For this reason, processes for how to identify victims, prosecute perpetrators, and support survivors are relatively nascent (Schmidt, 2014). Many CSE survivors are identified in “emergency rooms, substance abuse treatment programs, domestic violence programs, jails and prisons, and services for homeless and runaway youth” (Roe-Sepowitz & Hickle, 2017, p. 204), highlighting the complex intersections of CSE with addiction, homelessness, poverty, child and domestic abuse, incarceration, and prostitution. As a result, programs focused on gender-based violence, such as domestic violence shelters, have begun providing services to sex trafficking victims (Roe-Sepowitz & Hickle, 2017), often due to a lack of social service infrastructure to support survivors of trafficking specifically.

Organizations offering aftercare to survivors of commercial sexual exploitation have begun to emerge, although they are fewer and more nascent. A 2013 survey of residential programs for survivors of CSE revealed a total of 33 programs in the United States, with 28 states having no such residential program (Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013). Furthermore, 75% of

the available beds in these programs are reserved for minors (Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013). Although practitioners emphasize the importance of mental health and substance abuse treatment, advocacy services, and residential programs for CSE survivors (Gerassi, 2017), few resources exist for adult survivors of CSE. As 82% of the residential CSE agencies report plans to open residential programs in the future (Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013), providing care for this population is a significant and growing need. Despite the increased attention on the prevalence and effects of sex trafficking “there is scant evidence regarding effective programs and services specifically for women involved in CSE” (Gerassi, 2017, p. 14).

Positioning CSE Organizations in the Violence Against Women Movement

Although early activists pioneered social movements that focused specifically on issues such as domestic violence or sexual assault, the phrase “violence against women” is now more commonly used to describe multiple, intersecting forms of gender-based violence, including commercial sexual exploitation. The most common forms include “intimate partner violence, nonpartner sexual assault, and sexual exploitation and sex trafficking” (Raj & Yore, 2017, p. 135). As opposed to early activists and researchers, most second-generation activists use this term due to an “expansion of their political analyses to include the web of social issues” that affect women (Ake & Arnold, 2017, p. 20). Whereas issues such as ‘wife-beating’, rape, and forced prostitution formerly were conceptualized as discrete, separable phenomena, activism and research have demonstrated how these forms of violence are interconnected. Not only are issues such as physical violence, sexual violence, and emotional abuse often co-present within one abusive situation, but scholars and practitioners recognize that these interlocking social issues stem from larger structural, social, and political systems that engender, facilitate, and even support violence against women.

More specifically, the term “anti-violence against women movements” serves to “encompass all of the different threads of organized, extragovernmental efforts to end violence against women in the United States” (Ake & Arnold, 2017, p. 20). The interconnectedness of these forms of violence is on display perhaps most prominently in modern programs that seek to holistically address gender-based violence of various kinds, although they may organize around one particular form, such as CSE.

History of the Movement to End Violence Against Women and the Emergence of Nonprofit Commercialization

In order to understand the commercialization of modern organizations that support gender-based violence survivors, an understanding of their political-economic history is essential. In other words, understanding economic empowerment in this context necessitates an understanding of economic disempowerment and constraint in the social movement to end violence against women. Furthermore, such a history highlights the tensions between the social movement organizations’ mission and their resource dependency, further highlighting the significance of examining current nonprofit commercialization and its tensions within organizational economic empowerment processes.

As resource mobilization theory contends, collective action is rarely successful without economic resources to sustain and establish the social movement and organizations (McCarthy & Zald, 1973). Thus, the nature of social movements, and the organizational forms and practices they adopt, shift and vary according to economic opportunity and constraint. The interplay between economic forces and social movements is evidenced through the movement to end violence against women. In its earliest stages, the late 1800s, activists challenging cultural and legal permissions for wife-beating began to develop programs to shelter abused women and

children, primarily in California. At this time, no governmental funding existed to support survivors of violence, so these shelters were largely run by primarily faith-based organizations, such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and survived via charitable giving and fundraiser events (Baer, 1989; Pleck, 1983). In the second wave of the women's movement (the 1960s and 1970s), feminist activists fought for the criminalization of domestic violence and sexual assault. Not only were they successful in enacting this legislation, their political activism also resulted in laws and federal agencies that opened up funding to support shelters and crisis centers for victims of gender-based violence (Ake & Arnold, 2017). The influx of funding was considered a victory by many in the battered women's movement, as the high overhead of running a domestic abuse shelter made survival via charitable giving highly improbable. As a result of this legislation and governmental funding, domestic abuse shelters emerged in almost every major city shortly thereafter (Hamby, 2014). Organizations that supported survivors of gender-based violence were no longer solely grassroots, but had adopted new forms and practices based on the surge of governmental funding.

However, many rape crisis centers responded very differently than the domestic abuse shelters, demonstrating the tensions between the values and mission of a social movement organization and its resource dependency. Many rape crisis centers chose not to receive governmental aid from a political structure they critiqued and saw as responsible for the (re)production of sexual assault. As a result, even though rape crisis centers needed fewer resources compared to shelters, many centers found themselves in economic crisis by 1979, forcing many of them to shut down or choose dependence on governmental support for survival (Matthews, 1994).

Furthermore, even though federal funding enabled shelters and many rape crisis centers to survive, it further enmeshed the anti-gender-based violence movement into the political structure, and more specifically, its forms of funding. As a result, most contemporary abuse shelters and crisis centers are highly dependent on governmental aid, even as it waxes and wanes. With the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994, forms of gender-based violence were further criminalized, but organizations supporting survivors of gender-based violence became further tied into the criminal justice system. Thus, even though the legal reform created more rights and recourse for victims, it drew further critique from activists who had fought the criminal justice system's historically patriarchal treatment of abuse and assault victims. As a result, crisis centers and shelters became increasingly bureaucratized, required to meet new forms of governmental accountability and professionalization to receive federal/state aid. Rather than critique and change the structures that engender violence against women, the social movement's organizations were now dependent upon them and therefore unable to challenge them. Thus, since these changes, many have argued that the aims of the movement and its organizations fundamentally shifted, and question whether or not the movement was even successful. Social movement scholars have termed this paradox a "failure through success" (Ferree & Hess, 1995) where basic activist demands were met by policy reform, but the radical aims of the movement are undermined by policy implementation and resource dependency (Pleck, 1987; Schechter, 1982).

Now, in an era characterized by neoliberal reform, the violence against women movement faces different challenges that have created different organizational practices. Many shelters' governmental funding has been cut back, resulting in tighter budgets and a more precarious dependence on federal/state grant cycles (Baer, 2016). As a result, some nonprofits

supporting survivors of CSE and other forms of gender-based violence, like many other organizations (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Sanders, 2012), have been experimenting with commercialization techniques, seeking to meet multiple organizational goals through commercialization.

Commercialization of Organizations Supporting Survivors of Gender-Based-Violence

Very little research exists on how organizations supporting survivors of gender-based violence attempt to commercialize. However, the few studies reinforce pre-existing research suggesting nonprofits do so to meet practical, resource management (e.g., budget constraints) goals and therapeutic goals (e.g., providing benefits through “economic empowerment” or “horticulture therapy”) (Renzetti et al., 2014). This dual emphasis demonstrates a departure from the history of anti-violence organizations, as the commercialization efforts are not solely in place to provide financial support to the organization, but can operate to facilitate therapy and empowerment in those they serve. Not only does this change suggest that research in this area is needed, it further demonstrates the intersecting nature of economic empowerment with other forms of organization and individual empowerment.

For example, in a study of a domestic violence shelter’s recent horticulture therapy initiative, Renzetti et al. (2014) explain how the organizational leaders were experiencing financial pressures, so they began considering how to generate new revenue streams. They state:

Although various “cottage industries” were discussed, shelter administrators and staff felt that cultivating the land could address several issues simultaneously; specifically, farming could: 1) reduce the shelter’s food budget, while improving nutrition for residents and staff; 2) raise revenue through the sale of produce at local farmers’ markets; 3) provide residents with opportunities for physical exercise, socializing, and quiet reflection and meditation, thus facilitating healing; and 4) connect the shelter with the larger community through the shared value of land preservation and the “buy local” movement. (p. 10)

Thus, the authors emphasize both the practical, financial reasons as well as the possible therapeutic benefits to residents through developing a horticulture social enterprise.

Similarly, one of the CSE aftercare organizations examined in this project, River Oak, began its social enterprise in 2001. Now, their two-year residential therapy program for women who have left prostitution, trafficking, and addiction is funded in part by their business selling bath and body products. Furthermore, they employ survivors from their residential program in their social enterprise. Thus, the organization communicates the pragmatic purposes for their social enterprise, and, like the domestic violence shelter, they also highlight the therapeutic benefits of their business as well. River Oak's (2017) mission statement is to "heal, empower, and employ women survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction ... by providing safe and supportive housing, the opportunity for economic independence, and a strong community of advocates and partners" (Annual Report, 2017, p. 1). Thus, their model is built upon meeting practical, financial goals as well as provide therapeutic benefits to survivors.

Possible Perils of Commercialization

Although these programs appear to hold promise for CSE nonprofit organizations, research on anti-gender-based violence nonprofits hints at its perils as well. Feminists and other scholars have critiqued the growing professionalization of services for survivors, fearing that an emphasis on service-provision emphasizes an individualistic approach to therapy and obscures the structural and culture forces that perpetuate gender-based violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Lehrner & Allen, 2009; Walker, 1990). For example, as Lehrner and Allen (2009) note, "As resources are directed toward individual services for victims, a myopic analysis of the issue as 'that individual's problem' becomes possible, with the potential result an exclusive focus on therapeutic interventions" (p. 667). In the case of economic empowerment, focusing on

survivors' economic skills may reinforce victim-blaming notions that place the responsibility on survivors to avoid re-victimization or to 'better themselves' financially. An over-emphasis on the individual's responsibility could constitute a form of 'mission drift' emphasized in the literature on nonprofit organizations becoming business-like.

Thus, due to the potential benefits and constraints of commercialization for CSE organizations, further research should investigate how it operates in organizational economic empowerment processes. This research is especially useful considering the dearth of resources related to aftercare programs for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation (Gerassi, 2017; Schmidt, 2014). Thus, there is both scholarly and practical importance to understanding how nonprofit organizations engage in commercialization and to what effect.

Individual Empowerment of Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Women's Empowerment

Individual empowerment in this context is closely related to 'women's empowerment' as it has been conceptualized by scholars, particularly researchers in international development. Research on 'women's empowerment' is prevalent in this field, where it has been defined by organizations such as the World Bank and USAID. For example, the Inter-American Development Bank (2010) defines women's empowerment as 'expanding the rights, resources, and capacity of women to make decisions and act independently in social, economic, and political spheres' (p. 3), and the United Nations (2001) describes women's empowerment according to five characteristics:

women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. (as cited in Kabeer, 2012, p. 7)

These definitions bear similarity to the individualized definitions of empowerment discussed earlier, as they emphasize personal autonomy and decision-making.

Women's Economic Empowerment

As seen from these definitions of women's empowerment, expanding economic opportunity is regularly invoked as central to facilitating the empowerment of women. Many development scholars and practitioners almost equate it with women's overall empowerment (Rowlands, 1995; Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2018), believing that economic independence is so essential, that it operates akin to a 'ground floor' for achieving other forms empowerment (e.g., increasing self-worth, power to control one's own life, and ability to move outside the home). The World Bank was one of the first to explicitly adopt the language of women's economic empowerment, defining it as "making markets work for women (at the policy level) and empowering women to compete in markets (at the agency level)" (World Bank, 2006, p. 4). Although the hyper-emphasis on the economic dimensions of women's empowerment has been critiqued for being overly simplistic (e.g., Rowlands, 1995), research demonstrates that women's economic independence is critically linked to the achievement of many other empowerment outcomes (Kabeer, 2012). As The International Center for Research on Women (Golla, Malhotra, Nanda, & Mehra, 2011) argues, "economically empowering women is essential both to realise women's rights and to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare" (as cited in Kabeer, 2012, p. 8). For example, Kabeer (2012) reviews three studies on women who gained access to paid work, discussing how all three demonstrate connections between women's wage labor and other empowerment

outcomes. She states, “women’s paid work appeared to constitute an economic pathway to changes in their lives that went beyond the economic domain” (p. 17).

However, in Kabeer’s (2012) review of literature on women’s economic empowerment, she points out the conditions under which women find work empowering, as not all work opportunity is equivalent with empowerment. Most significantly, what kind of work and where one works are crucial factors for whether or not women consider work empowering. For example, studies indicate that paid work that involves mobility outside the home was more empowering than work confined to the household (Kabeer, 2012). More significantly, “good jobs,” or those characterized by fair and steady pay, legal protections, and decent working conditions, are more empowering than jobs with low pay, dangerous working conditions, or exploitative environments (e.g., sex work, unskilled agricultural labor, domestic labor). Kabeer (2012) notes that bad jobs are disempowering in part because women typically do not ‘choose’ them; they operate as ‘survival jobs’ that women work out of necessity. In sum, research on women’s economic empowerment demonstrates its importance in promoting overall empowerment; however, it also indicates that jobs themselves are not the answer, but the kinds of job are key.

Women’s Economic Empowerment and Gender-Based Violence

As literature on women’s economic empowerment demonstrates, women’s financial independence is linked to other forms of empowerment, including preventing or reducing one’s exposure to gender-based violence. This is unsurprising, as ample research demonstrates how poverty and violence are linked (Gilroy, Symes, & McFarlane, 2015). Many studies document how microfinance and microenterprise initiatives lower instances of domestic violence (Kabeer, 2012), as increasing financial independence can enable women to either escape abusive

relationships or exert greater power within relationships to avoid violence (Gilroy et al., 2015). Along the same lines, poverty is also a key risk factor for women returning to abusive partners after leaving the relationships (Brush, 2011; Hamby, 2014; Moe & Bell, 2004; Pruitt, 2008).

Despite the centrality of poverty in placing women at risk of gender-based violence, few U.S.-based organizations proactively address financial independence in their programs. Some argue the U.S. model is based on psychotherapy, and therefore emphasizes the psychological aspects of recovery and empowerment more than the material components (Wilson et al., 2015). However, more recently, domestic violence experts are calling for domestic violence initiatives that focus on the economic empowerment of domestic violence survivors (Goodman & Epstein, 2009; Renzetti et al., 2014), asserting that “financial instability and the threat or actual experience of poverty, in addition to the negative mental health impacts of IPV, are among the factors that motivate women to return to abusive partners, thus increasing the risk of revictimization” (Renzetti et al., 2014, p. 2).

In the context of domestic violence, economic empowerment has three components: (1) financial literacy, which is defined as having the knowledge and skills necessary to make sound financial decisions and acquire resources; (2) economic self-efficacy, which is a person’s beliefs about and confidence in their ability to achieve financial security and economic success (however they define success); and (3) economic self-sufficiency, which is one’s ability to independently meet one’s needs of daily life. (Renzetti, 2017, p. 275)

Of economic empowerment initiatives, financial literacy programs are the most popular among domestic violence advocates. Although these programs have yet to undergo rigorous empirical evaluation, preliminary studies point toward their potential to increase the financial independence, literacy, and self-efficacy of violence survivors (Postmus & Plummer, 2010). In the case of the therapeutic horticulture program at a domestic violence shelter, the authors note the effects of the program. They state that working on the farm resulted in “significant benefits”

to the residents, including feelings of accomplishment, self-sufficiency, and overall “economic empowerment” (Renzetti, 2017, p. 277). Other approaches to promoting economic empowerment among gender-based violence survivors include providing asset-building programs in which survivors receive savings matches or small loans to build their financial independence (Postmus, 2010; Sullivan, 2012). Other economic empowerment initiatives involve teaching resume-writing and job interviewing skills to aid survivors in finding employment (Renzetti, 2017).

Economic Empowerment for Survivors of CSE

The poverty-related risks of violence and revictimization are particularly pronounced for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, as the nature of abuse is intimately tied up with one’s economic vulnerability (Gerassi, 2017; Wilson & Butler, 2014). However, U.S.-based CSE aftercare programs “seldom focus on income generation activities or provision of employment to assist victims in exiting CSE ... although the lack of options and poverty are identified as causing relapse into CSE” (Wilson et al., 2015, p. 75). Only recently researchers and practitioners have begun discussing the importance of financially empowering CSE survivors (Gerassi, 2017; Wilson & Butler, 2014). Psychologists and other practitioners are now calling for organizations to provide more holistic recovery models that provide economic and financial training in addition to other forms of therapy to survivors, as failure to do so may undermine service providers’ extensive efforts to facilitate recovery and reintegration of CSE survivors. As Wilson and Butler (2014) argue, “Unless the poor economic conditions that contributed to their entry into the sex trade are sufficiently addressed in the post-exit phase, these women may fail in their efforts to achieve a life free of exploitation” (p. 500).

Although little research exists on these services for adults in the United States, emerging research points to the potential effectiveness of this economic empowerment initiatives for CSE

survivors. One study evaluated the impact of a job skills program for HIV+, drug-abusing women engaged in prostitution. As the participants often pursued sex work to support their addictions, the researchers observed a decline in prostitution as women gained more money selling the products made in the vocational training program (Sherman et al., 2006). The researchers conclude that this “behaviour change sustainability is most likely to succeed if women have access to job training programmes and licit employment opportunities” (p. 7). Similarly, some aftercare programs for sexually exploited children provide services related to economic employment, such as educational assistance, enrollment, and career development skills (Kaufman & Crawford, 2011; Macy & Johns, 2011; Wirsing, 2012). Research indicates that the “quality of vocational training and education is a large determinant in whether or not the child reintegrates well or returns to a trafficking situation” (Muraya & Fry, 2016, p. 215).

Perhaps most significantly, while little evidence exists on U.S.-based programs that center economic empowerment, there are many examples in India of successful economic empowerment programs to help facilitate the exit and rehabilitation of CSE survivors. Wilson et al. (2015) refer to these enterprises as “needs based, market driven, viable and sustainable” (p. 75), and are often operated by collectives of CSE survivors. Furthermore, they are developed to fit market needs of the local area and involve traditional and culturally-specific employment opportunities such as:

catering, hotel housekeeping, sewing and garment design, laundry services, pizza parlors, coffee kiosks and computer skills, as well as non-traditional employment such as construction, production of herbal medicines, fisherwomen cooperatives, ATM maintenance and petrol filling. (Wilson et al., 2015, p. 75)

Therefore, given the success of economic empowerment initiatives in other countries and the emerging research pointing toward the efficacy of similar programs in the United States, further

research is needed to understand the experiences of those in these programs and to understand their (dis)empowering effects.

The Present Study

By drawing on feminist new materialisms, empowerment research, and organizational tensions theory, this chapter has identified the importance of examining the material-discursive construction of economic empowerment at both the organizational and individual level, the tensions that emerge within these constructions, and the ways in which organizational members frame these tensions and respond.

By examining organizational (economic) empowerment, scholars can better understand how nonprofits use commercialization to attain their social missions. Furthermore, by explicating tensions within the construction of organizational economic empowerment, researchers and practitioners can better understand the contradictory nature of resource mobilization within a mission-driven organization. As these economic empowerment efforts are often directly tied to CSE survivors, further research should examine how CSE organizations pursue organizational economic empowerment through commercialization. Thus, the first research question(s) for this study are:

RQ1: How is organizational economic empowerment materially-discursively constructed?

RQ1(a): What tensions emerge within this construction?

RQ1(b): How do organizational members frame and respond to these tensions?

Second, as empowerment research indicates, empowerment operates at multiple levels. Thus, this project also examines the material-discursive construction of individual economic empowerment within CSE organizations. Given the nascence of research on their experiences

and effective therapies, this information is necessary for organizations seeking to support CSE survivors and their reintegration into their communities. Furthermore, by explicating the tensions that emerge within this construction, researchers and practitioners can better understand the ‘stress points’ within attempts to “organize empowerment,” as well as how organizational members frame these tensions and respond to them. Thus, the second research question(s) for this project are:

RQ2: How is individual economic empowerment materially-discursively constructed?

RQ2(a): What tensions emerge in this construction?

RQ2(b): How organizational members frame and respond to these tensions?

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

As discussed in Chapter 2, my metatheoretical orientation shapes my methodological commitments and strategies. Thus, in this section, I first trace how elements of feminist new materialisms—specifically materiality/embodiment, contradiction, and moral responsibility—have informed my methodological decision-making in specific ways. Then I outline the particular qualitative methods utilized in this study.

Methodology: Tracing a Feminist New Materialist Approach

Discourse-Materiality Complexity and Multiple Paradigms

As stated in Chapter 2, feminist new materialisms force an attention to the interplay between discourse/materiality and their corresponding philosophical paradigms (Putnam & Ashcraft, 2017). As Putnam and Ashcraft (2017) explain, feminist new materialisms demonstrate that “realist and constructivist ontologies can be held in tandem” (p. 348). Yet, in addition to holding together ‘competing’ ontologies, feminist new materialists embrace seemingly incommensurate epistemologies. By breaking down the distinctions between realist/constructivist, discourse/materiality, subject/object, and related dualisms, feminist new materialists reject the perceived divide between epistemology and ontology (Barad, 2007; Lykke, 2010;). For example, in her theory of agential realism, Barad (2007) draws on fellow feminist new materialist, Donna Haraway, using her term “onto-epistem-ology” to signify the inherent fusion of paradigms when conceptualizing matter and discourse as entangled. As a feminist new materialist onto-epistemology embraces disparate knowledge production traditions, methodology grounded in this approach necessarily reflects this emphasis on fusion, contradiction, and complexity.

Moral Responsibility

Furthermore, a feminist new materialist onto-epistemology requires moral accountability on the part of the researcher. As discourse and materiality, subject and object, knower and known, are all implicated in the intra-actions that constitute reality, researchers are no longer positioned as external to the research process. Haraway (1988) refers to the long-standing positivist emphasis on rationalist ‘objectivity’ as the “view from nowhere,” or the “god-trick.” Instead, she argues for a:

politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition, of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people’s lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity. (Haraway, 1988, p. 589)

Thus, since we “don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world” but rather “because we are part of the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 185), researchers are part of the discursive-material intra-actions that constitute reality, and are therefore ethically responsible for the realities they construct. As Lykke (2010) states, “Scientific research produces realities and worlds, and precisely because research, for good or for bad, is never without real effects, the researcher cannot allow herself or himself to avoid taking moral co-responsibility for the consequences” (p. 159).

However, feminist new materialists have identified the ways that the ‘view from nowhere’ has enabled researchers to evade this moral responsibility and use their epistemic privilege to (re)produce violences against vulnerable groups. Thus, to embody a “situated knowledge” or “view from somewhere,” researchers must be self-consciously aware of their own bodies, positionalities, and power in the research process. As Ellingson (2017) argues, when researchers’ bodies go “unmarked in our accounts, they reinscribe the power of scholars to speak

without reflexive consideration of their positionality” (p. 6). Thus, situated, embodied knowledge necessitates a particular set of ethics, termed by some feminist new materialists as “embodied ethics” (Ellingson, 2017) or an “ethics of knowing” (Barad, 2007). Beyond merely forcing an attention toward how researcher power can produce harms, this ethic requires consideration of how it can create benefits for others as well. For example, Ellingson (2017) calls for “embodiment in qualitative research in ways that will foster compassionate change in the world, affecting the material conditions of bodies” (p. 193).

Applying a Feminist New Materialist Approach to the Present Study

Practically, a feminist new materialist approach to research draws on these emphases in complexity, embodiment/materiality, and moral obligation. This project in particular embodies these aspects through its (a) multi-dimensional nature, (b) emphasis on moral responsibility, (c) methodological/ethical flexibility, and (d) researcher reflexivity.

Multi-Dimensional Nature

As a feminist new materialist approach embraces multiple methodological paradigms and approaches, this project engages the researcher-as-bricoleur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) metaphor, utilizing multiple qualitative methods across multiple sites and levels of organizing in order to present “deep, thickly described, complexly rendered interpretations of the meanings about a phenomenon or group” (Ellingson, 2017, p. 10). When describing this bricolage process within organizational communication research, Putnam (2014) likens it to “constructing a quilt,” wherein “investigators create a montage of organizational life, often from multiple paradigms and fragmentary sources” (p. 218). Thus, this project draws on interviews, observations, and

document analyses to weave together an understanding of organizational and individual economic empowerment in CSE nonprofit/social enterprise organizations.

Furthermore, given that feminist new materialism seeks to transcend distinctions in research traditions and paradigms, this project straddles qualitative methodological traditions. In doing so, it also follows Ellingson's (2009) call to "refuse to play within the lines, make up new rules, transgress categories to offer your own plan and be "promiscuous" in your methodology" (p. 54). By combining multiple methods across multiple organizations and meso and micro levels of organizing, this project seeks to draw out the differences and tensions within how organizations and individuals construct economic empowerment. In this sense, it follows a traditional ethnographic case study by utilizing its methods while rejecting the typical singular research site. Doerfel and Gibbs (2014) liken this hybridized approach to the "middle ground position" in organizational communication field research. Although described in more traditional post-positivist language, they explain the "essence" of middle-ground studies as:

they sample from multiple sites; hence, they sacrifice some of the contextualization comes from full immersion in a single site. In this sense, they provide more richness about organizational contexts that do nominal studies, while they maintain some distance from the site in order to generalize across contexts. They often draw on multiple methods, such as observation and interview or interviews and surveys, to add validity to singular methods. (p. 230)

In this way, the multi-method, multi-organizational approach exists in a liminal space between traditional field research and nominal field research; however, it also reflects the growing body of qualitative research in organizational communication with "complex" interpretive/analytic methods, that are "multimethod, multilevel, and intertextual" in nature (Putnam, 2014, p. 218).

Moral Obligation to Create ‘Useful’ Knowledge

As a feminist new materialist approach highlights one’s ethical responsibility to create knowledge that promotes social change, this project aims to surface information needed for ending commercial sexual exploitation. In communication research, this approach mirrors the work of feminist scholars as well as those who take a communication approach to social justice, or the "engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who are economically, socially, politically, and/or culturally underresourced" (Frey et al., 1996, p. 110).

As there are many approaches to social justice or feminist research, this project focuses its social change aims by seeking to address questions helpful to nonprofits that provide care to survivors of CSE. Within nonprofit communication research, this study responds to growing calls to make researchers’ studies more “useful” to nonprofit organizations seeking to create social change (Lewis, 2012; Simpson & Seibold, 2008). For example, Lewis (2012) calls out organizational communication researchers who create knowledge considered interesting to other researchers but not by the nonprofit practitioners themselves. She advocates for communication and collaboration with practitioners to understand how to make one’s research more useful for nonprofit organizations and those they serve. Within anti-gender-based violence program evaluation and research specifically, this study follows the ‘advocacy research’ perspective outlined by Gondolf, Yllo, and Campbell (1997) and Riger et al. (2002), in which a researcher “uses the research skills on behalf of practitioners and the battered women they represent rather than promote a research agenda” (Riger et al., 2002, p. 37).

For this project, seeking to create useful knowledge has involved speaking with individuals leading or employed at CSE nonprofit organizations about what information would be helpful. Furthermore, it draws on existing literature from practitioner fields such as social

work, international development, and nursing to identify where there are information needs in providing services to CSE survivors. Therefore, rather than identify research questions according to theoretical propositions or scholarly interest alone, it seeks to answer questions of practical import to organizations and individuals seeking to end commercial sexual exploitation (Simpson & Seibold, 2008). In addition, throughout the research process, I remained attentive to issues that emerged throughout the data collection process, modifying my questions accordingly in order to discuss areas my participants' areas of concern or interest. Furthermore, at a later date, I will summarize the best practices and challenges that emerged in the research process and distribute these reports to my participants for use in their organizations.

In this way, this project reflects the work of other organizational researchers who conduct engaged scholarship and use local communities and practical social needs to shape the nature of their research inquiry (Ellingson, 2017; Lewis, 2012). However, in the same way that this project embraces the complexity of multiple methods and research traditions, it does not fit into neatly bracketed understandings of engaged versus applied communication research. As much engaged research privileges sustained, collaborative involvement with one organization or community, this project does not fit a traditional template for engaged ethnographic organizational research as it spans several organizational contexts. However, as mentioned, it follows the same values as many engaged communication scholars through its attention to useful knowledge, participant involvement, and ethical/methodological flexibility and reflexivity (Dempsey & Barge, 2014)—aspects of the research process that will be elaborated further in the following sections.

Methodological/Ethical Flexibility

In order to create useful knowledge and remain morally accountable to one's research, this project embraces methodological/ethical flexibility. Unlike post-positivist approaches that

seek to separate the ‘knower’ from the ‘known’ and apply standardized, top down research designs (Ellingson, 2017), methodological flexibility recognizes the negotiated and co-constructed nature of knowledge production between two subjects. In other words, this flexibility is central to the “ability to navigate methodologically in process-shaped and dynamic worlds where the subjects and objects of research, knower and known, are part of the same context and not fenced off from each other” (Lykke, 2010, p. 150).

Methodological flexibility cannot be separated from ethical flexibility, as every methodological choice carries an ethical implication. From a feminist new materialist standpoint, when the researcher recognizes the mutual entanglement of the ‘knower’ and ‘known’ in the research process, it necessitates an embodied, ethical concern for the individuals involved. This is a fluid, ever-changing process that requires ethical flexibility. As Ellingson (2017) writes:

Because ‘an ethics of embodiment is complex and dynamic, open to challenge and revision’ (L&S, 2007, p.71), no single ethical standard can encompass all situations that may arise during the course of research (Swartz, 2001). This requires researchers to be flexible, attentive, and committed to ongoing consideration of not just embodied well being or material circumstances but even dynamic embodied identities and categories. (p. 46)

Methodological/Ethical Flexibility in Sensitive and Nonprofit Research

Enacting methodological/ethical flexibility is also important when those involved serve or identify as survivors of trauma. Being willing to adapt the methods and design is essential to ethical research, especially in this context. For example, due to past experiences of interpersonal violence or control, some participants may feel uncomfortable being recorded or signing their name on a consent form (Riger et al., 2002). Thus, these methodological/ethical decisions require flexibility so as to put participants at ease.

Methodological flexibility is also especially necessary when studying nonprofits. These organizations are often over-burdened, under-resourced, and heavily scrutinized (Riger et al.,

2002; Simpson & Seibold, 2008), such that evaluation and engaged researchers have pointed out that full collaboration with practitioners may simply be infeasible for many organizational members (Gregory, 2000). Many nonprofits that serve survivors of gender-based violence operate on shoestring budgets and insufficient staffing (Ake & Arnold, 2017; Riger et al., 2000). By maintaining methodological/ethical flexibility, this project can better respond to the fluid and shifting expectations and capacities of the various organizations and individuals involved. In this chapter's description of phases of this research process, I further discuss how I have enacted methodological flexibility in order to respond to the needs and interests of my participants.

Researcher Reflexivity

Enacting moral accountability and methodological/ethical flexibility necessitates researcher reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process by which a researcher interrogates one's power and positionality in the research process in efforts to minimize the effects of power between the researcher and participants (Ellingson, 2017; Pillow, 2003). According to feminist new materialists, it is through this process that a researcher seeks to "make herself or himself 'accountable' for her or his articulations of reality" produced through research (Lykke, 2010, p. 135). Ellingson (2009, 2017) considers reflexivity central to both crystallized research and embodied qualitative research, so that researchers are continually taking inventory of their own situated knowledges.

While researchers enact reflexivity in many ways, this is often done through journaling about one's own social location, the positionality of research participants, how participants are situated in potentially hierarchical relationships with the researcher, and how to represent the participants in the research narrative (e.g., Linabary & Hamel, 2017). Reflecting on questions such as these can also be accomplished through dialogue with other researchers and/or

participants, even online through email or platforms such as Google Docs. Researchers also engage in critical reflexivity by presenting participants with the findings of their study to seek their feedback on data interpretation and participant representation (DeVault & Gross, 2007).

Researcher Reflexivity in the Present Study

In this study, I enacted reflexivity through journaling throughout the data collection and analysis process. In the same way that ethical/methodological flexibility is especially essential in this particular research context, so is carefully reflecting on if and how the researcher is remaining morally accountable to participants. In this project, I first sought to enact reflexivity in this project through a preliminary visit to a CSE aftercare organization and interview with a survivor of sexual trauma. I asked a friend who has experienced sexual exploitation if she would accompany me to visit the organization, located six hours away. After we attended some events at this organization, I later interviewed her about her experience at the organization, and to seek her perspective on this research project. I asked her questions about what would make her feel heard or silenced in a project such as this, how to promote care and be attentive to particular ethical concerns. This interview served as a reflexive process that has shaped my methodological approach for this study.

In addition, I wrote reflexive journals throughout the data collection and analysis process. This writing interrogated my positionality alongside that of my participants. I sought to understand how my social location as a white, middle-class, heterosexual, evangelical Christian, American woman shaped my approach to collecting and analyzing the data. For example, my identity as an evangelical Christian made me familiar with language and norms of the faith-based nonprofits I studied. When I interviewed members from these organizations, I often disclosed that I was a Christian, as I wanted the participants to understand my familiarity with the religious

beliefs and conventions that shape faith-based nonprofit organizing. Furthermore, as I used to work at a faith-based CSE organization, I disclosed this aspect of my identity in the recruitment process, again seeking to develop a mutual sense of understanding. This led to data that was often rich with religious language. For the purposes of this paper, when analyzing these data in conjunction with secular nonprofits, I often ‘translated’ the language by generalizing it according to broader principles observed throughout the various nonprofits (e.g., discussing spirituality as a general, rather than denominationally specific concept). This ‘insider knowledge’ enabled me to observe both differences and similarities across organizations. In the future, I would like to use my journal reflections on my faith identity to write a separate piece on spiritual reflexivity and its role in the research process.

At times I would also disclose my identity as the daughter of two social entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders. As one of the organizations in this project is run by my mother, I journaled extensively about the nature of this relationship and how it shaped my interactions with participants at this organization and my understanding of their data. For example, when interviewing these participants, I often felt that they would share negative opinions about organizational operations, but would strategically hold back names of individuals responsible. After a few interviews, I felt that their critical feedback was presented as well as ‘anonymized’ with hopes that their opinions would reach the founder to create change. Since I have a connection with the founder, and she listens to me, I sensed that participants wanted me to ‘use’ this relationship for their benefit. Thus, in my journal reflections, I discussed how my role as organizational insider and founder family member appeared to facilitate participants’ sharing about challenging aspects of their work environment, while also causing them to hold back and strategically anonymize some of the information.

To reflexively consider my interpretation of the findings, I plan to, at a later date, write up a practitioner report of the best practices and challenges that emerged throughout the course of this project and send it to my participants for their feedback. By doing so, I seek to engage in reflexive discussion about the findings and make changes according to my participants' responses. After this discussion with practitioners, I plan to disseminate a final report that includes the findings edited according to this reflexive exercise.

Methods: Interviews, Document Analysis, and Observations at CSE Organizations

This study draws on three different qualitative methods at 18 different CSE organizations to examine how economic empowerment is materially-discursively constituted at both the organizational and individual level. More specifically, this project utilizes 38 interviews with organizational members, analysis of 204 organizational texts, and 54 hours of observation of organizational activities. For the two largest CSE organizations, River Oak and Freedom, Int'l,⁴ I conducted "passing organizational ethnographies" (Cooren et al., 2008), in which I collected interviews from 8 organizational members at River Oak and 13 organizational members at Freedom, Int'l, 54 hours of total observation at these organizations, and analyzed 131 of their internal and external documents. A 'passing' ethnography refers to efforts by researchers to engage in ethnographic-like analysis of multi-site, multi-agent phenomena (Couldry, 2003). In this sense, it "takes complexity seriously," embracing the partiality of ethnographic knowledge, and problematizing traditional notions of ethnography that emphasize immersion in 'fixed' spaces or cultures. Thus, this method is well-suited to multi-site qualitative work wherein researchers seek to discern patterns that potentially stretch across contexts. However, a "passing"

⁴ River Oak and Freedom, Int'l are pseudonyms.

ethnography recognizes that researchers, with limited time and multiple contexts, should seek “as much context as [can] reasonably be obtained” (Cooren et al., 2008, p. 53). Thus, I supplemented these two organizational passing ethnographies with interviews and document analyses of 16 other organizations.

In the following sections I describe the rationale and approaches I took for both data collection and analysis. This process can be described as taking place in three phases.

Phase 1: Gathering Preliminary Insight, Reflexive Feedback, and Permissions

In the first phase of this project, I sought to understand which sorts of information would be useful for organizations serving survivors of CSE. I had originally planned to conduct an in-depth engaged case study of River Oak, the largest CSE nonprofit social enterprise in the United States. Despite this organization’s interest in participating in my study, after communicating about co-designing the research questions and outcomes, they declined access because they were simply ‘maxed out’ and did not have the capacity to participate in an intensive, engaged case study. This experience highlighted the importance of maintaining methodological flexibility when engaging in research in low-resource settings (Riger et al., 2002).

Given the organization’s decision, I decided to change the research design from a case study to a multi-organizational analysis. Rather than simply seek out a new organization for a case study after receiving the denial from River Oak, I sought out the perspective of two different nonprofit leaders for feedback on how to make my project further beneficial for practitioners and, by extension, survivors of CSE. Both responded that a broader, rather than a ‘deeper’ analysis would be beneficial given the nascence of research on nonprofit approaches to serving survivors of CSE. They were more concerned with learning about the approaches of varying organizations than understanding a specific organization in-depth. With this knowledge,

I adapted the research design to include multiple CSE organizations in efforts to provide a seemingly more ‘useful’ product to practitioners. I decided to conduct two passing ethnographies of River Oak and another large CSE organization, and then interview founders and leaders at other organizations, as well as collect their public organizational documents.

I then visited River Oak with a friend to gather preliminary data on what specific questions to address through this project. After this visit, I interviewed my friend to seek her perspectives on compassionate and respectful ways to collect data at these organizations and with potential survivors of CSE. I then contacted an individual who is a founder of another CSE organization and a family member of mine. I chose Freedom, Int’l as a possible ethnographic subject because it is also a large, older CSE nonprofit that operates a sizable social enterprise. However, rather than running a residential program for survivors of CSE, Freedom, Int’l operates a workforce development program along with many other services for CSE survivors. The founder consented to me interviewing her employees, observing organizational events, and analyzing internal and external documents. She then wrote a letter documenting her relationship to me in order to provide full disclosure to the IRB. I also contacted the CEO of River Oak to ask for permission to collect the same kinds of data. With both leaders’ permission, I applied for IRB approval for a study that involved interviews, observations, and document analysis at these two organizations and interviews with organizational leaders at other CSE organizations, as well as document analysis of their public organizational materials.

Phase 2: Data Collection

Recruitment

After receiving IRB approval, I began recruiting interview participants from U.S.-based nonprofit/social enterprise organizations that met the following criteria: (a) serve domestic

survivors of CSE and (b) have attempted or plan to attempt to generate revenue for the organization outside of traditional governmental support or charitable giving. I recruited participants in three primary ways.

I first emailed my contact at River Oak, as they have an extensive network of ‘sister organizations’ that share their model for social enterprise and aftercare. I inquired about contacting individuals who lead these sister organizations, and my request was met with enthusiasm and a spreadsheet with the names and contact information of the presidents/leaders of each organization. I used this spreadsheet to recruit leaders of similar CSE organizations, mentioning River Oak’s involvement with my study and my interest in interviewing leaders of sister organizations about their work. I included the IRB-approved information sheet along with my prospecting email. From this process, leaders of 13 different CSE organizations were recruited for phone-based interviews.

As most of these organizations operate residential facilities, I desired the perspectives of more organizations who focus primarily on workforce development, like Freedom, Int’l. Through searching online, I discovered three additional workforce development social enterprises to supplement and add greater diversity to my dataset. I emailed their founders about setting up a phone interview, and all three agreed.

For the passing organizational ethnographies, I also recruited participants from each of the two case study organizations, River Oak and Freedom, Int’l. Rather than interview solely organizational leaders, I sampled individuals in a variety of roles, including sales, marketing, finance, volunteer coordinating, among others. I contacted individuals ranging from department leaders to part time employees to offer further context and diverse perspectives.

Interviews

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with organizational leaders and members, as they are essential for understanding a “social actor’s experience and perspective through stories, accounts, and explanations” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 173). I chose to interview organizational leaders in order to gain insight into financial decision-making within the organization (RQ1) and how these leaders seek to facilitate individual economic empowerment (RQ2). In this sense, these interviews are similar to elite interviews (Dexter, 2006). Dexter (2006) explains the unique insights provided by elite interviewing:

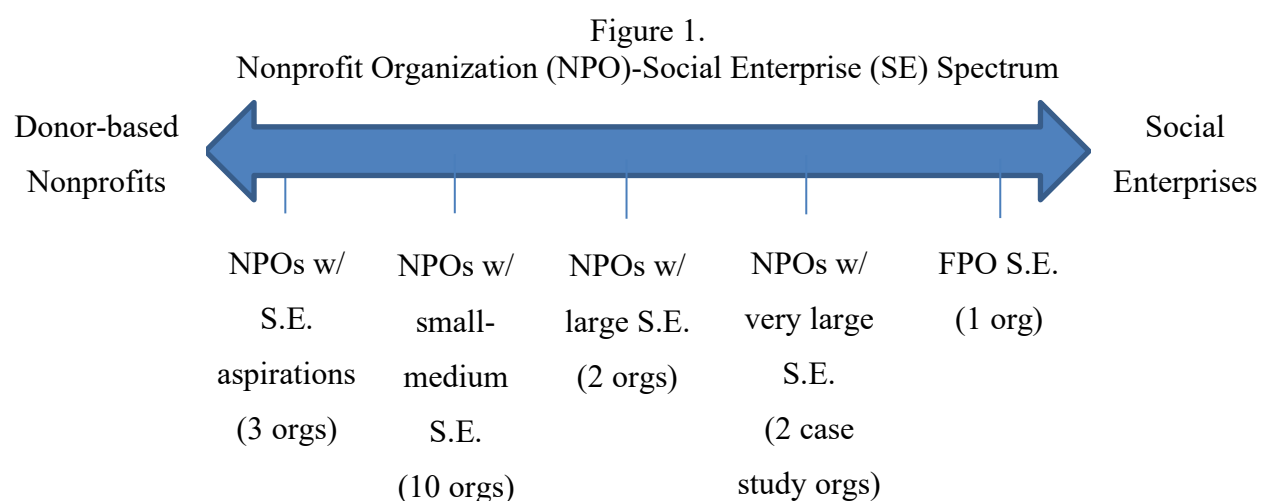
in elite interviewing, as here defined, the investigator is willing, and often eager, to let the interviewee teach him what the problem, the question, the situation, is ... partly out of necessity... this approach has been adopted more often with the influential, the prominent, and the well-informed, than with the rank-and-file of a population. For one thing, a good many well-informed influential people unwilling to accept the assumptions with which the investigator starts; they insist on explaining to him how they see the situation, what the real problems are as they view the matter. (p. 19)

Thus, interviews with elites are well-suited to exploring why and how organizations engage in commercialization activities, and if and how these processes operate as forms of economic organizational empowerment. Interviews with various organizational members offered meaningful context to the leadership interviews, as well as offered unique insight into the tension points within the organizational and individual economic empowerment processes.

Total, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 38 individuals, 21 of which were founders, presidents, executive directors, or C-level employees. The remaining 17 were organizational members in a variety of roles. Of the 38 participants, two were men, and three were African American. The rest of the participants were Caucasian women. Three of these individuals identified as survivors sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or addiction. I sought to incorporate more voices from self-identified survivors; however, these individuals proved

difficult to recruit for the study. I only contacted those in professional roles at the various organizations, per my IRB restrictions. However, most of these individuals politely declined my request to talk with them about their work at the organization.

I interviewed 13 participants at Freedom, Int'l, and 8 participants at River Oak. The remaining participants were organizational leaders at the 16 additional CSE organizations. These organizations are located in 13 different states in the continental United States and present a range of organizational forms on the nonprofit-social enterprise spectrum (Figure 1).



In this diagram, three nonprofits that operated residential programs and outreach centers aspired to develop social enterprises in order to add job training and employment opportunities for survivors. Ten of the organizations operated small to medium-sized enterprises, employing several women for only a few hours a week, or a few women for longer hours. These organizations identified primarily as nonprofits with small businesses to develop survivors' job skills. Nonprofits with large social enterprises are primarily workforce development programs that draw labor from their own community centers or local residential programs. The two case study organizations in this project operate 'very large' or multi-million dollar social enterprises,

making them especially hybridized nonprofits. Finally, one for-profit social enterprise was included in this study as it employs survivors from a local residential nonprofit.

I interviewed these participants in person or on the phone, based on the individual's preference and ease of access. Despite assumptions that face-to-face interviews are the 'gold standard' in qualitative research, increasing research points to the capacity of phone and online interviewing to generate similar, 'thick' data (Deakin & Wakefield, 2012; Kazmer & Xie, 2008; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). For a few participants, we continued to correspond about the interview topics via email after our phone conversation.

I employed a semi-structured interview format to maintain some standardization among interviews questions while creating space for participants to lead the conversation toward topics of interest. For organizational leaders, the interview protocol focused on organizational decision-making, such as nonprofit and social enterprise origin stories, why and how leaders began enterprising their organizations, how they gather and structure financial resources, and the perceived effects of commercialization. For these individuals and the organizational members, I sought to understand how running a business with employees recovering from trauma affects organizational operations and decision-making.

The organizational member interview protocol focused on participants' sense-making of their experiences employed or involved in the nonprofit organization. The questions sought information related to why they joined the organization, what they have enjoyed about their involvement, and what has been challenging. Although I initially planned to ask participants how they make sense of empowerment, this question did not yield the depth of insight desired. Thus, I edited my interview protocol to include different questions such as, "How would your role look different at a for-profit enterprise rather than a social enterprise employing survivors?" In

addition, due to the exploratory nature of this study, new insights emerged within the first several interviews, leading me to adapt the questions in the protocol further. The interviews ranged from approximately 26-78 minutes, with the average interview lasting roughly 45 minutes. At the end of each interview, I emailed the participant an invitation to accept a \$10 Amazon gift card. The interviews were then transcribed, generating 532 pages of single-spaced text, and uploaded into Nvivo qualitative analysis software.

(Participant) Observation

In addition to interviewing participants, I concurrently observed events and business spaces at River Oak and Freedom, Int'l. Participant observation is a “craft of experiencing and recording events in social settings” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 135). This is an ideal method for understanding how real-time, embodied talk and interaction in material organizational settings surface the material and discursive aspects of economic empowerment construction. The observations served as a complement to the interviews and document analyses, offering rich, multi-sensory data in addition to showing in ‘real time’ organizational processes.

There are several forms of participant observation that researchers can engage in the field. Tracy (2013) identifies a continuum, including complete participation, play participation, focused participant observer, and complete observer. I enacted “play participation” in which researchers seek to participate as active members, but can also “opt in and out in ways unavailable to a complete participant” (Tracy, 2013, p. 109). Play participation proved to be a flexible form of participant observation that suited the flexibility necessary for working with multiple organizations serving sensitive populations.

Thus, I observed 54 hours of organizational events, including educational workshops designed to inform prospective founders and social entrepreneurs about the organization’s

business and residential model, group meetings with these prospective founders and various organizational staff members about their roles and responsibilities, fundraising events, community trafficking awareness trainings, tours of the facilities, among other activities. I also volunteered at these organizations, spent time in their cafes and boutiques, purchased products and food, and interacted with staff members as a customer. For Freedom, Int'l, I also hosted a product party at my home and invited friends and family to attend and shop. At River Oak, I collected 22.5 hours of observational data, and at Freedom, Int'l, I collected 31.5 hours of observational data.

Throughout the process, I wrote ethnographic field notes to document the material and discursive features of the activities and interactions I observed (Bernard, 2011; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). During the observations themselves, I took 'jottings' (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) that I later adapted into more thorough descriptions and reflections on the activities observed. After the events, I wrote up detailed field notes and analytic memos to record and reflect on what took place at these organizational activities. In total, this process generated 96 single-spaced pages of field notes, memos, and reflections.

Documents

In addition to collecting interview and observational data, I collected internal and external documents from the two case study organizations, and public texts from the 16 other organizations. Collecting and analyzing organizational documents is well-suited to understanding how organizational materialities contribute the construction of economic empowerment (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). In the context of my study specifically, organizational documents provided insight into how organizations communicate about their mission, interact with stakeholders, construct programs to facilitate empowerment among survivors of CSE, and navigate their

enterprises. From the two case study organizations, I collected documents including materials disseminated at education workshops, documents describing organizational branding, newsletters, survivor testimonials, pamphlets, marketing materials, books written by founders, training manuals, and other documents. From the 16 other organizations, I collected publicly available information from their organization's websites. In total, I collected 204 organizational documents.

Phase 3: Data Analysis

After collecting the data, I uploaded the digital copies of the transcripts, fieldnotes, and organizational documents into NVivo, a qualitative analysis software, for thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). Using this software enabled me to visualize the connections between different forms of data and draw out patterns that stretched across data sources.

I began first with open coding, the "initial, unrestricted coding of the data," categorizing chunks of text into general, descriptive themes while also adding analytic memos (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 219). These themes included labels such as "social enterprise origin story" or "employee pay." Then I began axial coding, in which I grouped the smaller, descriptive codes into larger codes that captured broader categories of meaning, for example "meaningful work," or "work as therapeutic," or "trauma-informed communication." To guide this process, I followed Owen's (1984) criteria of "(1) recurrence, (2), repetition, and (3) forcefulness" (p. 275). At this point, I also created specific codes that attended to issues of materiality, embodiment, and space, so that I could specifically examine these aspects of the economic empowerment construction process. Finally, I engaged in selective coding, or using the research questions and theoretical positioning of the study to guide the selection of relevant codes and patterns for incorporation into the research narrative. Thus, I began creating codes that reflected the tensions

within these constructions of individual and organizational economic empowerment. These codes included labels such as “compassion vs accountability” or “mission as anchor in market-mission tension.”

Summary

In this chapter, I first identified my (meta)theoretical approach and explained how it has informed my methodological decision-making. I then outlined the specific methods I employed in this study, providing rationale for the use of these methods as well as a detailed description of their utilization throughout the three phases of scoping, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 4.

CONSTRUCTING ORGANIZATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

In this chapter, I discuss how organizations supporting survivors of CSE discursively-materially construct organizational economic empowerment. Since I define organizational economic empowerment as “the discursive-material processes by which organizations mobilize resources to meet their mission,” I first describe how organizations discursively-materially construct ‘mission,’ and then outline the discursive-material practices that enable their resource mobilization. Then I discuss how tensions emerge in this construction, how organizational members make sense of these tensions and respond to them.

Discursively-Materially Constructing Mission: Market is Mission but So Much More

Market is Mission: Discursive Construction

In these organizations, successful commercialization (the market⁵) is discursively framed as fundamentally necessary for achieving their social missions. In fact, unlike many nonprofits that commercialize in order to generate additional revenue, commercialization *is* the mission for these organizations. To facilitate survivors’ economic empowerment, the organizations build a business as a necessity in order to offer survivors job training, pay, and employment experience. For example, two organizations claim their missions are to “heal, empower, and employ” survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. Many others aim to ‘empower’ by offering opportunities for “economic self-sufficiency,” “economic independence,” “economic freedom,” or “financial independence” (web documents, annual reports). One organization describes the mission of their social enterprise as “to help women achieve economic self-sufficiency” and

⁵ When referring to the ‘market’ hereafter, I am referring to nonprofits’ commercialization attempts.

“build a sustainable business model that can create a profitable source of income for our clients, while building their confidence and giving them job experience” (Annual Report). Rather than describe the market as competing with or supplemental to the mission, these organizations construct the market *as* the mission, placing them in a mutually-reinforcing, dialectical relationship. In fact, providing economic opportunity is so central to these organizations, that some founders seek to provide new language for their business ventures, discursively re-figuring the ‘market’ at the heart of their mission. As the founder of River Oak explains:

I call them justice enterprises, not social enterprises. I'm trying to change that word because social enterprise is a big category, but what I think of when I think of a justice enterprise, I think of it where the workforce is the mission of the project. So, it's not just doing social good. It's actually the employment is the most significant part.

In contrast to many social enterprise models that donate proceeds to a social cause, or loosely align themselves with a social mission, Shelby seeks to reimagine the social enterprise model by centralizing employment, discursively positioning the “workforce as the mission of the project” and making the mission explicitly commercial in nature. Yet, this discursive construction of market as mission stems from the economic conditions and material needs of CSE survivors, highlighting how the mission is both discursively-materially constructed in these organizations.

Market is Mission: Material Needs Require Material Solutions

Many participants and organizational documents referenced the economic barriers facing survivors of CSE. Criminal records, social stigma, lack of education, little to no formal job experience, mental health and trauma disorders pose substantial obstacles for survivors seeking long-term employment. Wanda describes how if the women can find jobs, they are “little bits and pieces, hourly things like that, but a lot of them have really not good records. Things that the pimps made them go do or they're just so high, they've got five cars in their name, things like

that.” Several other participants referenced how felonies make it difficult for survivors to find sustainable employment. As most women in the programs have been involved in some form of prostitution, trafficking, and/or drug dealing, Georgia explains, “It’s not as though our women never work. Just the work that they did is not something that you want to put on a resume.” As a result, practitioners regularly voiced employment opportunity as most significant ‘need’ for their long-term recovery and independence. As Ellie explains, “It’s the biggest need honestly. The women need jobs that adequately pay.”

Thus, many organizations began their enterprises specifically to address the employment barriers survivors face. Even though many organizations began by providing wrap-around services of various kinds (counseling, safe and supportive housing, medical attention, etc.), they found that women’s inability to find jobs thwarted their long-term recovery and re-integration attempts. Thus, many of these organizations began cottage industries as an in-house opportunity for survivors to develop job skills, gain employment experience, and earn extra funds. When attending an event at River Oak, one of the first graduates of the program explained the origins of the social enterprise:

Then she shared some details about the program, how they earned stipends and could save their money and [the residential program] would match what they saved. They also learned how to build credit. She then shared about how [the founder] brought in a woman who taught her and the other residents about how to prepare for interviews, how to write resumes, dress professionally, etc. All the women got pumped up and went out to try to get some jobs. They couldn’t land anything. Nobody wanted to hire them. [The survivor] called this a “self-esteem buster.” They came back super discouraged and [the founder] said, “Okay guys, we’re gonna make candles.” At this point, [the survivor] let out a hilarious sarcastic laugh and said “We’re going to make what?” This was [the founder’s] idea to try to get the women to start making an income themselves since no one was able to get a job. [The survivor] referred to this as a way to “support ourselves.” (field notes)

The nonprofit's now multi-million-dollar social enterprise was born out of a need for employment, as the survivors' recovery process could not continue without it. Similarly, Rita explains a similar phenomenon in the early days of her organization:

...all of a sudden these women are doing well in their treatment, they're starting to heal from the trauma with all the counseling they're receiving. Then they realize trying to go out in the community and can't find a job, no one will hire them. The idea was, "What can we do to give jobs to these ladies to help them start to become self-sufficient?"

Crystal, another founder, refers to her earliest attempts to design programs that provide employment as "not really brilliant—necessity was the mother of invention." In another organization's written description of its social enterprise, the founder states how they wanted to "empower women mind, body, spirit, as well as financially. So we started a bath and body business." Thus, these participants expressed how the financial and employment needs of survivors led their organizations to develop social enterprises.

Each participant, however, explained how therapeutic services were simply not enough. Rather than employment functioning as another option in the banquet of available therapies, employment was something that the survivors' long-term recovery hinged on. Participants expressed that without vocational training and economic opportunity, all of the other survivors' 'successes' in recovery and empowerment would prove unsustainable. As Maggie describes:

And we kept hearing at the beginning and we still get calls of, "Hey, we graduated from a program but we don't have any job and we don't know how to take care of ourselves," and it feels like you're not set up for very realistic steps upon graduation.

When women are not 'set up' for economic independence, they are likely to relapse and forfeit the gains they have made in their programs. Chapter 5, when discussing individual economic empowerment, describes in greater depth the necessity for survivors to develop financial stability to sustain their recovery long-term.

Market-Mission Material-Discourse Intra-action

The founders' acknowledgement of the limits of therapy amid harsh economic realities highlight the centrality of economic opportunity in pursuing a larger goal of recovery and empowerment. In fact, some participants even described psychotherapeutic approaches as woefully insufficient in the face of such material and physical harms like violence and poverty. For example, Crystal explains how she learned about economic empowerment when living in one of the most impoverished countries in the world. She describes a Bengali woman whose husband was beating her, saying 'I could tell [the husband] until I was blue in the face that his wife had value, but that was meaningless to him.' Since the wife did not want to leave her family, Crystal bought her a sewing machine. When she became an economic resource to the family, the abuse stopped. As Crystal says, "I made her valuable in a way that [the husband] respected, which was economic." Although this experience happened internationally, Crystal describes how her approach to offering safety and opportunity for others was shaped by these early experiences. According to her, one must offer concrete, culturally-relevant opportunities, because you "can't just think pie in the sky and wish it to be." These experiences highlight how the very material conditions of women's disempowerment demand material solutions.

Similarly, Shannon describes how drug rehab would temporarily meet some of the survivors' physical needs, but did not meet their economic needs. She says, "We found so many women coming back out of rehab going back to the street, and we just wanted to be able to make a difference." For Shannon, making "a difference" meant starting a social enterprise, and offering economic opportunity in a part of the city where survivors had few options. Thus, for many of the CSE organization founders, they originally sought to provide emotional, spiritual,

psychological healing, but in order to address the material and economic needs of survivors, the founders unexpectedly became entrepreneurs.

Market is Mission but so Much More: Offering Employment Within Wrap-around Services

Even though many of these organizations describe employment as the primary mission, none of them ‘solely’ offer employment—even the one organization that is registered as a for-profit business. All of them offer far more than job opportunities, and many of them provide 2 year-long, 24-hour intensive, holistic recovery services free of charge. For example, in addition to employment, River Oak operates a residential program that provides “housing, medical care, therapy, education, and job training free of charge for up to 32 women and serves hundreds more with advocacy and referrals” (organizational documents). In this way, these organizations differ from residential treatment programs, typically established in the psychotherapy model, and they differ from most social enterprises or workforce development programs that focus primarily on providing job training and employment. Hope describes the difference between the two types of programs: “So there's ones that are more clinical in their approach. And really focus on the treatment side, and then ones that focus more on the job side. And it's very rare that you have like all different kinds of co-existing, which is what I think everyone's trying to do.” Thus, for these CSE organizations, their missions are the market, but so much more.

Offering Employment Within Wrap-around Services

As described before, many organizations began as recovery homes and healing houses, and did not create social enterprises until later. Thus, in addition to employment opportunities, these organizations offer all kinds of physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual services,

such as medical care, trauma counseling, addiction support groups, music therapy, among all manner of other programs. Many of the organizations in this study offer employment within the context of a 2-year residential recovery program, focused on women exiting prostitution, trafficking, and/or addiction. On their websites or in organizational documents, these nonprofits often describe the various ‘phases’ of their programs. Typically, the first year focuses on healing and recovery. As one organization states it, the first year is a time to “physically and emotionally rebuild.” In an education workshop hosted by River Oak, I recorded how an employee of the residential program described a typical week for a resident:

The survivor leader is explaining how they keep the women busy with 13 psychoeducational groups a week. She’s saying that on Mondays “we have a prostitution group and then a community meeting, Tuesday is arts and crafts, yoga, and then nutrition. Wednesday, anger management, finance group, brain science. Thursday we have co-dependency, relapse prevention, reality group. Friday, book study and wrap up.” Then she says that evenings are twelve step meetings. (fieldnotes)

Women in the residential program participate in these activities until they finish the first phase, when they can become eligible to work in the social enterprise. In this way, they are focused exclusively on recovering from trauma and addiction before they begin working. Yet the therapies do not end there—survivors continue to participate in these programs alongside their employment.

Employment Itself as Therapeutic

In addition to these holistic programs, the employment itself is much more than just a job. The women work in a safe and healing environment, where they can stop working if they need to process their trauma. They can leave for court appointments; they can make mistakes without typical workplace consequences. Even the organizations who do not operate residential programs provide this type of unusual employment experience, offering kindness and patience, as well as a

whole host of other opportunities and training. For instance, Crystal explains the extra services provided within their job training program:

Sure, we're taking their taxes out, you know, we're walking them through those steps. We're helping them balance their checking accounts. We're helping them pay their bills. We're helping them, if they're on disability, we're helping them fill out their disability papers. We're making sure that all those things that are happening with wraparound services, [the director] spends so much of her time just helping these women live life.

When I interviewed the director of the workforce development program, she offered more details about the forms of additional support she offers to the women. She described helping survivors navigate governmental systems, “helping them fill out papers” especially as sometimes they are “not computer literate” or “read with a 3rd or 4th grad level.” She described how she might “find out about a landlord trying to take advantage of a woman” and will walk her through her legal rights.

Furthermore, when providing employment, these organizations are very intentional about the *kind* of employment they offer. Rather than simply provide a job, they are careful to provide employment the women find enjoyable, empowering, and have opportunity for advancement. For example, Hope explains their organization’s desire to provide meaningful work rather than a ‘manual job’:

And like how could they do something that they love to do rather than being stuck in like fast food or something like that. Some of our women want to work outside of our organization, but it's very, like manual labor jobs, like fast food or like things like that.

For this reason, Hope began a social enterprise based on work women survivors enjoy.

In addition to enjoyable work, many of the organizations seek to provide opportunities for advancement, so that the women can learn new skills and grow their professional strengths and experiences. As Tiffany explains:

... we are passionate about these women having job opportunities where they can raise the ceiling. So we envision when our social enterprise is really strongly running that ...

and we already have survivors at every level, but we're tiny. We're just very, very tiny so once we are able to hire people, we're able to have a bookkeeper that's hired, it'll be a survivor when we can hire the trainers. They already are; the trainers already are survivors but it's not paid. Yeah, the marketers, everybody. Every position will be held by a survivor. And we're excited about that, just to give them opportunities to have titles that they would not have opportunity to have otherwise.

When organizations provide these opportunities, the work itself becomes a form of therapy. Janet explains how the work itself, due to the emotional and physical violence survivors endure, becomes empowering:

And not just train her in a skill, but create a safe space for her to learn a skill, to be celebrated, to be affirmed. If a woman has been in a relationship where she's been beaten literally black and blue, and has been emotionally tortured, saying that she's nothing and can't do anything, for her to be in a safe space where she's creating with her hands ...

Janet indicates the healing nature of creating something of beauty and value after being told you “can’t do anything.” Thus, work in this environment has a direct effect on the woman’s sense of self-worth and recovery. As Monica, a graduate of the River Oak program, explains about her position: “Not only am I not trapped in a 10-block radius anymore, but I get to travel around the United States and I have been out of the country ... so that's why I really love the position I got.” Monica’s statement explains the empowerment component of her work—not only has she experienced sobriety and recovery, but she has mobility and freedom through her work. Thus, for all of these programs, in addition to the wrap-around and holistic services provided, the work itself is therapeutic. Although other kinds of therapies are very important, employment is one of the most essential parts of recovery. Through working, women can replace what traumatized and disempowered them with the opposite—work that heals and empowers. Since offering this form of economic empowerment hinges on the organizations providing employment through their own businesses, commercialization is essential for mission attainment. Yet in providing employment, as well as other services, these organizations’ mission is the market, but so much more.

In sum, organizations discursively position addressing CSE survivors' material and economic needs as the primary mission. To do so, organizations use an economic approach (commercialization), making the market central to the organization's mission. However, by framing holistic healing and empowerment as equally important to employment, they organizations discursively-materially construct the market as the mission but so much more. In this way, these organizations diverge from dominant social enterprise and workforce development models that focus on employment. However, by running businesses to offer survivors job skills and opportunities, they depart from the therapeutic residential model that offers housing, physical and mental health treatment, and other forms of therapy. As organizations position the market and mission as a dialectic, an additional benefit emerges in the form of work-as-therapy, marking another difference between this organizational model and those in similar sectors.

Discursively-Materially Constructing Resource Mobilization: Leveraging Organizational Hybridity to Achieve Organizational Goals

Because 'the market is the mission but so much more,' these nonprofits can discursively and materially leverage their organizational hybridity to mobilize resources. First, their organizational structure enables them to creatively acquire and combine both contributed and commercial revenue streams to sustain and grow the organization. Organizations then use specific discursive tactics to capitalize on their structural hybridity. In doing so, materiality and discourse are utilized to leverage the market for the sake of the mission, as well as the mission for the sake of the market. Second, these organizations leverage organizational hybridity to enable financial flexibility and offset risk.

These organizations' structures enable great flexibility for acquiring resources. Since most of them are registered as 501(c)(3) nonprofits, they can receive tax deductible donations as well as apply for governmental grants and run businesses. All but one of the organizations in this study accepts charitable donations for the maintenance and growth of the organization. Several received grant money from foundations or the government. And 15 of the 18 ran businesses to also generate earned income. More than simply generating different kinds of revenue, however, these organizations engage in very creative ways of combining these resources, using both the mission to further the market, and the market to further the mission. In this way, they leverage their mission and market identity in ways that afford them more financial resources and flexibility than a traditional nonprofit.

Leveraging the Mission for the Market: Using the Mission to Raise Funds to Start and Sustain the Business

Raising charitable or grant funding for start-up capital is one of the primary ways these organizations get their businesses up and running. For example, Darrica explains:

We visited a lot of civic organizations that gave us a little bit of seed money. We had a couple of churches in our area that had a little bit larger contributions. But, primarily, we had one gentleman that, kind of for our vision, and he donated about ... Around in the first year and half, about \$30,000.

Similarly, Kristy explains how the organization used a city-wide nonprofit fundraiser to generate start-up capital for their social enterprise:

We, so last year during our [City] gives campaign, you know the day of annual giving that cities do, we focused our whole campaign on help us open [the enterprise] so we raised \$9,000 that we could put towards seed money to get some furnishings in there, buy paint, and get the initial product supplies.

In addition to money, many of the founders received donated or discounted facilities and supplies necessary for starting their enterprise. For example, Shelby describes how the earliest

days of the River Oak social enterprise began in a local Episcopal church's kitchen: "We didn't start out in an amazing building that was beautiful, that we were paying off exorbitant fees. We were, basically, located in a church that let us use their kitchen, and so we had no overhead."

This lack of overhead was crucial for getting their cottage industry off the ground. Similarly, the greenhouse necessary for Helen's organization's aquaponics business was donated by a community member. The coffeeshop space used by another nonprofit was gifted by the local community college, and Darrica explains how her organization receive reduced rent from a local landlord because he believes in the mission. At organizational events and in interviews, other founders described receiving discounted rates on the raw goods needed for their products, or in some cases, as when operating a thrift store, receiving all of the product for free from the local community. These examples demonstrate how the nonprofits' mission-oriented organizational identities gives them access to free or discounted funds and resources that most businesses would not receive.

Additionally, due to their mission and nonprofit status, these organizations rely on volunteer and discounted labor to reduce costs for their businesses. Founders rely on donated labor from community members to do everything from basic tasks such as tagging product or cleaning facilities, to high-responsibility roles such as providing free legal or business counsel or working full time in a C-level position. Several founders themselves run the organizations and enterprises without pay as well. The nonprofits also receive free services from other businesses and organizations. For example, several nonprofits described how local undergraduate or graduate students in business classes wrote their enterprises' business plans or conducted their market research. If organizations do not receive free labor or services, they often receive them at below-market rates, paying employees a 'nonprofit' salary for work that would be highly

compensated in the private sector, such as positions in accounting or marketing. These organizations rely upon the mission to motivate and retain their employees, when the wages are not as competitive as those at for-profit enterprises.

Once organizations have their businesses up and running, they continue to draw on mission-related activities to further their business growth. For instance, if the organizations sell a product, they bring those products with them to awareness-raising events. As Hope explains, “And so we started with that, and we just started selling [the products] at churches or places that had us come for to talk for awareness. And we would just bring soaps with us and sell them.” Similarly, Shelby comments on how they will go anywhere to share the story and then sell the product:

We'll go anywhere and tell the story, and after we tell the story, we sell the product. So, I'm not afraid to do two or three events a week: go to this church, go to this rotary club, go to this group, and just keep making new friends and making new friends, but building a movement is not an overnight activity, and that's what you're doing with a justice enterprise.

Thus, due to their nonprofit identity and operations, these organizations gain access to new markets and populations to sell their products, using the mission to further the market.

Communicating the Mission to Get Material Resources

Although the organization's structure enables flexibility for where organizational leaders can seek resources, the leaders must effectively communicate the mission to access these funds. In other words, the resource acquisition hinges on the discursive positioning of the mission. The interviews revealed how leaders work hard to communicate the mission in order to raise funds for the social enterprise. They shared how merely existing as a nonprofit or a business is not enough—much communicative labor is involved in this process. For example, Tiffany explains

how they used the ‘mission is the market’ to redirect funds donated for the residential program instead of the social enterprise:

And they'd given us the money for direct services for the women, but I wrote to them real quickly and I said, “We're going to share this into our social enterprise, just want you to know that. We're going to track every penny. And we're going to tell you how this became services to the women.” And so I was like, “Kristy, we've gotta make at least \$3,000.” It was \$7,300 when all was said and done of services to the women.

Similarly, Crystal writes in a Freedom, Int'l newsletter how a donation toward the social enterprises is a gift that multiplies:

Giving \$20 to a shelter helps keep a woman alive and safe. But a \$20 gift to a holistic program that includes vocational training and employment does more than keep her safe—it offers her choices. By empowering her to work with dignity, that \$20 turns into \$60, \$100, or more! That's why we don't just incubate new programs; we help them grow, become independent, and develop sustainable social enterprises to employ the wounded. As a result, we've seen many lives changed forever.

Crystal's explanation of how one's donation goes farther than a shelter highlights the discursive labor behind growing the social enterprises at these organizations.

The organizational leaders also strategically use the story of the mission to market and sell the product. This requires discursive labor, as the product sometimes cannot sell itself without the power of the mission behind it. As Shelby says about CSE social enterprises:

... their stories are the best marketing tool. If they're just thinking that they're going to compete through their product, I don't know what their product is, but they're going to have a long road ahead of them, but what they have is they have a powerful story that will carry them, and that the best marketing tool that they have. So, they need to figure out how to amplify their story.

None of these material resources would be accessible if the organizations did not share the story of their organization. As Cheyenne states:

I think the most important part is just being able to share the mission. That kind of, it leads to other things. So it leads to sales, it leads to having more people within the network. It leads to being able to find money within grants or scholarships or whatever, but all of that starts with a simple conversation and being able to spread the love and the community that we have here with everybody else.

Cheyenne's statement demonstrates how, when the organizations share the story of the mission, it leads to more product sales. Organizational founders and other members also strategically communicate the impact of sales on the organizational mission, seeking to encourage more sales. For example, I attended a community fundraiser for Freedom, Int'l held by a local theater. After the performance, the founder spoke about the organization's mission while a volunteer sold product in the basement of the theater:

Crystal seemed to be nearing the end of her presentation when the volunteer manning the product booth popped her head into the auditorium. In a friendly way, she interrupted Crystal and told everyone that they had just reached \$300 in sales that night, which is enough to support a woman in an international safehouse for a month. The crowd reacted to this—a few people let out an 'aww,' a few cheered, and Crystal jumped on this opportunity to tell everyone to go downstairs and buy more product. (fieldnotes)

By sharing with the audience the missional impact of the sale, these organizational members are strategically leveraging discourse to encourage more sales to generate more revenue. In a 2017 River Oak annual report, the CEO makes a similar comment. He shares:

... in 2017, we passed the \$2,000,000 mark in sales. Every sale made represents a job opportunity for another survivor. In the past year, [River Oak] has distributed over \$1,150,000 in wages to residents and graduates of our program.

By discursively comparing 'every sale made' to a 'job opportunity,' he highlights the missional impact of the sale. These examples of strategically utilizing discourse to acquire funds demonstrates the intra-action of discourse and materiality for an organization's economic empowerment.

Leveraging the Market for the Mission: Using Commercial Revenue to Grow Social Programs

In addition, these organizations leverage the market to sustain and grow their missions. Once organizations have their enterprises on their feet, they can use these funds to feed back into

their social programs. For example, as Frances states about their enterprise, “It truly is a beautiful thing and it provides some sustainability to the program. Any profit goes right back into the program, so it really provides sustainability and is just a beautiful thing.” Although only a couple organizations have enterprises that make substantial contributions to their social programs, many of the small enterprises consider this to be a larger goal for their enterprises. As Shannon states, “the whole vision” is that “eventually the enterprise will turn around and give back to even the programming.” As many of these nonprofits operate as partner organizations to a larger residential program + social enterprise, they often position this established organization’s commercial success as their aspiration. However, The CEO of this organization shared how there are many misconceptions about beginning businesses to sustain social programs, and even their multi-million-dollar social enterprise only contributes \$100,000 toward their residential program. As he shared in an email, “we still have to raise quite a bit in additional philanthropy to support [the residential program].” Even still, by merely sustaining itself, the enterprise funds some of the most valuable forms of therapy the organization seeks to offer. As Patty describes about their aquaponics business:

The cool thing is it started out to be the therapy part of the program, and now it's turning into not only the therapy, but the social enterprise. So, the social enterprise pays for the therapy. So, what we do actually pays for what we're doing. You know what I'm saying?

She describes how a form of horticulture therapy—gardening and aquaponics—grew into the social enterprise which, by sustaining itself, now pays for the horticulture therapy. And, as previously described, it also sustains the valuable forms of healing and empowerment afforded by meaningful work.

In addition to providing financial sustainability to the organization, these nonprofits also use commercial revenue to grow their social programs, using the market to further their mission

in unique ways. Especially for organizations selling physical items, they leverage the materiality of their product to tell the story of the mission and spread it to others. Marketing materials from these organizations often describe how each product “tells a story.” In addition, many organizations sell products that symbolize some aspect of their mission. For instance, by selling bath and body products with essential oils with healing properties, the material items themselves communicate the mission of healing. When survivors serve food that nourishes others, it communicates the purpose of the program offering physical, emotional, and spiritual nourishment to the women survivors. Tori explains how a ‘wrap’ bracelet, sold by the organization represents the cord that held a trafficked baby to a pole outside of a brothel in India:

... some people are just visual people. I love things like that that are my little trinket things as I'm praying. So maybe even if someone doesn't want it as a bracelet or a necklace, they just have this visual reminder of [a trafficked baby], this little bracelet that they could even use it as a bookmark or whatever. It's just like maybe they just have it by her card. This is the red cord, this represents her red cord. So I think making things personal, like the personal stories, and Rhoda's Roses, even though I don't think they were like ... I don't know how great of a seller they were, but people were just fascinated by her story.

Whereas a café run by survivors offers an embodied experience of the mission—eating food made by survivors meant to nourish a community—Tori’s description demonstrates how the wrap bracelet serves as material embodiment of the mission, communicating the mission in ways solely discourse cannot.

By describing how the bracelet could be used a ‘trinket’ for prayer, Tori highlights another unique aspect of how marketing and selling material items furthers the mission—they remain after the discourse fades, or after the organizational member is no longer present to tell the story. In this way, they serve as a visual reminder of the mission, communicating the mission through their materiality. For example, on one organization’s website, they describe how their products operate as “tools for public education, program replication, volunteer recruitment and

advocacy.” The organization ascribes communicative agency to the products themselves; even though they are physical “tools,” they serve an ideational purpose of education and advocacy. Similarly, in a marketing email from Freedom, Int’l, the organization advertises some new bracelets, stating they are:

... more than just bracelets--they are symbols of support, hope, and dignity. Adorn your arms while helping to “arm” women with job skills and sustainable income, empowering them to overcome risk and live better lives.

By operating as a material symbol of the mission, these physical products also multiply the mission. For example, Julia states about donors and customers to Freedom, Int’l:

And they're proud to wear [the jewelry]. To have that, to have the physical product where they can say so and so, obviously it's not their real name, from India made this. It's just very easy. I think it's easier to tell people about Freedom, Int'l because of that piece.

As Julia explains, Freedom, Int’l products keep sharing the mission of Freedom, Int’l after customers leave a Freedom, Int’l store or fundraising event. People comment on the products, and the wearers can share the story of Freedom, Int’l. Kristy explains how their social enterprise sells greeting cards with their residential program’s 24 spiritual principles. The idea came from a customer who wanted to giveaways for big events. She states, “our bishop for the state of Nebraska was our first customer and he wanted to create something he could give out to a big conference he was hosting.” When this stakeholder purchases the cards and gives them away at an event, the organization leverages the sale of physical items, as these items can be passed along to others as visual reminders and communicators of their organization’s mission. In this way, the material items ‘intra-act’ with the discursive telling of the organizational goals to further spread the mission of the organization.

Leveraging Organizational Hybridity to Offset Risk

Furthermore, not only do these organizations leverage their hybridity for growth, but also to create financial flexibility that offsets risk. Just as they can acquire funds from different sources, they can use different funding sources to act as ‘buffers’ to the threats of both nonprofit and commercial markets. For example, Alan, the CFO at Freedom, Int’l explains:

Our sales are declining on our product so therefore... I think our model used to be 60 to 70 percent revenue on sales and 30 percent donations. And now it's probably closer to 50, 60 percent on donations and 40 percent on revenue and sales.

Freedom, Int’l has survived by leaning more on sales in early years, and more on donations during later years. River Oak has experienced the opposite; this nonprofit was sustained primarily by donations at first and then grew their earned income over time. As Alan later explains, organizations need both sources of revenue, because they have to balance risk in both sectors. If an organization increases sales, “it's less work in terms of the fundraising side, because you're less dependent on people giving.” In this way, commercial success offsets the uncertainty of donor funding. However, he also mentions that you need to keep pushing forward in fundraising, because if you rely solely on sales, “you're more dependent on trends and everything else the other way.” Unlike organizations based on “100% donor asks,” Wanda describes how “not everything we do is driven by the donor side. Because we’re able to sustain so much of what we do on the enterprise piece.” By operating in a hybrid organizational space, these organizations can lean more heavily on sales when donations are down, and lean on donations when sales are down. As Janet describes, the only reason her organization has “been able to survive really [is] because of our business and our private donors.” With both revenue streams, her organization has flexibility to sustain itself while she seeks out additional sources of income.

Tensions in Discursive-Material Construction of Organizational Economic Empowerment

Although the market-mission dialectic does not appear contradictory, this construction produces organizational tensions, as organizational members seek to navigate contradictions and dialectics produced by seeking to ‘hold together’ market with mission. In this section, I will outline two tensions related to resource allocation and describe organizational member responses to these tensions. I then discuss two tensions related to organizational operations and how members responded to these tensions.

Table 1: Organizational Economic Empowerment Tensions

Tensions in:	Market	Mission
Resource Allocation	Invest in social enterprise	Invest in direct services
	Cut costs	Invest in quality
Organizational Operations	Quality	Compassion
	Efficiency	Compassion

Tensions in Resource Allocation: Investing in Social Programs or Social Enterprise

While organizations benefit from the structural flexibility of a 501(c)(3) status, they must also make choices about where to allocate funds within a hybrid organizational model. In doing so, participants expressed difficulty choosing between where to allocate funds—whether for direct services (mission) or for investing in the enterprise (market) for future growth. Although organizational members recognize both the market and the mission as worthy of investment, the dialectical construction of the market as the mission makes for difficulty in determining resource allocation. This emerged most prominently when I asked participants the question, “If I gave you two million dollars as an unrestricted donation, what would you do with it?” Though a seemingly

innocuous question, participants struggled to answer it. Few had ready-made responses; most paused and thought after I asked the question, and then would express the difficulty of making such a choice. When they did answer the question, several revised their answer later after further consideration, demonstrating the challenge of allocating funds within the hybrid model. For example, when I asked the CEO of River Oak, he said he would be “completely torn” between investing in another residence for the women versus investing the money in the business for growth. Similarly, Laura exclaimed, “Oh my gosh, I thought of three then I thought of three more immediately,” listing another residence for the women, a label-maker for the business, as well as a case worker for all employees. These statements demonstrate how direct services and the business are the primary categories that appear to compete for funds, and the difficulty of choosing between them.

Organizational Member Responses

Organizational members respond to this tension in different ways. Several expressed splitting the funds 50/50, in order to invest in both direct services and the business, since both further the organization’s overall mission. For example, Stewart stated,

I’d probably take a million of it, put it in the residential side and a million I would plow right back into the business for growth capital. We don’t have nearly enough dollars for marketing for sales support for getting out there, social media advertising. We just don’t. And it’s hindering us. The average consumer packaged goods company spends 24% of their revenue on marketing. We spend four.

Similarly, after a successful fundraising gala, Shannon used half the funds for the programs, and “put half of it right into [the enterprise], so we could hire women and begin the process of what we needed.” Other organizational members also ‘split’ the funds, choosing financial needs on both the enterprise and program side. In fact, some directors keep the funds

structurally split—so that all donations feed the programs, and all sales feed the enterprise. As Janet explains:

No, it's totally separate. So our social enterprise, 100% of that profit goes back in to buying more ingredients so we can make more product, and also it goes to the hourly pay of the survivors who are employed at Argrow's House. So that's a totally separate account. Our other account is focused, and it literally goes into an account where the mortgage is taken out every month, and 100% of our private donations go there, because we're working to pay off a \$60,000 mortgage this year.

Thus, her response to navigating the resource allocation tension is to structurally separate the program from the enterprise.

When choosing to invest in the enterprise—whether a split investment, or a whole investment—members employed a strategy to justify forgoing investing in the programs: refocusing on how the business helps sustain and multiply the funds for direct services. This is demonstrated through Tiffany's story of writing a donor about redirecting 1,500 dollars toward the social enterprise, claiming “It was \$7,300 when all was said and done of services to the women.” Similarly, Laura explains:

I would also just remind people that it takes money to make money, so although sometimes it is painful to invest in a good donor database or painful to maybe do a really nice print piece or it's painful to, whatever, spend money that you think oh my goodness, but this could do X, Y and Z programmatically, it's always important to remember that without the money none of the programs happen.

Thus, she identifies the guilt nonprofit practitioners experience when they invest in something ‘business-y,’ but then identifies how ‘none of the programs happen’ without wise allocation of organizational funds in both the nonprofit operations and enterprise.

As these examples have demonstrated the difficulty of where to direct donated funds, organizational members respond differently to where to invest the earned income from the social enterprise. Some desire for the social enterprise to eventually fully fund the social programs, as

discussed previously. However, others follow a different mentality, seeking to always pursue giving for growing social programs and the enterprise. As Shelby explains:

I don't care if the River Oak company ever sustains all the residential programs. I always think of the beautiful grants out there, and I'll always go after them. So, we'll just grow bigger. In other words, if we make 10 million a year instead of 3 million a year on product, we'll probably grow to \$15 million a year. I don't mind pursuing opportunities for grants and doing community fundraisers. I think people want to give; people want to give out of generosity and gratitude and all those things. So, I think there's always a place for that.

Thus, by expressing that ‘people want to give,’ she argues that the business should never fully subsidize the social programs—that donations should be sought to grow all parts of the organization.

Tensions in Resource Allocation: Investing in Quality or Cutting Costs

Practitioners also expressed difficulty in choosing to spend funds on quality products, services, or personnel versus cutting costs overall. For example, Mackenzie expresses the tension between investing in quality supplies for the social enterprise versus keeping costs down:

I think that there can be certain updates to our spa product, what it's housed in. So their containers. Like little parts of the ... what's the-
Interviewer: Packaging?
Mackenzie: Yes. Packaging, that type of thing, that makes it more appealing and feel more ... fancy is too strong of a word, but just more appealing. Where right now, it can feel kind of cheap. But there's always been such a concern about getting that right cost.

She expresses “getting that right cost” as competing with investing in a high quality, non-“cheap” product.

Similarly, several organizational leaders expressed difficulty in offering ‘quality’ of service for their residential program versus charging residents for housing. A few organizations charge women rent, using this money to pay for organizational overhead. However, many others insist that charging women runs counter to the organizational mission. As Violet explains:

... this particular model is just really capital intensive. And I've even gotten pushback from my board, and I know I'm not alone in this, but they're like "Well can't we charge rent, can't we make them pay for their housing like everybody else does?" But that's not the healing model, and so it does take a lot of money. You're basically supporting these people for two years. It's a lot.

Thus, the question of, "do we charge our beneficiaries?" exemplifies the tension of cutting costs versus investing in perceived quality of care.

Employee pay appeared to be the most sensitive manifestation of this organizational tension. Organizational members expressed differing assumptions surrounding appropriate pay for nonprofit labor, whether to invest in a 'living wage' for organizational members, survivors or otherwise. As Stacey expresses:

It's challenging, working within the constraints of being a nonprofit social enterprise because we don't have the margins of a traditional bath and body company. I mean, they have 300% margins and we have sometimes 20% margins, because we do pay all of the women, and everyone who works at River Oak gets a living wage and even if we're not manufacturing, everyone's still getting paid.

In contrast, other organizations pay women their employees and/or survivors less to increase profit or reduce costs. Along these lines, participants expressed tensions between paying for employees with high levels of expertise, in effect, receiving 'quality' personnel, or allocating resources elsewhere.

Organizational Member Responses

Participants responded to these tensions in a variety of ways. Many participants favored the quality pole, justifying investing in quality as more inexpensive in the long run and as an expression of the organization's mission.

Some justified choosing quality over cost-cutting by explaining that ultimately doing so saves the organization money, especially in personnel and facility decisions. For example, in an educational event about setting up social enterprises, the founder of River Oak explained that

raising money for a high-quality facility may feel difficult, but is ultimately necessary in order to avoid spending more money later. She describes how River Oak “Didn’t want to raise a money for a new roof,” but realized after it fell in, “That it was not the time to scrimp on the budget.” She summarizes by saying that they “learned that the hard way, because you pay that 50,000 three or four times over.” Christina makes a similar argument related to quality pay for personnel, describing how the organization experiences constant turnover because of low pay. She says, “if you're paying people what they're worth and their heart’s in it, your turnover is probably going to be better. And the turnover is frustrating, because you are ... it's costing more money.”

In addition to saving money, participants justified investing in quality because doing so aligns with the organizational mission, and is therefore worth their investment. Violet argues that charging women rent is ‘not the healing model,’ and therefore untenable for the organization, despite the board members’ requests. Similarly, many of the organizations in the study insisted on paying all employees a livable wage, as it is part of their empowerment model. Even in organizations paying employees less, they expressed the desire to raise pay in order to better meet their organizational goals of supporting survivors. As Naomi expresses, “I want them to be able to feel safe and secure with what they have, and I don't necessarily feel like we ... With the wage and the time that we give them, I don't know that we do as well as we could do that.” Similarly, Christina argues, “you're not going to support the women as well if you're not taking care of operations at home.” Her response demonstrates that investing in quality pay for quality personnel is not only a financial decision, but a philosophical one.

However, organizational members also experienced instances where they simply could not invest in quality—the funds simply were not there. However, when faced with this reality,

participants still emphasized the importance of quality, even when forced to choose inexpensive options despite their desires for better products, pay, or services. Their favoring of quality over cutting costs emerged through expressions of their desire to *eventually* achieve a higher level of quality, despite the inability to do it immediately. Thus, when faced with this dilemma, participants recommended going slow, and building the quality over time. For example, Maureen mentions how the success of their current café came slowly due to budget restrictions:

At the old café, I shouldn't call it the old café it's the same building just renovated, our food was okay. We really didn't have resources to have great food, but people came for the mission and they came for that feeling of I'm doing something good or I'm contributing. Our goal for the new café was that people would come, and if they came for that they would come back because the food and the service was amazing. So we've tried to match our product... We want you to have the same feeling as eating our food and experiencing the café and knowing that you're contributing to something great.

She is honest about their lack of resources, and how the café had to lean on the mission more heavily in the early days before the service quality could stand on its own. Similarly, Cathy explains how it took time to accumulate the resources for higher quality jewelry training:

We've had something that, really, people want. Which we have not nailed every single time. We've had products that have been like, oh that's not great. We're still learning over time. We just now went to jewelry school. My co-founder literally just, in January, went to jewelry school. Before that, we had had no official training, we were just learning as we went.

Rather than settle for cheap, however, all of the participants express how quality is worth striving for, even if it takes a long time to get there.

Tensions in Organizational Operations: Quality Versus Compassion

The quality versus cutting costs tension emerged alongside a similar tension, quality versus compassion. Participants expressed that there is a perceived tension between achieving a quality product and showing compassion to women survivors in a training program. This tension emerged when participants would describe how—typically in the early days of the social

enterprise—their emphasis on compassion and supporting women would override careful attention to product quality or cause them to carry products that were designed by the women but did not sell well. For example, at the education workshop, Shelby explained how, in the early days, River Oak did not emphasize quality in the same ways they do now. She stated, “At first it was like we just need to love each other and make bath and body products, and it’s like no we need people who know what they’re doing.” By describing how at first it was about ‘loving each other’ with little concern about quality, she demonstrates how she prioritized ‘love’ for survivors over product quality.

Other times, quality would decrease because organizations would emphasize that survivors should maintain total ownership over the enterprise, and by creating all the product ideas themselves, would spend less time perfecting each product. Frances explained how a River Oak employee warned her, saying, “the problem here at River Oak is that we have so many women and so many different ideas and we have a lot of products,” and that she “would rather see somebody start out small and do just four or five products and do them really well.” Sarah explains another way in which the amount of product can interfere with quality of product. When displaying product at events, volunteers and staff naturally desire to display product from every partner organization, saying “I do feel guilty every time I can't put something out.” The guilt conveys individuals’ desire to compassionately and fairly represent each organization so that each safehouse or program has a ‘fair shot’ at a sale. However, Sarah also describes that too much product “looks like a flea market,” and the appeal of the product and the quality of the display suffers.

When describing this compassion/quality tension, however, nearly every participant positioned it as a dialectic—that striving for quality is ultimately more compassionate than letting product or sales quality slide. As Christina explains:

I think when you're dealing with product, to make sure the quality is there. When things are breaking and that was, when the USTC first started, that was an issue and it's like, okay, people aren't going to keep buying things that are breaking. So, I think, especially in the nonprofit world and what we deal with, the women, because that can play into their worth, because now they're making crummy stuff, you know what I mean?

By explaining how low-quality product “can play into their worth,” Christina links the product quality to survivors’ perceptions of themselves. This theme emerged when various participants described an aversion toward “pity purchases,” or when customers buy product because they want to support the women, but not because they like the product itself. Crystal expressed:

And so, you want that expectation to be this stuff is quality because these women are quality, and don't you be looking down on these women. And so, these aren't, you know, oh, pity buys. These are something you would buy at Macy's, but now you know you're getting a better deal than Macy's, and you know who made it, and you know that this is going to help somebody.

Similarly, in a meeting with the marketing director at River Oak, she described how the organization overhauled their product recipes and branding because they feared too many people were buying out of pity, which reflected poorly on the ability of the women to gain mastery over their work. The outcomes of the rebrand demonstrate the link between product and service quality and the organization’s mission to empower women:

I think when we rebranded new packaging, new everything, and then we shut this place down for seven months and then reopened, it was like this caterpillar into a butterfly. I mean, sales sky rocketed, 60 thousand guests in a year. And it's caught everybody by surprise a little bit, but they're so stinking proud of it, and that's fun to watch. (Stewart)

By explaining the survivors’ pride in the work of their hands, Stewart’s comment illustrates how increasing the quality of the service is an act of compassion, ultimately leading to survivors’

greater self-confidence and beliefs in their abilities to be economically independent and successful.

Furthermore, participants emphasized that high quality products led to more sales, which grew the organization, enabling it to support and employ more women. For example, Crystal explains how the product “has to really, really be quality. My commitment is that you not buy out of pity, because if you buy it out of pity, you'll buy it once. I can get you to spend your money on pity once, on anything, and I'll never see you again.” She links the quality of the product to further investment in the organization. Cathy makes the same argument, claiming that if the product is not high quality, customers will treat buying it like a donation, thinking to themselves, “Well I donated my money there, now I'm gonna move onto the next one.” Sarah, when addressing the concern surrounding displaying product, tells volunteers “Just put out what looks good, and don't feel guilty about not putting everything out,” because it “just actually it sells better if it doesn't look like a flea market.” Thus, these examples demonstrate how participants do not perceive quality and compassion to be at odds, as they emphasize that quality is more compassionate, because it reflects on the women and leads to more funding for services that benefit them.

Organizational Member Responses

However, even though organizational members express the desire to prioritize quality, as it is truly the more compassionate approach, most organizations face constraints to achieving excellent quality products and services, especially right away. As a result, they employ a variety of creative strategies for improving product quality while exercising compassion on women in job training programs.

Most of the organizations described how achieving quality takes time, and emphasized the importance of slowing down the process so that women have time to learn how to make the products correctly. Kristy explains how striving for quality meant they had to come “a long way before we were ready to go to market.” Janet reinforces this argument:

you really want to create and be intentional about making the best possible product that you can make. Whatever necklace you make, it shouldn't break in a day. It should last for years. Whatever soap you create, it should be moisturizing and have a beautiful lather and smell amazingly delicious, so much so you feel like you can eat it. And that takes time, our soap recipe took about 6 months to perfect.

When taking time to perfect the products, the participants spoke to the importance of hands-on coaching of the women to ensure product quality, and having conversations with women if the quality appears to slip. As Crystal states, “The product has to be quality, and if the product starts to get ... If the product quality starts going down, then we have to have a conversation.” Frances shares a humorous story of a product in development that needed extra work before it was ready for market:

It's really funny because I took it to the board, we had a board meeting this month, and I said, “I want to show you a product that's in development and I want to talk to you about product development.” The board, they're all ears, and I bring this. I bring two bottles of this soap. One of them was the very first one that she did and this is what she told me, Danielle. She said, “Frances, this looks like dirty urine.”

Frances then describes how the survivor developed a new recipe, where “the clarity in the product is a little bit crisper, it's a little bit cleaner, it's got a deeper yellow to it, not as much brown.” Frances describes how the survivor appreciated the feedback, and was excited to deliver a higher quality product. As Frances explains, “I was telling the board, [the survivors] really put a lot of thought and a lot of energy into making these products and they want to make something that is good for you.” By describing how the survivors truly desire to make a high quality product, Frances demonstrates that working with the women toward quality is not at odds with

compassion, but can be an important part of organization's mission to train women for jobs. Furthermore, the survivor expressed gratitude for the feedback, even though it led to a product re-design, demonstrating that training women in product quality enables them to develop a greater sense of mastery—which often lends greater self-confidence.

Similar to slowing down, many organizations advocate starting small, making a few products that are high quality rather than moving on lots of product or service ideas. Like Frances mentions, rather than tell the women to dream up lots of different product ideas, “We've opted to stay small, just to build our products just a little bit at a time,” even though “when people get on our website, they see only three or four different items.” By keeping the products or service models simple, the participants explained that the women can learn how to achieve high quality products and experience the satisfaction of mastery. As Crystal explains:

I took a memory wire pearl bracelet from one of our other partners who have probably 300 products she made for us, and we knew that bracelet would sell. We had good data on that, good profit margins, good everything. And so, I took it away from her because it was my design, I owned it, and I gave it to them, and I said, “This is the only thing you have to you. You can sit there for six weeks and string pearls on a piece of wire. Any man can do that.”

By making a slight joke about how ‘any man can do that,’ Crystal emphasizes that new programs benefit from simple jewelry designs so that the survivors can master the design and create high-quality pieces. Rita also expresses how their organization simplified their catering menu after recognizing that constantly learning new recipes was challenging for the women:

When you're a catering company, people like to have a nice selection of things, and we've really narrowed down our selection because we're training people, and our women, a lot of them, have memory issues. From TBI or just arrested development, so we make sure that there's not a lot for them, we're not throwing new things at them all the time, and so they do feel that sense of accomplishment when they've learned a recipe, and learned how to do a procedure that they're repeating it and repeating it. It's not something new and different every day.

In the beginning, Rita's organization took many different kinds of catering requests, assuming that a quality caterer featured a diverse menu. However, they chose to simplify their menu after learning that constant change and new recipes was not helpful for the women, nor contributed to the quality of their service.

Tensions in Organizational Operations: Compassion Versus Efficiency

A related tension emerged in the data: compassion versus efficiency. When operating the business within the nonprofit social program, participants expressed 'balancing' remaining compassionate and patient with women survivors, while also using time and resources efficiently. As survivors are often undergoing recovery treatment, or still processing past trauma, they enter workspaces with certain challenges. Wanda shares about some of the challenges survivors face at work:

The challenges I think that women face are not only legal challenges or the lack of work experience, is lack of work ethic, lack of physical strength to work more than an hour or two, lack of just basic executive functioning and completing a task from beginning to end. For some of them literacy could be a challenge. For some of them emotional regulation is a challenge.

Thus, supporting the recovery and healing of survivors at work creates challenges on the business. As Naomi comments, "at the end of the day ... we're not here for the dollar, we're here for the people. And sometimes the people mean our very own employees." However, she then adds that doing so:

... absolutely creates challenges. Big ones. And sometimes like, 'Who can do this today? We need somebody to cover this. Is somebody willing?' And what's not going to get done in this side. Okay, thank you.' It's ... yeah. So, you know, and unfortunately it keeps ... I don't know how to say this appropriately, but it kind of keeps nonprofits down."

By mentioning how 'we're here for the people,' she acknowledges the dialectical nature of the compassion-efficiency tension, wherein they are not truly opposing forces because the people—

or compassion—wins out. However, she acknowledges the tradeoffs of this tension when she says that this focus “keeps nonprofits down.”

These statements highlight how favoring compassion can have negative ramifications for the social enterprise. Conversely, favoring efficiency and profit can have negative ramifications for the survivors. As Wanda explains:

We tried CleanStart, it's an actual cleaning company, and then we realized you can make a lot of money off of cleaning, another \$20 an hour, but it can also re-traumatize somebody. Which we didn't know. If you think about it the man of the household makes them do the cleaning and makes them do ... you know. We were finding that it was not helping.

Wanda acknowledges the re-traumatizing nature of a business model they originally developed to efficiently use funds and generate profit. Similarly, multiple employees of River Oak remarked that relapse is the “greatest threat” to their organization. As a result, their organization must constantly seek to support women in recovery and avoid causing triggers or possible relapses. For example, at the River Oak workshop session on the social enterprise, the first question asked during the Q&A addressed this compassion versus efficiency tension. Another founder mentioned how making bath and body products can involve harsh chemicals, such as lye for soaps, and that the stress of handling these chemicals, particularly under a time crunch, was very stressful for some of the women in her program. She asked how River Oak maintained a compassionate, trauma-informed environment despite the stresses of a workplace. As a result, participants acknowledge that they must address this tension, that “you have to weigh them ... what's more important, and what's the priority” (Naomi).

Organizational Member Responses

Despite the trade-offs on both sides of this tension, all of the participants expressed the importance of prioritizing compassion over efficiency, despite the losses for the business. As

Crystal states, “the program wins, always.” When Wanda discovered that the cleaning business was re-traumatizing women in her program, she fought to shut it down:

It was to the point where they had one cleaning job that was super easy, and it was like we put someone with them, like a volunteer would go with them, so that they could watch what was going on that they could feel safe. And they were fine, like there was nothing bad happened that was like... they would just get so depressed. Like every time they did it. And I was like, I'm not doing this anymore. Like, we're not. So I canceled it. I was like I'm not having them do this, and then I went to the board and then was like... And the ones that understood it, cause anybody would probably understand this right? It's like, do we want to do that to survivors? I don't know. It was hard though, that was... I got a nasty email, a nasty email. But we fought for it and here we are!

Wanda's decision to close the cleaning business stemmed from her commitment to provide a healing environment for the women, not a re-traumatizing one. The business model turned out to be antithetical to the organizational mission, so it was untenable. However, choosing compassion over the cleaning model lost Wanda's organization 10,000 dollars a year. A board member was furious over the decision, left the board, and “took her ten grand with her a year too” (Wanda). Similarly, other practitioners expressed how the nature of working alongside someone brings conversations to the surface, and they regularly stop working to help a woman process part of her trauma. As Frances explains:

You could be making a hand soap with a woman and something will just rise to the top at that moment that she needs to process. She may just burst out in tears and you're just there to listen. People don't have that component in regular business environments.

On the whole, participants did not express hesitation around whether to exercise compassion to create a trauma-informed work environment. However, because they are running “a business and business is business, you need to make a profit and all this” (Frances), organizational leaders get creative to keep business operations functioning while creating a safe and healing environment for survivors.

Organizational members employed a variety of creative strategies to demonstrate compassion toward survivors while also managing the enterprise. Several participants described the importance of learning what the women's strengths are, so that they can be placed in an environment where they can be successful. As Janet describes:

But if someone's anxiety won't allow them to be able to work with lye, which is a very dangerous chemical that goes in to soap making, then we'll make sure that she gets trained on essential oils or bath bombs, or that she focuses on packaging, or helping to keep the house organized.

In order to find “what will be a good fit” for the survivor, Janet emphasizes the importance “understanding the woman that we're serving, [and] being patient, very patient” in this process. At an education workshop session, Stewart expressed how finding the right fit is essential because it is “Really important that people feel like they're mastering what they're doing,” and he encouraged all who attended to “acknowledge and celebrate mastery” when they see it in both survivors and employees (fieldnotes).

Despite the importance of learning the women's strengths and placing them in appropriate roles, participants also expressed how the nature of trauma means that any a survivor may experience difficulty in any role—even if it is a ‘good fit.’ For example, Hope states, “we can get somebody to point where it's like, okay they've doing this job for a long time and we're trying to get them more responsibility and then there's relapse.” Thus, participants expressed the importance of forming a deep knowledge of the women and checking in with them. Along these lines, forming a community of support, where women have accountability with each other is equally important. Hope explains the importance of both checking in and developing a community of support:

And just saying okay, how ... like let's fill me with how these things are going because I need to know like what's going on with you, where your head's at, like all those types of things. So I think if you're trying to build a social enterprise, like it should also be

community based. You can't really like build this thing just based on some idea that's like obscurity. You have to actually know the women and know what's going on.

Maureen expresses the same argument—leaders and all community members have to check in with each other:

The best thing to as preventative measure is to stay close. We're definitely a work family in that we're all open with each other, we talk about things and if someone's going through something, most people know about it and not in a nosy way, but that we feel comfortable enough to share those things and then we hold each other accountable. I include myself in that. I share what's going on in my life too, and there's this sense of community there.

Naomi explains how balancing efficiency and compassion goes beyond merely extending grace to someone, but checking in and caring for their well-being:

Yes. So, or maybe got an employee with a bad attitude because their home life is horrible. Well, in some places like, "Hey, you didn't smile for that customer. I'm writing you up. Hey, you didn't smile again. Guess what? You've just got fired." We don't do that here.

Interviewer: There's the third chance and the fourth chance, yeah.

Naomi: The third and a fourth and a, "Tell me what's going on. What can I help you with," kind of thing. Which is the right thing.

The importance of providing communal support is reflected in survivors' descriptions of important aspects of trauma-informed work. In a testimonial in one of the organization's documents, a woman expresses the importance of this sense of workplace community to her overall healing, saying that "nothing heals [her] heart more than being with women. This is the most important element for me." And that "Working with the women is a joy to me and very important to my own recovery."

To cultivate community and connection among survivors and employees, multiple participants mentioned the importance of coming together regularly to foster a sense of family. At an education workshop, Stewart expresses this as the importance of "Taking time each day to kinda ground yourself in some kind of ritual" (fieldnotes). At River Oak, they gather multiple

times a week for a ‘morning meditation’ where they share spiritual principles used in the recovery process, check in on each other, and refocus on their shared goals. For employees in businesses whose schedules conflict with the morning meditation, they began doing their own meetings because of the importance of gathering together. As Maureen explains, “we have Monday morning to meet as a team to read our meditation, go in a circle, and that's everyone's chance to kind of share a little bit. It helps us all combined to understand in each other's lives and understand where we are.” She goes on to explain how this meeting has been a “game changer,” sharing:

It keeps everyone focused and the time to discuss things and to touch base. We didn't always do that, and that time is sacred to us now. We start every day with a quick meditation. We'll we read a quote for the day or we read from [the spiritual principles book used for recovery], and we don't go around, but we just say our meditation for the day, "Stay on Point", we read it, then we talk about the reservations, the assignments we have going for the day and has been really great.

In order for the community to provide appropriate support and accountability, the participants expressed the importance of learning about trauma and addiction, so that all organizational members do so in a trauma-informed way. When I asked participants how to create a “trauma-informed workplace,” most replied that trauma training is key. They suggested getting a trauma therapist or counselor to train the staff. One organization, the oldest of the group, developed a “Trauma-Informed Care Committee” or TICC to provide ongoing support and accountability to the organizational community. As Cheyenne explains:

We just find that the education piece is super, super important and having people that are there to not only watch, be the eyes and ears throughout the organization, the people to keep everybody accountable, you know? It's not just the women in the program that need to be kept accountable. Everybody here needs to be kept accountable and with TICC, we strive to do that.

The Trauma-Informed Care Committee is a group of volunteers who meet to discuss ongoing workplace practices and dynamics and how to make them more trauma-informed moving forward. As Stacey explains:

So we actually have a committee that is dedicated to making sure that we stay on track with that as well. It's called TICC, T-I-C-C. They also put together barbecues, and they do other things too, like we all went to top golf. They do fun things, but then also we have suggestion boxes, and I was like, have you been triggered? And we talk a lot about that. How to identify if someone is being triggered. Did we do it? Did somebody else do it? Now that it's done, how do we get out of it? We have a lot of those ... It's been really helpful to have that training for us, as staff. 'Cause like I said, it is really interesting working in a recovery community, but being a professional and not coming from recovery or not having a degree in social work, or behavioral science or something, it's a very different ... I'm like, I'm just a sales rep, I'm just a person, I'm a makeup artist, you know what I mean?

Stacey identifies how individuals unfamiliar with trauma need the training in order to provide accountability, support, and a safe environment for those who are still processing and recovering from past trauma.

Another way to offer support to survivors in the workplace is to pair them with specific individuals who can offer training. In the education workshop, Stewart expresses how survivors are less prone to anxiety or stress when working if they are paired with a more seasoned employee. He responded to Janet's question about cultivating a trauma-informed workspace with several answers, one of which was to "Pair somebody new with somebody very experienced so they're never on their own" (fieldnotes). Similarly, Rita described tapping on volunteers to join survivors in the kitchen so that they have additional support while they prepare catering orders.

Despite practitioners' best attempts to mitigate triggers and relapses, they remain a natural part of these organizations' functioning. As a result, participants expressed the importance of 'expecting the unexpected' because of these unique risks to their community.

Hope describes the unpredictability of the survivor-centered workplace:

It's like, cause we can get somebody to a point where it's like, okay, you're almost going to be the leader of this thing, and then there's a relapse. Or we can get somebody to the point where it's like, okay they've doing this job for a long time and we're trying to get them more responsibility and then there's a relapse. And it's not something they can control and it's not something they can pinpoint when it's going to happen. They're given all the resources that we can offer, but those things still happen.

She highlights how even when the organization offers support and resources, relapse is a still a possibility, and one cannot predict when it will happen. Maureen shares a similar story:

the first 6 months of us opening the first version of the café, a manager relapsed and she just disappeared and I had no idea what I was looking for at all. She did everything and then just disappeared and was gone. I didn't hear from her for week, so that was hard.

Maureen then expresses the importance of recognizing that triggers and relapses are inevitable, so “It's really how to talk about it, knowing how to handle it, having a back-up plan in place.”

In addition to a back-up plan, several organizational members described ‘getting creative’ when the unexpected happens. For example, at a River Oak education workshop, one of the attendees asked the founder about managing mistakes in the product development process that emerge from survivors’ response to triggers or other stressors. The founder reacted with a very relaxed answer, first offering examples of major errors River Oak has made in the past. For example, she mentioned how the first time they locked in a major retailer to carry their product, they “shipped an entire thing of empty lip balms.” She told this story, and then said that these events are all “part of the cost of doing business in trauma,” and as an organization “we’re not freaking out, that’s all part of it” (fieldnotes). Thus, she identifies the importance of expecting mistakes because of the nature of a survivor-driven enterprise, and to ‘not freak out’ when they come. Then, she, like Maureen, refers to the importance of having a back-up plan or transforming the mistake into an opportunity. For example, Shelby states, “you just made a thousand candles and you forgot to put the scent in it. okay now we know are the giveaways at next year’s event.”

Freedom, Int'l also employs creative solutions to addressing design ideas that are unlikely to be best sellers. Rather than simply tell the women in the workforce development program that their jewelry designs will not be popular, in their primary boutique, they have a special display with 'one of a kind' items that are individually designed by survivors. Thus, rather than throw out the product idea or dissuade women from creating unique designs, they demonstrate compassion toward survivors by finding a unique way of promoting this particular product. Similarly, when Wanda's organization discovered that cleaning was re-traumatizing the women, she redirected grant funds to turn 'Clean Start' into an all-natural cleaning products company. Instead of cleaning homes, the women make cleaning products in the safety of their own program. In sum, these are some of the many ways that organizations navigate the efficiency-compassion dialectic. While all organizations express that compassion 'wins out' at the end of the day, they employ a variety of creative strategies to keep their enterprises running.

Summary

In sum, organizational economic empowerment is discursively-materially constructed by positioning the mission as "the market is the mission but so much more" and mobilizing resources by leveraging one's market-mission organizational hybridity. As in any organization, tensions inevitably emerge. The tensions within this study reflect the larger market-mission tension, as investing in the enterprise reflects a market-based sensibility and investing in social programs reflects a mission-based sensibility. Similarly, choosing 'quality' over compassion appears to reflect a market-based goal rather than a mission-based goal. However, the organizational members' responses highlight how the market and the mission are not truly competing; instead, the participants frame these tensions as mutually reinforcing and display a variety of methods for navigating these tensions in the workplace.

CHAPTER 5.

CONSTRUCTING INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This chapter addresses the discursive-material construction of individual economic empowerment in organizations serving survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Through analyzing field notes, organizational documents, and participant interviews, several themes emerged from the data. In total, individual economic empowerment was constructed with several components: as (a) (re)gaining agency over one's body and finances, (b) engaging in meaningful work, and (c) achieving long-term economic independence.

(Re)gaining Agency Over One's Body and Finances: Healing in a Safe Place

Individual economic empowerment requires a necessary foundation of physical, psychological, and emotional healing. Before women can begin building vocational skills or picking up work hours, they must begin addressing the trauma sustained from their abuse and exploitation. For example, I asked Emily what has "been successful in helping women transition into sustainable long-term employment," and her response was:

Most women that come into recovery, they have no self-value. Building self-value, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-admiration, all of those things, because we come into recovery torn down, humiliated, ashamed, guilty, abused, mentally ill, all those things.

In short, she says the most important part of long-term economic independence is healing from shame, humiliation, abuse. Without some healing, even if survivors do get jobs, they often struggle to maintain them long-term. As Tiffany explains:

And we have seen brilliant, brilliant women who end up on disability because they cannot hold down a job because of things like that. They get triggered and then they end up getting asked to leave because they might leave work unannounced or something like that and not give an explanation when they come back as to why they came back. And so they just go from job to job to job until they just finally give up.

Thus, economic empowerment begins with healing. Healing, however, must begin in a safe place. In this safe environment, one can begin to gain agency over her body and finances. In the following sections, I discuss how safety is discursively-materially constructed and how survivors learn to reconceptualize, reconnect with, and regulate their bodies in this safe place. Then I describe how survivors (re)gain control over their finances.

Safety First: Constructing Safe Places for Healing to Happen

Given the violence and danger associated with commercial sexual exploitation and street life, women entering these nonprofit programs, especially residential programs, are unfamiliar with safe places. Even after joining, they often remain fearful and suspicious because of their experiences of abuse, exploitation, and deception. For this reason, feeling safe is a ‘ground floor’ for healing—and therefore economic empowerment. The concept of safety is central to Freedom, Int’l’s mission statement, and at multiple organizational events, the founder has said, “no one heals if they don’t feel safe.” In a newsletter from Freedom, Int’l, she writes, “between rescue and true freedom comes a journey of healing, restoration, and empowerment. But before those can take place, a survivor needs to feel safe.” At an education workshop at River Oak, the CEO breaks down the healing model for the residential program. He describes a Maslow-esque hierarchy where the bottom tier is “a safe place to live, food, sleep” and the following tiers are “employment and financial stability, then family relationships and sisterhood, then confidence self-respect, self-esteem, mastery, then self-actualization.” Therefore, these organizations prioritize creating spaces that both provide physical safety and communicate psychological and emotional safety as a first priority.

These organizations create physically safe spaces through a variety of measures, including shielding from women from physical threats, which include people such as traffickers,

pimps, or bad influences. As Janet argues about their facility: “So it's just a communal space, if a woman is fleeing a trafficker or a domestic violence situation, we want her to be safe.” At a community fundraiser event, Crystal described hiding a woman under her conference room table to protect her from a trafficker. Currently, the organization is raising funds for a 24-hour emergency shelter to provide more immediate options to women fleeing dangerous situations. For organizations operating residential programs, the nonprofits take great care to remove women from environments that might threaten their physical safety or success in recovery. For example, when women begin the residential program at River Oak, they must be sober, they cannot take any prescription narcotic drugs, and they cannot receive any visitors to the house for 90 days. If any residents engage in physical or verbal violence or sex on the premises, they are immediately dismissed. These rules are in place to protect the other residents as much as the new resident as she begins her recovery process.

In addition, these physically safe spaces also must be emotionally and psychologically safe. In a Freedom, Int'l newsletter, Crystal writes:

At-risk women and children need shelter, sanctuary, a home. We have rescued many women running for their lives with kids in tow. We can no longer hide them in conference rooms and basements, and for a trafficked or abused woman, a hotel is often a painful reminder of her trauma. We need a shelter here!

Her comment about hotels are a ‘painful reminder’ highlights how physical spaces in these organizations need to be free of threats of physical danger as well as psychological reminders of past abuse. These organizations also seek to create physical spaces that communicate a sense of peace and safety from a harsh and chaotic external environment. As Crystal states:

And I remember the first time we opened the first store, before anybody walked in we had a little gathering, and I told the women, I said, “I want them to come in here and feel safe.” We played spa music. We didn't play worship Christian music, we didn't play rock music, we didn't play anything that would identify us, or niche us, in any way, shape, or form. I wanted music that every woman would go, “Oooh,” and feel pampered by, right?

And so, in the beginning we only played spa music, because I wanted women to walk in and go, “Oooh.”

In this statement, Crystal describes how the physical space itself communicates an emotional and psychological ideal. Her desire for the material space to ‘symbolize’ safety highlights the interactions of materiality and discourse in creating safe spaces.

Similarly, River Oak is decorated and designed in such a way to communicate safety and healing, as is the “healing house” run by a CSE organization in Iowa. As Janet shares:

I mean we have certain colors, we have certain imagery and things that are up, that we hope to give the women, or help to give the women peace when they enter the home. But before you even enter the home, you can smell this amazing, peaceful aroma of essential oils and soaps, and bath bombs, because the front room has 2000 bars of soap in it. So you can smell that, and the energy when you come in to the home is extremely peaceful.

There are many physical, space-related aspects of safety in these environments. Yet these material aspects were chosen by founders for symbolic and material effects—creating a psychological and emotional sense of safety within these spaces.

For example, Tori describes Freedom, Int’l as a safe place because it was a physical separation from a place associated with pain, but also because of the communication and care of the staff in responding to her physical and emotional needs:

So I felt safe here because I hadn't been violated here or what not, 'cause I felt like I was in our home. Just like the protective instincts that the staff had here and the knowledge on how to handle me because I was going crazy, and how to handle it legally. Just having all of it, my physical needs, my emotional needs and our legal needs, having somebody walk us through that was what made me feel safe.

Tori’s statement demonstrates how both the material environment and the interaction with employees constructed a sense of safety so that she could begin to heal from the trauma that occurred in her own home.

Many organizations employ specific discursive strategies to communicate safety to others. Both Freedom, Int’l and River Oak describe the importance of ‘loving without judgment’

as essential to creating an emotionally and psychologically safe space. For example, Sarah describes, “That's something that I really push, too, that we desire to create safety everywhere we go. That might look like just you having an attitude of safety and welcoming and nonjudgment to all those that are around you.” In the work context particularly, participants described the unconditional grace and love as essential to creating a safe, trauma-informed workplace: This is a safe space for you to learn how to control emotions, how to manage conflict, how to manage anger in a safe environment” (Georgia). For example, after Janet explained how the aromas of the soap and essential oils create a calming physical space, she discusses how this sense of safety is constructed through talk and interaction as well:

Most of the time during support groups and other things, the women are crying, and lamenting, which it's a safe space to do that, but nine times out of ten when the women leave, there's smiles and laughs and community and sisterhoods being built. So I think that impacts the way that a space feels. I think it impacts this memory, this connection, to what women not only are seeing, but what emotions are connected to the safe space, that they come back to weekly.

Janet’s comment about “emotions connected to the safe space” highlight how discourse and physical spaces must come together to form an environment where a survivor—or anyone—can begin the healing process.

Safety as Ongoing Construction in Economic Empowerment Process

The significance of safety is not relegated to the beginning phases of the healing process. While some women need an immediate shelter that provides physical and psychological safety, this sense of safety must continue throughout their job training and employment experience in order for them to make gains in their recovery and empowerment. In this way, safety must be present for the entire economic empowerment process, in the workplace as well.

Cathy explains how they located their workspace in the residential program so that the survivors could stay in an emotionally safe environment while they work. As she explains, “So what's really great is being in the space where they actually do their counseling, where they get other services, it's so helpful because it creates already a safe environment for them.” Even job training programs that collaborate with residential programs also must take active measures to remove triggers for residents. Rita explains how they regularly conduct drug-testing to keep their workspace safe:

...we do have things in place to treat our, to kind of keep ourselves trauma informed and make it a safe place. Drug testing is one, we do random drug tests, people can't work for us if they haven't been sober for six months. We drop them before they come to work, and unfortunately that, I'd say 50% of the people that come to work for us don't pass that first drug test. That's just sad and it's so hard but because we are that program for recovery it's important that the women that are there understand it's safe and they're not gonna be triggered by somebody that's using beside them.

Thus, through both materiality and discourse, organizations seek to construct physically and psychologically safe environments for the women to begin the healing process. By ensuring that the workplace spaces are safe as well, the organizations seek to maintain an environment where a woman is free from threats to her recovery and growth. Safety is essential to a survivor's overall economic empowerment, as you cannot heal if you do not feel safe, and you cannot become economically independent if you are not healing.

Healing: Reconnecting with and Regulating One's Body

Healing is a broad term, linked to multiple dimensions of empowerment. Although all aspects of healing from trauma support one's economic empowerment, for the sake of this paper, I discuss a few specific forms of healing more explicitly tied to economic empowerment. For example, due to the embodied and economic nature of many CSE survivors' abuse, healing from this abuse must engage how their bodies have been commodified, and in particular, how many

have disassociated from their body and/or numbed it through drugs or alcohol. For many organizations, once survivors have been sober for 30 days, and are in the safety of a residential program, they can begin this healing process of reconnecting with their bodies. Through working, they also experience physical and emotional healing from trauma.

Trauma Causing Disembodiment

Survivor narratives portrayed how trauma and addiction causes a breach between survivors and their bodies. As a River Oak survivor shares:

I remember waking up in a car that I had stolen and not feeling my body at all. Fortunately, it was the police who woke me up, and that became the beginning of trying to feel my body and my life again. It has not been easy, and there have been great highs and lows. I know the sweetness of grief and the feeling of tears against my skin. I also know that I will still sacrifice just about anything to be accepted by a man. But knowing that my body and spirit are connected at least gives me permission to treat my body and every other body in the world as a great gift from God. (organizational document)

By describing how healing is learning how to feel again, this survivor conveys how brokenness is disembodiment, the inability to feel grief and tears and happiness. Similarly, at a ‘lunch and learn’ event, a River Oak survivor:

starts telling her story first, beginning with discussing how she lived on the streets, and like many of the residents at River Oak, was molested as a child. talked about how she was a slave to heroin, and would do anything to be able to shoot up. She shared that she would turn tricks or whatever else was necessary, and that she cared more about her habit than her kids. (fieldnotes)

By stating how she had been abused as a child, and become a ‘slave’ to heroin, this survivor shares how she needed the drugs to cope with the pain, numbing her body from the continuing trauma of living on the street. Another survivor narrative states:

I have a broken body. I knew sobriety for nine years in [the residential program] and still am searching for peace. I have jumped off hotel roofs to avoid the police and have survived being stabbed. My body wants to be medicated to forget the brokenness and all the times I abused it to get a fix. (organizational document)

As she explains, her body has been broken by abuse, and drugs help her to forget the pain.

Similarly, survivors expressed feeling disassociated from their bodies because they viewed them as items for sale—either by themselves or by others. As Monica expresses:

I didn't know how to live life on my terms without the use of drugs and alcohol. So it's go out, speak to somebody, get the rent money, and go right back to using again, because now I'm clean, but I still saw myself as though I'm some type of commodity. So I go right back into the same thing.

In several events in which survivors shared their personal stories, they expressed various ways of disassociated from their bodies when selling themselves or being sold, as they did not want to feel their emotions. Thus, as one's means of survival caused survivors to disconnect from their bodies or actively numb them, healing—and a new way to make a living—requires a reconnection with one's body.

Reconceptualizing, Reconnecting with, and Regulating One's Body

Many of the organizations seek to provide therapies and programs that help women reconceptualize their relationship to their bodies, reconnect with their bodies, and nourish them.

Reconceptualizing one's body highlights the importance of discourse in this healing process. Women survivors need new conceptual tools to make sense of what their bodies are—whether broken, beautiful, physical, spiritual, commodified, or otherwise. River Oak structures its residential program around 12 spiritual principles, one of which is “unite your spirituality and sexuality.” As the previous survivor shared, she has learned that her “body and spirit are connected,” which gives her “permission to treat my body and every other body in the world as a great gift from God.” Similarly, another survivor shared that “On my best days I know even this broken mess of a body is a temple of spirit” (organizational document). This discursive construction—that the body is spiritual rather than solely physical—is necessary for survivors to

reconnect with their bodies and nourish them. This sense-making step is essential for motivating women to reconnect with their bodies, and to achieve the goals of healing and nourishing one's body. For example, in its annual report, one of the organizations identifies the reclaiming and nourishment of one's body and spirit as central to their mission: "In this space, women who were once used and abused for the pleasure of others, will learn to nourish their own bodies and souls."

In addition to reconceptualizing one's relationship with their body, survivors experience healing by learning to reconnect with the body they have often disassociated from. As all of the women in these programs have experienced trauma, and many of them have trauma disorders, such as PTSD or Complex PTSD, learning to regulate their body is essential in their healing process. In a Freedom, Int'l training event for the public in recognizing human trafficking, a trauma counselor presented on how trauma affects the body. She described how trauma disorders are memory disorders. In order to help survivors of trauma overcome PTSD and related conditions, they need to 'unstick' the traumatic memories. She explained how our body "holds memories in different senses," so even if a survivor has blocked a memory, the body still 'remembers' it in its sensory system (fieldnotes). Thus, triggers are sensory experiences that 'unlock' a memory stored in one's body. When a survivor experiences a trigger, her body remembers the experience of trauma, and she goes into fight or flight mode. The therapist explained how in order to calm down the mind, one must try to calm down (regulate) the body first.

Many of these organizations provide different forms of therapies to help survivors reconnect with their body and learn to regulate it. As Ellie shares, "reconnecting" survivors with their bodies is a "really important and powerful in their recovery." For example, the trauma

therapist discussed how yoga has been an effective therapy for individuals with trauma disorders because “yoga is a movement and rhythm that helps regulate the body” (fieldnotes). Thus, many organizations provide various kinds of therapies, including music therapy, equine therapy, and others to help survivors calm their minds by calming their bodies. As Ellie describes:

... we'll use art therapy. We'll use yoga, meditation, gardening if it's summer. Whatever it is. Bringing them down through healing. Just calm activities whether it's breathing activities or whatever that might look like. Music therapy.

By describing how these activities “bring them down,” Ellie highlights how these therapies enable women to calm down their bodies and learn to regulate them.

Working as Physically Therapeutic

While the residential programs and similar organizations offer this essential form of therapy, the data also conveyed how working itself was a powerful tool for healing women's physical bodies, reconnecting women to their bodies, and redeeming past understandings of oneself and work. For example, Helen shares about the therapeutic effects of working in a greenhouse:

Working in the green space is literally, when they come in the [organization], it's like, “I have such a bad headache.” A lot of times it's stress, it's trying to learn to eat properly again. You put them into the aquaponics, and it's fresh. It's amazing how much oxygen is in that place. After an hour, hour of half of working in there, they're like, “Gosh, I feel so great. My headache's gone.” So, it's actually very physically therapeutic, and that's the first thing usually our first barrier to recovery is the physical part.

Other organizational leaders described how the work itself provided physically therapeutic benefits, especially when working with natural ingredients with healing properties, such as lavender, or essential oils. Leah explains, “When we make things with essential oils, there are benefits. Orange and frankincense helps with PTSD symptoms, or sweet orange and lavender.

While women are making products, they're receiving benefits from the products." Or as Janet describes:

If a woman has been in a relationship where she's been beaten literally black and blue, and has been emotionally tortured, saying that she's nothing and can't do anything, for her to be in a safe space where she's creating with her hands ... I was packaging an order yesterday and for the first time I kind of slowed down and I smelled the scent of the essential oils, I touched the softness of the body butter and the soap, the packaging. Many of the women say when they come in [the organization's healing house], even when they're working, that it becomes therapeutic for them.

Sarah makes a similar claim:

I talk about the spa products that even in the marketing of them, there's evidence of people working with their hands, and finding healing in that, but then when they're working with things like essential oils that have sometimes aromas that can be healing, I just love that aspect, as well.

These statements demonstrate how working with materials that have healing properties can have physically therapeutic effects—something especially important when survivors' bodies hold the traces of their trauma. On a trip to visit River Oak, I observed this when my friend, a survivor, shared about her own healing process:

After this woman shared, Starla, my travel companion, shared about her own experience. She talked briefly about having experienced abuse in the past and how her journey of healing took a recent turn when she began a massage therapy program. She described how receiving massage was very, very difficult for her, that she did not like being touched. Through this process, however, she started to experience what it meant to receive healthy, healing touch. She started to tear up slightly, as she shared about how she had never experienced that before. Now she is a massage therapist, and it's been an opportunity to share her story with women like her, and try to show them healing touch. (fieldnotes)

Now her desire to is to become certified in 'Trauma Touch Therapy'—a specific form of massage designed to help survivors unlock traumatic memories stored in their body, and experience healing and relief. Starla's experience demonstrates how working has been healing, enabling her to reconnect with her body, as well as regain some control over it.

When one has begun to reconceptualize the purpose and nature of one's body, these physically healing experiences interact with the new sense-making of one's physical self. Women survivors understand the importance of nourishing their body, and they engage in activities that provide physical healing and regulation. This process is vital to economic empowerment, since before one can understand a new way to work with one's hands, she must reconceptualize the nature of her hands, of her body. Similarly, before she can sustain employment by working, she must learn to regulate her body.

Reconceptualizing and (Re)gaining Control Over Money

The importance of learning about trauma, triggers, and regulating one's body is especially important when it comes to finances, as handling money proves to be a significant trigger for many survivors. In this way, survivors must also learn to reconceptualize money, and seek to regain control over finances, in the same way that they are seeking to reconceptualize and regain agency of their bodies as well. As Darrica explains:

because all of our women have been in experiences where they were a commodity, and sell any type of product is going to be triggering. And even though no matter what work they do, that's going to come up. So it's like better for it to happen in that space. I think the biggest trigger is always like, like, so we do like we go to markets and stuff like that with our car. So you have to make sure somebody's in a place where they feel comfortable. I try to sell something, cause a lot of them are also like, you know have been dealers or things like that. It's just the whole idea of selling can be difficult... so I would say that is definitely true and I think, so I mean money in general is a trigger.

Thus, learning how to reconceptualize money and regaining control over finances is an essential piece of economic empowerment.

Learning proper money management is also important for practical reasons. As Helen explains about the survivors, they “come in with DUI charges, any old court bills, anybody else they owe money to. Trying to pay off old utility bills that they never paid. Old phone bills.

Usually court costs are the ones that are really incredible. Sometimes its medical bills. A lot of old medical bills.” Thus, for this population, many have debts and financial burdens they must immediately address before they can start earning and becoming financially independent.

Most of the organizations in this study offer financial literacy training, as well as other programs to enable women to learn about money management, get out of debt, and begin saving. For example, Maggie describes a local workshop that helps survivors:

they give you an individual ... I guess we'll say advocate that helps them look at [survivors'] past credit scores, maybe any outstanding money that they owe and create an individual plan and then they also go through group classes where it talks to like budgeting and the importance of finances and all that stuff.

Other financial literacy classes the organizations offer in-house, using techniques from money management gurus such as Dave Ramsey to provide practical tools for residents in managing their finances. For example, Darrica describes how they adapted Dave Ramsey techniques:

So, what we really did was just took out his initial first two steps, and we just really preached over and over to them, to naming. Naming their dollars. And that was one of the things that ... Is one of the things that when the ladies grasp it, we see the greatest success in. And one of the things that we also ... It causes, that people have the hardest time surrendering about. That they believe that we don't have any right to tell them to ... What they can do with their money and what they can't. And they're legitimate, that's legitimate.

Darrica identifies how the classes discuss issues such as budgeting, but they are actually addressing deeper, trauma-related concerns such as control. As she says later:

It's the whole breaking the addiction ... Breaking the cycle of impulse of thought, is really where their problem is with money, too. And when they can break through that, controlling their impulsive thinking, with their money, as well. That they can learn to control that in other areas of their life.

Darrica relates money management problems to addiction—both are born out of issues of control and impulsivity. In this context, addressing financial literacy is about far more than learning about opening a bank account and how to set a monthly budget. When Crystal describes how the

women in their workforce development program receive financial education, she also mentions that “They have no sense of delayed gratification, no sense of savings,” but acknowledges that working through these issues is equally part of the healing and empowerment process.

In addition to the financial literacy training, many organizations offer matched savings programs for residents, especially those that model their residential program after River Oak. At an education workshop at River Oak, survivor leaders discussed how they structure the savings program for residents. They discussed how “if [residents] will disciplinely save 1200 dollars in the program, then River Oak will match it with 1000 dollars” (fieldnotes). Yet, there are parameters around this program. The residents have to save little bits at a time, rather than, for example, use their tax return, and they must have ‘qualifying’ purchases in mind, such as a car, or fines and fees. Residents cannot use it for buying new furniture, for instance. Matched savings programs are one of many resources that these organizations provide to support the economic independence of the women they serve.

The ways participants describe the financial literacy process highlights the importance of both embodiment and discourse in enabling survivors to (re)gain control over money. Recognizing money is a psychological and physical trigger makes understanding the body important for financial literacy, especially as Darrica explains how survivors’ money problems reflect their impulsive thinking and addictive habits. However, helping survivors overcome unhealthy financial habits involves talking with them—as Darrica states “preaching over and over to them” certain principles. Through this talk and interaction, staff help survivors understand how their financial understandings and behaviors are rooted in their trauma. Then, by offering matched savings programs, organizations ‘reward’ survivors’ physical and psychological progress in overcoming financial triggers and impulsive thinking with a material

benefit. The financial literacy and savings programs highlight the complex interplay of materiality, embodiment, and discourse in cultivating healthy money habits in survivors of trauma.

Engaging in Meaningful Work

Even though working continues to facilitate the healing process, some healing must occur in order for the economic empowerment process to occur. In addition to healing, working itself is an essential—if not the most important—part of the economic empowerment process. As described in Chapter 4, survivors face many barriers to employment that block their ability to develop financial independence. By working survivors learn vital job skills, gain economic resources and job experience, and can develop financial independence.

At the same time, not all work is empowering. *Meaningful* work offers far more than a paycheck and a possible pathway out of poverty. Meaningful work continues to facilitate the healing process and the growing of one's sense of self-worth and accomplishment. In the next section, I outline what *kind* of work contributes to individual economic empowerment.

Work That Gives to Oneself and Others

A critical part of the healing and empowerment process is engaging in work that gives to oneself and others. The interviews, observations, and documents portrayed how meaningful work gave women survivors a sense of pride, accomplishment, and self-esteem.

For example, Rita describes how learning to cook gives women a sense of “confidence that comes from conquering a recipe and having it taste delicious, and serving it to people and having them say, ‘Oh my gosh, this is amazing.’” At multiple Freedom, Int'l events, the founder shared a similar story of a woman in their workforce development program. The founder

described bringing a necklace designed by the survivor to a speaking engagement at Quantico for high-ranking US military officials. This necklace was very popular with the wives of the officials, and Crystal describes telling the survivor after the event:

... the most powerful men in the Marine Corps' wives were buying the work of your hands, fighting over the work of your hands, she jumped up, ran around the table, and sang a song. She went home and told her babies, "Your mamma is an artisan." And that is authentic dignity. I can tell her until I'm blue in the face that she has worth, and value, and dignity as a human being, as a woman, but when people fight over the work of her hands, that is just such organic, authentic dignity.

Crystal's story highlights how the pride and accomplishment one feels from 'work well done' cannot be imparted onto someone, that she must feel she has earned it. Crystal describes this as "authentic dignity"—an organic sense of pride and self-worth that results from gaining mastery over a skill. Such a comment highlights the limits of discourse in facilitating empowerment. As Crystal states, she can tell a survivor "until [she's] blue in the face that she has worth and value" but this discursive approach cannot compete with satisfaction and sense of self-worth that stems from working with one's hands, mastering a skill, and producing something considered desirable by others. Helen also shares how this sense of accomplishment paves the way for other kinds of healing and empowerment. She shares about a resident's hesitation to make artwork to sell in the local community:

... one of the girls, she's like "I've never been an artist. I can't do this. I was always told I can't do this. I'm not an artist." Hers was the first piece to sell when we opened our greenhouse. So someone from town, one of the local accountants bought it for their office. She was baffled. She was like ... and I said, "[name], it's really pretty." It just ... There was a whole open space that she never even knew. It's like, "Somebody just bought my artwork? For like a business in town!" Like, "What's happening here. Maybe I have other stories that I've written wrong. Maybe I can rewrite other stories."

By linking the survivors' realization that her work is valuable to a shift in understanding of herself, Helen portrays how one's work being valuable makes survivors themselves feel

valuable. Darrica confirms how working enables one to overcome feelings of self-doubt and worthlessness:

It's very interesting when they come in. Their fear of even trying. And then when we give them the liberty to make it however they want it. And then they complete that product. It really is a turning point, that they realize they can make something worth buying. I think the ladies have gotten a lot out of it.

As the fear of trying is deeply tied to one's sense of low self-worth, mastering one's work leads to an increase in self-worth. However, as demonstrated by these statements, this embodied experience must co-occur with talk and interaction that enables a woman to connect her newfound skills with a 're-writing' of her sense of self. Thus, empowering work is that which gives to oneself a sense of mastery and accomplishment.

Empowering work is that which gives to others as well. Survivors and organizational leaders expressed the importance of designing a product or service that gives back to the community. For example, making food for others is seen as nourishing their bodies and offering opportunities to connect relationally over food. As demonstrated by a survivors' statement in a recent report by River Oak:

I believe you should put all of yourself into the food you're making for others. I want our customers to taste the Spirit we make our dishes with and feel the love we have for them. 'Soul food' means you put your soul into what you make. (Donna)

Donna highlights how cooking for others is showing them care, even linking it to a spiritual practice in which the chef pours their soul into the food for the sake of others. Maureen describes how operating a café creates a space where the community can enjoy the food prepared with love by survivors, but customers can also find a space of healing and support at the same time. As she states:

What I think is really cool is that the café is kind of this open door for the community to be a part of that. We also find that a lot of people that come to the café, they are healing in their own way also, and so there's this really cool relationship between staff and

customers where we kind of just hold each other up a little bit. You can feel it when you walk in the place.

Just as serving food is offering care and nourishment to another, serving it in a space where others can gather and feel warmth and support also enables women to give to others through their work. Similarly, Helen describes how their organization runs a food bank to serve their community:

They literally go in groups of two, usually with a peer mentor, and they deliver food to people's doors. That's immediately to flip the switch between being a net taker, to the net giver. So that's a really important part of our program to also empower them to see, "I'm not worse off than someone else. Actually, I can help someone else that I didn't even know I know help myself." So, there's the beginning part when they first walk in. We make sure the new girls are the ones that walk the food to the door.

Helen describes how learning to give to others is an essential part of the healing process. It begins to change survivors' understandings of their own capacity, as well as consider other's needs when they often are focused on survival or coping with pain and abuse.

As many of the organizations create bath and body products, the data is rich with examples of how these products offer healing to their users. Organizational leaders described choosing this business model because of its rich symbolism. As Kristy describes:

... the bath and body products, I think it's tied to what [River Oak's founder] talks about and it's that healing component. It's making something with your hands that it smells good, and it feels nice, and it's beautiful, and it's wonderful, and you know when you make it that it's going to somebody to make them heal.

Frances describes how healing others is especially significant because survivors' own bodies need healing, and through these programs, are undergoing a healing process. As a result, the survivors desire to give that to others. As Frances says:

They want to make things that are good for you, because their bodies have been abused. Their skin and then their bodies, it tells the journey of where they've been. they've got needle marks, they've got tattoos, they've got scars from being beaten. Some of them have got scars from bones that have been broken that weren't healed properly because they didn't get the proper medical attention at the time that things happened. If you took a

woman who has been through this journey of trafficking, you're going to see a body that can tell a story. That body is not going to be that pretty.

By describing how survivors' bodies can 'tell a story' of abuse, Frances links this narrative to its counterpart—the story of healing offered through products that nourish one's body. By describing the symbolism in this way, Frances highlights how bodies communicate trauma, but how certain physical items can nourish bodies, and therefore communicate healing.

Frances describes in greater detail how the specific bath and body products reflect specific kinds of gifts that the survivors want to offer others. For instance, she describes how a survivor was insistent on developing a body salve, telling her:

You know Frances, sometimes when you're on the streets you feel like an old baseball glove that's been tossed into the corner of a garage and it's cracked and it's leathery and people don't think that it's useful. If you take a salve, any salve, this body cream or Vaseline or anything, and you start applying it to that glove and you do it over and over and over again, pretty soon that thing comes back to life. Then it's useful.

By describing how the thing 'comes back to life,' the survivor is describing a healing process. By stating that with life, the thing is 'useful,' she also links the product to the concept that healing is useful for others. Thus, she desires to design something that is healing and useful. Similarly, another survivor from this organization insisted on developing a hand sanitizer, even though the founder was slightly confused at first, she describes the survivor's argument:

... being out on the street, it is gross out there. She remembers going a whole week without a bath. She said, "I smelled terrible. I'm sure other people could smell me coming." You've constantly looking for a place that you can get clean. You're constantly looking for a place you can take a shower. She said, "I think this hand sanitizer is really important."

Thus, the healing properties of these products make the women feel as though they are extending to others a healing product that reflects their own healing process. In this way, they desire to make physical products that communicate an experience of healing and nourishment.

In addition to bringing healing to others, many participants described making something beautiful as giving joy and satisfaction to others. As Janet describes, she wants to “have great quality natural products that are beautiful and colorful and vibrant, that when you look at them, they bring you joy, but they also feel great on the skin.” In this way, these products are designed not only to feel good, but to bring their user joy through their beauty. Sarah also describes how she loves working in an environment that makes beautiful products, because as a buyer, it “just makes me feel a certain way, that having something beautiful and well-made and things like that.” Like food and bath and body product, making beautiful jewelry or scarves or other items is symbolic. As Crystal describes:

And so, there's something about producing something beautiful in a half hour, an hour, whatever it takes, when you can't fix your life and make it beautiful. So, beauty really matters. Physical beauty, I've learned, is healing for people who feel that beauty and worth has been stripped from them, and who have been reduced to the worst description or sum total of their externals, you know? And so, beauty matters, it really matters.

Leah reiterates this argument simply and succinctly when she says, “there’s something to say about making something beautiful when you’ve been broken.”

By describing work that gives to others, these data also demonstrate that this giving is a feedback loop—by giving to others, you are giving to yourself. The satisfaction one feels from mastering a recipe or design stems from others’ receiving joy and satisfaction from your work. The mutually reinforcing nature of giving through meaningful work feeds into a larger process of empowerment—where women feel pride and accomplishment by offering something of beauty and value to others. When their bodies have been exploited, this experience serves as the inverse of their abuse, making this kind of work meaningful not only because it gives to oneself and others, but because of the rich symbolism of *what* it gives.

Work Where Survivors Have a Voice in Decision-Making

In order for the work to be empowering, rather than merely employment, participants expressed the importance of agency in one's work. Given the nature of exploitation, survivors need to feel that they have some voice and control in their employment. More specifically, survivors need to have a voice in their work goals and conditions. Maureen describes how having a voice in one's work conditions and environment is one of the most important parts to a successful enterprise:

I think it's important for everyone to feel like they have a voice whether they're the dishwasher or a line cook or the chef. For everyone to have a voice and feel like they contribute and that they feel like they're not just being demanded what to do. If they see an improvement, that they're heard and that we offer the opportunity to make those changes. I think for everybody to have a sense of purpose, and again I think that's kind of a no brainer.

Maureen connects 'having a voice' to having purpose in one's work. Thus, she demonstrates how having ownership over one's work is one of the ways that empowering work 'gives back' to the worker. Agency and ownership in one's work forms the foundation for the 'survivor leader' model many of the organizations adhere to. Rather than simply employ women, they explicitly seek to move them into leadership where they are in decision-making roles that help chart the course of their departments and organization.

Some enterprises are completely designed by the survivors themselves. For example, Violet describes how her business model was developed by two women in prison: "I have an initial proposal that was actually developed by two inmates on the inside. I thought it was good enough to just present to the department. I didn't mess with it at all." Similarly, Hope describes how their social enterprise was born out of conversations about what products the women wanted to make:

So our thought was, well we kind of gathered all the women that are currently in our program, and just had a thinking session about what kind of products would you want to make? What would this look like, what would you want to do? And of course there was like a lot of things going on the board, but the most consistent was bath and body.

Even if the survivors do not design the entire enterprise themselves, all of the organizations work to make the women agents in the design or sale of products and services. As Frances' descriptions of product development highlight, the women survivors chose the different types of products based on how they symbolize different parts of their own healing process. She also describes how the survivors insisted that all the products contain sunflower essential oil, because their program's symbol is the sunflower. As she states:

The first thing they wanted to do was start putting sunflower essential oils into all of our products. Somewhere in our products you'll find essential oils, sunflower essential oil is the key to ... Here's the thing, you wouldn't even know it's in our products because it doesn't have a smell, it's clear, it doesn't have any color and no smell, but they're insistent that it be there. I said, "Okay, if it's important to you then it's important to us so let's make sure it's there."

Other programs build the product offerings according to the survivors' ideas. As Kristy shares, "we also have our own products that our residents, their handmade products that they came up with and design and create and market and price and all the things." Even if when survivors do not design the entire product, they still maintain some voice in its development process. For example, Georgia shares, "that's why the gift baskets work too because everyone can kind of have their favorite little thing in there and it's an attractive thing to have." Several organizations that sell food described utilizing recipes from the women or their families. Tiffany describes a pie-making fundraiser the women launched to raise capital for the social enterprise:

"I don't have much ... but I have my grandmother's secret pie crust recipe." She said, "And anybody can make it." I was like, "Really?" And I was like, "Well, what if our volunteers help us make pies? And we'll just make as many pies as we can make." And they were like, "Really?" And I was like, "Yeah, really!"

Even by sharing the survivor's statement that she 'doesn't have much,' Tiffany's comment demonstrates how having a voice in one's work is also a part of learning about your own value—that you can contribute ideas and skills to help your team or others.

Work Where Survivors Have Agency to Explore Their Interests

In addition to a voice in one's business and working conditions, participants expressed the importance of agency in what kind of work they do. In this way, empowering work is that which enables women to explore their interests and potential. At multiple events, Crystal, the founder of Freedom, Int'l, described how one of the first questions she asks when she meets survivors are what their dreams are. She describes how survivors regularly respond by saying they have learned not to dream. Through the work of the organization, Crystal longs to help survivors discover their interests and pursue their dreams. Not only do survivors face many barriers to employment, but even when they overcome these barriers and work in the community, they typically do so in low-skilled positions. For example, Hope describes the questions that the leadership considered at the start of their organization:

And like how could they do something that they love to do rather than being stuck in like fast food or something like that. Some of our women want to work outside of our organization, but it's very, like manual labor jobs, like fast food or like things like that.

As Tiffany explains, survivors “don't have the opportunity to use their leadership skills, their creative skills, and they just see themselves as nothing more. And that's sad because they are so much more.” Therefore, providing employment that enables women to explore their interests and potential is a unique opportunity—one that enables them to rise above the typical job opportunities provided to them.

Many other organizational leaders share the desire for survivors to explore their interests, seeking to structure their programs so that women can seek out work they enjoy. As Kristy

shares, “So not only do they get employment at [the enterprise] they're not restricted to only one skillset they can also follow their dreams in other small and large corporate entities too.” Darrica explains how they seek to offer employment opportunities for women so “that they don't have to force themselves into a job that, A, either they don't like, or B, they're not prepared to do.”

When unable to provide the right fit for a survivor in-house, several participants described wanting to find the perfect job for a survivor in the community or to eventually start an enterprise that fits the interests of many of the women in their program. For instance, Hope discusses how the organization’s “dream” is to open up a salon because a “very common interest for our community at least has been cosmetology and people wanting to do hair or sometimes people already having that in their background.” As Janet explains:

And if employment at [the enterprise] isn't a good fit, we're also hiring outside of [the enterprise], working to find her employment as well. The goal is always to find the person full time job with benefits, and a job that she's passionate about, as well.

Maggie shares about the ‘victory’ of finding an apprenticeship for a survivor with a very unique career interest:

Well, we have a resident who was interested in working on the upholstery of cars which got kind of very out there for us. We're able to find through some of our connections and her family, a guy in the community that has been running this car shop for a few generations, and it's been in the family, and maybe that's taking her on and first hiring her as kind of an unpaid intern or she was able to go through training and learn upholstery, and then eventually a paid employee and that felt like a very unique victory for her that I wouldn't have imagined whenever we first started.

Maggie shares her satisfaction at finding a job in the survivor’s highly specific preferred industry. Many organizational leaders expressed more joy in finding the ‘perfect fit’ for a survivor than simply employing most in their own enterprises. Monica provides insight into how the right position enables her to explore her interests and potential. She states:

My dream was to get clean. Not only am I clean. Not only am I not trapped in a 10 block radius anymore, but I get to travel around the United States and I have been out of the country... so that's why I really love the position I got.

By describing her dream as ‘getting clean,’ she highlights the importance of healing in the overall economic empowerment process. However, after she got clean, her work enabled her to travel all over the world and explore her interests and potential. While healing is important to overall economic empowerment, work offers something qualitatively different when it enables women to explore their passions and potential.

Through these examples, meaningful work is clearly constructed through both discursive and material processes. ‘Empowering’ work is where survivors—through talk and interaction—have a ‘voice’ in the decision-making regarding a very material, embodied experience: working with one’s hands. Similarly, by practitioners asking about survivors’ dreams and seeking out work opportunity that suits their goals, the discursive process of discovery is intertwined with the embodied experience of the work itself. Survivors must discuss and consider what their dreams and interests are through talk and interaction. This communicative process combines with an embodied working experience that together become empowering.

Work That is Communal

The data also portrayed a pattern of community as necessity—for recovery, but also for empowering work. Many survivor narratives expressed the importance of community in the healing process. For instance, a graduate and employee at River Oak notes, “Not that long ago, I had just accepted that I would die on the streets. Now I know I have a future. It took a community to keep us on the streets, but it also took a community to help us get better” (River Oak Annual Report). Monica also shares about the significance of community when it comes to getting clean:

And it's good to have the relations with staff, but it is absolutely amazing when there's a whole community of people behind you, helping you and saying you can do it and we will help you in any way we can. And the difference that that door made for me, I had tried group homes so many times. I'd go into a 30 day program, but I had been using for over 26 years, so what was 30 days gonna do? That was just like a break.

Similarly, Helen refers to “human wall of community” as the “central part of healing.” However, unlike a solely therapeutic program, she describes how community is also essential to make for empowering work, as the work itself becomes healing as well. She elaborates:

The human wall of community is the ability in the wintertime for us to cram into that aquaponics and work together, or go to the green house and work together. Because, that's where the conversations come. The ability to invite other people into that space. It's like if you want to talk ... Just say somebody wants to ask me, of course I open myself to talk to anybody about recovery, But it's like, “Hey, can you meet me at the greenhouse? I've got some work to do. Can you just meet me there?”

Helen identifies something unique to co-laboring—that healing conversations come alongside working together. The embodied, physical process of gardening together enables discursive processing of one’s trauma and recovery experiences. As this healing is necessary for survivors’ overall economic empowerment, community is necessary for empowering work. Several participant stories illustrated the importance of community for empowering work by describing its lack. For example, Rita explains how their organization won a local competition to operate a café in a local library. However, the plan fell apart for several reasons, one of which was the isolation the survivors felt:

Then when we got them trained, the survivor really wasn't comfortable having that responsibility of being there by herself. We couldn't afford to have two people, so what we ended up doing was having this cute little café, but we were employing people that weren't survivors, to run a café that was losing money, and we were like, "We can't keep doing this." That's where we thought, this model of satellite locations around the city doesn't work for us because it was a stress on management to try to manage these people that weren't there with you. We weren't large enough to do that. It didn't work for the survivors. The survivors wanted to be in the kitchen, they wanted to be where all of us were, they didn't want to be out there on their own.

Rita goes on to describe how the kitchen is a ‘community hub’ that keeps the survivors connected and supporting each other in their healing processes.

Maureen also discusses how community happens in the kitchen, and their cafe team has begun ritualistic ways of fostering community among employees to keep each other accountable, to their recovery processes as well as their work. As she describes:

Just kind of our once a week meeting that has been a game changer. It keeps everyone focused and the time to discuss things and to touch base. We didn't always do that, and that time is sacred to us now. We start every day with a quick meditation. Well we read a quote for the day or we read from [the spiritual principles book], and we don't go around, but we just say our meditation for the day, "Stay on Point", we read it, then we talk about the reservations, the assignments we have going for the day and has been really great.

Maureen describes this meeting as a way of staying connected to each other, and continuing to cultivate the sense of “work family” that survivors desire. This community is fostered through both talk and interaction as well as physically working alongside one another. In this way, economic empowerment is, in part, discursively-materially constructed by working in community.

Sustaining Long-Term Economic Independence

These employment experiences, financial literacy, and other forms of financial and workforce training seek to develop survivors’ long-term economic independence. In order for survivors to experience economic empowerment, they must be able to sustain themselves financially over time, outside of the healing environment of a nonprofit program. As the founder and CEO of River Oak state in their latest annual report: “We remain unwavering in our practices that offer women the opportunity to heal both emotionally and financially to ensure their long-term well-being.” Similarly, Leah states the goal of the Freedom, Int’l training center as “nurturing and empowering women toward sustainability.” Therefore, the healing process and

survivors' employment should prepare them for transitioning from the program into the community for sustainable economic independence. When they can achieve economic independence, they have overcome the myriad barriers between survivors and meaningful employment and financial stability. As Cathy's comment highlights:

... it's really hard if you have a felony on your record at all, if you've done jail time, if you, any of that, it's really hard to get a job, and it's hard to get a place to live. I mean, there are so many obstacles but it's been cool, one of the women that we work with now, she just got her own apartment, she just bought a car, like I was passing her house up, walking and talking to you and she rolled her window down ... she just bought her own car. How cool is that?

As a result of the healing environment, and meaningful work where survivors can explore their potential, Stacey explains, "A lot of the women get their job skills, get a job reference, because they've been there for at least a year and a half at that point. And they can actually go out into our community and get another job." Or even if they continue to work for the social enterprise, survivors can become economically independent, which typically necessitates housing, transportation, and a sustainable wage. The data are rich with stories of survivors finding jobs in the community, saving to purchase houses and cars, pay off court fees, reunite with their families, and meet many of the criteria associated with economic independence. Like Shannon states, "We're just watching many of them get jobs or get cars and be a part of the community leadership structure now," or as Laura shares:

Yeah, it just makes me excited. And it's hard not to be in a space with a woman who's just buying her first house or who like one of the employees on my team just completed a four-series class on becoming a volunteer manager. She's a woman who walked the street for 20 years, then came through River Oak and now she's our volunteer manager or volunteer coordinator.

Thus, 'true' economic empowerment is sustainable economic independence. The healing process, meaningful work, and training is designed to support women's economic independence long-term.

However, the data revealed how economic independence is not ‘granted’ after a woman leaves a residential or workforce development program—it must be supported for years beyond their ‘graduation.’ Thus, to maintain one’s financial independence, survivors need a community of support. As Cheyenne shares, ‘success’ for a graduate is “housing, and employment, and from our stand-point, it would be a sense of community. So for us it's really important that they have that sense of community, and we try to provide that through the church and through mentors.” Maggie lists ‘benchmarks’ that are similar, saying, “maintaining a job, maintaining health care, and maintaining community I think are the biggest factors that we're looking out for after graduation.”

The importance of community for long-term recovery and independence is highlighted through the challenges graduates face when they disconnect from community. Without community, many rekindle unhealthy relationships out of loneliness. As Tiffany shares, “when you don't have any community at all and you've had so much trauma, a bad, even evil community is better than none and [survivors] flip back.” As a result, without community and support, survivors are likely to relapse and forfeit the progress gained in their residential and workforce development programs. Like Rita explains:

And they were moving into their own apartments and this great transition, but within a year they were relapsing, because they have all of this support and then all of a sudden it goes away, and there's no support there.

Similarly, Cheyenne describes a similar pattern for River Oak graduates:

If they don't have [community], and then often times, they don't make it, because they're out of their own, and they get, you know it doesn't take much for them to get discouraged or get side-ways or miss an appointment or whatever.

Thus, several organizations have developed programs to support their graduates, offering some resources, but mostly a sense of communal support. For example, one of the workforce development programs runs a survivor-led support community:

All the women, they get together once a month for a social, some type of a social event, whatever we plan. They might have a paint night, either paint and wine kind of events, well, this is without the wine. So if somebody, they come in and give the women a canvas and they all paint, we've done that. Might go bowling, whatever it might be. But then we also have a support group meeting, which is always the first Saturday of the month, and it's run kind of like an AA meeting, where it's just for survivors: no volunteers, no staff that aren't survivors. It's a time for them to really be able to talk with each other about the struggles, the commonalities that they face in their backgrounds. So that's been, I think, real successful as well. (Rita)

Most other organizations stay connected to graduated survivors, often developing programs or services specifically for them. For example, River Oak has a “graduate services” department to offer continuing support to those who have exited their program. This community of support—whether maintained by survivors or nonprofits—help survivors navigate the difficulties of independent living. As Rita shares:

We offer them case management. We help them if they, all the sudden, something happens and they're changing and they need assistance with housing, we'll help them with that. They've lost a job and they don't know what to do next, so we'll step in and try to help navigate them there. There might be changes in their government assistance. They might be losing their food stamps because they've gotten a job, and it's freaking them out, so I just talk them through that, show them where there's some pantries, and finally they'll realize, "Oh, gosh. I do have enough to pay for my own groceries now." Just having that hand to help them when those needs arise.

As these examples demonstrate, in order for survivors to experience economic empowerment, it must be sustained long-term, and this can only be done with a community of support. Even when survivors seemingly meet the appropriate economic benchmarks for financial independence (savings, reliable income), or the material necessities for independence (affordable apartment, home, vehicle), a sense of community and support is vital to their long-term economic success. While this community may offer material benefits (lending a car, etc.), the participants

demonstrate that primarily discursive and ideational processes foster this sense of community.

The survivors interact through support groups and “talk to each other about the struggles” (Rita) in order for their economic independence to ‘stick.’

Summary

Thus, for organizations supporting survivors of CSE, individual economic empowerment is discursively-materially constructed through (re)gaining control over one’s body and finances, meaningful work, and long-term economic independence. Throughout each one of these components, discourse and materiality come together to form unique contributors to the empowerment process. For example, ‘healing in a safe space’ requires safety to be both ideational and physical. Discursive interaction is essential to building a sense of emotional and physical safety for survivors, as are the spatial aspects of these environments. Similarly, in order for one to begin regulating one’s body, she must reconceptualize the nature and purpose of her body—something facilitated through a 12-step process enacted through interpersonal and community discussion. Finally, meaningful work is both deeply embodied and discursive. The ideational and communicative aspects of empowering work are spotlighted by work that is not just physical or manual, but that which gives to oneself and others, where one has a voice in decision-making, can explore her interests and potential, and can work alongside others in community.

Tensions in the Construction of Individual Economic Empowerment

However, within this construction of empowerment, tensions emerge, particularly in how *organizations* seek to facilitate *individual* economic empowerment. In this way, both tensions of authority-autonomy and compassion-accountability stem from a larger organizational tension rooted in the relationship between survivor and the organization. As Dykstra-DeVette and

Canary (2018) discuss, the critical tensions within ‘organizing empowerment’ stem from the questions: “Who empowers whom? Who is the actor and who is the passive recipient of power?” (p. 11). Thus, the following tensions reflect a larger tension within the organizing empowerment process, the tension between active and passive. Organizations seek for survivors to be the ‘agent’ in their own healing and empowerment; they do not want to be the ‘rescuer’ or ‘savior.’ However, the nature of trauma and addiction recovery requires external support and structure, thus making organizations important agents in the process. In this way, the tensions of authority-autonomy and compassion-accountability stem from the larger active-passive tension inherent within ‘organizing empowerment’ processes. In this section, I describe each tension, how organizational members frame it and respond to it.

Table 2: Individual Economic Empowerment Tensions

Tensions in ‘Organizing Empowerment’	Active	Passive
	Autonomy	Authority
	Accountability	Compassion

Authority Versus Autonomy

The first tension that emerged is autonomy versus authority in decision-making. The data demonstrated that survivors need to be their own agents in the healing and empowerment process, yet also needed the support, structure, and authority of the residential or workforce development program. For example, a graduate from the River Oak program shares, “I’ve always been a great team player but never had to be my own leader. River Oak constantly pushes me to grow” (River Oak’s 2017 annual report). However, at an education workshop, another survivor shared, “I’ve tried multiple times to go off and do what I want,” but “when I would veer off, they

would gently guide me back” (fieldnotes). These two survivor stories highlight the need to lead oneself—make autonomous decisions to seek recovery—but also the need for the community to exercise some authority. This way, when someone goes off to “do what she wants,” she can be corrected and keep working toward emotional and financial healing and independence.

Organizational Member Responses

Participants constructed this tension as a dialectic, despite its seemingly contradictory nature. Participants described how authority actually feeds a survivor’s ‘true’ freedom, or autonomy. In other words, over time, she is able to make responsible agentic decisions when she is safe from the influence of drugs, pimps, or other negative forces in her life. For example, an individual at one organization describes the program as one wherein “women learn to become more self-sufficient by having responsibility” (website testimonial). In this way, survivors become more autonomous and independent when they follow the authority of the program and take on responsibilities.

When framing the tension as a dialectic, participants described the importance of “getting the intakes right,” or finding residents who are willing to forgo their own decision-making and follow the authority of the program. As Emily states, “You’ve got to get the right people in there. That sounds kind of cold, but here’s the thing. Not every person that needs transitional living wants transitional living.” Similarly, at an education workshop hosted by River Oak, the staff of the residential program emphasized the “preadmission process” where staff screen each applicant to “see if she’s a good fit” and “make sure that she’s ready to commit to that program and is able to satisfy the requirements of the program” (survivor leader, fieldnotes). To ensure that the women in the program are willing to follow the authority of the program, they require all of the women on the waiting list for the residential program to call every week in order to stay active

on the list. This is also part of the screening process, aimed at ensuring the women in the program are willing to follow the authority of the program.

Even when survivors are willing, conflicts inevitably arise between the program or staff's authority and the survivor's sense of autonomy. When survivors buck up against the rules of the program, the staff aim to refocus the survivors on how the rules are in place to help the survivors.

As Emily describes:

... And you say, "Okay, what are you willing to do to change?" They'll tell you anything. "Anything, I don't want to go back to that." I'm like, "Really? Because when I ask you to do some shit you don't like, I'm going to remind you that we had this conversation." That's what I say. I said, "Okay, really, because when I tell you you're going to pack up your shit and you're going to move to the other bed, but you don't want to be laying next to her, but then I'm going to say, remember, you said you were willing."

Emily's dialogue illustrates when a survivor refuses to follow an instruction from an authority, she attempts to refocus the survivor on her original goals, her willingness to do anything because she doesn't "want to go back to that." In this way, Emily reminds the survivor of what her life was when she made her own decisions, when she did not have to abide by the rules of the residential program. She says "if you can take them in that wounded and hurt place, let them be vulnerable but safe and then guide them to a place of hope." Thus, she explains the importance of focusing on the ways in which their previous autonomous decision-making kept them in a place of woundedness, but following the authority and structure of the program will help them grow and recover.

In order to emphasize how autonomy-authority are not at odds, participants often have survivors set their own goals for their healing. This enables staff to exert an appropriate kind of authority—authority that aligns with the survivors' goals. Then, when staff refocus survivors on these goals, the authority the goals exert is originally constructed by the survivor, thus preserving her sense of autonomy. As Maggie shares:

And really listen to the voices of who is coming to the program because it's super easy for us to think we know what other people need but we don't. Each individual knows what they need the very most and let them have a lot of voice in their recovery and in their journey and be there to assist and help them but don't think you have the answers to rescue someone else.

Leah confirms that this needs to be an explicit conversation. She says, “you need to have conversations with women about what their needs actually are” and talk explicitly about “goal-setting.” She argues that doing so is important because “it’s not me rescuing them or saving them. They have the power themselves to heal.” Cathy describes a similar process for the women who work in their social enterprise. Every year, they meet with the women and talk about specific goals they have. Then, they create a plan for her to achieve those goals. She states:

... one of the survivors that works with us is Spanish-speaking, and she wants to learn English. We've been talking to her on a translator on our phones for a year and a half. It's holding her back a little bit from getting other work and really feel like part of the community. She also wants to learn how to drive. So today we broke down the steps that it would take in order for her to do these things.

Thus, when organizational members create ‘authority’ according to the goals set by survivors, they can refocus survivors on those goals when they resist following the program or the staff. Similarly, at the education workshop, survivor leaders shared how the rules for the residential program were originally constructed by the first set of graduates from the program. They made the house rules according to the logic of “This is how we’re going to keep our sanctuary safe and keep each other safe” (fieldnotes). In doing so, participants ground the program’s authority in the survivors’ autonomy. River Oak advocates developing a sense of “shared authority,” where the survivors “regulate themselves.” At the workshop, survivor leaders described how “they’ll tell on each other” because “that’s their safe space” that they don’t want violated (fieldnotes). Maureen provides a more specific piece of advice in cultivating a sense of shared authority. She says,

You want to try and change that mentality that authority is bad, so rather than having this dominant approach, it's more of a team oriented and a we mentality. It's using pronouns

like ‘we’ and ‘us’, and not ‘they’ and ‘them’ and ‘I’. I think that's been really key in that it's not a ‘me’ and ‘them.’

Leah also describes being intentional about language as a way to lessen the perception of a hierarchy. She says, “I try not to use the word supervisor’ or ‘manager’ because I never want them to feel a power dynamic from me.” Instead, she wants to cultivate a “team environment.” Thus, in order to navigate the authority-autonomy dialectic, participants aimed to make authority ‘shared’ rather than hierarchical, rooting the rules in the survivors’ autonomy.

Compassion Versus Accountability

Participants also expressed the tension between compassion and accountability. Whereas authority versus autonomy reflected differences in decision-making between survivors and staff, compassion versus accountability addresses how organizational members hold survivors to their goals when difficulty arises. As Maureen explains, “That's definitely the challenge is finding that delicate balance between compassion and accountability,” or as Leah shares, “They’ve lost their support system, so they need to feel familial... but they also need accountability.” Organizations want to show compassion and support to survivors when they experience triggers, setbacks, or even relapses. However, they also desire to hold them accountable to their recovery and healing goals, not letting them use the trauma or difficulty as an excuse to keep from growing.

Organizational Member Responses

Even though participants may express this tension as a ‘balance,’ they approach this tension as a dialectic, demonstrating that staff must do both—exercise compassion and hold survivors accountable. One strategy participants employ is lovingly reinforcing consequences, but treating mistakes and setbacks as “learning opportunities” As Hope says, “like we have a woman relapse, but if they come back and they are like willing to go to detox or they're working

out again, like relapse happens. I'm not going to fire them over that.” Hope highlights when the woman is willing to learn and change, compassion is important, and she can receive a second or third chance. Similarly, Maureen refers to these reactions and mistakes as “learning opportunities.” She says,

There are ... learning opportunities and that's how we try to view them. When there's a knife fight, a screaming incident. Obviously there has to be consequences because otherwise that's just enabling and allowing. That's not training, that's not helping. It's following through with consequences in a loving and respectful way, but also addressing the deeper issues that are there.

Maureen explains that balancing the tension comes down to lovingly reinforcing consequences while also pushing survivors to address the causes for their difficulty or emotional reactions. As she elaborates:

You take certain triggers and rather than just brushing them off, you say, “Okay, here we go. Okay let's talk through this. What caused you to react that way? How do you think we need to do it again for the future,” and then also letting the whole staff know we know that if your hand comes up next to this person's face, it's gonna trigger them. So we don't want to do that, and then if someone accidentally does that, to that person, “How are you going to cope and react? Do you need to remove yourself? Do you need to...,” and you know just kind of getting a plan for that.

Rather than write off their reactions because they are going through a healing process, Maureen expresses the importance of discussing these setbacks as the truly compassionate approach. She describes how organizational members should ask questions to help the survivors process why they behaved how they did.

Participants also expressed how accountability in the workplace is essential for survivors' success in other jobs after they leave the program. Leah describes how the program is “very grace-filled and nurturing, but you can't just not show up. A workplace will expect that.” She connects her responsibility to holding women accountable to preparing them for the workforce

after they leave the program. Stacey also conveys how accountability is in the survivors' best interest:

I feel like, because the women aren't going to get a free pass. So it's like, I don't want to set you up to fail, but if you don't do your job, you're not going to have this job, because I'm not going to enable you.

She describes how she does not want to set women up for failure by enabling them, thus she highlights how accountability helps women meet their recovery and empowerment goals.

Other participants expressed the importance of reinforcing consequences out of compassion for the *other* survivors. As Rita explains:

Drug testing is one, we do random drug tests, people can't work for us if they haven't been sober for six months. We drop them before they come to work, and unfortunately that, I'd say 50% of the people that come to work for us don't pass that first drug test. That's just sad and it's so hard but because we are that program for recovery it's important that the women that are there understand it's safe and they're not gonna be triggered by somebody that's using beside them.

In order to exercise compassion to all the women in the workforce development program, she has to hold everyone accountable to sobriety. Survivor leaders at the River Oak event advocated for the same approach in the residential program. They described how holding women accountable to sober living is necessary for the success of everyone in the program. To provide justification for reinforcing rules, one of the survivor leaders said, "If someone come in and smoke dope in the house, that's violating your safe place" (fieldnotes). Therefore, just as reinforcing authority enables women to meet their goals of 'true' freedom and autonomy, holding women accountable is exercising compassion toward the survivor herself as well as the others in the program.

Summary of Tensions

Thus, as organizations seek to facilitate individual economic empowerment, tensions inevitably arise regarding the locus of responsibility in the empowerment process. Even though

individual economic empowerment may be discursively-materially constructed as (re)gaining control over one's body and finances, meaningful work, and long-term economic independence, these components require a dynamic interplay between organizational actor and survivor. The push-pull tensions of authority-autonomy and compassion-accountability reflect a dialectical organizational tension that participants must navigate. By framing these tensions as non-competitive, but interdependent, they develop creative responses in navigating their outworking within organizational life.

Summary of Chapters 4 and 5

In this study, I examine how organizational and individual economic empowerment is discursively-materially constructed in CSE organizations. To address the first research question, "How is organizational economic empowerment discursively-materially constructed?", I described how organizations mobilize resources to meet their missions. First, I discussed how these organizations discursive-materially construct mission as the 'market is the mission but so much more.' Rather than position the market and mission as competing, these organizations discursively construct commercialization (the market) as central to the attainment of their social mission (healing and economic empowerment). Yet, by expanding the mission beyond the market, these organizations also demonstrate how providing employment is part of a larger mission to offer holistic services aimed at facilitating emotional, psychological, physical, and financial healing and empowerment. Thus, unlike social enterprises that solely provide employment, these organizations offer wrap around services, including physical and mental health care, housing, education, financial literacy, job training, and many other services. Unlike treatment facilities, they aim to provide employment and job training opportunities so that survivors can gain the valuable skills and experiences necessary for financial independence.

Second, I discussed how organizations mobilize resources necessary for meeting their social missions, describing how their organizational hybridity enables creative and flexible approaches to resource acquisition and deployment. More specifically, I discussed how organizations discursively-materially leverage the market for the mission, and the mission for the market. This flexibility also enables organizations to offset risk posed by both nonprofit and commercial markets. I then discussed the tensions that emerged within this construction of organizational economic empowerment. As organizations' management of the mission-market dialectic is central to their discursive-material construction organizational economic empowerment, the ensuing tensions map onto this larger, ontological market-mission tension. First, I outlined the tensions in resource allocation, explaining how participants expressed difficulties choosing between investing in the social enterprise or social programs, as well as investing in product and service quality or choosing to cut costs. I also described tensions in organizational operations, such as compassion versus quality and compassion versus efficiency. For all of these tensions, I described how participants made sense of them and addressed them within the organization.

For the second research question, I examined how individual economic empowerment is discursively-materially constructed. To summarize, I argue that it has three primary components: gaining agency over one's body and finances, engaging in meaningful work, and sustaining long-term economic independence. When discussing the first component, I describe how the healing process, specifically gaining agency over one's body and finances, is a necessary foundation for economic empowerment. In early stages of a residential or workforce development program, survivors must have a safe place to heal from physical, emotional, and financial trauma. In this process, they learn to reconnect with and regulate their bodies. They also learn to reconceptualize

and regain control over finances. The second component is engaging in meaningful work.

Meaningful work is defined as that which gives to oneself and others, where one has a voice in decision-making, agency to explore their interests and potential, and engages in community.

Finally, economic empowerment is also sustaining long-term financial independence. In the data, maintaining a network of support emerged as the most important factor in sustaining not only one's economic independence, but also one's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. After explicating each component of economic empowerment, I described the tensions that emerged from this construction. The primary tensions were authority-autonomy and compassion-accountability. I also described participants' responses to these tensions as they seek to facilitate individual economic empowerment in survivors of CSE.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

In this next chapter, I outline the theoretical contributions of both organizational and individual economic empowerment as discursive-material constructions. I then discuss this study's practical contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

Contributions to Organizational Empowerment Theorizing

This study makes several theoretical contributions, both through its explication of organizational economic empowerment and individual economic empowerment. First, this study reconceptualizes organizational empowerment by examining the organization's empowering processes rather than the individual empowerment of organizational members. As previous theorizing of organizational empowerment examined organizational processes (i.e., flatter authority structures, participatory decision-making) that facilitate the empowerment of individual organizational members (e.g., Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Stohl & Cheney, 2001), these approaches equate organizational empowerment with individual empowerment. While such approaches are helpful for understanding individual empowerment, they do not explicate how organizations themselves pursue or experience empowerment. Doing so is important in order to avoid the "individualistic bias" present in understandings of empowerment, organizational and otherwise (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). As Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) argue, examining organizational empowerment processes "focuses our attention to levels of analysis beyond the individual (i.e., corrects for individual bias) and provides a lens for examining the confluence of factors that characterize empowered organizations" (p. 135).

By focusing on organizational economic empowerment specifically, this study sheds light on how economic empowerment facilitates larger empowerment processes. Whereas scholars

have noted the importance of resource mobilization for organization's survival and ability to carry out their mission (e.g., Sanders, 2012; Sanders, 2015), this study showcases how commercialization *is the mission*. The 'market as mission' is illustrated through the social enterprise origin stories, in which the businesses emerged in response to a specific mission-based need rather than a market-based one (i.e., resource deficiency). In other words, the businesses emerged not for the survival of the organization, but for the survival of the beneficiaries, as job skills and employment were necessary for survivors' healing and empowerment gains to be realized, especially when facing significant barriers to employment in the community. Such a finding suggests that for organizations that consider employment and economic empowerment central to their missions, attempts to commercialize are essential for larger organizational empowerment, even aside from the economic empowerment of the organization.

Furthermore, as this empowerment process is rooted in the pursuit of both market and mission, this study suggests that not only are organizational empowerment processes inherently tensional, but may rest on how organizations navigate the market-mission tension. The participants' experiences of organizational tensions reinforce this argument, as all four of the primary organizational tensions stemmed from the larger market-mission tension. For example, as members navigated allocating resources to the enterprise (market) or direct services (mission), or investing in quality services (mission) or cut costs (market), the primary stress points in the organization emerged from the larger market-mission tension. How organizations manage the market-mission relationship, and the subsequent tensions that emerge from it, is vital to the overall empowerment of the organization.

Contributions to Market-Mission Theorizing

The generative, dialectical nature of the market-mission tension is especially significant in light of the current market-mission debate, in which market and mission are often positioned in a dualistic relationship where each pole appears to negate the other. For nonprofits that hold the workforce as central to its mission, the market and mission are mutually reinforcing, producing both financial and mission-related benefits. This theme also reinforces scholarship on the generative and creative potential of dialectical tensions (e.g., Putnam et al., 2016), and emerging research on the productive potential of the market-mission tension in nonprofits (e.g., Sanders, 2015). However, even in communication theorizing, market and mission are still conceptualized as “competing concerns,” even if managing them is ‘normal’ (Sanders, 2015, p. 218). In this study, the market is the mission, and therefore does not compete with it—the market fundamentally constitutes the mission, even if there are smaller tensions that emerge in this process.

Furthermore, by examining hybrid organizations, this study also extends existing understandings of the ways in which the market-mission tension is generative. The ways the organizations leverage the market for the mission and the mission for the market create benefits uncommon to traditional, donor-based nonprofits. Unlike traditional nonprofits, these hybrid organizations capitalize on the commercial market for the furthering of their mission, even using material items such as the sale of products to communicate and spread their mission beyond traditional discursive nonprofit techniques. They also experience greater financial flexibility due to their hybridity, particularly as they grow bigger, and can use commercial funds to feed operations and direct services. Furthermore, by providing meaningful work, these organizations offer a unique form of therapy to survivors, as the expressions of the healing and empowering

nature of working convey. By discursively-materially positioning the market and mission in a generative, dialectical relationship, these organizations experience benefits to both their finances and missions that are qualitatively different than many traditional nonprofits.

In this way, this study contributes to emerging understandings of contradictions in nonprofit organizations. As Sanders (2012) argues, the market-mission tension is an ontological feature of nonprofits, a dilemmatic phenomenon to be embraced rather than resolved. However, his argument stems from analyses of traditional nonprofits, in which the market sustains the mission rather than operates as central to the mission. While this study reinforces the ontological nature of the market-mission tension, it pushes Sanders' argument further, highlighting how, when the market *is* the mission, the tension is uniquely dialectical and generative. Furthermore, as the nonprofit sector increasingly embraces forms of commercialization, this study offers a forward-looking portrait of how emerging and hybrid organizations are navigating and benefitting from the market-mission tension.

Contributions to Nonprofit Studies Through Examining Materiality and Discourse

In addition, by examining materiality in relationship to discourse, this project extends communicative theorizing of nonprofits. Organizational communication scholars have increasingly called for greater attention to materiality in examining organizational phenomena (e.g., Ashcraft et al., 2009; Harris, 2016), yet the predominant 'constitutive' approach in organizational communication often favors discourse over materiality. Thus, as communication scholars have recently called for constitutive approaches to nonprofit studies, this project both responds to this call and challenges its assumptions. Koschmann et al. (2015) argue that taking a communicative approach to studying nonprofits "helps us see that language matters because it calls into being specific social realities that enable or restrict social action with real material

consequences” (p. 212). In their theorizing, Koschmann and colleagues invoke materiality as a ‘consequence’ of discourse, rather than intra-acting with discourse to construct social action and organizing. Even though social enterprise nonprofits may appear more ‘material’ on the surface, they merely spotlight the material realities of all nonprofits more clearly, offering a vivid canvas to explore how both materiality and discourse intersect to produce organizational phenomena.

First, nonprofits have historically existed to address material problems—homelessness, poverty, violence, environmental threats, etc. Many of them also offer material solutions such as food, health care, water, shelter, and other services. While it is true that, “For most people what constitutes their experience of nonprofit organizations is fundamentally social, relational, interactive, and meaningful—in short, communicative” (Koschmann et al., 2015, p. 214), it is equally true that, for most people, they also engage with the fundamentally material aspects of nonprofits as well. More importantly all stakeholders are engaging with phenomena mutually constructed through materiality and discourse. Daily nonprofit behaviors such as communicating the missions, providing services to beneficiaries, or interacting with stakeholders all engage materiality and discourse together. Although Koschmann et al. (2015) aim to identify how a communicative approach contributes to a field of research that privileges the functional and economic aspects of nonprofit studies, taking a communicative approach will prove more fruitful when communication scholars examine the ways that materiality and discourse come together in nonprofit organizing.

Furthermore, as stated previously, increasing numbers of nonprofits are beginning to commercialize, often selling material goods, thus making an explication of how materiality furthers and interacts with their organizational mission important for scholars to acknowledge moving forward. For example, this study highlights how nonprofits leverage their structural

flexibility as well as communicative tactics to access and deploy resources. These practitioners rely on the flexible 501(c)(3) organizational structure as much as they also rely on discursive techniques to raise funds and generate buy in from stakeholders. Similarly, this study also showcases how selling a material item becomes a physical manifestation of that organization's mission. It continues to communicate the story of the mission (e.g., 'ventriloquize' it) long after the discursive sharing of the story fades. Thus, there are reasons why nonprofit practitioners—and communication scholars—should examine the ways in which discourse and materiality can come together and be leveraged to further their social mission.

In addition, this study contributes to understandings of tensions in nonprofit organizing through its emphasis on materiality as well. Sanders (2015) echoes Koschmann et al. (2015) by arguing for and examining the communicative construction of the mission-market tension in nonprofit organizations. However, in doing so, Sanders privileges discursive constructions of the mission-market tension, seemingly equating the nature of the tension with organizational actors' discursive constructions. While this project also seeks to understand how organizational members make sense of and respond to tensions, it explicates how the mission-market tension is materially-discursively constructed, emphasizing structural and material aspects of the mission-market tensions, such as the structural components of a 501(c)(3) or the material nature of selling physical products. In this way, this study challenges and extends current theorizing of the market-mission tension as something that lives in discourse, arguing instead that the market-mission tension comes to 'matter' through material-discursive interaction.

Contributions to Individual (Economic) Empowerment Theorizing

This study's primary contribution is bringing together a discursive and material approach to explicating individual empowerment. Within international development, economic, and

business literatures, empowerment is often equated with economic opportunity (Rowlands, 1995). As a result, the emotional, psychological, discursive, and other aspects of empowerment are often overlooked. However, within communication literature, the economic, embodied, and material aspects of empowerment are overlooked in favor of dialogic and interactional aspects of empowerment (e.g., Papa et al., 2000a; Papa, Singhal, & Papa, 2006). Few studies look at multiple aspects of empowerment (Dykstra-DeVette & Canary, 2018), and even fewer examine how materiality and discourse come together in constructions of empowerment. However, in doing so, this study generates unique insights into the nature of individual empowerment, particularly for survivors of CSE. First, by examining participants recovering from trauma and/or addiction, this study spotlights the embodied nature of empowerment's possibilities and constraints. As the findings demonstrated, merely telling someone that she has value or is capable is not sufficient in the healing and empowerment process, especially when the nature of a survivor's abuse is deeply economic and embodied. Instead, the data demonstrated the importance of working with one's hands—an embodied and economic activity—and the body's recovery from trauma. As the workshop with the trauma therapist demonstrated, discursive forms of therapy are not sufficient for individuals with trauma disorders, as they have to calm down the body in order to calm down the mind. However, this healing and empowerment process involves both reconceptualizing the body (enacted primarily through discursive interaction) and regulating the body (a physical act). The inability of either discursive or physical approaches to fully facilitate the healing highlights how discourse and materiality intersect in the empowerment process.

By examining both discourse and materiality, this project also extends more recent theorizing about empowerment that seeks to address its holistic nature. Dykstra-DeVette and

Canary (2018) put forward crystalline empowerment as a concept that captures the fractal, complex, and tensional nature of empowerment. Furthermore, the crystal metaphor highlights empowerment's socially constructed nature, taking on new definitions and experiences according to the various social locations and perspectives of different actors. One of the tensions the authors discuss is the symbolic/material tension within empowerment. However, by treating symbolic and material aspects of empowerment as one tension among several, this approach isolates materiality to one of several tensions within empowerment processes. However, as a feminist new materialist perspective, and the findings from this study demonstrate, materiality is implicated in all of the tensional processes of empowerment. One cannot fully parse out material or economic empowerment from the discursive processes that facilitate and construct it. Nor can one remove one's body from the process of consciousness-raising and other aspects of discursive empowerment. More specifically, Dykstra-DeVette and Canary (2018) discuss materiality in terms of goods and food distributed to beneficiaries in need of material resources. While an important aspect of larger empowerment processes, their study does not interrogate the embodied complexities of empowerment processes. In the present study, the nature of trauma and sexual/physical abuse bring the embodied aspects of empowerment to the fore, forcing communication scholars to grapple with how embodiment both enables and constrains empowerment processes.

Contributions to Theorizing Embodiment and Materiality in Organizational Communication

By explicating the role of embodiment in these empowerment processes, this project also extends understandings of materiality in organizing. Since the 'material turn,' most organizational communication scholarship discusses embodiment in terms of how bodies are

communicatively constructed, and how discursive understandings of bodies are projected onto different actors, (re)producing social norms for gender, sexuality, health, romance, beauty, etc. (e.g., Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009). However, little work examines how bodies themselves resist and constrain these ideational identities and norms. In other words, communication is given primacy, and more importantly, agency, when embodiment is invoked in discussions of materiality and discourse in organizational communication.

However, the ways in which trauma and addiction affect one's body highlight the limits of discourse to 'change' or shape one's body. In fact, the body often shapes the discourse, especially in the early stages of the recovery or healing process. For instance, triggers are involuntary bodily reactions survivors experience when an outside stimulus 'unlocks' a traumatic memory stored in one's sensory system. Triggers cause one's body to enter a 'fight or flight' response. Thus, attempting to verbally console someone who has been triggered has a limited effect. As the trauma therapist explained, after experiencing a trigger, a survivor needs to calm down her body before she calms down her mind. Thus, the way in which she communicates at this point is shaped by her physiological response to a perceived imminent threat to her safety. In this way, this study reinforces arguments voiced by individuals examining biological communication. As Afifi and Floyd (2015) state in an introduction to a special issue on Communication, Biology, and Physiology in *Communication Monographs*:

Just as social behavior shapes—and is shaped by—the cultural, historical, economic, political, and religious contexts in which it occurs, it also covaries with the anatomical features and physiological processes of those who engage in it. Indeed, it is logically impossible to separate communication from the biology of those produce it. (p. 1)

As indicated by the post-positivist term "covaries," most of this work circulates outside of organizational communication, especially critical, qualitative, and interpretivist organizational communication research. However, by examining individual economic empowerment in

conjunction with organizational economic empowerment, this study highlights the implications of embodiment for organizational communication scholars. As demonstrated in this study, triggers come from one's external environment, hence the importance of constructing physical and emotional safety within CSE organizations. Not only does the physical space communicate safety to survivors, but organizational members must communicate in ways that acknowledge and respect trauma's effects on other organizational members' bodies. As demonstrated through the Trauma-Informed Care Committee at River Oak, organizations seeking to promote the recovery and individual economic empowerment of survivors of trauma must constantly educate and monitor their members in communicating with trauma survivors. Thus, understanding how 'organizational communication' in this context hinges on understanding how survivors' interactions and communication is shaped by the effects of trauma on their brains and bodies. In this way, though interpersonal and health communication scholars have pioneered research in biological communication, understanding how bodies enable and constrain communicative behavior is essential for understanding communicative phenomena in organizations. Furthermore, doing so continues to "materialize organizational communication" (Ashcraft et al., 2009), taking seriously how matter—and bodies—come to matter in organizing.

Practical Contributions

As this study offers an analysis of an under-researched social issue (commercial sexual exploitation), and an emerging organizational form (nonprofit social enterprises), it offers many practical contributions.

First, by focusing on how organizational economic empowerment is both materially and discursively constructed, this study outlines the creative ways practitioners leverage discursive techniques to gain access to funds and sell products. For example, it describes how practitioners

tell the story of the organization to access free volunteer labor or discounted raw materials needed for the social enterprise. This study also details how practitioners capitalize on structural and material aspects of organizing to further the organizational mission. For example, these findings portray how practitioners use commercial revenue to fund direct services, or leverage the material nature of commercial goods to operate as a physical reminder of the organizational mission. Furthermore, by addressing the common perception of the market and mission as competing forces within nonprofits, this study offers instruction for practitioners in responding to this assumption, regardless of its veracity. For example, by detailing how organizations frame the market as the mission, practitioners can utilize this framing when communicating with stakeholders, especially given the confusion or skepticism surrounding a hybrid organizational form such as a nonprofit that operates a business. Furthermore, by detailing the tensions that emerge in navigating the market-mission tension, would-be founders have insight into potential stress points in organizational resource allocation and operations. Current founders can observe the practices of other organizations and gain new ideas for organizational responses to these tensions.

Second, by explicating the components that promote individual economic empowerment in survivors of CSE, especially how organizations seek to promote this process, this study offers a practical outline for individuals developing therapies within residential and/or workforce development programs. Since “there is scant evidence regarding effective programs and services specifically for women involved in CSE” (Gerassi, 2017, p. 14), this information is essential for building programs backed by empirical research. Furthermore, as 82% of the residential CSE agencies report plans to open residential programs in the future (Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013), there is a growing need for this information. For example, by outlining the significance of

emotionally and physically safe environments, practitioners have examples of what material and discursive features communicate ‘safety’ for survivors of CSE.

Furthermore, this study affirms the findings in Kabeer’s (2012) meta-analysis of economic empowerment programs that indicate certain *kinds* of work are considered empowering by women participants. Although she identifies work that is reliable, safe, and offers some agency, this study identifies how meaningful work is particularly empowering for survivors of abuse. Furthermore, more than simply ‘fulfilling’ work, this study highlights how meaning is derived in part by survivors experiencing the opposite of their economic exploitation—work that is agentic, therapeutic, enables them to pursue their interests and potential, and symbolically offers to others the healing and restoration one has received in the nonprofit program. For practitioners interested in promoting economic empowerment among CSE survivors, these findings offer a template for designing social enterprises that create meaningful, empowering work for women in the programs. In addition, by outlining what promotes sustainable empowerment long-term, practitioners have exemplars for how to foster community among graduates of CSE programs.

Furthermore, by outlining areas of tension in facilitating individual economic empowerment, practitioners gain insight into the challenges of this process. Rather than simply describe best practices, this study utilizes tensions in order to communicate the complexity, messiness, and push-pull nature of many organizational phenomena. Although this study seeks to offer best practices to practitioners, by contextualizing them within tensions, it resists solely offering simplistic solutions to common organizational problems. Furthermore, by highlighting the various ways that organizational members respond, practitioners can observe a multiplicity of

responses, identifying which map on most effectively to their own organizations and specific populations and challenges.

Limitations

As with any study, this project has limitations. First, the majority of participants were white, middle-class women. Despite attempts to seek out a greater diversity of participants, the homogeneity of the sample reflects the homogeneity of this emerging organizational space. As such, this study not only raises questions about *who* can do the work of supporting survivors of CSE, but also reflects a certain, more privileged perspective on the nature of organizational and individual economic empowerment. Furthermore, due to the difficulty in accessing the first-hand experiences of CSE survivors themselves, this study's explications of economic empowerment are limited to mostly practitioner perspectives, rather than the perspectives of those in the programs themselves. The few participants who identified as survivors offered valuable insight into the nature of empowerment at multiple levels, yielding a fruitful area for future research. By incorporating more diverse voices and experiences, future research can also seek out a more 'crystalline' perspective on empowerment, particularly seeking out differences between the survivor and the organizational actor.

Similarly, this study is limited to younger organizations, specifically young social enterprises. With the exception of the two larger case-study organizations, most of the social enterprises were in their first few years of operations. Thus, the descriptions of their role in organizational economic empowerment are limited to the early, 'start up' years of the enterprises. Given indications that tensions shift over the lifespan and growth of the enterprises, this study seeks to counterbalance these younger enterprises by a more in-depth portrayal of the

more established enterprises. However, the majority of organizations operated small-scale and ‘young’ businesses.

In addition, as most of the organizations favor the residential model for CSE aftercare, the findings are more explicitly aligned with organizations offering a residential program, rather than solely a workforce development program. Although organizations that specialize in workforce development reiterated many of the findings of the residential programs, these programs often have less ‘control’ over the whole empowerment process, as they seek to provide holistic services and employment, but not housing. Furthermore, many of the residential programs are part of a larger network of sister organizations to River Oak, thus many of them model their programs after River Oak and reflect their values. Therefore, organizations that emerge without the assistance of a larger organization such as River Oak may develop different values or processes for enacting organizational economic empowerment or facilitating individual economic empowerment.

Finally, due to lack of access to the residential program at River Oak, this study does not include observations from any residential programs or internal meetings themselves. By focusing on public events and workshops, this study records descriptions of the programs, but lacks the incisive and rich ethnographic account of the internal workings of these workforce development and residential programs.

Directions for Future Research

All of the previously discussed limitations offer opportunities for further research. For example, a more diverse sample of both participants and organizations would yield more varied results, especially seeking out nonprofits that do not operate residential programs or identify as sister organizations of River Oak. Additionally, studies that include observations of the

innerworkings of these organizational residential or workforce development programs might offer insight less ‘cleaned up’ by organizational members in public-facing events or in interviews with an organizational outsider.

In addition, future research should examine how the faith-based orientation of many of these organizations affects their organizational identities and processes. As many participants discussed how they accessed resources from church groups, or dealt with stakeholder pressures related to their faith-based identities, specifically interrogating these forms of communication would highlight differences between faith-based and secular nonprofit organizing. Along these lines, examining how organizations that position themselves as both local and global (as only the two case study organizations did) would also yield insight related to organizational change and identity.

Future research should also focus explicit attention on the construction of ‘safe space’ in these organizations, seeking out how safety is spatially, materially, and discursively constructed. Doing so may aid future organizations in developing physical spaces that communicate safety to survivors, as well communicative practices that nurture and protect their sense of emotional safety.

Conclusion

This project has explicated the discursive-material construction of organizational and individual economic empowerment within organizations serving survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Through a multi-method qualitative study of 18 organizations, I have identified key patterns in the tensional constructions of economic empowerment at multiple levels of organizing. I am continuing to communicate with practitioners at these organizations as I compose a summary of best practices and challenges to return to my participants. This study also

contributes to theorizing of organizational and individual empowerment, specifically the role of materiality, embodiment, and contradictions in constructing empowerment. Its practical contributions include strategies for nonprofits seeking to develop enterprises, as well as nonprofits providing services to CSE survivors. In sum, this study adds insight to an area where scant information exists—how nonprofits operate businesses to offer economic opportunity to survivors of economic exploitation.

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APPENDIX A. ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER INTERVIEW GUIDE

These questions are designed to lead participants through a semi-structured interview about how they make sense of and/or enact ‘economic empowerment’ at both the individual and organizational level.

Pre-Interview:

Before we begin our formal interview, I would like to ask a few preliminary questions. These questions will be combined with other participants to provide background information about the study’s participants as a whole.

1. How long have you served in your current role at the organization?
2. What other background information would be useful in understanding your work here?

Potential Interview Questions:

Organization/Social Enterprise Origins

1. Tell me about your involvement with the organization. How did you come to develop this organization/work here?
2. In your own words, what would you say is the organization’s mission?
3. When did the organization begin its business? How did that come about?
 - a. What resources did the organization draw on at this time?
 - b. How did you feel about this decision?
 - c. How did the staff feel about it?
4. How did you communicate this change to your stakeholders?
 - a. How did they respond?
5. Are the residents of the program involved in the business?
 - a. What does this look like?

- b.* How do you feel they perceived this process?
- c.* What makes you think this way?

Outcomes and Challenges

- 6. How does the business relate to the organization's overall mission?
- 7. What do you think the overall outcomes of the business have been for the organization?
 - a. What do you think the outcomes have been for the survivors?
- 8. What are the challenges in operating a business and an [insert specific economic empowerment program]?
- 9. If you could go back and do things differently, what would you do?
- 10. What would you consider your organization's best practices for operating your programs and your business(es)?

Defining Empowerment

- 11. How would you define empowerment?
 - a. How would you define economic empowerment?
- 12. How does someone know if they are experiencing empowerment?

Looking Ahead

- 13. What are your organization's goals for the future?
- 14. What do you think should be the goals of organizations like yours?
- 15. If you were talking to someone interested in starting an organization similar to this one, what would you tell them?

Conclusion

- 1. We are concluding our interview. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Is there anything about your organization's journey or mission that I haven't asked you about that

you think is important for me to know? Is there anything else you would like to discuss about your organization that would be useful for me to know?

2. Finally, would you feel comfortable with me analyzing information posted on your organization's website related to these questions?
3. Are there any other documents that you think would be helpful in my project that you might consider providing access to?

APPENDIX B. ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBER INTERVIEW GUIDE

These questions are designed to lead participants through a semi-structured interview about how they make sense of and/or enact ‘economic empowerment’ at both the individual and organizational level.

Potential Interview Questions:

Experience at Organization

1. Tell me about your position here at [x] organization.
2. How did you come to work here?
3. Please walk me through a typical day at work for you.
4. What has been the best part of your experience at this organization?
 - a. What has been the most challenging part?
5. If you could change anything about your work here, what would it be?
6. In your own words, how would you describe the organization’s mission?

Defining Empowerment

7. How would you define empowerment?
 - a. How would you define economic empowerment?
8. How does someone know if they are experiencing empowerment?
9. When was a time that you felt empowered? What did that look like?
 - a. What happened next?
10. Have there been times where you’ve felt disempowered? What did that look like?
 - a. What happened next?

Looking Ahead

11. What would you like to do in the future?

12. What would you like to see the organization do in the future?

13. If you were talking to someone interested in starting an organization similar to this one, what would you tell them?

Conclusion

We are concluding our interview. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Is there anything about your organization's journey or mission that I haven't asked you about that you think is important for me to know? Is there anything else you would like to discuss about your organization that would be useful for me to know?

VITA

Danielle J. Corple

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN **May 2019**
Brian Lamb School of Communication GPA: 4.0/4.0
 Major: Organizational Communication
 Minors: Non-Profit/Social Enterprise Organizations and Mixed Research Methods
 Advisor: Patrice M. Buzzanell
 Committee Members: Stacey Connaughton, Natalie Lambert, Kevin Stainback
 Dissertation: *Empowerment 'at work': Examining the construction of economic empowerment in organizations serving survivors of commercial sexual exploitation*

M.A., Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN **August 2016**
Brian Lamb School of Communication GPA: 4.0/4.0
 Major: Communication
 Concentration: Media, Technology, and Society
 Minors: Research Methods and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
 Advisor: Patrice M. Buzzanell
 Committee Members: Howard Sypher, Felicia Roberts
 Master's Thesis: *Beyond the gender gap: Understanding women's participation in Wikipedia* **(Recipient of the Outstanding Thesis Award granted by the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender)**

B.A., Cedarville University **May 2013**
 Major: English GPA: 3.76/4.0
 Concentration: Secondary Education
 Undergraduate Thesis: *A new masculinity for a new millennium: Gender and technology in David Fincher's The Social Network*

AWARDS AND HONORS

Graduate Student Research Award (\$1,000) October, 2018
 Indian Women's Association, Purdue University

- Competitively selected award to support graduate student research on women's equality and wellbeing

Promise Award (\$750) July, 2018
 College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University

- Competitively selected award to support the research of a graduate student in the College of the Liberal Arts

Top Paper Panel July, 2018
Feminist and Women's Studies Division, National Communication Association

Purdue Research Foundation Grant (\$20,000) April, 2018
Purdue University

- Competitively selected grant to support research on issues of diversity and inclusion in undergraduate professional formation

Top Student Paper Award November, 2017
Organizational Communication Division, National Communication Association

Outstanding Thesis Award August, 2017
Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender

- Competitively selected award to recognize an outstanding Master's thesis exploring communication, language, and gender

Top Student Paper Award May, 2017
Feminist Scholarship Division, International Communication Association

2016-17 Learning Community Student Impact Award December, 2016
Learning Communities Program, Purdue University.

- Competitively selected award to recognize Learning Community instructors who have demonstrated exceptional success in connecting students to peers, faculty and professional staff, campus resources, and the local community

Promise Award (\$750) February, 2016
College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University

- Competitively selected award to support the research of a graduate student in the College of the Liberal Arts

Redding Fellowship (\$5,000) Fall, 2016
Brian Lamb School of Communication, Purdue University

- Competitively selected fellowship for a Ph.D. student in the Brian Lamb School of Communication

Communication Graduate Student Member-At-Large September, 2014
Purdue University Brian Lamb School of Communication Graduate Students

Elected to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges Spring, 2013

Competitively Selected Writing Center Fellow Spring, 2013
Cedarville University Writing Center

Writing Tutor Certification Fall, 2012
College Reading and Learning Association

President of University Chapter of International English Honor Society
 Cedarville University Department of English, Literature, and Modern Languages

Spring, 2011

PUBLICATIONS

Cooky, C., Linabary, J.R., & **Corple, D.J.** (2018). Navigating big data dilemmas: Feminist holistic reflexivity in social media research. *Big Data & Society*. doi: 10.1177/2053951718807731

Linabary, J.R. & **Corple, D.J.** (2018). Privacy for whom?: A feminist intervention in online research practice. *Information, Communication, & Society*. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2018.1438492

Buzzanell, P. M., & **Corple, D.J.** (2016). Book review of *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Work and Employment*, edited by Stephen Edgell, Heidi Gottfried & Edward Granter (London, UK: Sage, 2015). *Management Communication Quarterly*. doi: 10.1177/0893318916670035

Published Proceedings

Corple, D.J., Torres, D., Zoltowski, C. B., Miller, K. E., Kenny Feister, M., Buzzanell, P. M. (2018). Understanding ethical reasoning in design through the lens of Reflexive Principlism. *Proceedings of the 2018 ASEE Annual Conference*, Salt Lake City, UT.

Miller, K.E., Kenny Feister, M., Zoltowski, C., Torres, D., **Corple, D.J.**, & Buzzanell, P.M. (2018). Exploring team social responsibility in multidisciplinary design teams. *Proceedings of the 2018 ASEE Annual Conference*, Salt Lake City, UT.

Torres, D., Zoltowski, C. B., Kenny Feister, M., Buzzanell, P. M., **Corple, D.J.**, & Miller, K. E. (2017). Investigating the contextual and shifting nature of ethics within engineering design teams across time. *Proceedings of the 2017 ASEE Annual Conference*, Columbus, OH.

Under Review

Corple, D.J. (revise and resubmit). Organizing exclusion: Gendered power and contradictions within Wikipedia. *Management Communication Quarterly*.

Corple, D.J., & Linabary, J.R. (revise and resubmit). From data points to people: Feminist ethics in online big data research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*.

Corple, D.J., Kenny Feister, M., Zoltowski, C., & Torres, D. (revise and resubmit). Understanding the shifting and situated nature of ethical reasoning in design. *Journal of Engineering Education*.

Linabary, J.R., **Corple, D.J.**, & Cooky, C. (under review). Feminist activism in digital space: Postfeminist contradictions in #WhyIStayed. *New Media & Society*.

Manuscripts in Progress

Corple, D.J., Kenny Feister, M., Buzzanell, P., Torres, D., Miller, K., & Zoltowski, C. (in progress). Gaining a seat at the table: Gender dynamics in engineering design and ethical decision-making. To be submitted to *Gender, Work, & Organization*.

Corple, D.J., Linabary, J.R., & Cooky, C. (in progress). "So powerful": Examining the sense-making of feminist hashtags #WhyIStayed/#WhyILeft. To be submitted to *Women's Studies in Communication*.

Online Learning Module Publications

Matei, S.A., & **McDonald, D.J.** (November, 2014). *Does agenda setting theory still apply to social media?* Online Learning Module for COM 559: Current Trends in Mass Communication Research, Purdue University.

Matei, S.A., & **McDonald, D.J.** (November, 2014). *The social impact of social media: Creator or destroyer of social capital?* Online Learning Module for COM 559: Current Trends in Mass Communication Research, Purdue University.

COMPETITIVE CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Corple, D.J., Torres, D., Zoltowski, C.B., Eddington, S., Brightman, A.O., & Buzzanell, P.M. (June, 2019). *What you need to succeed: Examining culture and capital in biomedical engineering undergraduate education*. Paper to be presented at the annual conference of the American Society for Engineering Education, Tampa, FL.

Eddington, S., Zoltowski, C.B., Brightman, A.O., **Corple, D.J.**, & Buzzanell, P.M. (June, 2019). *Tensions in applying a design thinking approach to address barriers to increasing diversity and inclusion in a large, legacy engineering program*. Paper to be presented at the annual conference of the American Society for Engineering Education, Tampa, FL.

Corple, D.J., & Linabary, J.R. (November, 2018). *From data points to people: Feminist situated ethics in online big data research*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, Salt Lake City, UT.

****Presented in the Top Paper Panel, Feminist and Women's Studies Division, NCA**

Corple, D.J. (November, 2018). *The entrepreneurial nonprofit: Constructing resilience via social enterprise*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, Salt Lake City, UT.

Corple, D.J., Kenny Feister, M., Buzzanell, P.M., Zoltowski, C.B., Miller, K.E., & Torres, D. (November, 2018). *Engineering gender identities: Women engineers in service learning*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, Salt Lake City, UT.

Corple, D.J. (October, 2018). *Empowerment at 'work': Examining economic empowerment in organizations serving survivors of commercial sexual exploitation*. Paper presented at the Organizational Communication Mini-Conference, New Brunswick, NJ.

Corple, D.J., Torres, D., Zoltowski, C. B., Miller, K. E., Kenny Feister, M., Buzzanell, P. M. (June, 2018). *Understanding ethical reasoning in design through the lens of Reflexive Principlism*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Society for Engineering Education, Salt Lake City, UT.

Miller, K.E., Kenny Feister, M., Zoltowski, C., Torres, D., **Corple, D.J.**, & Buzzanell, P.M. (June, 2018). *Exploring team social responsibility in multidisciplinary design teams*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Society for Engineering Education, Salt Lake City, UT.

Linabary, J.R., **Corple, D.J.**, & Cooky, C. (May 2018). *Voice, domestic violence, and digital activism: Examining contradictions in hashtag feminism*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Prague, Czech Republic.

Corple, D.J. (November, 2017). *Organizing exclusion: Gendered power and contradictions within Wikipedia*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, Dallas, TX.

**** Recipient of Top Student Paper Award, Organizational Communication Division, NCA**

Corple, D.J., Linabary, J.R., & Cooky, C. (November, 2017). *"So powerful": Examining the sense-making of feminist hashtags #WhyIStayed/#WhyILeft*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, Dallas, TX.

Corple, D.J. (November, 2017). *Telling a different story: Alternative accounts of domestic violence*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, Dallas, TX.

Corple, D.J. (October, 2017). *Beyond the gender gap: Understanding women's participation in Wikipedia*. Master's thesis presented in Awards Panel at the annual conference of the Organization of the Study of Communication, language, and Gender, Omaha, NB.

Torres, D.H., Zoltowski, C.B., Feister, M.K., **Corple, D.**, & Miller, K. (June, 2017). *Investigating the shifting nature of ethical reasoning in the context of human-centered design across time*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Engineering Education, Columbus, OH.

Corple, D.J., & Linabary, J.R. (May, 2017). *Intervening in online research: A feminist approach to privacy*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, San Diego, CA.

**** Recipient of Top Student Paper Award, Feminist Division, ICA**

Linabary, J.R., **Corple, D.J.**, & Cooky, C. (May, 2017). *Of wine and whiteboards: Enacting feminist reflexivity in collaborative research*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois.

Corple, D.J., & Linabary, J.R. (February, 2017). *Intervening in online research: A feminist approach to privacy*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Brian Lamb School of Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University.

Corple, D.J. & Linabary, J.R. (October, 2016). *From data points to people: Feminist ethics in online big data research*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, Northern Illinois University.

Linabary, J.R., **Corple, D.J.**, Cooky, C., & Fogle, E. (June, 2016). *Creating digital space for feminist activism: A qualitative content analysis of #WhyIStayed*. Paper presented at Console-ing Passions, International Conference on Television, Video, Audio, New Media, and Feminism, University of Notre Dame.

Linabary, J.R., **Corple, D.J.**, Cooky, C., & Fogle, E. (May, 2016). *More data, more problems: Examining neoliberal institutional challenges to online research*. Paper presented at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois.

Corple, D.J. (February, 2016). *Power and privacy: A feminist response to ethical tensions in online community research*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Brian Lamb School of Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University.

McDonald, D.J. (November, 2015). *Sex, tech, and precarity: Tales of a feminist qualitative researcher*. Paper presented at the annual conference of The National Women's Studies Association, Milwaukee, WI.

McDonald, D.J. (October, 2015). *Beyond the gender gap: Interrogating the treatment of women in Wikipedia culture*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, Western Kentucky University.

McDonald, D.J. (October, 2015). *(Un)Contested Feminist Ideological Terrains*. Panel presented at the annual conference of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, Western Kentucky University.

McDonald, D.J. (October, 2015). *Sexting, Consent, and Coercion*. Panel presented at the annual conference of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, Western Kentucky University.

McDonald, D.J. (February, 2015) *'Send me pics': Exploring social and relational influence in young adult sexting behavior*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Brian Lamb School of Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University.

Linabary, J.R., & **McDonald, D.J.** (February, 2015). *Feminist dilemmas in social media research*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Brian Lamb School of Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University.

McDonald, D.J. (March, 2013). *Ezra Pound and the myth of the modern woman*. Paper presented at the annual convention of the International English Honors Society (Sigma Tau Delta), Portland, OR.

McDonald, D.J. (October, 2012). *Types, tendencies, and tutoring: Myers-Briggs in the writing center*. Poster presented at the annual conference of the International Writing Center Association, San Diego, CA.

McDonald, D.J. (Spring, 2011). *Feminine identity on the frontier: An ecofeminist analysis of The Last of the Mohicans*. Paper presented at the Annual Research and Scholarship Symposium, Cedarville University.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Corple, D.J. (March, 2018). *Privacy for Whom?: Thinking Critically about Privacy in Computational Research*. Guest lecturer in graduate seminar COM 674: Computational Research Methods, Purdue University.

Corple, D.J. (October, 2017). *Thesis and Dissertation Panel*. Presented in panel organized by the Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University.

Corple, D.J. (September, 2016). *How to Succeed in Graduate School*. Presented in panel organized by the Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University.

Corple, D.J. (April, 2016). *Online Harassment in the World of Wikipedia*. Presented to Jasmine Linabary's Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies class, Purdue University.

McDonald, D.J. (November, 2014). *The role of research in ending injustice*. Communication Graduate Student Association Research Roundtable, Purdue University.

McDonald, D.J. (April, 2013). *A new masculinity for a new millennium: Gender and technology in David Fincher's The Social Network*. English Seminar, conducted campus-wide presentation on senior thesis, Cedarville University.

McDonald, D.J. (February, 2013). *The gothic and nostalgic in Carlos Ruiz Zafon's The Shadow of the Wind*. English Seminar, led three hour class lecture and discussion on *The Shadow of the Wind*, Cedarville University.

GRANTS

<i>Empowerment at 'Work': Examining economic empowerment in organizations serving survivors of commercial sexual exploitation</i>	2018
Graduate Student Research Award from the Indian Women's Association Purdue University (\$1,000)	
<i>Empowerment at 'Work': Constructing economic empowerment in organizations and survivors of commercial sexual exploitation</i>	2018
Promise Award from the College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University (\$750)	
<i>Examining Understandings of Ethics, Inclusion, and Identity in the Professional Formation of Engineers</i>	2018
Purdue Research Foundation Grant, Purdue University (\$20,000)	
Communication Graduate Student Association Travel Grant (\$100)	2016
<i>Beyond the gender gap: Understanding women's participation in Wikipedia</i>	2015
Promise Award from the College of Liberal Arts, Purdue University (\$750)	

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant	August, 2018 - present
<i>NSF RFE Grant: Understanding the Professional Formation of Engineers through the Lens of Design Thinking: Unpacking the Problem of Diversity and Inclusion</i>	
Dr. Carla Zoltowski, Dr. Patrice Buzzanell, & Dr. Andrew O. Brightman	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead project examining diversity and inclusion in engineering disciplinary cultures • Develop analytic strategies for understanding diversity and inclusion in undergraduate professional formation • Present findings to scholarly and practitioner communities 	
Research Assistant	January, 2017 - present
<i>NSF REE Grant: Understanding the Communicative and Social Processes of Engineering Ethics in Diverse Design Teams</i>	
Dr. Carla Zoltowski & Dr. Patrice Buzzanell	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead projects examining diversity, inclusion, and ethical reasoning in an undergraduate engineering service learning context • Analyze and integrate multiple forms of data to generate solutions to organizational problems • Co-write grant reports • Manage data analysis software for 7-member team 	
Co-Researcher	August, 2015 - present
<i>Creating a digital space: Uncovering the possibilities and constraints of hashtag feminism</i>	
Dr. Cheryl Cooky	

- Lead projects examining voice and empowerment of survivors of domestic violence
- Collect and analyze Twitter data using text mining, network analysis, and thematic analysis
- Conduct, transcribe and analyze qualitative interviews with victims/survivors
- Co-develop analysis approaches and co-author manuscripts

Research Assistant

August, 2015 – May, 2016

Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence

Dr. Patrice Buzzanell

- Directed and/or co-coordinated scholarly workshops, conferences, and panels to promote career advancement of minority faculty
- Developed strategic vision for Butler Center's events, research, and public engagement
- Managed Center's scholarly and public engagement through social media
- Collected data on the experiences of pre-tenure women faculty

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Primary Instructor*COM 324: Organizational Communication*

Spring, 2018

Purdue University, West Lafayette (1 semester)

- Designed course syllabus, assignments, and schedule
- Taught historical and contemporary theories and analytic approaches to organizational communication
- Designed lessons and assignments on career development in order to improve students' professional communication skills

COM 217: Science Writing and Presentation

Summer, 2016 – Summer, 2017

Purdue University, West Lafayette (4 semesters)

- Taught principles of verbal and written communication to undergraduate science majors
- Translated communication principles to science contexts
- Provided personalized feedback on presentations and papers

COM 114: Fundamentals of Speech Communication

Fall, 2014 – Fall, 2016

Purdue University, West Lafayette (7 semesters)

- Taught principles of presentational speaking for general education and learning community students
- Coached students in effective oral and written communication
- Attended weekly pedagogical training to strengthen teaching skills (first semester)

COM 325: Interviewing Principles and Practice

Spring, 2016

Purdue University, West Lafayette (1 semester)

- Taught interviewing strategies and principles to undergraduate students

- Coached students in employment interview and career development strategies

GS 315: Internship Development Strategies

Spring, 2015

Purdue University, West Lafayette (1 semester)

- Taught resume and cover letter writing, networking, interviewing, and job search techniques to liberal arts undergraduate students
- Offered one-on-one career coaching for students

Student Evaluations of Instruction*

Communication Department Evaluation Criteria:

1. My instructor has displayed genuine interest in the topics covered in this class.
2. My instructor has been well prepared for class each day.
3. My instructor has provided useful feedback throughout the semester.
4. My instructor has treated all students in class with respect.
5. My instructor has created an atmosphere that promotes learning.
6. This course has been well organized.
7. This class has provided a meaningful learning experience.
8. My instructor shows respect for diverse groups of people.
9. **Overall, I would rate this instructor as:**

Semester Course # of Responses / # of Students in Course	Q#1	Q#2	Q#3	Q#4	Q#5	Q#6	Q#7	Q#8	Q#9
Spring, 2018 COM 324 (21/24)	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.1	4.8	4.6
Summer, 2017 COM 217 (17/18)	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.3	4.4	4.8	4.8
Spring, 2017 COM 217 (18/20)	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.7	4.9	4.8
Fall, 2016 COM 114 LC (19/25)	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.6	4.8
Summer, 2016 COM 217 (16/18)	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.9	4.8	4.1	4.2	4.8	4.7
Spring, 2016 COM 325 (17/23)	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.8
Fall, 2015 COM 114 (22/24)	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.0	3.7	4.9	4.8

Summer, 2015 COM 114 (17/18)	4.9	4.9	4.9	5.0	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.9	5.0
Spring, 2015 COM 114 (21/23)	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.8	4.6
Spring, 2015 COM 114 (21/24)	4.2	4.5	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.3	3.9
Fall, 2014 COM 114 (22/24)	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.3
Fall, 2014 COM 114 (17/23)	4.4	4.6	3.9	4.6	4.4	3.9	3.6	4.6	4.0

* Evaluations provided for all courses in which over 70% of students completed an evaluation

Graduate Teaching Assistant

COM 250 Mass Communication and Society

Spring, 2016

Purdue University, West Lafayette

Fall, 2015

- Taught recitation sections that fostered critical discussion of social issues related to new technologies and media
- Graded all student exams, papers, and class participation

GS 415 Senior Job Search Seminar

Spring, 2015

Purdue University, West Lafayette

- Evaluated and offered personalized feedback on student resumes and cover letters
- Provided individualized career coaching for undergraduate liberal arts students
- Assisted Director of Liberal Arts Career Development in teaching, grading coursework, and strategic planning

ENG 140 Composition

Fall 2011, 2012

Cedarville University

- Mastered English stylistics and mechanics
- Provided detailed technical and content feedback for student papers

LIT 234 Western Literature

Summer, Fall 2011

Cedarville University

- Devised and implemented essay evaluation criteria
- Communicated evaluation of student essays with clarity and specificity
- Developed dexterity in navigating online educational software

Writing Center Consultant

2011 – 2013

Cedarville University

- Developed non-directive tutoring proficiency by conferencing with students individually
- Gained familiarity with wide range of academic disciplines and citation styles
- Designed and conducted undergraduate workshops on literary theory and analysis

Writing Center Fellow

Spring 2013

Cedarville University

- Provided weekly, semester-long individual tutoring of eight students
- Enhanced strategic tutoring approach through regular evaluation of student progress and implementation of personalized tutoring techniques
- Initiated improvements in program through documentation of student progress and submission of proposal to program director

SERVICE & ENGAGEMENT

Professional Memberships

National Communication Association (NCA)

International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI)

International Communication Association (ICA)

Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG)

American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)

Departmental Service**Conference Submission Reviewer**

Spring, 2017

*Communication Graduate Student Association Conference, Purdue University***Mentor for New Graduate Student**

2015 - Present

Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University

- Provide advice and support for new student acclimating to graduate school

Member-at-Large

2014 - 2015

Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University

- Facilitated and organized events promoting academic and professional development
- Communicated Master's student cohort interests and needs to organization
- Assisted in recruiting prospective students for Purdue graduate program

Information Action Committee Member

2014 – 2015

Communication Graduate Student Association, Purdue University

- Facilitated the dissemination of teaching, academic, and professional development resources

University Service

Leadership in Action Award Nomination Reviewer

Spring, 2017

*Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence, Purdue University***Research Assistant***Purdue University College of Liberal Arts (CLA) Faculty Affairs Committee*

Spring, 2017

- Implemented college-wide survey for evaluation of CLA administrative leadership
- Analyzed data, created and disseminated reports to committee members
- Assisted in drafting executive summary of data for administrative use

President

2012 - 2013

*Alpha Kappa Delta, Cedarville University chapter of International English Honor Society:
Sigma Tau Delta*

- Supervised university-wide Foreign Film Series
- Organized mentorship program and professional development opportunities for undergraduate English majors

Community Service**Writing and Program Development Volunteer**

2008 - present

Women At Risk, International, Wyoming, MI

- Assist in research, writing, and anti-trafficking program development
- Volunteer in U.S. and on international trips (past: Thailand, Egypt, and Italy)
- Organize events and raise funds for human trafficking survivors

Grocery Assistance Program Volunteer

2016 - present

Clear River Church, Lafayette, IN

- Strategize distribution of food to socio-economically disadvantaged individuals in Lafayette
- Plan events to celebrate holidays and provide additional resources (gifts, clothing, etc.)

Fundraising and Marketing Volunteer

2012 - 2013

Safe Harbor House, Springfield, OH

- Designed and implemented fundraising events
- Wrote and edited marketing materials
- Provided transportation and mentorship for Safe Harbor residents

WORK EXPERIENCE

Writing Department Director

May, 2013 – August, 2014

Women At Risk, International

- *Leadership:* Coordinated team of 6 contract, volunteer, and intern writers; designed, delegated and edited writing projects; co-organized fundraising event generating over \$70,000

- *Teaching*: Designed and instituted curriculum for creative/professional writing internship program; interviewed and supervised interns
- *Writing*: Composed advocacy and marketing literature, fundraising materials, and web content

Public Relations Representative

August, 2009 – September, 2011

Heartsong Touring Teams

- Delivered PR presentations to audiences of several hundred+ at community events and youth camps
- Managed contributions and wrote for nonprofit organization's weblog
- Interacted with diverse individuals through counselor positions and host-home placements during music/PR tours spanning 15 states

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Organizational Communication

COM 574: Organizational Communication

COM 674: Organizational Identity and Identification

COM 590: Entrepreneurship & Social Change

SOC 525: Social Movements

COM 600: Foundations of Human Communication Inquiry I

COM 601: Foundations of Human Communication Inquiry II

SOC 520: Work in Contemporary America

Gender, Media, and Technology

COM 632: Online Interaction

COM 590: Theory and Trends in Gender and Technology

COM 559: Current Trends in Mass Communication/Social Media Research

COM 512: Theories of Interpersonal Communication

Research Methods

COM 590: Evaluation Methods for Applied Communication Research

ANTH 641: Discovery and Design: Making Projects Work

COM 682: Computational Research Methods

COM 682: Multivariate Methods

COM 674: Network Analysis

COM 585: Qualitative Methods

ANTH 605: Ethnography

WGSS 682: Feminist Methods

EDPS 591: Mixed Methods Research Design and Application

POL 608: Qualitative Research Methods in Political Science

EDCI 616: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Educational Research