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Distinctive or Professionalised? Understanding the Postsecular in Faith-Based Responses to Trafficking, Forced Labour and Slavery in the UK

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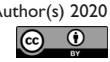

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Abstract

This article examines the intersection of religious faith and the 'fight against modern slavery' in the UK, as yet unexplored in sociological literature. Analysis of faith-based organisations' activities in this area challenges understandings of a postsecular rapprochement between faith and secular actors – where postsecular is used by some scholars to refer to the re-emergence of faith in the public sphere, and where we understand rapprochement to mean the placing of equal value on faith-based and secular worldviews. Our research reveals that faith-based organisations in the anti-trafficking/modern slavery third sector operate on a 'dual register', secularising as they professionalise their public face, while retaining religious distinctiveness when engaging with co-religionists. We argue that, rather than evidence of a genuine two-way postsecular rapprochement, it seems that faith-based organisations in this sector are prioritising secular modalities, meaning the learning process is one-sided rather than complementary.

Keywords

faith, human trafficking, modern slavery, postsecular, welfare pluralism

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Introduction

On 2 December 2014, representatives of major global faith traditions convened at the Vatican to sign the *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery*, which pledged to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking by 2020 (Global Freedom Network, 2016: 4).[1] This event was organised by the Global Freedom Network, which had been set up earlier in 2014 by Australian Christian philanthropist and mining magnate Andrew Forrest, on the premise that 'religious faith can be a powerful motivating force inspiring individual and community action both spiritually and practically'.[2] While global multi-faith initiatives for social action are not unprecedented, the emergence of a global faith alliance on modern slavery and human trafficking is a newer phenomenon and resonates with faith-inspired abolitionist movements to eradicate transatlantic slavery in the 18th and 19th centuries. Academic studies of the US context note the influence of evangelical Christians, in particular, on government anti-trafficking policy, especially during the George W Bush administration (2001–2008). Scholars argue that this influence emerges in the adoption of human trafficking approaches which conflate sex work and sexual exploitation (Weitzer, 2007; Zimmerman, 2011) and focus on individual bad actors in place of a recognition of wider structural causes of exploitation (Zimmerman, 2011). While the Obama administration (2009–2016) expanded the definition of human trafficking to encompass other forms of exploitation (Chuang, 2014), the conflating of sex work and sexual exploitation remains prominent in both US domestic and international anti-trafficking activities (Milivojevic and Pickering, 2013).

However, the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in responses to human trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery in the UK has received little sociological attention compared to faith engagement with other social issues (but see Pemberton, 2006, who promotes the possibilities for churches to mobilise social action around 'sex trafficking'). Is this faith-based response to modern slavery and human trafficking distinctive? Or do the activities of these faith actors differ little from other professionals working in this area? If the latter, is there any discernible impact from the injection of faith on the practical and discursive construction of this field? This article considers these questions within wider sociological debates around the 're-emergence of faith' in the public sphere, and suggestions that we are living in a 'postsecular era', or that the increased numbers of faith–secular partnerships indicate a 'postsecular rapprochement' in the public sphere, where a rapprochement refers to 'an agreement reached by opposing groups or people'[3] (Beckford, 2012; Cloke and Beaumont, 2013; Habermas, 2006; McLennan, 2007). Following Tomalin (2018), we contend that the concept of the postsecular fails to adequately consider the extent to which many faith actors operate on a 'dual register': secularising as they professionalise in their public facing work, while retaining religious distinctiveness when engaging with co-religionists. This is particularly the case for those faith actors who operate as formal third sector organisations and often receive government funding, such as those we mainly focus on in this article. Are we seeing a genuine 'postsecular rapprochement' between these actors and their secular counterparts, if these faith actors are adapting themselves to secular environments and moderating, downplaying or hiding their distinctive faith identity as they 'professionalise' (Cloke and Beaumont, 2013)? While this latter observation is not new (see, for instance, Cairns et al., 2007;

Dinham, 2009; Harris et al., 2003; Prochaska, 2006), others have not examined the implications of this for postsecular theory, which is the key sociological contribution of our article to these debates.

It is important to briefly define our key terms. Modern slavery, although not defined in any international legal instrument, is generally understood as an umbrella term encompassing human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour (Patterson and Zhuo, 2018). Human trafficking – understood to involve recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons – is not synonymous with modern slavery; severe exploitation may occur without a process of 'trafficking'. Relatedly, the tendency to equate human trafficking primarily with sex work is challenged by statistics[4] that suggest the majority of those now considered to be in 'modern slavery' are in forced labour in sectors such as agriculture, construction, hospitality and manufacturing, as well as domestic exploitation and coerced criminal activity. McGrath and Watson (2018) call this cluster of terms trafficking, forced labour and slavery (TFLS). For brevity, this article uses 'anti-TFLS' to refer to the growing field of responses to 'modern slavery' conceived of as a broader phenomenon than human trafficking.

This article refers to both faith and religion, while acknowledging that they can have different meanings. Although they are used interchangeably, the language of 'faith' dominates policy discourses, so we mostly use the term 'faith' here. We suggest that one reason that 'religion' is avoided in policy discourses is because it points to differences that lead to social division, whereas having a 'faith' is something that is shared by people regardless of their religious tradition. We use the term 'faith actor' to refer to individuals, institutions and organisations that have a faith background, and the term faith-based organisation (FBO), as a subset of 'faith actor', to denote an organisation with ties to a religious institution and/or an underpinning faith ethos (see Sider and Unruh, 2004). By 'professionalised', we mean taking on market-like features such as effective/efficient service delivery and demonstrating improved ability to access statutory funding and highly skilled human capital. As we note below, the literature on FBOs, which mainly focuses on North America, generally treats professionalisation as involving secularisation (Bielefeld and Cleveland, 2013). This, in itself, challenges theories of the postsecular and the existence of a genuine postsecular rapprochement within the faith-based anti-TFLS third sector.

We begin by outlining rebuttals to the secularisation thesis (i.e. that modernisation would inevitably lead to the decline in religious belief and practice), on the basis that religious faith has a renewed role in public life in the UK. Since the 1980s, a willingness to engage faith actors in the provision of social welfare has coincided with neoliberal welfare reforms. We then present the findings of our mapping of UK anti-TFLS organisations. Finally, we discuss the implications of this for the questions of how the FBOs working in this field negotiate between maintaining a distinctive faith identity and a professional public face, and what an examination of anti-TFLS faith engagement contributes to sociological theories of the postsecular.

Theorising the 'Postsecular' Society

In the UK, as elsewhere, assumptions that religious faith in modern societies was to become only relevant in the private lives of individuals, most likely eventually

disappearing altogether, have been challenged by the continued presence of faith actors in the public sphere. This persistent or even resurgent presence of faith exists in tension with global concerns about a clash between the values of secularism (the ideology that secularisation should be promoted) and religious particularisms, most strongly focused on the effects of so-called Islamic fundamentalism (Asad, 1993). While late 19th to early 20th-century sociologists such as Durkheim (1915) and Weber (1930) focused on the demise of religion as a public social force, today the secularisation thesis is recognised as flawed. Drawing on Eder (2002, 2006), Cloke and Beaumont (2013: 35) contend that we can observe a trend of religious faith re-emerging into the public sphere and rediscovering 'its voice'. While we share Cloke and Beaumont's (2013: 29) view that we need to distance ourselves from any idea of an 'epochal shift from a secular age . . . to a postsecular age', others go further in claiming that we are witnessing the emergence of a 'postsecular era' (Habermas, 2006; McLennan, 2007; see also Beckford, 2012).

Habermas is the most famous discussant of the postsecular and proponent of postsecular theory, and takes both a descriptive and normative approach. He states that modern societies are becoming increasingly postsecular and that faith actors and secular actors should participate in a 'complementary learning process', where 'both sides can . . . then take seriously each other's contributions to controversial themes in the public sphere' (Habermas, 2006: 258). While Habermas' idea of a 'complementary learning process' might seem to respect all forms of knowledge and allow individuals to share their perspectives in their own voices, he has been widely criticised for ultimately holding a secularist position when he writes that 'in a constitutional state, all norms that can be legally implemented must be formulated and publicly justified in a language that all the citizens understand' (2008: 28; see also Dillon, 2012; Tomalin, 2018). For Habermas, this 'publicly justified language' corresponds to reasoned secular discourse that prohibits reference, for instance, to divine authority or revelation, and necessitates that 'religious citizens' ultimately have to translate 'their religious norms into a secular idiom' (Dillon, 2012: 258). We argue that if we are witnessing faith actors adapting their communications and activities to appear non-religious in order to be acceptable to a wider secular society (i.e. shifting register), then to use the term 'postsecular rapprochement' is misleading.

Building on the work of sociologist of religion José Casanova (1994), who argues that secularisation is multidimensional, we also argue that there is a need to be more specific about what aspect of postsecularisation we are referring to. Casanova (1994) posits three types of secularising process: differentiation (i.e. the separation of realms of modern life into distinct subsystems with their own function and rationality, which means the separation of religious communication from secular modes); privatisation (i.e. where religion becomes less significant in the public sphere); and the decline of individual religious belief and affiliation. This is also a useful way to think about postsecularisation. Our discussion here does not require comment on the extent to which individual religious belief and affiliation is in decline, although there is evidence that in global North settings such as the UK, this is the case (Davie, 2015). We are more interested in the other two senses of secularisation and whether they have been reversed. While there is evidence that desecularisation, or 'postsecularisation', is taking place in the sense of the deprivatisation of religion, the persistence of secularisation in the sense of differentiation, as evidenced in the need for the faith actors that were part of our research to secularise their

communication strategies in the public sphere, means that we cannot define the rapprochement between these faith actors and their secular counterparts as postsecular. We argue that the labelling of concepts and processes matters if we are to precisely capture the nature of faith–secular partnerships. Characterising the rapprochement we observed as postsecular overlooks the important observation that many faith actors are 'strategically shift[ing]' between secular and religious 'modes of communication' (Tomalin, 2018: 3) as the discussion of our research below demonstrates.

Faith and Welfare Pluralism in the UK

In the UK, the last few decades have seen the increased visibility of both faith and faith actors in the public sphere, facilitated by, and running parallel to, the advent of neoliberal welfare state restructuring in the 1980s. While the establishment of the modern welfare state in 1945 may be widely thought of as secular, it was endorsed by key faith actors like Archbishop William Temple, who argued that the 'State is under the moral law of God, and is intended by Him to be an instrument for human welfare' (Jawad, 2012: 45). Such an explicit Christian articulation all but disappeared in the UK in the following decades, although faith actors had played the role of a welfare state before 1945 (Jawad, 2012). However, welfare state retrenchment has created space for faith actors to take a bigger role in the provision of public services as government services have been outsourced (Evans et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2012). Simultaneously, secular and faith-based charities and community groups have stepped in to alleviate the social consequences of the shrinking welfare state (Beaumont, 2008; Beaumont and Cloke, 2012; Cloke et al., 2010; Fyfe, 2005). For some faith actors, this public role has gone beyond merely serving the poor, to advocating for changes in policy (Beaumont, 2008; Wills et al., 2009).

The growing public service role of faith actors from the 1980s onwards was further facilitated by important shifts in how British Christians, especially evangelical Christians, understood their roles in society (Cloke et al., 2012; Filby, 2011). At this time evangelical Christians who had often, but not always – see later on The Salvation Army – historically rejected social action as the purview of liberal Christians, began reconsidering their position (Cloke et al., 2012). Evangelical Christians like Steve Chalke, founder of Stop the Traffik (a prominent anti-TFLS campaigning organisation), came increasingly to understand praxis as an important element of their faith. Minority faiths have also played an important role in addressing the consequences of welfare state retrenchment. The Al-Manaar Mosque and Muslim volunteers were central in offering support to survivors of the Grenfell tower disaster (Kellaway, 2018), for example, while, Sikh Gurdwaras regularly provide shelter and food for homeless or needy people (Singh, 2015).

There are unresolved debates about whether faith actors' greater role in service provision is positive or negative, and whether there is anything 'distinctive' about what they do. The faith motive of FBOs may be understood as offering understandings of social justice that challenge the policies that cause poverty, rather than merely ameliorating their symptoms (Wills et al., 2009). However, third sector organisations' involvement in welfare state services can also be seen as part of 'roll-out neoliberalism' (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 384), disciplining service users on behalf of the state (Lancione, 2014), and mitigating the worst effects of welfare state retrenchment, thereby relieving the

government of its responsibilities. There are also concerns that outsourcing welfare state services to FBOs has increased the influence of conservative faith leaders, at the expense of women and sexual minorities (Patel, 2011).

Researching Anti-TFLS in the UK

There is a significant body of scholarship exploring the growing role of faith actors in many different areas of welfare service provision, including homelessness (Johnsen, 2014), drug rehabilitation (Williams, 2015), food banks (Cloke et al., 2017), as well as humanitarianism and international development (Roth, 2019; Tomalin, 2015). There are studies of the role of faith actors in anti-TFLS in both the USA (Campbell and Zimmerman, 2014; Zimmerman, 2010, 2011, 2013) and the global South (Frame, 2017; Raimi, 2012), but very little research on this topic in the UK. This article draws on a wider Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)[5] funded project that aims to investigate the roles of FBOs in anti-TFLS in the UK. It does not include a focus on the informal role of local faith communities and their places of worship in anti-TFLS. The project as a whole included 81 in-depth qualitative interviews, analysis of the contribution of FBOs and other faith actors to committees and inquiries relating to the Modern Slavery Act in Hansard, a mapping of the anti-TFLS third sector and analysis of visual communications in the field. The core qualitative research included case studies of six organisations offering support to people identified as 'victims of modern slavery' (29 interviews with managers and staff); and interviews with 21 civil society and government key informants, 14 people who had received support and 17 civil society representatives in the Netherlands and Spain. This article discusses the first phase of research which reviewed literature produced by FBOs and mapped the publicly available communications of anti-TFLS third sector organisations to examine FBO roles in service provision and campaigning. We highlight below examples from documents identified in our mapping, library and database searches that include explicit references to a Christian perspective; whereas much material produced by 'FBOs' does not adopt a specifically religious standpoint and reproduces generic or hegemonic (secular) readings of TFLS.

The mapping examined the publicly available communications of third sector organisations involved in anti-TFLS in the UK between May and August 2017. We identified organisations through: our existing knowledge; the list of National Referral Mechanism (NRM) subcontractors;[6] and the 'first responder agencies' to whom a suspected victim of modern slavery must initially be referred.[7] Adding an exploration of the Charity Commission listings under 'trafficking' and 'slavery' helped to pick up some constituted organisations less networked or cross referenced in others' reports or without a clear web or social media presence. A snowball technique identified further organisations via collaborators listed in websites and reports (e.g. Bradstock et al., 2014) and social media, especially Twitter profiles and 'followers'. Third sector organisations addressing TFLS in the UK were included due to the focus of the research on anti-TFLS activities in the UK. Organisations with offices in the UK, but whose anti-modern slavery interventions are in the global South (such as Islamic Relief) were excluded, as were statutory bodies such as Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and the police Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit

(MSHTU). Although there is informal support of vulnerable migrants in places of worship of all faiths in the UK, the congregational level was beyond the scope of this research. The mapping offers a snapshot of a particular time period in 2017 in a rapidly changing sector where new initiatives are frequently emerging and existing organisations expanding into the anti-TFLS field.

The organisations were classified according to several criteria, including: links to a faith tradition or self-identification as faith-based; relationship with the state (e.g. involvement in NRM provision); whether a single-issue anti-TFLS organisation or one with a wider remit; and type of activities. Organisations were categorised according to their stated priorities and main activities in campaigning, service provision to trafficked persons (TPs) or service provision to people who were not trafficked (e.g. providing training on TFLS to professionals), or some combination of the three. For example, while the Human Trafficking Foundation provides emergency bursaries to trafficked persons, their main focus is on lobbying parliament and raising public awareness and they were categorised as 'mainly campaigning'.

Drawing on Sider and Unruh (2004), we determined whether an organisation was faith-based by examining the presence of: explicit or implicit religious references in the mission statement and other non-governmental organisation (NGO)-written texts; any links to a specific church or other faith institution; whether or not published profiles of trustees and staff stated their faith or membership of a faith body; and requirement for faith affiliation in any job advertisements. While there were areas of ambivalence that sometimes made classification difficult, this speaks to the extent to which FBOs feel willing or able to identify their religious identity, a topic explored below in discussion of the mapping. The mapping exercise identified only one non-Christian (Jewish) organisation, so we focus on Christianity in this article.

Is There a Distinctive 'Faith-Based Approach' Response to Modern Slavery?

Christian FBOs are significant in the provision of services under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Introduced in 2009, the NRM was established to meet the UK's obligations under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.[8] A person who is considered by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) or the National Crime Agency's Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) to have 'reasonable grounds' to be considered a victim of modern slavery is entitled to a 45-day period to 'reflect and recover' (National Crime Agency, n.d.). The NRM offers accommodation, psychological support, health care and legal and immigration advice. In 2011, NRM service provision was outsourced to The Salvation Army (TSA), an evangelical Christian church as well as an FBO and the largest non-government provider of social care, that 'exists to save souls, grow saints and serve suffering humanity' (The Salvation Army, 2018). TSA further subcontracted services to 12 organisations, eight secular, and four FBOs. Two of the FBOs and one of the secular groups are solely or primarily anti-trafficking organisations; the rest are women's charities, social housing and support providers, and a migrant support charity. On 29 June 2020, The Salvation Army was re-awarded the NRM contract for another five years.[9]

Discussion of the controversial decision to award the contract to TSA sheds light on the context in which FBOs are operating in the anti-TFLS third sector, and raises questions around the existence of a postsecular rapprochement in the sector. In particular, it suggests that faith actors may be viewed with suspicion by their secular counterparts. Before 2011, the NRM contract was held by the Poppy Project, a project of Eaves Housing, a charity established in 2003 to support women with experience of domestic and sexual violence, as well as Migrant Helpline, another secular charity (ATMG, 2010). Concerns were raised about the loss of considerable experience in not re-contracting the Poppy Project. Immigration solicitor Catherine Robinson said that it was 'deeply disappointing that the Poppy Project's proven expertise in working with trafficked women has not been given proper recognition or weight' and that retaining 'a gender-specific and specialist service with a proven track record' was an absolute necessity in this field (Hodgson and Robinson, 2011). Globally, TSA are early adopters in the field, having been prominent in early antecedents of contemporary anti-trafficking advocacy in the early to mid 20th century (Limoncelli, 2017). The Poppy Project suggested that it had lost the contract because of its critiques of government policy, and that TSA were seen as more biddable (Hill, 2011). The government responded that TSA had put in a stronger bid, and that its plan to subcontract would allow them to provide services across England and Wales (Butler and Travis, 2011). Other critiques focused even more strongly on the faith identity of TSA. The Rt Hon Dr Denis MacShane MP wrote a letter to the Ministry of Justice Minister Crispin Blunt (who awarded the contract):

> The idea that the vulnerable, scared women from Muslim, Orthodox, Buddhist and other cultural backgrounds who face violence and torture from their pimps and traffickers here in Britain should now be handed over to a proselytising mono-religious organisation like the Salvation Army beggars belief. (Womensgrid, 2011)

This comment expresses fears that faith actors, especially those with a mission to evangelise, are distinctive in not always approaching service provision for a diverse client base appropriately.

Despite little academic research on the roles of faith-based anti-TFLS activity, Christian actors and authors have written books, briefing papers and reports about their activities. These documents provide insights into how Christians understand and approach modern slavery, and the theological underpinnings of their interventions. Common to these reports is an expression of TFLS as a violation of 'human dignity', as well as human rights, and that Christians are not only 'called on' to combat this crime, but that their faith dimension gives them a distinct advantage. Christian Action in Research and Education (CARE, 2017: 2) state 'CARE believes that every person is made in the image of God and that human trafficking is a violation of that fundamental truth'. A Church of Scotland (2007) document *Human trafficking: To be silent is to be unfaithful* claims 'to be silent . . . is not an option; we are called to care for all God's creation. We are called to love our neighbour.' Emphasising distinctiveness, Ben Cooley (2015: 71), the founder of anti-TFLS organisation Hope for Justice, writes: 'I've learnt that one man plus the power of God equals victory every time no matter what the odds. This means that when the Church gets involved in the darkest places, we can transform

them.' The (Catholic) Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation (RENATE) (2015: 8) report *A mapping across Europe* explicitly states: 'The uniqueness of RENATE – as contrasted with secular agencies – is that its prophetic action is sustained and inspired by deep Christian faith. Faith in holding on to the God who liberates from injustice and oppression.' An interesting counterpoint to these reports is Pemberton Ford (2017), who discusses what Pentecostal churches can do to better address human trafficking and domestic violence in their congregations, but does not examine the theological underpinnings.

Somewhat more diversity can be seen in how trafficking is understood, and victimhood constructed, in these documents. Collectively, the Christian literature suggests a disproportionate, but not exclusive, focus on the sexual exploitation of women and children. The Church of Scotland (2007) report cites only examples of women and children in sexual exploitation. CARE's first priority for combatting human trafficking is criminalising the purchase of sex. However, CARE (2017: 1) also state: 'people are trafficked into prostitution, agricultural and building labour, manufacturing, domestic servitude, forced begging, benefit fraud and petty criminality, and organ removal' and *Fighting Slavery: Faith in Action* (Kinsella and Stanley, 2015) includes a wide range of exploitative situations, including brick kilns and cannabis farms in India.

We can thus identify a sense among these Christian actors that human trafficking is a grave social ill that Christians are particularly called to combat. The historic Christian involvement in the anti-slavery movement, and the conflation of human trafficking and sex work is likely to render this topic as particularly morally compelling for some Christians. Indeed, Peter Stanley (2015: 84), a Christian and former strategy director at Stop the Traffik, describes himself as a 'modern day William Wilberforce'. What does this mean, practically, for Christians involved in campaigning and in service provision? Has there been a distinctive Christian contribution in these areas or evidence of a post-secular rapprochement between a Christian and secular approach?

Mapping the Anti-TFLS Third Sector

We undertook a mapping of the anti-TFLS third sector to answer these questions and to better understand the roles played by FBOs. This identified 115 third sector organisations involved in providing services and/or engaging in campaigning on TFLS in the UK. Of these, we analysed 34 (30%) as faith-based, and 81 (70%) as secular. All of the FBOs except one (René Cassin, Jewish) are Christian. At first sight, FBOs therefore do not appear as prominently in anti-TFLS as in other sectors where FBO welfare provision dominates, such as homelessness (Johnsen, 2014). However, delving into organisational focus and activities raises interesting questions about the *roles* of FBOs in anti-TFLS. Forty-six of the 115 organisations focus only on addressing modern slavery as a single issue rather than as part of a wider remit of services to a range of groups. Of these single-issue groups, 45% (21) are FBOs. FBOs are thus more strongly represented among single-issue anti-TFLS groups than in anti-TFLS overall. Moreover, of the 28 single-issue groups that provide *services* to trafficked persons, either as a main focus or in conjunction with other activities, FBOs make up 57% (16). The corollary to this is that faith-based anti-TFLS organisations are not playing as large a role in campaigning as they do

in service provision (4, or 24% of 17 single-issue groups active in campaigning without service provision are FBOs).

FBO involvement in service provision to so-called 'potential victims of modern slavery' should not be surprising given how growing service provision by FBOs, through government contracts and to 'fill the gaps' left by a retrenching welfare state, has been highlighted in studies of welfare pluralism and the postsecular. A potentially significant detail is that many of the multi-issue organisations mapped pre-date the upsurge in interest in modern slavery over the last decade. In contrast, Christian individuals and institutions seem more likely to have decided to establish a dedicated, faith-based response in recent years, through setting up specialist, single-issue organisations. We also found that, of eight non-NRM accommodation projects (operating in September 2017), three are secular, and five are FBOs. All offer services only to women, and three of these (two FBOs, one secular) are only for women exiting the sex industry. This focus on women could indicate that beyond government contracts, understandings of TFLS have not yet moved on to reflect broader definitions of modern slavery. It is nevertheless difficult to untangle whether an increase in faith-based organisations responding to TFLS was generated by the ratification of the 2009 Council of Europe Convention, and then the Modern Slavery Act 2015 or if the increase denotes a *distinctively motivated* faith-based response indicated in an apparent emphasis on service provision over campaigning or advocacy.

The mapping analysis was hampered by the difficulty of establishing whether a particular organisation had a faith identity. Some FBOs downplay their religious origins and connections. This is true for those involved in service provision and for those involved in campaigning. Hope for Justice is a Christian charity whose main focus is service provision to trafficked persons; the only mention of their faith identity on their website is far down in their FAQ page. Similarly, A21 is known in the anti-TFLS sector as an evangelical Christian organisation, but there is no reference to this on their website. Also, not all organisations founded by individuals of faith are to be viewed as FBOs. Stop the Traffik, founded by prominent evangelical Christian Steve Chalke does not self-define as a FBO. Publicly available information was thoroughly examined to establish as clear a picture as possible and with the awareness that religious affiliation is not always obvious at first sight. Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) for example, has a name that would suggest a religious affiliation, but a careful analysis of the information on its website, and its trustee board, revealed that this was a historical relic and that the organisation is now secular. Given the obscurity of some organisations' faith–secular positioning in public communications, we used the 'Wayback Machine'[10] web archiving tool, which archives websites at particular dates, to delve into the faith orientations of some organisations. We observed the faith origins of some NRM subcontracted FBOs becoming increasingly hidden. For example, in 2011 the City Hearts website reflected the growth of a project under the wing of an evangelical church, their webpages nestled within the website of Hope City Church. Now the organisation has its own, more secularised, website with references to inspiring Bible quotes, or faith terms such as 'love', largely removed. A senior manager of a FBO, associated with evangelical Christianity, whom we interviewed, described how their public communications had transformed over the nine years the organisation had been established, saying: 'we were far more Christian in our language right at the beginning'. They further emphasised that 'what

I've done as a faith-based organisation is I've just made sure our outputs are incredible' to offset how 'faith-based can be looked down on, particularly in the Christian faith'. This confirms a strategic, deliberate shift towards data on 'outputs' taking prominence in public communications with a sensitivity to possible negative perceptions of faith or Christian-based organisational identity.

FBOs and 'Professionalism' in the Anti-TFLS Third Sector

This sensitivity around possible negative perceptions points to the importance, when theorising the postsecular, of considering how FBOs operate within a particular arena. The de-emphasis of faith identity occurring on the websites of some FBOs provides an interesting contrast to the literature produced by anti-TFLS faith actors reviewed earlier, that posits a particular role for Christians. This perhaps reflects how Christian-based literature is aimed to communicate primarily with co-religionists; the CARE briefing was written for the (presumably evangelical Christian) supporters of the organisation, for example. By contrast, how an organisation presents itself on its website reflects how it wishes to be perceived by the wider society. As a member of frontline staff in an FBO offering services to people exiting severe exploitation described:

> We wouldn't have a gay story in the magazine, would we? We wouldn't have a transgender story . . . [or] a story about abortion . . . a woman who has been raped and stuff. You always sort of . . . play your audiences, say [if] it was a group of nuns. But if it was a group of students, I could give quite a different talk.

This suggests that many anti-TFLS FBOs are operating on what Tomalin (2018: 3) refers to as a dual register, 'strategically shift[ing]' between secular and religious 'modes of communication'.

This public de-emphasis of faith can be understood in the context of the tendency among some FBOs to distance themselves from their faith identity as they expand and professionalise, in response to changing demographics of staff and volunteers, as well as funding pressures and government regulations (Bielefeld and Cleveland, 2013). If an organisation wishes to maintain a distinctive faith identity through only hiring co-religionists, for example, that will limit the pool of qualified staff and may undermine professionalism. In addition, the concerns raised when TSA was awarded the NRM contract, especially those around proselytisation, indicate how a public unease with overtly religious service provision, justified or not, forms part of the context in which anti-TFLS FBOs are operating.

The professionalisation of faith actors in the anti-TFLS sector can be driven by two motives, occurring separately or together, both with implications for the actors' faith identity and its public expression, and therefore for our conceptualisation of 'postsecular rapprochement'. Some faith actors are motivated to de-emphasise their faith out of an instrumental need to appear more 'professional' in order to gain funding or establish credibility in policy influencing with secular partners. Further, this may be accompanied by a second motive, a 'professional' desire to downplay the particularism of Christian motivation and ambition to avoid any sense of preference or favouritism towards

potential service users according to their faith identity, motivated by a desire to ensure equality of access to people of all faiths or none. In this sense, some FBOs (those that are more 'professionalised') are more likely to have commonalities with professionalised secular organisations than they would with other, more distinctive, FBOs. While professionalism is not incompatible with some degree of faith identity, there does appear to be a trade-off between distinctiveness and professionalism among FBOs.

We argue that this de-emphasis of a distinctive faith identity by some FBOs complicates understandings of what constitutes a genuine postsecular rapprochement. If, as discussed above, we view genuine postsecular rapprochement as involving a 'complementary learning process in which the secular and the religious sides involve one another' (Habermas, 2010: 21, cited in Cloke and Beaumont, 2013: 37), then it is not clear that such a process is occurring between FBOs and secular organisations involved in anti-TFLS. Instead, it would appear as if many FBOs have made a conscious choice to secularise their image and adopt statutory language when discussing TFLS. The dual register made apparent in the more overt faith perspective adopted in FBO reports, suggests FBOs are instrumentally emphasising their faith ties when beneficial, and downplaying them in secular facing communications. This allows them to garner trust and respect in a secular society, while also mobilising support and resources from co-religionists. In light of this, the mere existence of faith and secular organisations working together in partnership is evidence of a rapprochement but not of a two-way postsecular rapprochement, as in these interactions, many FBOs are simply acting as secular organisations for the purposes of the partnerships. This, in turn, points to the need for nuance and specificity in sociological theorising of the 'postsecular'; the mere presence of faith actors in a particular public arena should not necessarily be taken as evidence of a postsecular rapprochement.

Our discussion here focuses on whether or not a two-way postsecular rapprochement is happening across the boundary between faith-based and secular organisations working on anti-TFLS, rather than upon how FBOs employ the faith end of their 'dual register' in their day-to-day activities, beyond the glare of the secularising public sphere. This could be in terms of their interactions with co-religionists but also with non-religious clients, employees and volunteers. An emphasis upon the faith–secular rapprochement within organisations and movements is, however, the focus of the case studies presented by Cloke et al. (2019) where they explore how religious and secular views and subjectivities *within* organisations and social movements can engage with, and learn from, each other (Cloke and Beaumont, 2013; Williams, 2015). Drawing on Habermas, they observe the emergence of what they call 'crossover narratives' that 'emerge from the engagement of mutual tolerance across religious/secular boundaries' (Cloke et al., 2019: 21). They argue that 'mutual translation, then, leads to complementary learning' characteristic of postsecularity (2019: 21). Cloke (2011: 478) contends, for instance, that elements of theological understandings of evil (where evil is seen as an independent spiritual force in opposition to God) and secular understandings (that focus on 'philosophical and empirical accounts of violence and suffering') have combined in crossover narratives and shared action on social issues like homelessness. Given the wider context in which FBOs are expected to present a secular face in order to be seen as 'professional', it is perhaps not surprising that despite similarities in approach, it was unclear from our research the

extent to which faith narratives and moral frameworks might have crossed over into broader discourses that characterise the anti-TFLS domain. Following Cloke et al. (2019) we do surmise that crossover narratives might be evident where we find faith and secular actors working towards a shared ethical agenda (i.e. neo-abolitionism). To determine this, however, research would need to be carried out across the broad anti-TFLS terrain to examine the genealogy of shared narratives, emerging from faith-based or secular discourses.

Conclusions

An era of welfare pluralism in the UK sees third sector organisations increasingly acting as providers of welfare services as the state incorporates them within 'roll-out neoliberalism' (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 384). FBOs have emerged as significant players in this terrain of welfare provision. We have established, through the first mapping exercise of this type in the UK, that FBOs are now a significant part of the anti-TFLS sector; especially in the provision of *services* to trafficked persons, and that more *single-issue* organisations that offer services are FBOs. The corollary to this is that fewer FBOs are prioritising campaigning or advocacy, and that faith-based action is more likely to be specialised; 'hiving off' anti-TFLS as a focused concern, not one necessarily embedded in broader anti-poverty or rights-based social action.

Although we have shown that FBOs and individual faith actors play visible roles in anti-TFLS service provision and campaigning, we question whether this is really evidence of a postsecular rapprochement. Clearly, FBOs in service provision and campaigning are heterogeneous; and many are eschewing or moderating a distinctive faith identity in order to appear professional. Evidence of postsecular crossover narratives appear in the shape of faith and secular actors working towards a shared ethical agenda (i.e. neo-abolitionism), but many FBOs seem to be secularising aspects of their work and adopting a 'secular register' in order to participate in this terrain. Beneath plentiful evidence of ostensible postsecular partnerships, many FBOs actually prioritise secular modalities (Tomalin, 2018) meaning the learning process is one-sided rather than complementary. Engagement in welfare provision requires what Hjelm (2015: 10) calls 'external interpellation', requiring religious communities to limit religiosity to allow them to partner with the state. So far, our findings demonstrate the need for a more nuanced conceptual framework than one that suggests that the rapprochement between faith and secular actors in the anti-TFLS field is convincingly postsecular. We argue that it is not, as it does not equally value and recognise faith and secular identities. Going forward, it is critical that sociological research around the postsecular explores the nuances of how, and on what terms, particular faith actors are entering specific public arenas. The nature and extent of a postsecular rapprochement between faith and secular actors may depend on the specific terrain of engagement and activities undertaken.

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Notes

1. https://cdn.globalfreedomnetwork.org/content/uploads/2017/02/06155946/GFN-A-United-Faith.pdf.
2. http://afn.org.au/what-is-the-afn/.
3. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rapprochement.
4. Statistics produced about human trafficking, modern slavery and/or forced labour are vague due to their hidden nature. Conversely, some calculations inflate figures based on data that conflate varied and broad exploitation phenomena.
5. ES/N014979/1.
6. https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/year_5_report_1.pdf.
7. http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism.
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