Constructing the “Social Evil”: An Analysis of Anti-Prostitution Crusades in Progressive-Era Chicago, 1907-1915

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CONSTRUCTING THE “SOCIAL EVIL”:
AN ANALYSIS OF ANTI-PROSTITUTION CRUSADES IN
PROGRESSIVE-ERA CHICAGO, 1907-1915

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty
of
Purdue University
by
Amanda Jo Swygart-Hobaugh

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

May 2004
To Pat and Mom, for their love and support

To my late father, who wanted his children to have a college education—I got one, Dad!
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<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Clifford Barnes Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHS</td>
<td>Chicago Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSH</td>
<td>Chicago Society of Social Hygiene</td>
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<tr>
<td>C15</td>
<td>Committee of Fifteen</td>
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<td>EB</td>
<td>Ernest Bell Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>GT</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPL</td>
<td>Immigrants’ Protective League</td>
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<td>JPA</td>
<td>Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
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<td>VCC</td>
<td>Vice Commission of Chicago</td>
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ABSTRACT


This study analyzes anti-prostitution crusades in Chicago during the Progressive Era, using a social constructionist theoretical perspective to explore how crusaders constructed prostitution as a social problem. My multi-faceted theoretical framework drew on both social constructionist theories as well as social movement theories examining collective action frames as master frames. For organizational purposes, the separate analytical chapters examine different groups of crusaders: the crusaders against “white slavery,” those battling “vice,” and a group of Hull House women crusading against the “social evil.” My analyses revealed the following: (1) broader discourses present during the Progressive Era shaped the contours of the crusaders’ claims considerably, but crusaders also often molded these discourses to reflect their particular values, interests, and agendas; (2) the crusaders’ similar and/or differing values and interests—their middle-class values/interests, professional values/interests, gendered values/interests, and religious values/interests—shaped their claims regarding the prostitution problem; (3) the boundary crossing of some crusaders across the demarcated groups of crusaders was reflected by their influence on the other crusaders’ claims; (4) the perceived and/or intended audience shaped the crusaders’ claims; and (5) various master frames permeated the crusaders’ claims, including injustice, social duty, social control, and rights frames. I conclude by considering the following: (1) the reflection within the crusaders’ claims of the internal struggles they faced when constructing the prostitution problem; (2) the utility and limitations of the employed social constructionist and social movement frameworks for historical analyses; and (3) the limitations of my research and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The culmination of the 19th century and the launch of the 20th century were characterized by sweeping social changes in the United States. Industry was booming in urban centers, and, consequently, a mass influx of immigrants—eager to share in what Herbert Croly (1909) espoused as the “promise of American life”—was witnessed (Buroker 1971; Leonard 1973). A burgeoning optimism and idealism concerning social and political issues accompanied this presumed progress (McCarthy 1989). Accordingly, this period became known as the “Progressive Era”—characterized by an ideology of reform and activism (Grantham 1964; Wiebe 1967; Kirschner 1975; Hobson 1987; McCormick 1997).

The Progressive Era was teeming with social reform efforts, and nearly every aspect of society was targeted for reform. As noted in the research literature, Progressive-Era activism included but was not limited to the following: industry-related reforms directed at labor relations and work hazards (Fishback 1986; Pittman 1989; Nutter 1997); municipal and political reforms (DuBois 1987; Stromquist 1997); urban reforms directed at city planning, garbage disposal and public bathing (Williams 1980; Gillette 1983; Fairfield 1994; McGurty 1998) educational reforms (Reese 1986; Plank 1988); public health reforms (Kirschner 1986; Brandt 1987); the peace movement (Schott 1993; Alonso 1995; Sklar 1995) and family welfare reform (Muncy 1991; Ladd-Taylor 1994).

Not surprisingly, prostitution—once generally tolerated as a “necessary evil”—became viewed as a “social evil” and thus also an object of social reform (Rosen 1982). As a result, a multi-faceted anti-prostitution movement proliferated during the Progressive Era, with calls for reform coming from various crusades launched by social settlement workers, religious reformers, physicians, sociologists, psychiatrists,
businessmen, and local as well as national government agencies. Consequently, the research literature examining Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades abounds.

The current literature on the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades has largely been contributed by historians and is primarily concerned with articulating the social and historical context in which these crusades were embedded. The majority of the historical research provides a comprehensive national overview of the individuals and groups involved in the movement and their proposed political agendas (Lubove 1962; Feldman 1967; Connelly 1980; Rosen 1982; Hobson 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Grittner 1990; Lagler 2000; Donovan 2001; Keire 2001; Pivar 1973, 2002). Other historical analyses focus upon crusades in particular localities, such as metropolitan centers like New York City (Gilfoyle 1992) and Chicago, Illinois (Anderson 1974; Linehan 1991), and other towns and cities (Humphrey 1983; Murphy 1987; Jones 1991; Baldwin 1997; Kipp-Shucha 1997; Mackey 2000). The remaining historical analyses concentrate on particular anti-prostitution crusades, such as the “social hygiene” and the “feminist” crusades (Burnham 1973; DuBois and Gordon 1984; Brandt 1987; Luker 1998). This literature describes the leading actors within these crusades, their interests and activities, and their preferred political agendas—thus establishing the historical and social contexts in which prostitution as a social problem was being addressed.

The historical literature on Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades is informative and insightful. However, from a sociological perspective, I find the extant literature largely to be theoretically lacking. The literature is principally descriptive and, consequently, is analytically wanting. Some noted exceptions (Connelly 1980; Rosen 1982; Hobson 1987; Grittner 1990; Luker 1998; Doezema 1999; Lagler, 2000; Donovan 2001; Keire 2001) do offer insightful analytical interpretations of their research. However, I believe that these analyses may be buttressed with a unique analytical approach—namely, a social constructionist approach that examines the rhetorical claims embedded in Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades.

The extant literature largely neglects or devotes limited attention to the actual claims made by the anti-prostitution crusaders and the rhetorical features of these claims. A body of sociological literature—dubbed “social constructionism”—emphasizes

[C]onstructionism emphasizes how socially created definitions propel issues from the unnoticed background into the prominent foreground of public discourse and, once there, have an impact as profound as the objective conditions. (P. 317)

Accordingly, analyzing the “socially created definitions” embedded in the rhetoric of the anti-prostitution crusades provides further insight into the contextual features of the Progressive Era. In discussing his constructionist approach, Best (1987) acknowledges:

While the success of claims-making may well depend, in part, on the constellation of interests and resources held by various constituencies in the process, the way claims are articulated also affects whether they persuade and move the audiences to which they are addressed. (P. 102)

The current literature provides exceptional descriptions of the “constellation of interests and resources” held by the various Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusaders. However, the literature lacks in-depth rhetorical analyses of the way the crusaders attempted to persuade their audience to take up arms in the fight against prostitution. Likewise, as Best (1987) further articulates,

Just as people’s decisions to make claims emerge from a larger social context, so do their rhetorical choices. Claims-makers articulate their claims in ways that they find (and believe their audiences will find) persuasive. The larger cultural context—the weight assigned to various sorts of evidence, the relative importance given to different values, current standards for appropriate social policies, and the degree of consensus about these various judgments—affects rhetorical work. (P. 117)

The extant literature provides a solid foundation of the larger social and historical context in which the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades were embedded. However, a rigorous analysis of the reflexive relationship between the larger context surrounding the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades and the rhetorical strategies used by the crusaders would provide new insights—and possibly contradictions—to the
current historical analyses. This analytic approach would allow for a simultaneous examination of how prostitution is being constructed as a social problem within the rhetorical features of the separate crusades and also the broader contextual discourses that impact what is being constituted in the anti-prostitution rhetoric. Moreover, this approach would facilitate an exploration of how the broader historical and social discourses of the Progressive Era shaped the contours of the crusaders’ claims and how these claims as rhetorical practices reproduced, reflected, and/or challenged these broader discourses.

Hence, Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades would appear to be a hotbed for rhetorical analyses of claims-making activities. The claims made by these crusaders offer rich material for analyses related to social movements, class and ethnic relationships, sexuality and gender, and social problem construction. Consequently, one would expect rhetorical analyses of these crusades to be abundant. However, this is not the case. Therefore, my research fills the vacuum of rhetorical analyses of the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades.

Additionally, I devote acute attention to gender’s impact and its expressed role within the rhetorical features of the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades. A burgeoning literature uncovers the role women played in Progressive-Era social reform efforts and the impact their gender had on their concomitant goals and strategies for achieving those goals (Baker 1984; Sklar 1985; Deegan 1988; Fitzpatrick 1990; Flanagan 1990; McGerr 1990; Pascoe 1990; McClymer 1991; Muncy 1990, 1991; Deutsch 1992; Koven and Michel 1993; Kunzel 1993; Clapp 1994; Ladd-Taylor 1994; Odem 1995; Rynbrandt 1997; Abrams 2000; Abrams and Curran 2000; Lagler 2000; Stivers 2000; Knupfer 2001). These analyses reveal that the Progressive-Era women reformers—in order to carve for themselves a professional niche in the “public” sphere—sculpted their reform efforts to fit a mold of their gendered expectations and roles. Also, the literature exposes how women reformers’ desired objectives often differed from their male counterparts (Hobson 1987; Luker 1998).

Consequently, an exploration of gender’s impact and its expressed role within Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades should also be analytically fruitful. A select
few examinations of Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades have included a gender focus in their analyses (Rosen 1982; Hobson 1987; Luker 1998)—finding gender to indeed impact the separate agendas, strategies, and objectives of crusaders. However, these analyses have not rigorously examined the impact of gender on and its expressed role within the rhetorical strategies of the separate Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusaders. Current works, such as Ladd-Taylor’s (1994) analyses of Progressive-Era women’s labors for child welfare advocacy and Deutsch’s (1992) exploration of the political involvement of Progressive-Era Bostonian women’s organizations, note the gendered features of the women’s rhetorical strategies. Thus, I deduced that gendered rhetorical features might surface within an examination of the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades as well. Therefore, my research provides unique analyses of gender’s impact and its expressed role within the rhetorical strategies used by Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusaders.

Moreover, my research contributes to the sparse historical analyses within the social constructionist literature. Excluding noted exceptions (Fee and Fox 1988; Rafter 1992; Donovan 1993, 1997; Loseke and Fawcett 1995; Neuman 1998; Doezema 1999), the current social constructionist analyses focus on contemporary issues. However, the current social constructionist analyses of historical data strengthen the arguments made by historians on the same topics of discussion. Likewise, as Loseke and Fawcett (1995) espouse in their analysis of “discursive productions of bourgeois mythologies” within 1912-1917 charity campaigns,

[Bourgeois] mythologies circulating in the late twentieth century contain seeds of discourses from earlier eras…We…turn to the moral clarity of the past…in order to understand something of earlier antecedents to the more confused situation of the present. (Loseke and Fawcett 1995:62-63)

Similarly, as illustrated through research comparing the rhetorical features of the Progressive-Era crusades against syphilis and the contemporary campaigns against HIV/AIDS (Donovan 1993, 1997; Fee and Fox 1988) as well as Progressive-Era crusades against white slavery and contemporary discourses of trafficking in women (Doezema
The research literature addressing Progressive-Era reformers and prostitution originates from Lubove’s (1962) synopsis of the separate national-level Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades, including discussions of the white slavery “hysteria” and the vice commission investigations. Lubove deduces that the drive to repress prostitution was distinguished by two essential features: a general struggle to preserve the nation’s human resources, and the reconstruction of the prostitute as a “victim both of her environment and sinister ‘interests’ who manipulated her as a tool for their own profits” (p. 310). According to Lubove, the reformers pin-pointed three “causes” of the perceived escalating prostitution problem: (1) an organized system of prostitution that entrapped innocent women; (2) the “scientifically unsound” doctrine of male’s “sexual necessity” which created a false demand for prostitution; and (3) the “immoral”
influences of commercialized leisure activities—such as dance halls, saloons, theaters, and amusement parks. He concludes that the crusade against commercialized prostitution was ultimately “an experiment in social control,” in which

The Progressive vice reformers focused their wrath…upon the interests which they claimed corrupted and exploited for personal gain the natural sexual instincts of others; and they shifted attention from prostitution as an expression of individual moral perversity to prostitution as a business enterprise which flourished on ignorance and socio-economic depravation. (P. 330)

Similarly, Feldman (1967) provides a historical overview of the reaction to prostitution within the Progressive Era. According to Feldman, the Progressive reformers believed the chaotic urban environment to be a “veritable house of ill repute” (p. 194). Likewise, Feldman found that the claims made about prostitution and white slave traffic were invariably saturated with attacks on immigrant populations—particularly Southern Italians and Russian Jews.

Burnham (1973) discusses the “revolution” in American attitudes toward sex during the Progressive Era—particularly the “social hygiene” movement’s attempts to expunge the Victorian “conspiracy of silence” and ameliorate the double standard of sexuality. Burnham intimates that the physicians—motivated by the perceived urgent threat of venereal disease—believed the “conspiracy of silence” surrounding public discourse on sexuality issues was extremely deleterious to the fight against venereal disease and thus needed to be overcome for the good of society. He notes that the power/prestige of the medical profession and the Progressive ideal of scientific knowledge meshed with public practice legitimated the social hygiene movement’s stance on prostitution and escalated its subsequent success in breaking the “conspiracy of silence” that surrounded public discourse on sexuality issues. The social hygiene movement, according to Burnham, adopted the social purity movement’s desire to deconstruct the double standard of sexuality and reconstruct a single standard of sexuality where the ideal for men as well as women was sexual continence and chastity.

Pivar (1973) explores the social purity movement against prostitution of the late 19th century, ending his examination at the beginning of the 1900s. Similar to Burnham’s (1973) findings, Pivar argues that the social purity movement was primarily focused on
seeking social justice for women by debunking the double standard of sexuality and advocating for a single standard of sexuality.

Within his analysis of crusades against prostitution in Progressive-Era Chicago, Anderson (1974) examines a proposed relationship between prostitution and the Progressive notion of “social justice.” Concurrent with most research, Anderson attributes the revelations of the “muckrakers,” the “preaching” of the social hygiene movement, and the “white slavery” panic as central elements to the arousal of public concern about Chicago’s commercialized vice and the subsequent appointment of the Vice Commission of Chicago to investigate this perceived burgeoning social problem. He also notes that

Vice reformers denounced the double standard of morality as a ‘wrong and vicious theory of the sexes’; and part of the objection of prostitution was that the system unjustly stigmatized the woman, ‘ignoring the moral responsibility of the man.’ They also refuted various myths about sex, such as the notion of male sexual necessity, which held that sexual intercourse was necessary to a man’s health. (P. 223)

Connelly (1980) also provides an overview of the Progressive-Era “response” to prostitution—including considerations of white slavery narratives, vice investigations, immigration legislation, and the social hygiene movement. He espouses that prostitution became

[A] master symbol, the code word, for a wide range of anxieties engendered by the great social and cultural changes that gave the Progressive Era its coherence as a distinct historical period. (P. 6)

In concurrence with previous literature, Connelly (1980) infers that apprehension about women’s changing roles in the public sphere, uncertainties and prejudices towards the “new” immigrants, and anxieties about the urban environment were tightly intertwined with fears of a supposed escalation of prostitution during the Progressive Era. He states that this unprecedented zealous anti-prostitution crusade was in essence a last-ditch effort to quell the perceived threat to the Victorian ideals of “civilized morality.” Consequently, as Connelly declares,
The prostitute was deplored not only because she violated the beliefs and assumptions of civilized morality, but also, and perhaps more importantly, because her life-style, attitudes, and behavior were ominous signs of change in the feminine ideal, which would ultimately influence the behavior of all women. (P. 47)

Concurrent with the previous literature, Rosen (1982) notes that while in the American Victorian society prostitution was deemed a “necessary evil” to assuage men’s presumed uncontrollable sex drive, Progressive-Era social reformers argued that prostitution was a “social evil” that perpetuated the double standard of sexuality. She also provides an informative historical overview of the separate anti-prostitution crusades during the Progressive Era. Rosen cites that the images depicted through the campaigns against prostitution typically involved portrayals of prostitutes as “innocent victims” or “vicious women.” Likewise, she notes that racial, ethnic, and class prejudices were very salient in these images—providing examples from vice commission reports and white slave panic literature to support her interpretations.

Brandt (1987) analyzes the changing social constructions of venereal disease—addressing the proposed role of prostitution in the promulgation of venereal disease in the Progressive Era. He reiterates that the reformers’ anxieties about urbanization, immigration, and changing sexual norms of behavior were intimately connected to their constructions of venereal disease and prostitution in the Progressive Era. Brandt also notes that the “social hygienists” depicted prostitutes as vectors for venereal disease and men who sought their sexual services as endangering their “innocent” wives and children. Likewise, he emphasizes the social hygienists’ concern to break the “conspiracy of silence” surrounding public discussion of sexuality-related issues—claiming this silence hindered progress in combating venereal disease. Lastly, he notes physicians’ professional status gave legitimacy to their constructions of venereal disease.

DuBois and Gordon (1984) consider feminists’ involvement in the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades, noting that the feminists “exaggerated [prostitution’s] magnitude” and also:

1 Scholars’ imposition of contemporary notions of “feminism/feminist” on Progressive-Era women reformers is a point of contention in the academic community; see Cott (1989) and Ladd-Taylor (1994) for extended discussions of this debate. Throughout this study, I only use this terminology when the cited
[E]xaggerated the coerciveness of prostitution...[feminists] denied the prostitute any role other than that of passive victim. They insisted that the women involved were sexual innocents, helpless young women who ‘fell’ into illicit sex. They assumed that prostitution was so degrading that no woman could freely choose it. (P. 33)

Subsequently, DuBois and Gordon (1984) claim that the Progressive feminists’ inability to escape victim constructions of prostitutes “ultimately prevented transcending a sexual morality dividing women into the good and bad” and thus supported a dichotomous construction of female sexuality (p. 34). In concurrence with previous studies, they note that the Progressive feminists attributed the double standard of sexuality as the root of the prostitution problem.

D’Emilio and Freedman (1988) provide an extensive historical overview of the “intimate matters” of sexuality within the United States, discussing the concerns of changing “sexual patterns” during the Progressive Era. They claim that three “themes” characterized the Progressive Era: (1) the double standard of sexuality persisted—where women were to be chaste and men were allowed to indulge their supposedly “uncontrollable” sexual drives; (2) differing patterns of family life and sexual mores of the “new” immigrants and the working-class began to weaken “the hegemony of middle-class ideals”; and (3) economic transformations that pulled women into the public sphere and subsequently allowed opportunities for non-procreative/non-marital sexual relations threatened to undermine “civilized morality” (p. 173).

D’Emilio and Freedman (1988) also focus on “crusades for sexual order”—including an overview of the social hygiene movement, white slavery panic, vice commissions, and war-time reforms directed at prostitution. They reiterate that the “social hygiene” movement proved most effective in breaking the “conspiracy of silence” that surrounded public sexual discourse and in deconstructing the “double standard that condoned male patronage of prostitution” (p. 206). In their discussion of the white slavery panic, D’Emilio and Freedman briefly discuss the images portrayed through the white slavery rhetoric—noting the constructions of the women involved as “innocent victims” and the procurers typically as foreigners preying upon naïve girls. They detail authors have employed it or when referring to their particular interpretation of Progressive-Era women reformers’ motivations and actions.
the activities of the vice commissions and also briefly discuss the “philosophical kinship”
of the vice crusaders and the social hygiene movement fostered through their shared
attack on the double standard of sexuality.

Hobson’s (1987) analysis of Progressive-Era prostitution echoes much of the
previous literature. However, she devotes considerable attention to the convergence and
divergence of the agendas/objectives of the separate reform movements. She
distinguishes between those movements that defined prostitution as a social problem
“narrowly” and those that defined it “broadly.” She posits that the social hygienists’
definition was narrow in scope—focusing upon the eradication of prostitution primarily
as necessary for disease control. In contrast, Hobson suggests that feminist and social
purity reformers agendas were broader in scope—adhering to the belief that the
eradication of prostitution would facilitate the broader Progressive reform objectives of
uplifting the nation’s morality and emancipating women from their subjugated status
within society via adherence to a double standard of sexuality. In addition, and echoing
previous literature, she suggests, “the medical establishment, when it rallied behind the
campaign against prostitution in the United States, gave prestige and legitimacy to the
movement” (p. 153). Hobson implies that the scientific-saturated bases of the physicians’
arguments imparted an “expert” status to their claims—thus invoking higher prestige.
However, Hobson poses that the “physicians’ participation also helped to undermine the
broader goals of sexual equality that feminists sought” (p. 153)—an observation that is
echoed in subsequent research (Luker 1998).

Grittner (1990) examines the white slavery “myth,” focusing on crusades against
white slavery in last decades of the 19th century, the “white slave panic” between 1909
and 1914, and the subsequent impact of the landmark legislation against white slavery,
the Mann Act. Echoing previous research, he notes that the crusaders against white
slavery pinpointed immigrants as the primary culprits victimizing innocent, white,
country girls:

The pressures of industrialization, immigration, and urbanization contributed to the
Americanization of a myth that tried to explain the dangers of urban life to young
women. The desire to reaffirm symbolic boundaries drove reformers…to argue that
prostitutes were victims, not women lacking in moral strength. (P. 187)
Linehan (1991) traces prostitution reform efforts in Chicago, including an overview of white slavery narratives, the Vice Commission of Chicago’s report, the Committee of Fifteen’s role in prostitution reform, and the trials and tribulations of the Morals Court’s involvement in prostitution prosecution. While Linehan also highlights the saturation of anxieties and prejudices concerning immigrants and depictions of prostitutes as “innocent victims” in the white slave narratives and the Vice Commission’s condemnation of urban conditions and commercial leisure activities, her final analysis is that the reformers were ultimately guided by personal interest. Consequently, she concludes “this hidden agenda, coupled with the obstructionism of municipal authorities, turned prostitution reform in Chicago in to an unending, vicious circle” (p. i).

Gilfoyle (1992) devotes attention to Progressive-Era New York’s concern with white slavery and prostitution. Although limited in discussion, he reports that purity reformers of the time continuously depicted prostitutes as “helpless victims,” noting, “these crusaders never believed that the decision to engage in prostitution could be a voluntary choice” (p. 275). Additionally, he mentions some vice investigators’ comments on the “loose” morals of female sexual activity. Likewise, he briefly cites the purity reformers and public’s unsubstantiated belief that immigrants were to “blame” for the prostitution problem. Concurrent with previous research, Gilfoyle states that the ensuing rejection of the double standard of male sexual behavior manifested in some claims made by prostitution reformers.

Through her examination of the Progressive-Era “social hygiene” movement, Luker (1998) contends that a “new gender regime” (p. 602) was concretized through structural responses to prostitution. Her analysis focuses upon the alliance of physicians and women moral reformers in the social hygiene movement and their differing agendas for the goal to eradicate prostitution. Luker also documents how both the women moral reformers and the physicians propagated a “single standard” of sexuality as the panacea for prostitution and its supposed inevitable companion, venereal disease. However, while the social hygiene movement supported the women reformers’ goal of gender equality in anti-prostitution legislation and punishment, Luker notes that the women involved disproportionately felt the negative consequences of the implemented legislation. Thus,
instead of reconstructing sexuality toward a single standard, the outcomes of the social hygiene movement further inculcated the inequity of a gender regime based on the double standard.

Lagler (2000) focuses specifically on the white-slavery narratives of Chicago from 1907 to 1915. She explains that the construction of these narratives was driven by various political agendas, including

\[P\]atrol[ing] the boundaries of white masculinity, criticiz[ing] the capitalist system and push[ing] for economic reform, and challeng[ing] traditional gender boundaries by crafting narratives which called for woman suffrage, advocated expanded professional opportunities for women, and justified the excursion of middle-class women into an ever widening realm of both public space and the public sphere. (Abstract)

Donovan (2001) examines anti-prostitution crusades in New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco during the Progressive Era. He poses that the white slavery narratives produced in these crusades should not be considered as an “irrational response to an imaginary threat” but as an arena where reformers “engage[d] in political projects targeting sexual practices that posed a threat to white hegemony” (Abstract).

Keire (2001) also examines the white slavery “scare” from 1907-1917 but departs from the previous literature’s foci. Rather than interpreting the white slave discourses in light of social control of women’s sexuality or immigration anxiety, she claims that white slave crusaders primary concern was an anti-trust agenda that critiqued corrupt municipal systems. As she concludes,

The white slavery scare was more than the hysterical expression of middle-class fears of urbanization, immigration, and women’s increased mobility. When white slavery writers compared municipally tolerated vice to big business, they expressed a deep-seated antipathy toward exploitative interests and government-granted privilege. (P. 21)

Pivar’s (2002) latest study continues his previous investigation (Pivar 1973) of the social purity movement’s campaign against prostitution. In his present study, his primary objective is to explore how the social purity movement against prostitution evolved in the first decades of the 20th century. Namely, he discusses how the social purity movement conflicted and converged with the burgeoning social hygiene movement.
The Crusaders, their Agendas, and the Dominant Discourses

The Crusaders and their Agendas

I have gleaned from this body of literature that the following were the major actors in the Progressive Era anti-prostitution movement. There were those promulgating the existence of a widespread “white slavery traffic,” whose primary agenda was to stop this traffic in women. There were the “social hygienists,” whose primary concern was the eradication of venereal disease through the breaking of the “conspiracy of silence” that surrounded public discussion of sexuality. There were the women reformers, or “feminists,” whose ultimate goal was to deconstruct the double standard of sexuality that produced the demand for prostitution. Finally, there were the vice commission investigators, which included social scientists, settlement house workers, and religious leaders, whose primary concerns were to scientifically explore the causes of prostitution and then make informed propositions to eradicate prostitution.

The Dominant Discourses

Upon reviewing this body of literature, I have garnered several dominant discourses that were deployed in the separate Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades, which I will briefly discuss. Although the current literature includes discussions of the various aspects that constitute these discourses, these considerations are not interpreted through the analytic of discourse and discursive practices, which, as I subsequently demonstrate through my analyses, contributes critical insights to the examination of these crusades. In my theoretical chapter, I devote more discussion of these analytics and thus clarify their relevance to my analyses. However, I must presently stress that the following discourses were constructed via my personal interpretations of the secondary literature.

Anxieties regarding Urbanization

As the literature suggests, an anxieties regarding urbanization discourse was deployed through the crusades. This broader discourse manifested through the crusaders’
expressed desires to reconstruct the prostitute from an “immoral individual” to a “victim” of urban ills, such as economic depravation, poor housing conditions, the trappings of commercialized recreation, and immoral profiteers seeking to capitalize upon their virtue (Feldman 1967; Connelly 1980; Grittner 1990).

**Anxieties regarding Women’s Foray from the Private to Public Sphere**

An anxieties regarding women’s foray from the private to public sphere discourse was also deployed. This discourse was articulated through the crusaders’ discussions of women’s changing roles as workers and concomitant changes in sexual behavior, which seemed to foreshadow a new sexual standard that would displace their middle-class notions of “civilized morality” (Connelly 1980; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Donovan 2001). Consequently, many of these separate crusades dispelled the double standard of sexuality, which presumably produced the demand for prostitution, as erroneous and thus in need of reconstruction toward a single standard of chastity and continence for both men and women.

**Anxieties regarding Immigration**

Likewise, an anxieties regarding immigration discourse was deployed through these crusades. Drawing from the secondary literature, it appears that this discourse was primarily deployed through the “white slave” crusaders’ claims, which expressed continuous animosity toward immigrants as well as a belief that immigrants were disproportionately responsible for the “traffic in women” (Feldman 1967; Connelly 1980; Rosen 1982; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Grittner 1990; Linehan 1991).

**Anxieties regarding Capitalism, Commercialized Recreation, and Industrialization**

An anxieties regarding capitalism, commercialized recreations, and industrialization discourse was also deployed through the anti-prostitution crusades. This discourse was primarily articulated through the crusaders’ constant admonishment of commercialized recreation, which seemingly preyed upon the innocence of children while ruthlessly in pursuit of profit (Lubove 1962; Connelly 1980; D’Emilio and
Freedman 1988; Lagler 2000; Keire 2001). This discourse also manifested in claims of prostitution as a “big business” enterprise that “flourished on…socio-economic depravation” (Lubove 1962: 330).

Social Hygiene

The crusaders also deployed a social hygiene discourse within their crusades. This discourse was primarily concerned with the relationship of prostitution and the spread of venereal diseases and was often expressed through the crusaders claiming that the double standard of sexuality, which presumably produced a false demand for prostitution, was “scientifically unsound” (Lubove 1962; Burnham 1973; Anderson 1974; Brandt 1987; Hobson 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Gilfoyle 1991; Luker 1998). It was also promulgated through the continuous declarations of the necessity for rigorous scientific investigations to solve the prostitution problem.

Prostitute as Innocent Victim

Lastly, a discourse that depicted the prostitute as innocent victim was prevalent in the anti-prostitution crusades. Continuously, the secondary literature notes that the prostitutes and/or “white slaves” were depicted as innocent victims of several social factors—be it conniving procurers and procuresses, economic depravation, or the entrapments of commercialized recreations—which drew them unwittingly into “the life” (Lubove 1962; Connelly 1980; Rosen 1982; DuBois and Gordon 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Linehan 1991; Gilfoyle 1992).

“Progressivism”

Not surprisingly, the literature that addresses “Progressivism” offers differing interpretations as to what were the core goals, values, and ideological foundation of Progressive-Era reform. Grantham (1964) suggests there were certain “essential elements of the progressive temper”:

[A] faith in democracy, a concern for morality and social justice, an exuberant belief in progress, a susceptibility to the revelations of journalistic ‘truth’ and the efficacy of
education, a middle class and urban outlook, a quest for efficiency, and an entrepreneurial strain. (P. 236)

Similarly, Kirschner (1975) notes that earlier historians continually cited Progressive-Era reformers’ motivations as altruistic endeavors to bridge the “gap they perceived between physical abundance and social poverty” by “humanizing the social order” (p. 69). However, Kirschner then presents a debate in the literature as to whether Progressive-Era reform efforts should be interpreted as based in the ideological goals of “social justice” or “social control.” He notes that while the earlier literature depicts the reformers as “saints who walked among the poor and devoted themselves tirelessly to relieving the distress caused by an oppressive social system,” in more recent interpretations, the social reformers “appear as detached as a group of engineers redesigning a worn-out mechanism” (p. 70). Kirschner concludes that progressive reformers—frightened by the perceived “social upheaval” and “moral decay” presumably caused by, among other things, urbanization, immigration, and the commercialization of leisure—were caught in a tug-of-war between “social justice” and “social control” ideologies. In his words,

Even while they were moved by a tender-minded wish to liberate the downtrodden from the shackles of society, they were restrained by a tough-minded desire to protect society from the threat of the downtrodden. (Kirschner 1975:88)

Ultimately, Kirschner (1986) aligns himself with one side of the debate—deducing that the Progressive-Era reformers’ objective “was social control in the face of urban disorder more than it was humanitarian reform in the face of social justice” (p. x).

Concurrently, a growing body of literature—rather than engaging in the “social justice” versus “social control” debate—devotes attention to Progressivism as a means to pursue the “professionalization” of reform work and to dispense middle class values and ideologies (Wiebe 1967; Bledstein 1976; Kirschner 1986; McCormick 1997). Wiebe (1967) espouses “the heart of progressivism was the ambition of the new middle class to fulfill its destiny through bureaucratic means” (p. 166). As Kennedy (1975) notes in his overview of Progressive reform, Wiebe argues that this “new” middle class power came “not from inherited wealth or status but from its possession of new tools of science,
organizational expertise, and a broad integrative social vision” (p. 461). Wiebe offers an interpretation of the Progressive reformers as “displaced elites seeking to reclaim their slipping social status” (p. viii). According to Wiebe, this reclamation of status through the “professions,” such as medicine and social work, was achieved through deliberate efforts to inculcate a “new middle class” value system wherein expertise, scientific reasoning/methods, educational mastery, professionalism, and bureaucratic efficiency reigned supreme. McCormick (1997) provides a similar interpretation:

[T]he Progressive ethos—rooted in evangelical Protestantism, now turning to the task of delivering the cities from sin; committed to social science methods because they could eradicate social conflicts; opposed to the worst evils of big business but accepting of capitalism itself; devoted to collectivist, interventionist solutions, confident they would not destroy individualism—was distinctively native, urban, and middle class. (P. 15-16)

While the secondary literature’s discussions of “Progressivism” is largely framed in terms of the goals, values, and ideologies of Progressive-Era reformers, drawing from this body of literature, I interpret “Progressivism” as an over-arching master discourse, which shaped the contours of Progressive-Era reformers’ discursive practices. Thus, as presented in my analyses, I consider how the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusaders reproduced, reinforced, and/or challenged the broader discourse of “Progressivism” through their discursive practices.

Professional Discourses regarding Women’s Sexuality and Role in the Public Sphere

Thus, a growing body of literature poses the escalation of reform in the Progressive Era was a conscious effort by the middle class to secure a professional niche for themselves in the rapidly changing society. Consequently, these “professionals” addressed many issues that appeared in need of reform. Among these issues were women’s changing role as workers and concomitant changes in sexual behavior, which seemed to foreshadow a new sexual standard that would displace the professionals’ middle-class notions of “civilized morality” (Connelly 1980). Accordingly, the professionals’ agendas included women’s sexuality/biology. As a result, the separate professions produced competing discourses—each trying to claim its authority to the knowledge of women’s sexuality/biology. The following discussion of competing
professional discourses—medical, psychiatric, and sociological/social work—illustrates how each separate profession predicated its expertise and authority on women’s sexuality/biology.

**Medical Discourses**

During the Progressive Era, the medical profession largely addressed sexuality issues through the “social hygiene” movement. As the secondary literature continuously attests (Burnham 1973; Brandt 1987; Hobson 1987), the social hygiene movement’s apparent link with medical science accorded it a master status in regards to sexual knowledge. According to the research literature, the social hygienists’ primary objectives were to eradicate venereal disease through breaking the “conspiracy of silence” that surrounded public discussion of sexuality issues and denouncing the double standard of sexuality as scientifically unsound (Burnham 1973; Brandt 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Luker 1998). Many social hygienists posed that the implementation of sexuality education curriculums was key to achieving these goals. As Moran (1996) notes,

> The institutionalization of sex education appealed particularly to the more professional-minded sexual reformers, especially physicians, who hoped that a regular program in the public schools would obviate the necessity for public moral crusades and the deluge of anti-vice literature that itself constituted a form of pornography. (P. 497)

However, physicians were not in universal agreement regarding how to address sexuality education—particularly, what to teach women. As Brandt (1987) states,

> The educational campaign confronted Victorian notions of “pure” womanhood. The “conspiracy of silence” had reigned supreme regarding women, and many doctors felt women should be spared the “degrading” experience of receiving sexual knowledge. (P. 28)

Likewise, although physicians and other reformers called for women’s sexual enlightenment, the educational programs continued to operate on the double standard that men were sexually aggressive, while instruction for women focused on women as chaste and passionless (Brandt 1987). Furthermore, physicians encouraged a curriculum that
pinpointed women as primarily responsible for demanding a higher moral standard from men. Thus, in the face of rabid venereal disease, the physicians strongly emphasized a single standard of sexuality where men and women practiced sexual continence. Moreover, physicians predicated this suggestion on presumed scientific knowledge. As Dr. Prince Morrow, prominent physician and founder of the American Social Hygiene Association, stated, sex education “should include as a cardinal feature a correction of the false impression instilled in the minds of young men that sexual indulgence is essential to health and that chastity is incompatible with full vigor” (from D’Emilio and Freedman 1988: 206). To the Progressive-Era physicians, due to the scientifically unsound myth of male “sexual necessity,” the spread of venereal disease from prostitutes, then to husbands, and finally to innocent wives and children threatened the moral fiber of the family (Burnham 1974; Connelly 1980; Luker 1998). It seems that the thought of a wife infecting her innocent husband was unfathomable—as is illustrated by the stipulation that only the prospective husband prove himself free of venereal disease to attain a marriage license (Connelly 1980). As Connelly (1980) notes,

Though there may have been a medical rationale for this rather peculiar exemption, what seems to have been equally at work was a recrudescence of the Victorian penchant for envisioning women as suffering victims. (P. 80)

Thus, it appears the social hygiene movement did not succeed in its goal of debunking the double standard of sexuality. In fact, as Luker (1998) suggests, instead of reconstructing sexuality toward a single standard, the outcomes of the social hygiene movement further inculcated the inequity of a “gender regime” based on the double standard (p. 602).

Psychiatric Discourses

Psychiatry also counted itself among the many disciplines vying for expert status among the professions during the Progressive Era. As Lunbeck (1994) describes,

Constantly invoking the authority of science, with which they claimed their discipline was now allied, [psychiatrists] outlined an ambitious professional program aimed at
securing them the formal institutional and political power that had eluded their predecessors’ grasp. (P. 61)

Therefore, the Progressive psychiatrists—like their fellow “professionals”—claimed themselves as the expert authority regarding changing sexual mores—particularly, the perceived deleterious liberality of working-class women’s sexual behaviors (Lunbeck 1987). However, while most sociologists and social workers traced these changing sexual practices of working-class women to environmental factors, such as breakdowns in the urban family structure, women’s low wages that encouraged the exchange of sexual favors, and the supposedly promiscuity-fostering commercialized recreational activities (Kirschner 1980, 1986; Peiss 1983, 1986; Odem 1995; Abrams 2000), psychiatrists diagnosed them as the result of women’s moral deterioration. Thus, the psychiatric classification “hypersexual female” emerged to explain working-class women’s “psychopathic” sexual displays (Lunbeck 1987, 1994; Miller 2000).

The “hypersexual female”—strikingly similar to the late nineteenth-century psychiatric diagnosis of “nymphomania” (Groneman 1994)—was classified as the “willfully passionate woman who could not control her desires for sexual pleasure”—the antithesis of the Victorian ideal of the chaste and reticent female (Lunbeck 1987:513). However, there was not a complementary classification of the “hypersexual male.” In fact, as Lunbeck (1994) relates,

Not burdened like a girl by the efflorescence of strong sexual impulses, [the adolescent boy] could celebrate their acquisition with ardor and evoke only the bemused tolerance of psychiatrists; the curiosity, experimentation, and satiation of desire that was symptomatic of gross defect in a girl was but the commendable manifestation of the boy’s natural drive for self-expression and mastery. (P. 515)

Thus, contrary to other professional discourses, psychiatry claimed scientific grounds for at least one side of the double standard of sexuality, which condoned the sexual promiscuity of men as “natural” and a “necessity.” However, rather than seeing woman as asexual by nature, she was deemed “wholly sexual, her life colored by barely controllable sexual impulses” (Lunbeck 1994: 515). Moreover, the hypersexual female was cast as a vicious sexual predator that lured indefensible men into her web of
immorality (Lunbeck 1987, 1994; Miller 2000). Similarly, while sociological and social work discourses typically deemed public places such as amusement parks and movie theaters as sites where lustful men and profit-motivated procurers preyed upon working-class women, the psychiatric discourse inferred that

The city’s abundant public places teemed with hypersexuals, ready to lure unsuspecting men into questionable establishments, to hire rooms for immoral purposes, to plague men with the demands of their insatiable immorality. (Lunbeck 1994: 516)

Thus, when confronted with the problem of prostitution and the promiscuity of working-class women oft-equated with prostitution, Progressive-Era psychiatrists staked their claim to a distinct expert knowledge of women’s sexuality by establishing the “hypersexual female” as a supposedly scientifically-grounded diagnosis (Lunbeck 1987, 1994).

Psychiatrists, as well as other reformers and eugenics enthusiasts had also proposed “feeble-mindedness” as a possible cause of prostitution (Rafter 1992; Lunbeck 1987, 1994). However, psychiatric tests did not support this theory, finding prostitutes to be generally of normal intelligence levels. Thus, some psychiatrists subsequently abandoned this theory—arguing that female sexual delinquents “belonged to a group of subnormal individuals that intelligence tests were powerless to identify” (Lunbeck 1994: 524).

Sociological and Social Work Discourses

Along with the physicians and the psychiatrists, social scientists and social workers carved their own professional niche via the discourse of women’s sexuality/biology. University of Chicago Professor William Isaac Thomas, who wrote the texts *Sex and Society* and *The Unadjusted Girl*, was a very influential sociologist who continuously addressed women’s sexuality/biology. In *Sex and Society*, Thomas initially deemed women as having weak sexual appetites and needing of male protection, but he then held male’s superior control over the social world was largely due to social rather than biological factors (Deegan 1988). He subsequently deduced that “there is certainly great difference in the mental ability of individuals…but difference in natural ability is, in
the main, a characteristic of the individual, not of race or of sex” (from Deegan 1988). He finally argued that women’s social “inferiority” and subordinate position in society was not due to biology but to men’s dominance and control of women—a rather radical thought for his time (Deegan 1988). Then, in *The Unadjusted Girl*, he emphasized the breakdown of traditional society, or “social disorganization,” rather than moral disintegration as the origin of young girls’ sexual delinquency (Deegan 1988).

The University of Chicago also produced several women doctoral students who became prominent figures in social reform and/or social service agencies, such as Sophonisba Breckenridge, Edith Abbott, and Katharine Bement Davis (Fitzpatrick 1990). Breckenridge and Abbott held teaching positions at and were involved in social investigations conducted by the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy—a research and training center dedicated to social research and reform (Fitzpatrick 1990). However, Fitzpatrick notes that Breckenridge and Abbott’s study, published as *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, reflected their middle-class values’ impact upon their interpretations of female sexual delinquency, which they deemed more detrimental and destructive to the girls’ virtue than boys’ expected rambunctiousness (Fitzpatrick 1990).

Katharine Bement Davis, who left Chicago with a doctoral degree in political economy, became the first superintendent of the New York State Reformatory for Women and was a leading figure in prison reform. Also, Davis conducted several rigorous and massive social-scientific studies on prostitution and women’s sexuality under the auspices of Rockefeller’s Bureau of Social Hygiene and was active in the Committee for Training Camp Activities, which provided “wholesome recreation” for basic trainees during World War I. Similar to W. I. Thomas, Davis determined social factors as largely causing a woman to engage in prostitution.

Women social workers also played an important role in the social reform efforts of the Progressive Era, and they often predicated their expertise in social work on the basis of their gender (Baker 1984; Sklar 1985; Deegan 1988; Fitzpatrick 1990; Flanagan 1990; McGerr 1990; Pascoe 1990; McClymer 1991; Muncy 1991; Deutsch 1992; Koven and Michel 1993; Kunzel 1993; Clapp 1994; Ladd-Taylor 1994; Odem 1995; Rynbrandt 1997; Abrams 2000; Abrams and Curran 2000; Lagler 2000; Stivers 2000; Knupfer
As the research literature attests, Progressive-Era women reformers—to secure a professional niche in the “public” sphere—sculpted their reform efforts to fit a mold of their gendered expectations and roles. As Deegan (1988) and Fitzpatrick (1990) both discuss, social work was largely composed of women. In fact, even when educated in disciplines such as sociology or political science, women were strongly encouraged to pursue social work positions—partially due to the hiring discrimination of women for academic positions but largely because social work was considered a woman’s profession (Deegan 1988; Fitzpatrick 1990). These women—to secure their professional niche—promulgated the rationale that women’s domestic role as mother and keeper of the home could and should be transmuted to “public housekeeping” of society.

Thus, women predicated their reformist venture into the public sphere on the grounds of their biology. Witnessing the unfavorable impacts of urbanization and industrialization on their communities, a large group of women saw their cities, towns, and nation in need of “mothering” (Baker 1984; Flanagan 1990; Ladd-Taylor 1994). Likewise, faced with few viable professional options, women created careers for themselves in the public sphere that merely extended their presumed biological roles (Muncy 1991). The ideological framework of “maternalism” has been used to symbolize Progressive-Era women’s justification of their excursion beyond their private domestic roles to provide nurturance to a floundering society (Koven and Michel 1993; Knupfer 2001). Thus, women dominated the social work profession, for it provided the ideal settings for them to expand their private role into the public sphere through such social programs as maternal and child welfare organizations (Muncy 1991; Koven and Michel 1993; Ladd-Taylor 1994), juvenile courts (Clapp 1994; Knupfer 2001), the Americanization movement (McClymer 1991), and services for unmarried mothers (Pascoe 1990; Kunzel 1993). Finally, although these women social workers did often predicate their professional expertise on social-scientific criterion like the other professions, their primary claim to authority was their assumed biological predisposition for caring and nurturing.
“Progressive” Chicago and Prostitution

Thus far I have reviewed the literature regarding Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades in the United States, literature regarding “Progressivism” as ideological and professional milieux, and predominant professional discourses regarding women’s biology/sexuality propagated during the Progressive Era. Presently, I turn to a discussion of the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades’ presence in Chicago, as my analyses are focused within Chicago. This discussion includes the following: (1) a synopsis of the social and political context of Progressive-Era Chicago; (2) a description of those involved in the prostitution reform efforts in Chicago; and (3) an interpretation of the Chicago crusaders’ accordance with the “Progressive ethos” forwarded by McCormick (1997).

The Social and Political Context of Progressive-Era Chicago

The social context of Progressive-Era Chicago was turbulent. Once a small town on the banks of Lake Michigan, Chicago had become a major American industrial center. The proliferation of industry in Chicago produced the demand for massive numbers of laborers. Consequently, Chicago experienced exponential growth in its population during the first decade of the 20th century—“one of the most spectacular episodes in American history” (Connelly 1980:92). By 1910, Chicago’s population had swelled to just over two million, making it the second largest city in the nation. This massive influx of workers knew no gender, race, or ethnic boundaries: women and men from surrounding rural areas flooded the city, as well as western and the “new” eastern and southern European immigrants (Connelly 1980; Meyerowitz 1987; 1988). Concomitant with its urban and industrial growth, Chicago’s commercialized recreation abounded during the Progressive Era; amusement parks, movie theaters, saloons, and dance halls dotted Chicago’s landscape—providing cheap leisure activities to the urbanites (McCarthy 1976; Kirschner 1980; Meyerowitz 1987; 1988). Thus, Progressive-Era Chicago had become a teeming urbanized, industrialized, and commercialized metropolis and, as Connelly (1980) notes, “had achieved the status of master symbol for all the achievements and excesses of American urban civilization” (p. 92).
The tumultuous social context of Progressive-Era Chicago was complemented by an equally turbulent political context. As Flanagan (1986; 1987) suggests, several issues were crucial in shaping the political culture of Progressive-Era Chicago. First, Chicago had out-grown legislative statutes that were intended for small rural communities. But, the state legislature and courts were largely recalcitrant toward accommodating for the city’s new needs—thus causing political problems between these actors. Furthermore, Chicago’s government and police system was riddled with corruption (Haller 1970; Anderson 1974; Flanagan 1986, 1987). Additionally, due to its size, diverse population, and strong industrial holdings, Chicago became the “frequent target of all rural hostilities to big cities” (Flanagan 1986:113).

However, dissatisfaction with the city was not limited to rural critiques; Chicagoans themselves viewed the city’s growing urbanization, industrialization, and immigration population often apprehensively (Anderson 1974; Flanagan 1987). Yet, rather than being pessimistic about these changes, many Chicagoans optimistically believed they had the free will, the power, and, most importantly, the moral duty to address these social ills through fervent social reform efforts. Thus, concurrent with the larger Progressive movement, Chicago’s social and political culture was characterized by social reform and activism (Anderson 1974; McCarthy 1976; Flanagan 1986, 1987, 1990; Linehan 1991).

Progressive-Era Chicago’s Anti-Prostitution Crusades

As the research literature proclaims (Lubove 1962; Anderson 1974; Connelly 1980), Chicago played a key role in the anti-prostitution movement. It was the first city to officially sponsor a municipal vice investigation, and the report of the Vice Commission of Chicago (VCC) influenced city and state vice commissions across the country. Chicago was also among the first cities to end the policy of tolerating prostitution in “red-light” districts. Likewise, Progressive-Era Chicago was a hotbed of social reform activity—the social justice movement, municipal reform, and evangelical Christianity reforms thrived there. Additionally, influential reform efforts, such as Jane Addams’s Hull House, Graham Taylor’s Chicago Commons, Louise de Koven Bowen’s
Juvenile Protection Association, Grace Abbott’s Immigrants’ Protective League, the Chicago Society for Social Hygiene, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, as well as the Chicago School of Sociology and William Healy’s Juvenile Psychopathic Institute called Chicago home.

Not surprisingly, all these organizations and actors, as well as muckraking journalists such as George Kibbe Turner, white slavery traffic fighters like Clifford Roe, Reverend Ernest Bell, and their constituents, and, of course, the VCC and the Committee of Fifteen (C15), either directly or indirectly played some role in Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades. Although sometimes coming from divergent ideological philosophies and social backgrounds, they all had one common goal: annihilation of Chicago’s perceived burgeoning prostitution problem.

The reinvigorated and vehement agitation against Chicago’s prostitution “problem” from 1907 to 1915 appears to have been instigated by muckraking journalist George Kibbe Turner’s exposé on Chicago’s organized vice, which was published in *McClure’s Magazine* in 1907 (Anderson 1974; Connelly 1980). Turner shockingly revealed that Chicago’s vice district—known as the “Levee”—was a highly organized multi-million dollar business, harboring “at least ten thousand professional prostitutes” (from Anderson 1974). Furthermore, Turner posed that related urban ills such as police corruption, machine-run city government, and problems with gambling and alcohol were tightly intertwined with prostitution—further exacerbating the problem. As Connelly (1980) describes, Turner’s “The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities” was a “reformist diatribe against slum politics, boss rule, and the moral dissipation of the urban masses” (p. 61). Likewise, Connelly (1980) notes Turner’s exposé pinpointed “Russian Jews” as primarily responsible for Chicago’s supply of prostitutes—thus reflecting an “ever-present American anti-Semitism” (p. 60). Turner moved on to point his accusatory finger at New York City’s prostitution, but his exposé succeeded in fueling the Progressive fervor against Chicago’s “social evil.”

Chicago’s impassioned public attention to the “white slavery traffic” coincided with Turner’s exposé. In 1907, Clifford Roe, an assistant state’s attorney for Chicago’s Cook County and also a vocal white slavery investigator, launched a series of white
slavery prosecutions (Anderson 1974). Subsequently, Roe resigned from his position in 1909 to pursue white slavery investigations, the results of which were revealed in his 1911 publications entitled *The Prodigal Daughter: The White Slave Evil and the Remedy* and *The Great War on White Slavery*, the latter containing essays by the following: Ellen Henrotin of the Federation of Women’s Clubs, Edwin W. Sims, U. S. District Attorney; Dr. Winfield S. Hall, Professor of Physiology at Northwestern University Medical College; and Dr. Josephine E. Young, Specialist in Children’s Diseases at Rush Medical College.

Concurrently, Reverend Ernest Bell, secretary of the Illinois Vigilance Association and superintendent of the red-light district “rescue” effort called the Midnight Mission, compiled essays which addressed Chicago’s supposed rampant white slavery syndicate, published in 1910 as *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls, or War on the White Slave Trade*, with contributions from the following: Edwin W. Sims and Harry A. Parkin, U. S. District Attorney and Assistant U. S. District Attorney; Clifford G. Roe, Assistant States Attorney; Florence Dedrick, rescue missionary of the Moody Church; Mrs. Ophelia Amigh, Superintendent of the Illinois Training School for Girls; Dr. William T. Belfield of Rush Medical College; Winfield Scott Hall of Northwestern University Medical School; and Rev. Melbourne P. Boynton. Additionally, the Midnight Mission held “open air” services in the midst of the red-light district and disseminated pamphlets deriding the social, moral, and medical evils of prostitution. Several other white slave tracts were disseminated in Chicago from roughly 1908 to 1915, including but not limited to Jean Turner Zimmerman’s *Chicago’s Soul Market* and America’s *Black Traffic in Young Girls*.

Simultaneously with the proposed rising tumult of the white slavery traffic a national “social hygiene” movement was launched by Dr. Prince Morrow’s 1904 publication of *Social Diseases and Marriage*. The social hygiene movement was first organized as the American Society for Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis in 1905, which later joined forces with the American Purity Alliance and the American Vigilance Committee to form the American Vigilance Association in 1911: the organization became the American Social Hygiene Association in 1914, with representative groups
across the nation, including The Chicago Society of Social Hygiene (CSSH). According to the research literature, the social hygienists’ primary objectives were to eradicate venereal disease through breaking the “conspiracy of silence” that surrounded public discussion of sexuality issues and denouncing the double standard of sexuality as scientifically unsound (Burnham 1973; Brandt 1987; D’Emilio & Freedman 1988; Luker 1998). Consequently, the social hygiene movement viewed prostitution as a vector for venereal disease whose persistence depended on the myth of male’s “sexual necessity” and thus as a target of reform.

The CSSH counted as its members such noted reformers as Jane Addams and future VCC members Julius Rosenwald and W. W. Hallam, as well as some University of Chicago professors (Moran 1996). According to Moran (1996), the CSSH, organized in 1906, “quickly became one of the most active social hygiene groups in the country, issuing numerous pamphlets and holding lectures…on the dangers of vice for young people” (p. 486). Additionally, the society, along with the VCC and the Chicago Woman’s Club, suggested that a public school sexuality education curriculum was crucial to combating the spread of venereal disease and prostitution. As Moran (1996) notes,

The institutionalization of sex education appealed particularly to the more professional-minded sexual reformers, especially physicians, who hoped that a regular program in the public schools would obviate the necessity for public moral crusades and the deluge of anti-vice literature that itself constituted a form of pornography. (P. 497)

Thus, in contrast to Turner’s muckraking exposes and the moralistic emotional appeals of the white slave narratives, the social hygienists “added the authoritative voice of science and hygiene to the moralistic claims against prostitution…” (Brandt 1987:32).

Possibly the most publicized and nationally influential Progressive-Era anti-prostitution effort was the 1910-1911 investigation by the VCC. After three years of escalating agitation against prostitution—including Turner’s expose, the white slavery investigations, the British evangelist Rodney “Gypsy” Smith’s march through the red-light district, and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union’s foray into Mayor Busse’s office to plea for full enforcement of the law—the first municipally-appointed vice investigation was established in Chicago in April of 1910 (Anderson 1974). The VCC
was comprised of thirty “prominent and respected” (Anderson 1974:209) Chicagoans, two of which were women. The following were among the committee members: Professor Graham Taylor, President of the Chicago Commons settlement and founder of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy; Dr. William Healy, Director of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute; Professors Charles Henderson and William Isaac Thomas of the Chicago School for Sociology; Ellen Henrotin, representing the Federation of Women’s Clubs; six physicians, including Dr. Anna Dwyer, President of the Mary Thompson Hospital and William A. Evans, Chicago’s Health Commissioner; some prominent Chicago businessmen, including Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company; several lawyers and judicial representatives, including United States District Attorney Edwin W. Sims; and several religion-affiliated persons, representing Catholic, Protestant, as well as Jewish faiths.

With $5,000 appropriated for funding in 1910, The VCC commenced their field investigation.2 Dedicated to social-scientific methods of inquiry, the VCC exhaustively probed all facets of the vice problem. Groups such as Hull House, the Juvenile Protection Association, the Anti-Saloon League, and Bell’s Midnight Mission all leant information on vice to the sub-committees of the VCC. Committee members ventured into dance halls, movie theaters, and saloons as well as tenement housing and industrial factories to assess the relationship of these environmental conditions with vice. The commission members also interviewed prostitutes, madams, and police officers to fully understand the causes of this supposedly growing problem. Finally, after compiling their evidence, drawing conclusions about the probable causes of prostitution, and proposing recommendations to combat Chicago’s vice problem, in April of 1911 the official VCC report was released as the 380-page treatise entitled The Social Evil in Chicago, with the bold motto: “Constant and Persistent Repression of Prostitution the Immediate Method: Absolute Annihilation the Ultimate Ideal.”

One of the many recommendations of the VCC’s report was for the formation of a city-sponsored committee to investigate and prosecute prostitution (Linehan 1991).

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2 Another $5,000 was appropriated for the year 1911 to continue the commission’s investigations, and $8,000 was contributed from private sources (Sumner 1913).
However, like the recommendation for the immediate disbanding of the segregated vice district, this proposal did not come to fruition. Therefore, shortly after the VCC report was released, a privately-funded organization called the Committee of Fifteen (C15), which had financially backed Clifford Roe’s white slavery investigations, took up the task of continuing the investigation of vice in Chicago (Anderson 1974; Linehan 1991). The C15 counted the following as its members: Jane Addams; Harriett Vittum, settlement house worker, member of the JPA, and future director of the Women’s City Club; Clifford Barnes, former Hull House resident, president of Illinois College, and University of Chicago Instructor; Louise de Koven Bowen, president of the JPA and treasurer of Hull House; some prominent businessmen, including Quaker Oats president Henry Parsons Crowell and Sears, Roebuck and Company president Julius Rosenwald; and several of the original VCC members, including Graham Taylor, Ellen Henrotin, Edwin Sims, and William A. Evans.

According to secondary sources (Anderson 1974; Linehan 1991) the C15’s objectives were to combat white slavery and pandering and to sever the connection of prostitution with big business. The committee continued investigations of the vice district, but, in fear that the prostitution would just scatter into respectable communities, were wary of eliminating the segregated districts. However, from 1913 to 1915, the committee did instigate an unprecedented tactic: they published the names of property owners who rented their buildings for “immoral purposes” in daily papers. Although most of these property owners were district workers, several prominent citizens did rent properties that were used as brothels (Linehan 1991). They then cited Illinois statutes that sanctioned evacuation of property leased for immoral purposes and $200-a-day fines for every day these properties were used for the purposes of prostitution (Linehan 1991). Then, on October 3, 1912, Chicago’s then state’s attorney John E. W. Wayman met with the Committee to discuss a plan to abruptly enforce the present but long-ignored laws against prostitution (Anderson 1974; Linehan 1991). And, although the Committee did not endorse his proposed policy, that evening, Wayman launched “one of the most dramatic attacks in Chicago’s history” (Anderson 1974:215)—securing warrants for the arrests of 135 “dive keepers” and ordering the closing of all the red-light district resorts.
until the expiration of his term in office. Finally, with the vehement advocacy of Committee members such as Jane Addams and Louise de Koven Bowen, the aldermen agreed to never return to the old policy of segregated vice districts—forever ending the tacitly accepted red light district in Chicago (Anderson 1974).

Concurrent with serving on the C15, Jane Addams and Louise de Koven Bowen were intensely investigating the “ancient evil” (Addams 1912a) of prostitution. Jane Addams, founder of the nationally renowned settlement Hull House, was continuously involved in numerous social reforms in Progressive-Era Chicago, working with the members of the IPL, the Chicago School for Civics and Philanthropy, the Chicago School of Sociology, on perceived pressing but rectifiable urban problems (Deegan 1988; Fitzpatrick 1990). As Deegan (1988) notes, while under Addams’s wing, Hull House not only provided needed services to the neighborhood dwellers but conducted numerous groundbreaking sociological investigations to assess what problems faced the immediate community—predating and consequently strongly influencing the Chicago School of Sociology’s topical inquiries and methodological approaches. Louise de Koven Bowen, a member of one of Chicago’s oldest and richest families, was also involved in several reform organizations; in addition to founding the Juvenile Protective Association (JPA), she served on the board of directors of the Chicago Council of Social Agencies and the School of Civics and Philanthropy, was president of the Women’s City Club for ten years, and served as trustee and treasurer of Hull House for forty-three years.

Through a collaborative effort of Addams and Bowen, investigations of prostitution and the conditions surrounding and encouraging prostitution were launched. Their findings and recommendations for the amelioration of prostitution were disseminated via pamphlets by the JPA as well as published in McClure’s Magazine as separate essays then subsequently in Jane Addams’s 1912 book A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil. As Addams (1912a) explains in her preface to A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil, the JPA, under the direction of Bowen, sent twenty field officers out daily to investigate the following:

[D]ance halls, theatres, amusement parks, lake excursion boats, petty gambling rackets, and the home surroundings of one hundred Juvenile Court children and the records of
Addams (1912a) concluded “the reports...became to me a revelation of the dangers implicit in city conditions and of the allurements which are designedly placed around many young girls in order to draw them into an evil life” (p. ix). Their findings ultimately pointed to environmental factors such as economic inequality, breakdown of familial structure, commercial recreations, and the organized syndicate of white slavers as exacerbating Chicago’s prostitution problem.

Grace Abbott, then director of the Immigrants’ Protective League (IPL), her sister Edith Abbott, instructor at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, and Sophonisba Breckinridge, co-founder of the IPL and also an instructor at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy—all close associates of Addams and Bowen and residents of Hull House—were also involved in Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades.

Under Grace Abbott’s direction, the IPL, concerned with the general welfare and protection of Chicago’s newly emigrated and residential immigrants, made special efforts to protect immigrant women from the dangers of prostitution and the white slave trade, including attaining names and addresses of all unescorted female immigrants, having agents stationed at railroad depots to thwart white slave traders, and investigating employment agencies suspected of supplying immigrant girls to disreputable houses (Buroker 1971; Leonard 1973; González 1998). Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge under the auspices of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy investigated several perceived social ills in Chicago—including the connection of “delinquent girls” with prostitution and the factors that encouraged their involvement (Odem 1995).

Not long after the C15 became more active in Chicago’s crusade against prostitution, another recommendation by the VCC was brought to fruition through the 1913 establishment of a Morals Court branch of the judicial system, which would deal exclusively with vice cases. According to Linehan (1991), the stated aims of the Morals Court were:
First, to reduce commercial prostitution by concentrating all related cases in one court. They hoped this would demonstrate the tremendous amount of vice in Chicago and keep public conscience aroused to fighting it. Second, to keep a closer check on the police response to prostitution, to ensure that arrests were made and graft eliminated. Third, to promote efficiency in judicial administration and speed in the handling of cases. Finally, the court was to wisely and humanely deal with offenders by marshalling all the social service agencies in vice reform to provide organized assistance. (P. 280)

Several of the original VCC members were appointed to positions in the Morals Court, with Dr. Anna Dwyer serving as attending physician and Dr. William Healy of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute creating an inventory which examined the familial, environmental, developmental, psychological, and medical characteristics of the persons tried in the court (Linehan 1991). Chief Justice of the Municipal Court Harry Olson directed the operations of the Morals Court branch, while several other regular employees assisted the appointed judges, including clerks, bailiffs, policewomen, psychiatrists, and physicians (Linehan 1991). Likewise, social service agencies such as the Illinois Vigilance Association and the Girls Protective League offered their assistance to the Morals Court cases (Linehan 1991). The Morals Court was an ambitious and optimistic endeavor to realize the VCC’s recommendation. However, due to the disorganization of the court, the rapid turnover of its employees, and its poor facilities and resources, the Chicago Morals Court bore limited success in combating the prostitution problem (Linehan 1991).

The Crusaders and the “Progressive Ethos”

Previously, I reviewed research literature that discussed the core goals, values, and ideological foundation of “Progressivism” during the Progressive Era, which presumably guided reform efforts (Grantham 1964; Kirschner 1975, 1986; Wiebe 1967; Bledstein 1976; McCormick 1997). Several similar interpretations of the crux of “Progressivism” were presented. However, I presently consider McCormick’s (1997) proposition of the “Progressive ethos” and assess to what extent his interpretation applies to Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades. McCormick noted that:

Students of Progressivism have produced an outpouring of studies documenting the varied, fervent efforts to solve the problems caused by urbanization and
industrialization…the spirit and methods of Progressivism unquestionably emanated from the native-born, urban middle and upper-middle classes…The Progressive ethos—rooted in evangelical Protestantism, now turning to the task of delivering the cities from sin; committed to social science methods because they could eradicate social conflicts; opposed to the worst evils of big business but accepting of capitalism itself; devoted to collectivist, interventionist solutions, confident they would not destroy individualism—was distinctively native, urban, and middle class. (P. 15-16)

Upon reviewing the social and political culture of Progressive-Era Chicago and the primary actors in Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades, I deduced that the proposed “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997) generally applies to this localized movement. The secondary literature suggests that the Chicago anti-prostitution reformers often attributed the problem of prostitution as intrinsically linked to the city’s rapid urbanization and industrialization (Anderson 1974; McCarthy 1976; Connelly 1980; Kirschner 1980; Linehan 1991; Moran 1996). While some of the reformers pinpointed the breakdown of the strong rural family social unit within the chaotic urban environment as the key contributor to the growing prostitution problem, others emphasized poor living and working conditions caused by the industrialized economy as intensifying Chicago’s prostitution problem. As Moran (1996) describes,

Supporters of the “social hygiene” movement (as the Progressive crusade against prostitution and venereal disease came to be known) were deeply threatened by evidence that individuals and institutions were failing to rebuff the modern city’s temptations, but they were confident that they, as an enlightened elite, had the ability to stop the decay. (P. 482)

Likewise, the largely urban phenomenon of commercialized recreations, such as amusement parks, cheap movie theaters, and dance halls, were continuously cited as part and parcel to Chicago’s prostitution problem. Therefore, I think it a fair assumption to pose that Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusaders believed prostitution was ultimately linked to problems of urbanization and industrialization, thus fitting McCormick’s (1997) interpretation of Progressivism.

This interpretation then states “the spirit and methods of Progressivism unquestionably emanated from the native-born, urban middle and upper-middle classes” (McCormick 1997:15-16). Once again, I deduced from the secondary literature that,
overall, this interpretation rings true regarding the Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders. As Haller (1970) summarizes,

[Chicago] reform leaders tended to be Protestant and native American in origin. Moreover, the reformers lived in upper income areas dominated by native Americans: the Hyde Park and Woodlawn areas surrounding the University of Chicago, the Gold Coast along Lake Michigan, and the elite northern suburbs. (P. 625)

When breaking down the particular actors in the separate anti-prostitution crusades in Progressive-Era Chicago, the presence of “native-born, urban middle and upper-middle classes” (McCormick 1997:15-16) dominates the membership. For example, Clifford Roe—the highly vocal and prolific investigator of Chicago’s supposed white slave traffic—held the position of assistant state’s attorney—a middle-class professional post. Similarly, the CSSH called middle-class professionals such as Jane Addams and professors from the University of Chicago as well as prominent upper-class business leaders like Sears, Roebuck and Company president Julius Rosenwald, members—also all native-born (Moran 1996). Likewise, all but three of the thirty VCC members and roughly four of the approximate fifty directors of the C15 were native-born, but all could be considered as members of the middle-class and upper-middle classes—illustrated by the academics, social scientists, physicians, businessmen, and legal professionals that dotted these organizations (Anderson 1974; Linehan 1991).

However, I would not necessarily classify most of Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders as “urban,” per se. Although at the time of their crusading activities the majority of the actors called Chicago their home, they largely originated from rural, Midwestern communities (Linehan 1991). Their rural beginnings may explain their general discontent with the present urban environment. Their idealized version of the rural family and home life often did not mesh with the conditions they observed in the urban communities; consequently, their reform ideals often comprised the image of the nurturing (rural) hearth and home. However, reformers such as Jane Addams optimistically believed that this rural ideal should and could be realized in the urban community—and it was the social reformers moral duty to do just that. Therefore,
the Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders were “urban,” but the influence of their largely rural upbringing cannot be ignored.

I also infer that although several of the Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders were from evangelical Protestant backgrounds, many other actors represented Catholicism and Judaism. Thus, to call Chicago’s anti-prostitution movement “rooted in evangelical Protestantism” (McCormick 1997:15-16) would be erroneous, in my opinion. However, several of the most adamant agitators against prostitution—most particularly, against white slavery—were evangelical Protestants (Anderson 1974; Connelly 1980; Linehan 1991). Likewise, once again most prevalent among the white slavery actors, the presence of the “social gospel” (Gorrell 1988; Smith 1992) of a Christian’s duty to his/her brethren to reach out into the community and save them from “sin” was witnessed. Therefore, from reviewing the secondary literature, I would state at this point that whether or not the Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution movement was “rooted in evangelical Protestantism” is not completely clear to me.

However, the remaining three elements—a dedication to social scientific methods, a dissonant relationship with capitalism, and a devotion to collectivist/interventionist solutions—were present in the majority of the Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusades. As was discussed previously, Jane Addams and Louise de Koven Bowen’s JPA investigation of prostitution was rigorous and grand in scale, using field observations and documentation that were championed by the Hull House members. Likewise, the VCC’s investigation was also social-scientifically rigorous—involving sub-committee investigations, interviews, and massive documentation of their findings. Moreover, it can be inferred that if the CSSH was similar to other national social hygiene organizations, a dedication to scientific studies of the social and environmental were prevalent (Brandt 1987; Hobson 1987; Luker 1998). Additionally, prominent social scientists such as William Healy and William Isaac Thomas were involved in one or more of these anti-prostitution efforts—once again highlighting the ever-present influence of social scientific rigor. Therefore, I deduced that this element of the “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997) was illustrated in the anti-prostitution crusades.
Furthermore, it is evident that the Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders had a dissonant relationship with capitalism. While they extolled the many opportunities that industry brought to Chicagoans, they were increasingly critical of the poor working conditions and economic inequality they observed in working class communities—as illustrated through the findings of the VCC, the C15, and Addams and Bowen’s investigations (Anderson 1974; Connelly 1980; Linehan 1991). Additionally, as noted in the research literature, the revelation of prostitution as a highly organized commercialized business further inflamed the reformers’ sentiments against big business (Connelly 1980; Brandt 1987). Lastly, the encroaching presence of commercialized recreations, which were continuously targeted as aggravating the prostitution problem, once again drove home the possible evils of capitalism. Thus, this element of the “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997) also figured heavily in Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades.

Finally, the last element of this “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997)—devotion to collectivist/interventionist solutions—was also present in the Chicago anti-prostitution crusades. The crusaders were continuously stressing the importance of community involvement in and the collective duty of the Chicago citizens to engage in combating prostitution in the name of “social justice” (Anderson 1974; Connelly 1980). Likewise, the many suggestions for solving the problem of prostitution often were interventionist in nature. The “social hygienists” continually stressed the need for sexual education as key to preventing the growth of prostitution (Moran 1996), as did Jane Addams and the VCC. Similarly, one of the aims of the Morals Court was to provide the necessary social services that they believed would “rehabilitate” their clients—thus intervening in their further participation in prostitution (Linehan 1991). Thus, this element of the “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997) was once again affirmed in the Chicago anti-prostitution crusades.

Discussion

The reviewed body of literature informed my analyses in several ways. First, these works provided the general historical and social context of the Progressive-Era anti-
prostitution crusades. From this research, I gleaned the national-level movements’ separate participants, their agendas, and their particular objects of reform—thus establishing the general historical and social backdrop of the crusades. Additionally, drawing from this research, I garnered several discourses that were present in the separate crusades. As will be elaborated in the following theoretical sections, a portion of my analyses explore whether or not the separate crusaders employed broader discourses in their rhetorical strategies for increased persuasive potential. Therefore, I explore whether these broader social, political, academic, and professional discourses, as inferred from the secondary literature, were reproduced, reinforced, and/or challenged in Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders’ claims. Additionally, by garnering who were the primary actors in Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades, I established a sample from which to draw data for my analyses. Moreover, I gleaned the crusaders’ general actions and involvement in the fight against prostitution in Chicago. Lastly, I assessed the extent to which Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusaders conformed to the “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997)—a discussion to which I will return in my concluding chapter.
CHAPTER TWO: THEORY AND RESEARCH METHODS

Theory

My analyses of Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades were guided by a multi-faceted theoretical framework composed of the following: (1) social constructionist frameworks as developed by Best (1987), Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993), Loseke (1993), and Loseke and Fawcett (1995); (2) selected concepts from the social movement frameworks of Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford (1986), Snow and Benford (1988, 1992), Tarrow (1990), Johnston and Klandermans (1994), and Jasper (1997); and (3) Holstein and Gubrium (1994) and Gubrium and Holstein’s (1999) analytic of interpretive practice. Upon reviewing my theoretical framework, I discuss its application in my analyses.

Social Constructionist Frameworks

Best’s and Loseke and Fawcett’s Rhetorical Frameworks

My rhetorical analyses were sensitized by Best’s (1987, 1990) framework, in which he adopts Toulmin’s (1958) categories of rhetorical persuasion—grounds, warrants, and conclusions—to analyze the missing children campaign of the 1980s. I complemented these analyses with Loseke (1993) and Loseke and Fawcett’s (1995) analytics of people-types and moral worthiness.

Grounds

As per Best’s (1987, 1990) rhetorical framework, the grounds in social problems rhetoric are the “basic facts” about the proposed social problem, or evidence about the seriousness of the problem (Baumann 1989). As discussed by Best (1987, 1990), and
supported by de Young (1996), the grounds of rhetorical arguments typically manifest in three different types: definitions, estimates, and typifying examples.

According to Best (1987; 1990) definitions identify the social problem, establishing both the symbolic boundaries of what is and is not part of the social problem—its *domain*—and the sort of problem it is—its *orientation*. Best (1987) poses that domain statements are particularly pertinent when the claims-makers are hoping to “call attention to a previously unacknowledged social problem”—constructing an existing social condition as a “social problem” (p. 104). Similarly, orientation or reorientation statements are often used to cast an existing social problem in a new perspective (Best 1987; 1990).

*Estimates* of the problem’s magnitude comprise another common element of the grounds (Best 1987, 1990). According to previous research, estimates of a social problem typically manifest in three types: incidence estimates, growth estimates, and range claims (Best 1987, 1990; DeYoung 1996). Incidence estimates denote “the number of cases, incidents, or people affected” (Best 1987:106) by the social problem, growth estimates infer that the problem is increasing and will continue to do so if not addressed, and range claims establish who is vulnerable to the problem (Best 1987, 1990).

According to Best (1987, 1990), *typifying examples*—accounts of specific incidents or persons affected by the social problem—are often used as a rhetorical device in social problems construction. These examples act not only as attention grabbers that give a “sense of the problems frightening, harmful dimensions” (Best 1990:28) but also as means to promote the audience’s identification with those affected by the social problem.

Additionally, typifying examples may be analyzed using Loseke (1993) and Loseke and Fawcett’s (1995) understandings of the construction of *people-types* and *moral worthiness*. Loseke (1993) argues that in social problems rhetoric, persons are constructed as “victims” and thus “sympathy-worthy,” or as “victimizers” and thus “condemnation-worthy.” Furthermore, Loseke and Fawcett (1995) argue that these examples draw on broader moral discourses to construct a person as sympathy-worthy. For example, in their analysis of 1912-1917 charity campaigns, *morality of biography,*
morality of activity, and morality of motivation rhetorics were noted, wherein persons were constructed as one or more of the following: (1) hard-working and thus not economically idle; (2) devoted family members struggling to find work despite being discouraged or burdened with troubles; and (3) wanting to work to avoid dependence. These rhetorics facilitated the audience’s acceptance of the moral worthiness of the persons. Therefore, typifying examples are an important element of the claims-makers rhetorical strategies: to successfully convince an audience that this social problem needs addressed, the claims-makers must construct those affected by the problem as “victims” and thus “worthy” of the audience’s sympathy and assistance.

Warrants

Best (1987) states that warrants are the necessary link between the grounds and conclusions—they “justify drawing conclusions from the grounds” (p. 108). As Baumann (1989) elucidates, warrants “explain why we should care about a problem and why we should accept recommended solutions” (p. 63)—they legitimize demands for action against the social problem. Best (1987) also notes that warrants often involve expressions of values, which Snow et al. (1986) classify as “states of existence that are thought to be worthy of protection and promotion” (p. 469).

Best (1987) delineates several warrants expressed in the 1980s missing children campaigns. The value of children was a prevalent warrant—expressing high sentimental value of children and deeming them as priceless individuals in need of protection. Similarly, a warrant that presented children as “powerless innocents” or “blameless victims” was often expressed. Best also found that warrants suggesting possible alliances between the missing children problem and other proposed social problems were present in the campaign. Additionally, claims that the present social policies were ineffective emerged in the missing children campaigns. Likewise, Best notes that drawing historical continuity of the missing children problem with other problems to justify future action were presented in the claims. Lastly, Best found that the value of rights and freedoms played heavily in the missing children campaign.
Conclusions

The final element of Best’s (1987, 1990) rhetorical framework is conclusions—“calls for action to alleviate or eradicate the problem” (p. 112). As Best notes, these conclusions are shaped by how the grounds have been constructed as well as the warrants embedded in the claims.

Best (1987) gleaned five overlying conclusions from the 1980s missing children campaign: awareness, prevention, social control policies, and other objectives. According to Best, in the initial stages of the missing children campaign the claims-makers largely sought to bring the proposed problem to public awareness through activities such as advertising campaigns and printing images of missing children on milk cartons. In addition, the campaigns emphasized squelching further exacerbation of the problem through several means, including encouraging parents to assemble files of photographs and fingerprints of their children and providing educational videos and pamphlets that gave safety tips for avoiding abduction. Likewise, the missing children claims-makers demanded new social control policies to deal with the problem, including new legislation and federal bureau practices. Lastly, Best notes that several other objectives were sought, such as a federal study to count the cases of missing children, prosecution of adult sexual offenders, thorough screening of persons working with children, and investigating the link between popular culture and child exploitation.

Rhetoric of Rectitude vs. Rhetoric of Rationality

Within his discussion, Best (1987) also denotes two rhetorical “patterns” that characterize claims-making activities: the rhetoric of rectitude and the rhetoric of rationality.

Best (1987) explains that via the rhetoric of rectitude, claims-makers argue that “values or morality require that a problem receive attention” (p. 116). In addition, Best states that those using the rhetoric of rectitude are largely seeking reinterpretation of a social problem and are directing their efforts at either a “converted” audience or a “hostile” one. Best also argues that the rhetoric of rectitude is most commonly employed early in the claims-making movement and typically by less experienced claims-makers.
In contrast, the *rhetoric of rationality* contends that the audience and/or society will somehow benefit from ratifying the claims (Best 1987). Moreover, Best argues that the rhetoric of rationality is generally used later in the claims-making movement and by seasoned claims-makers. Lastly, Best states that claims-makers employing the rhetoric of rationality are typically directing their claims to perceived readily-persuadable audience and are calling for action rather than reinterpretation.

However, although the rhetoric of rationality and rhetoric of rectitude are substantively different, claims-makers often use both approaches (Best 1987). Furthermore, these complementary rhetorical strategies both have the central argument that a responsibility to address the social problem exists. However, one contends moral responsibility should act as the motivation toward action while the other supports personal interest.

**Context and Claims-Making**

Best (1987, 1993), unlike “strict” constructionists who advocate examining claims divorced from context, proposes a “contextual” constructionist approach that recognizes claims “do not emerge from a social and historical vacuum” (1987:117). As Best (1987) further articulates,

> Just as people’s decisions to make claims emerge from a larger social context, so do their rhetorical choices. Claims-makers articulate their claims in ways that they find (and believe their audiences will find) persuasive. The larger cultural context—the weight assigned to various sorts of evidence, the relative importance given to different values, current standards for appropriate social policies, and the degree of consensus about these various judgments—affects rhetorical work. (P. 117)

Similarly, de Young (1996) notes, “it is a resonance between warrants…offered by claims-makers, and prevailing cultural concerns that largely accounts for the persuasiveness, and the persistence, of claims” (p. 67). Thus, from a contextual constructionist perspective, a consideration of the larger social context is crucial to analyzing the rhetorical features of claims-makers’ claims.

Therefore, Best (1993) argues that employing a contextual constructionist perspective allows the researcher to explore the relationship between the historical,
cultural, and sociostructural context and the claims which are presented in social problems rhetoric. Thus, in addition to examining the rhetorical features of the claims, the researcher may probe several questions regarding the impact of various contextual aspects on the claims:

Which claims-makers make which claims (or counterclaims)? And why did they choose those strategies? Do their rhetorical choices reflect their particular values or interests? Do those choices derive from available resources…? To what degree does their rhetoric reflect contingencies of knowledge…? (Best 1993:117)

Thus, using a contextual constructionist perspective, one can explore the possible influence of contextual features, such as class, gender, race/ethnicity, religious affiliation, organizational membership, professional association, etc., on the claims being made about a social problem. Moreover, the presence, absence, and/or challenge of broader contextual discourses can be examined using this theoretical framework.

Ibarra and Kitsuse’s Rhetorical Framework

Although Ibarra and Kitsuse advocate a “strict” rather than “contextual” constructionist approach (Best 1993), components of their theoretical framework proved useful to my analyses. Consequently, I supplemented my rhetorical analyses with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) “rhetorical dimensions” analytics of rhetorical idioms, motifs, and claims-making styles.

Rhetorical Idioms

Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) describe rhetorical idioms as rhetorical strategies that “situate condition-categories in moral universes” and as “moral vocabularies” that engage an audience to action through reference to “moral competence” (p. 31). According to Ibarra and Kitsuse, these rhetorical idioms typically manifest as five types: rhetoric of loss, rhetoric of entitlement, rhetoric of endangerment, rhetoric of unreason, and rhetoric of calamity.

As Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) note, the rhetoric of loss idiom portrays something “sacred” as being threatened by a putative condition. Thus, they pose that the central
concept of this rhetorical idiom is protection. They note that positive terms that compose this idiom’s moral vocabulary include “innocence,” “beauty,” and “purity,” while the negative terms include “sin,” “pollution,” “chaos,” and “evil.”

Within the idiom of rhetoric of entitlement, according to Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993), an importance of equal institutional access for all citizens, guarantees of individual freedom and liberty, and the value of egalitarianism are rendered. Consequently, the centralizing concept of this idiom is expansion—expansion of rights and privileges to all citizens. They pose that the positive terms of “lifestyle,” “diversity,” “choice,” “tolerance,” and “empowerment” characterize this idiom’s moral vocabulary, while “intolerance,” “oppression,” “racism,” and the like act as negative terms.

According to Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993), threats to the health and safety of the human body are represented by the idiom of rhetoric of endangerment. They note that the positive terms of this idiom’s moral vocabulary include “hygiene,” “prevention,” and the like, while the negative terms include “disease,” “pathology,” “epidemic,” and “risk.” They also stress that this rhetorical feature is “most idiomatic when delivered in scientific style, language and reasoning, or when endorsed by medical testimony” (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993:35).

Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) idiom of rhetoric of unreason implies those involved at fault for the putative condition deliberately manipulate individuals and/or actively conspire against persons. The terms that typically manifest within this idiom’s moral vocabulary include “trusting,” “naïve,” “innocent,” “desperate,” “easy prey,” and “vulnerable.” They also stress that children “provide a paradigmatic vernacular resource for articulating this rhetorical idiom” (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993:36).

Lastly, Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) delineate the rhetoric of calamity idiom, which they claim evokes the “unimaginability of utter disaster” by “bring[ing] a variety of claimants under a kind of symbolic umbrella, hence providing the basis for coalition building” (p. 37) Consequently, the use of this idiom portrays inaction as causing other social problems to grow exponentially.
Motifs

Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) also discuss motifs as an important rhetorical dimension of social problem construction. They define motifs as “thematic elements and figures of speech that encapsulate or highlight some aspect of a social problem” (p. 43). However, though similar in nature to rhetorical idioms, they stress that motifs “are not complexes of moral discourses in the same sense as rhetorical idioms; rather, they are a kind of generic vocabulary conventionally used in claims-making” (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993:43). Motifs often manifest as metaphorical phrases and include terms such as “epidemic,” “menace,” “scourge,” “crisis,” “blight,” “war on…,” and the like.

Claims-Making Style

Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) also consider “claims-making style” as important to the understanding of claims-making. They note that a claimant’s “bearing, tenor, sensibility and membership category” shape the appearance and content of the claims as well as their interpretation (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993:45). Likewise, they refer to how claimants “style” their claims to fit consistently with their particular claims-making style.

Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) delineate several claims-making styles. They discuss the scientific style as being “disinterested” and utilizing terminology that is “technical” and “precise.” They also describe the comic style, in which the claimants highlight the hypocrisies of claimants or counterclaimants and use irony and sarcasm to convey their claims. The theatrical style, according to Ibarra and Kitsuse, involves dramatizing a problem, such as holding sit-ins and boycotts, to convey claims. In contrast, claimants employing the civic style present their claims as “unstylized” and thus hope to achieve an appearance of genuineness and sincerity. Ibarra and Kitsuse then discuss the legalistic style, in which the claimant presents him/herself as representing the legal rights of another party. Lastly, they describe the subcultural style, where “segments of society—whether self-defined by class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or geographical location—tend to evolve unique…ways of commenting on the larger social world” (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993:49).
Social Movement Frameworks

My research also drew on literature regarding the role of framing and culture in social movements (Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford 1986; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Benford and Snow 2000; Tarrow 1990; Johnston and Klandermans 1994; Swidler 1994; Jasper 1997). Upon reviewing the framing analytic forwarded by Snow et al. (1986), Snow and Benford (1988), I surmised that this analytic closely approximated Best’s (1987, 1990) theoretical framework. Accordingly, since my analyses are predominantly guided by Best’s framework, I believe it would be redundant to now then interpretations of these findings via the framing analytic perspective. However, I do believe that Snow and Benford (1992) and Benford and Snow’s (2000) master frame analytic may further inform our understanding of the Progressive Era anti-prostitution crusades and thus warrants discussion. Specifically, via the master frame analytic I examine what master frames were reflected in the crusaders’ claims and what inferences may be made about the historical and social context of the Progressive Era based on my analyses of these crusades.

Collective Action Frames as Master Frames

Snow et al. (1986) and Snow and Benford (1988, 1992) introduced the concept of frames as an analytical tool for examining social movements. According to Snow et al. (1986), a frame serves as an interpretive device “function[ing] to organize experience and guide action” (p. 464) and is integral to movement participation. As Snow and Benford (1988) explain, social movements

[Frame, or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists. (P. 198)

Furthermore, Snow et al. (1986), Snow and Benford (1992), and Benford and Snow (2000) emphasize that successful mass mobilization by social movements is in part contingent on their appropriation of elements from a master frame. These master frames are broader frames from which social movements may pull themes and strengthen the persuasiveness of their claims. According to Benford and Snow (2000), if a social
movement organization’s (SMO’s) collective action frame is limited in scope, rigid and exclusive to that movement, and has minimal cultural resonance, its potentiality for mobilization in other movements is minimal. However, Benford and Snow argue that if a particular movement’s collective action frame is “sufficiently broad in interpretive scope, inclusivity, flexibility, and cultural resonance,” (p. 619) it may function as a master frame that is not distinct to that particular movement but may be appropriated by other SMOs to mobilize action against a perceived problem. Moreover, according to Snow and Benford (1992), if a particular social movement’s collective action frame resonates with a widely held master frame, its potentiality for mobilization increases. Likewise, as Snow and Benford (1986, 1992) demonstrate, these master frames are historically and socially contingent. Furthermore, they discuss how broader values and beliefs are embedded within master frames. Lastly, Snow and Benford (1986; 1992) propose that the master frame does not necessarily determine particular movement frames. The master frame may shape the particular movement frame, but there is also potential for transformation and/or extension of master frames.

Several social movement theorists build upon this framing/master frames analytic. For example, Johnston and Klanderman (1994) note that culture is channeled into social movement rhetoric and can serve to constrain this rhetoric. However, they also suggest that transformations of culture through the discursive practices of the social movement actors can occur. Consequently, Johnston and Klanderman state that analyses of social movements should explore “how framing activities affect behavior, how public discourse generates collective action frames, and how socially constructed meanings influence action mobilization” (p. 22).

Similarly, Jasper (1997) stresses the importance of examining the role rhetoric plays in social movement organizations. As Jasper implies, the success of a social movement organization is not only contingent on what tangible resources they possess but also on “how persuasive it is, how broad an impact it claims for the problem it addresses, [and] how it fits with the audience’s existing beliefs” (p. 273). Thus, Jasper echoes Snow et al.’s (1986, 1988, 1992) emphasis. Likewise, Jasper stresses meanings may be examined through the rhetoric of social movement organization. Furthermore, he
highlights how the rhetoric of social movement organizations “do not merely resonate with existing...beliefs; they help to construct and transform them” (p. 287)—once again reiterating the analytic of framing analysis.

Tarrow (1990) also stresses that analysts must link the constructed meanings within social movements to “broader mentalities” of a society to explore the reflexive ideological link between these movements and the societal contexts in which they are embedded. Drawing on Snow et al.’s (1986, 1988, 1992) framing analytic, Tarrow suggests that social movement organizations synthesize elements from “societal mentalities”—or popularly held values/practices about private lives/behaviors—and “political cultures”—“more clearly molded points of concern about social and political relations”—into “collective action frames,” which are “purposely constructed guides to action” (p. 176). Likewise, Tarrow poses that a particular social movement “is far more likely to bridge, extend, or amplify existing frames in the political culture than to create a wholly new one that may have no resonance in the existing culture” (p. 190). However, Tarrow also posits that new frames may develop from the struggle over meanings within a particular social movement and without from clashes with opponents of the movement.

Interpretive Practice

Holstein and Gubrium (1994) and Gubrium and Holstein (1999) describe their analytic of interpretive practice as an “intersection of ethnomethodology and Foucauldian discourse analysis” (1999:1). According to Gubrium and Holstein (1999), ethnomethodologists’ analyses have traditionally been concerned with answering the how question—how social reality is constructed in everyday life. Using this strict ethnomethodological approach, the analyst “brackets” a so-called reality, or s/he “suspends all commitments to an a priori or privileged version of social structure, focusing instead on how members accomplish, manage, and reproduce a sense of social structure” and on how persons accomplish a sense of social order, shared meanings and/or “reality” through their interactions (Holstein and Gubrium 1994:264). Thus, there is no reality “out there”: this so-called “reality” is self-generated and constructed “from within.” These realities are indexical, meaning they depend upon the particular context.
of the interaction; likewise, they are reflexive, in that they “give shape to those settings while simultaneously being shaped by the settings they constitute” (Holstein and Gubrium 1994:265).

Due to ethnomethodology’s emphasis upon the face-to-face construction of “reality” through interaction and talk, the empirical analyses using this approach have largely been “micro” in focus; therefore, “macro” level analyses using this perspective traditionally have not been undertaken. Consequently, Gubrium and Holstein (1999) pose, “Constructionists may need to formulate a new project that retains ethnomethodology’s interactional sensibilities while extending its scope to both the constitutive and constituted *whats* of everyday life” (p. 13).

Concurrently, Gubrium and Holstein (1999) note that whereas ethnomethodologists had suspended interest in answering the *what* question—”*what* is being accomplished, under *what* conditions, and out of *what* resources” (p. 2)—new analyses outside of traditional ethnomethodology have emerged that explore how the broader institutional and cultural contexts affect what these constructions produce. Therefore, they conclude Foucauldian discourse analyses would extend the scope of ethnomethodology to a “macro” level while retaining its basic assumptions of the interactional accomplishment of “realities.”

As Gubrium and Holstein (1999) explain, rather than “bracketing” a so-called reality, Foucauldian analyses consider “how historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their worlds” (p. 14). These systems, or, in Foucauldian terminology, discourses, are socially reflexive in that they both constitute and meaningfully describe the world and its subjects. Thus, Gubrium and Holstein infer that, in contrast to ethnomethodology’s emphasis on *how* reality is constituted interactionally, Foucauldian considerations stress the *whats* that are constituted through discourses. Consequently, Foucauldian analyses have a much more “macro” feel to them due to their focus on broader historically and culturally specific discourses that mold subjects’ experience and construction of reality.

However, as Gubrium and Holstein (1999) explain, Foucauldian analyses do not assume that discourse determines subjects’ construction of reality. Rather, they presume
that subjects may actively shape and manipulate these discourses through utilization or *discourse-in-practice*. Consequently, they pose that the Foucauldian analytic of discourse-in-practice may be likened to ethnomethodology’s analytic of *discursive practice* in social interaction.

Therefore, Gubrium and Holstein (1999) suggest a logical and fruitful hybrid of these analytical approaches entitled *interpretive practice*, which

> [E]ngages both the *hows* and *whats* of social reality; it is centered in both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds, and the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality constituting activity. (P. 2)

Thus, the interpretive practice analytic incorporates both the ethnomethodological explorations of *how* subjects accomplish reality through interaction and the Foucauldian awareness of how discourses shape the likely possibilities of *what* is to be constituted.

Gubrium and Holstein (1999) suggest that the interpretive practice analytic explores the interplay between discourse-in-practice and discursive practice and thus expands the scope of both ethnomethodological and Foucauldian analyses. Likewise, they note the need of a balanced analysis of both discourse-in-practice and discursive practice—being careful not to stress one over the other. As they admonish,

> Reducing the analytics of discourse-in-practice into discursive practice risks losing the lessons of attending to institutional differences and cultural configurations as they mediate and are not “just talked into being” through social interaction. Conversely, figuring discursive practice is the mere residue of institutional discourse risks a totalized marginalization of local artfulness. (P. 25)

For the researcher to empirically apply the interpretive practice analytic, Gubrium and Holstein (1999) suggest that the s/he must engage in “analytic bracketing,” which “amounts to an orienting procedure for alternately focusing on the *whats* then the *hows* of interpretive practice (or vice versa) in order to assemble both a contextually-scenic and a contextually-constructive picture of everyday language-in-use” (p. 27). Thus, the researcher must temporarily bracket the *whats* of discourses-in-practice to glean how the context is constructed within the discursive practice; then, s/he must “bracket” the *hows*
of discursive practice to garner what elements of the cultural/historical discourse are being reproduced and/or challenged within the discourse-in-practice. Additionally, although the researcher temporarily brackets one analytic while exploring the other, s/he must not completely disregard the one for the other. Rather, s/he must continuously consider the interplay of discourse-in-practice and discursive practices—thus noting the reflexive relationship of these practices. Therefore, using the analytic of interpretive practice, the researcher may effectively explore the *hows* and the *whats*—thus hybridizing the ethnomethodological and Foucauldian approaches to reality construction.

Furthermore, the analytic of interpretive practice allows for inferences of the *whys* (Gubrium and Holstein 1999). As Gubrium and Holstein discuss, while qualitative inquiry traditionally shuns causal interpretations, the analytic of interpretive practice allows for some speculation about the causal *why*. More specifically, the analytic of interpretive practice allows the researcher to explore how:

[D]iscursive practice…provides the footing for answering why recognizable constellations of social order take on locally distinctive shapes…. [while] Discourse-in-practice provides the footing for answering why discursive practice proceeds in the direction it does, toward what end, in pursuit of what goals, in relation to what meanings. (P. 32)

In conclusion, Holstein and Gubrium (1994) and Gubrium and Holstein’s (1999) interpretive practice analytic is a progressive tool for empirical explorations. They successfully meld ethnomethodology and Foucauldian discourse analysis without compromising the basic assumptions of the separate frameworks. Likewise, the analytic supports the simultaneous critical examination of discourse-in-practice—wherein the researcher spotlights how discursive practice reproduce, reinforce, and/or challenge/contradict these discourses—and discursive practice—wherein the researcher explores the influence of cultural and historical discourses-in-practice that may hinder the exercising of individual agency in the discursive practices. Furthermore, the analytic of interpretive practice extends qualitative inquiry by allowing for causal inferences.
Research Methods

In this section, I will present the following: (1) my analytic approach, wherein I discuss the specific application of the constructionist frameworks within my analyses; (2) a justification for the research setting and time frame in which I focused my analyses; and (3) a discussion of my data selection process and chapter organization.

Analytic Approach

The constructionist frameworks, complemented by the social movement frameworks, primarily informed my detailed rhetorical analyses of the claims. Additionally, using Foucault’s (1980) deployment of sexuality analytic, I examined the reflection, reinforcement, and/or displacement of the broader sexual discourses present in the Progressive Era. However, these separate analytical facets comprise aspects of my central analyses of the reflexive relationship between the crusaders’ rhetorical strategies and the broader discourses present in the Progressive Era, which were ultimately sensitized by the master analytic, if you will, of interpretive practice.

Constructionist Frameworks

My constructionist analyses were primarily sensitized by Best’s (1987, 1990) rhetorical framework and supplemented by elements of Loseke (1993), Loseke and Fawcett (1995), and Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical analytics. Specifically, drawing from Best’s (1987, 1990) framework, I gleaned the grounds, warrants, and conclusions present in the Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders’ claims. Additionally, I complemented my analyses with Loseke (1993) and Loseke and Fawcett’s (1995) analytics of people-types and moral-worthiness and discussed the presence or absence of rhetorics of rectitude and/or rationality (Best 1987, 1990) in the crusaders’ claims. Likewise, I examined the presence and/or absence of rhetorical idioms and motifs in the crusaders’ claims as well as their claims-making styles (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993). Lastly, employing a “contextual constructionist” approach (Best 1993), in my concluding chapter I explored the influence of the historical, political, and social context upon the rhetorical features of the Chicago anti-prostitution crusaders’ claims—
considering how their agendas, goals, status, values, and perceived audience impacted their rhetorical choices.

Social Movement Frameworks

Using the master frame analytic forwarded by Snow and Benford (1988, 1992) and Benford and Snow (2000), I garnered what master frames (Snow and Benford 1992; Benford and Snow 2000) were used to increase the persuasive potency of these anti-prostitution claims—or what new master frames were created through the discursive practices of these crusaders. As the present literature suggests, some master frames present in the Progressive Era—such as “social justice” (Anderson 1974) and/or “social control” frames (Kirschner 1975; 1986)—were used in many Progressive social reform discourses. Thus, my analyses assessed the extent to which these and other master frames were reflected, reinforced, and/or challenged in the rhetorical features of Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades.

Interpretive Practice

As previously discussed, I employed the interpretive practice framework (Holstein and Gubrium 1994; Gubrium and Holstein 1999) as a master analytic to guide my interpretations of the reflexive relationship between the crusaders’ rhetorical strategies and the broader discourses present in the Progressive Era. I presently discuss how the separate components of this multi-faceted framework resonate with the interpretive practice analytic.

Best (1987) stresses the importance of examining the rhetorical features of claims made about a social problem and how these features affect their persuasive potential. Therefore, Best proposes that rhetorical analyses—the study of persuasion—should be used to examine how claims are made about social problems. He notes that the warrants that are produced in claims-making activities often construct values and resonate with broader values of the intended audience. Additionally, Best emphasizes that the broader context in which claims-making activities are embedded must also be analyzed, thus stressing the importance of exploring the influence of broader cultural and historical
contexts upon the rhetorical features of the claims—analogous to Gubrium and Holstein’s (1999) discourse-in-practice analytic of interpretive practice. Lastly, Best also underscores the reflexive relationship of context and claims-making, reaffirming his framework’s harmony with Gubrium and Holstein’s analytics of interpretive practice.

Loseke’s (1993) consideration of people-types, moral worthiness, and emotions and Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical dimensions also befit the interpretive practice analytic. Concurrent with the analytic of discursive practice, Loseke emphasizes the need for analyses of how people-types, moral worthiness, and emotions are constituted in claims-making activities. Likewise, she incorporates the analytic of discourse-in-practice, noting that

> [E]motions discourses are linguistic cultural resources available for members to situationally use in evaluating, labeling, expressing, and managing putative internal states...emotions claims-making is similar to claims-making for the cultural category of “social problems.” Activities in both are historically and culturally embedded, both activities reflect power and politics...and both reflect the particular and local concerns of claims-makers. (P. 211)

In contrast, Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) focus exclusively on the hows of discursive practice, emphasizing the need to “bracket” out supposed structural influences and devote social problems construction analysis to the rhetoric or “vernacular constituents” of the claims being made. Consequently, to Ibarra and Kitsuse, discourse-in-practice is inconsequential to the analysis of social problems construction. However, their concepts complement the analytic of interpretive practice and thus facilitated my rhetorical analyses.

Snow et al. (1986), Snow and Benford (1988, 1992) and Benford and Snow (2000) also stress the need to explore how social movements constitute their reality through how they frame their particular grievance—thus concurrent with Gubrium and Holstein’s (1999) discursive practice analytic. Additionally, Snow et al. stress the importance of examining what is being conveyed in these frames—noting if a particular social movement’s framing resonates with a widely held master frame, its potency for mobilization increases. Thus, Snow and Benford’s concept of master frames may be likened to Gubrium and Holstein’s discourse-in-practice analytic of interpretive practice.
Lastly, Snow and colleagues also propose that the master frame does not necessarily determine particular movement frames; they note that the master frame may shape the particular movement frame but that there is also potential for transformation and/or extension of master frames. Thus, this theoretical perspective once again resonates with Gubrium and Holstein’s analytic of interpretive practice: both approaches emphasize the reflexive relationship of discourse-in-practice and discursive practices.

Thus, the combination of Gubrium and Holstein’s (1999) interpretive practice analytic and multi-faceted theoretical framework proved insightful to my examination of Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades. My analyses were simultaneously sensitized to how prostitution was being constructed as a social problem within the discursive practices of the separate crusades and also to the broader contextual features that impacted what was being constituted in the anti-prostitution discourses-in-practice. Furthermore, I explored the reflexive relationship of the discursive practices and discourses-in-practice embedded in these anti-prostitution crusades. Through the analytic bracketing of discursive practice and discourse-in-practice and simultaneous comparing/contrasting of these analytics, I considered how the broader historical and social context of the Progressive Era shaped the contours of the crusaders’ claims and how these claims reproduced, reflected, and/or challenged the Progressive-Era discourses.

Methodologically, I used the extant secondary literature on Progressive-Era social reform to glean the larger discourses. I subsequently analyzed primary historical sources of Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades, simultaneously examining the discourse-in-practice and the discursive practices embedded in the rhetorical features of the data. In conclusion, the analytic of interpretive practice both methodologically and theoretically guided and subsequently strengthened my empirical analyses.

Research Setting and Time Frame

Rather than analyze the national Progressive-Era anti-prostitution movement, I limited my examination to the separate crusades’ representations in Chicago. As the research literature proclaims (Lubove 1962; Anderson 1974), Chicago played a key role
in the anti-prostitution movement during the Progressive Era. It was the first city to officially sponsor a municipal vice investigation, and the report of the Vice Commission of Chicago (abbreviated throughout as VCC) influenced city and state vice commissions across the country. Chicago was also among the first cities to end the policy of tolerating prostitution in red-light districts. Likewise, Progressive-Era Chicago was a hotbed of social reform activity—the social justice movement, municipal reform, and evangelical Christianity reforms thrived there. Furthermore, influential reform organizations, such as Jane Addams’s Hull House, Graham Taylor’s Chicago Commons, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, the Chicago School of Sociology, and Rev. Ernest A. Bell’s Midnight Mission, called Chicago home. Additionally, Progressive-Era Chicago represented a microcosm of the larger national anti-prostitution movement (Anderson 1974). It appears that all aspects of the national-level movement were represented in Chicago—“social hygienists,” social settlement reformers, vice commission investigators, and crusaders against the “white slave traffic” were all voicing their claims about the prostitution in Chicago. Consequently, focusing on Chicago provided exemplary analyses of the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades.

Additionally, rather than examine the entire Progressive Era, I limited my analyses to activities between the years of 1907 and 1915. Although Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades occurred both before 1907 and after 1915, the secondary literature denotes this time period as including the most vehement and fervent efforts, both on the local and national level (Lubove 1964; Anderson 1974; Meyerowitz 1988). Also, as Anderson (1974) illuminates, the ardent agitation against Chicago’s prostitution problem was instigated by George Kibbe Turner’s exposé on Chicago’s organized vice, which was published in McClure’s Magazine in 1907. Subsequently, white slavery narratives and prosecutions related to the white slave traffic, the rigorous VCC investigation published in 1911, and investigations by other organizations such as the Immigrants’ Protective League, the Juvenile Protection Association, and Jane Addams’s Hull House followed suit—marking this time period as prolific for anti-prostitution sentiment and activism. Thus, restricting my examinations to this time frame was analytically justifiable. Furthermore, although anti-prostitution efforts extended beyond the United States’ entry
into World War I in 1917, bracketing my analyses to 1915 was analytically arguable. As the United States’ involvement in World War I erupted in 1917, suddenly the prostitute was no longer a helpless victim in need of protection: she was a vector of disease that threatened to weaken the moral and physical strength of the troops (Brandt 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988). Consequently, while a social justice frame dominated the rhetoric of the crusaders’ pre-war claims, the social control frame and social hygiene concerns prevailed after U.S. entry into the war. Thus, the predominant victim construction was transitory. However, while fleeting, it embodied the Progressive reformers’ optimism and activism: in the face of social injustice, society had the power, the drive, and the duty to obliterate this blight upon greater humanity.

Data Selection and Chapter Organization

My choice of primary data sources and chapter organization were primarily guided by the secondary literature and by my multi-faceted theoretical framework. I will discuss each chapter separately, but I wish presently to address my overall data selection and organizational scheme.

Data Selection

I did not examine the entirety of available resources regarding anti-prostitution crusades in Chicago but rather sampled resources deemed relevant and representative for my rhetorical analyses. Drawing from the secondary literature, I gleaned who appeared to be the primary actors and organizations involved in Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusades and thus limited my data selection to claims made by these persons and/or organizations, attempting to represent all the different reformers who were most visible in the anti-prostitution crusades. Within the selected reformers, drawing from the extant literature I selected their paramount works and excluded works that were redundant of these principal works. I also limited my data selection to “public” materials, such as organizational publications and reports, published volumes, pamphlets, and journal articles, and excluded “private” materials, such as private letters and manuscripts; I deemed this selection strategy analytically warranted, as my primary focus was how the
crusaders constructed prostitution to persuade a public audience to take action against the social problem. For these same reasons, I excluded criminal court and related criminal justice institutions records. While I included for my analyses various primary sources from newspaper, magazine, and journal articles that were written by specific reformers, I excluded secondary source materials from these periodicals. Lastly, while some of the selected materials were published after my established time frame of 1907-1915, I included them due to the reported activities’ occurrence during the designated time frame.

To obtain specific sources of data, I took various approaches. When reviewing the extant literature regarding Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusaders in Chicago, I noted specific sources that were referenced and obtained those sources when possible. Some of these sources were available in published books that I either obtained from Purdue’s Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education (HSSE) library collections or via interlibrary loan, including the following: Rev. Bell’s (1910) collection, *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls, or War on the White Slave Trade*, which contained several individual essays by various reformers as well as by Rev. Bell himself; Roe’s ([1911] 1979) collection, *The Great War on White Slavery, or Fighting for the Protection of Our Girls*, which contained mostly presentations of white slavery cases prosecuted by Roe but also included a few individual essays by other reformers; Addams’s books, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (1912a) and *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1930); the collection, *Speeches, Addresses and Letters of Louise de Koven Bowen* (1937); Breckinridge and Abbott’s ([1912] 1970) *The Delinquent Child and the Home*; Abbott’s (1917) *The Immigrant and the Community*; Healy’s (1929) *The Individual Delinquent: A Text-Book of Diagnosis and Prognosis for All Concerned in Understanding Offenders*; Thomas’s ([1923] 1967) *The Unadjusted Girl, With Cases and Standpoint for Behavior Analysis*; and the VCC’s (1911) report, *The Social Evil in Chicago: A Study of Existing Conditions with Recommendations by the Vice Commission of Chicago*. I also obtained various periodical articles that were referenced in the extant literature, including articles by Turner (1907), Roe (1912), Healy (1913), and Sumner (1913).

Lastly, I browsed various manuscript collections at sites in Chicago that committee member Anne Knupfer suggested might contain relevant data sources. At the Chicago Historical Society, I browsed various manuscript collections and obtained several sources from the Ernest Bell Papers collection, the Clifford Barnes Papers collection, as well as the works by Zimmerman (1908, 1912). At the Newberry Library, I browsed the Graham Taylor Manuscripts collection, from which I obtained the various C15 annual reports and pamphlets as well as a CSSH pamphlet. Lastly, I browsed some manuscript collections in the University of Chicago Regenstein Library’s Special Collections.

**Chapter Organization**

Drawing from my synopsis presented in Chapter One of the primary actors and organizations involved in the Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution crusade, I organized the subsequent analytical chapters Three through Six accordingly. I first grouped the actors and/or organizations that appeared substantively affiliated—be it by
belonging to the same organizations, having analogous primary interests, representing parallel professions, and/or employing similar claims-making styles and/or rhetorical strategies. Thus, I constructed the following three groups—the crusaders against white slavery, those battling vice, and the Hull House women—to organize my analyses. However, these groupings, while based on these aforementioned similarities, should not be interpreted as rigid demarcations; many of the crusaders crossed these boundaries. As detailed in my synopses of the major actors in the Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusades, several crusaders were involved in various different organizations, some of which cross the boundaries of the separate groups that I constructed for my analyses. Therefore, while for organizational purposes I have constructed these three groups, I will discuss the boundary crossing by crusaders. Additionally, I must reiterate that my groupings were not arbitrary: As previously mentioned I based these groupings on the crusaders’ similarities in organization memberships, their interests, and their anticipated similarities in rhetorical features. However, throughout my analyses it became apparent that those crusaders crossing these boundaries perhaps had distinct influences upon the rhetorical features of the claims—a facet to which I devote discussion in my concluding chapter.

Upon grouping crusaders in separate chapters, I then arranged the chapters to approximate the chronological history of the reform efforts launched between the years 1907 and 1915. My multi-faceted theoretical framework also guided my organization of the analytical chapters. Chapters Three through Five focus on the claims-makers’ rhetorical strategies—primarily sensitized by Best (1987, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1990), Loseke (1993), Loseke and Fawcett (1995), and Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical frameworks. Chapter Three explores the claims made by various Chicago crusaders against the white slavery traffic, the majority of which were contained in Rev. Ernest A. Bell’s (1910) collection, *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls, or War on the White Slave Trade*, and Clifford Roe’s ([1911] 1979) collection, *The Great War on White Slavery, or Fighting for the Protection of Our Girls*, and pamphlets from the Ernest Bell Papers. Chapter Four examines the claims made within the Vice Commission of Chicago (VCC) report and by individual members of the Commission, including William Healy, W. I.
Thomas, and Graham Taylor, as well as those offered by the Committee of Fifteen (C15) in annual reports and other publications and a pamphlet by the Chicago Society for Social Hygiene (CSSH). Chapter Five analyzes the anti-prostitution claims made by five women social reformers—Jane Addams of Hull House, Louise de Koven Bowen of the Juvenile Protective Association (JPA), Grace Abbott of the Immigrants’ Protective League (IPL), and Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy—who resided at and/or were strongly affiliated with the Hull House settlement in the years 1907 through 1915 and either directly or indirectly addressed the problem of prostitution.

Lastly, in Chapter Six I explore the continuity and disjuncture between the crusaders’ claims, considering how broader discourses, values and interests, boundary crossing, and perceived audiences similarly and differentially shaped their claims. I then discuss the master frames (Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Benford and Snow 2000) evidenced in the crusaders’ claims, including the following: injustice frame, social duty frame, social control frame, and rights frame. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of my contributions to the extant literature regarding Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades and social constructionist frameworks, and then consider the limitations of my research and offer suggestions for future research in this area.
CHAPTER THREE: CRUSADERS AGAINST “WHITE SLAVERY”

Introduction

The White Slavery Crusade in Chicago

As the prolific narratives regarding Chicago’s white slavery traffic illustrate, and as the research literature deduces (Rosen 1982; Hobson 1987; Linehan 1991), Chicagoans’ involvement in the crusade against the white slavery traffic during the first decades of the 20th century was globally unprecedented. As detailed in Chapter One, those involved in Chicago’s crusade against white slavery came from varied backgrounds, including ministers and missionaries, district and state attorneys, physicians, education administrators, and women reformers. Likewise, Chicago’s crusaders were not dominated by a particular gender: women and men alike took up arms against the white slave traffic.

The research literature continuously suggests that the white slave narratives had essentially two reoccurring thematic patterns (Lubove 1964; Feldman 1967; Anderson 1974; Connelly 1980; Rosen 1982; D’Emilio & Freedman 1988; Linehan 1991). First, all prostitutes were portrayed as “innocent victims” who were duped into “the life” by conniving profiteers. Secondly, the procurers of white slaves were disproportionately deemed foreigners (typically Eastern or Southern European, and often Jewish) who victimized rural and immigrant girls who were new to the city. Likewise, as Linehan (1991) suggests,

[T]he decline of rural America, uncontrolled immigration, government corruption, the venality of big business, and the proper place for women all could be challenged within the framework of the white slave narrative. (P. 155)
Through often emotional and plausibly sensationalized appeals, the separate white slavery narratives that surfaced in Chicago fueled the flame of Progressive-Era Chicago’s anti-prostitution movement.

**Analysis**

Best’s (1987, 1990) grounds, warrants, conclusions, and his considerations of the rhetorics of rectitude and/or rationality primarily guided the following analyses. These analyses were also complemented by elements of Loseke (1992, 1993) and Loseke and Fawcett’s (1995) analytics of people-types and moral-worthiness, and Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) framework of rhetorical idioms, motifs, and claims-making styles.

**Grounds**

In the claims made by the crusaders against white slavery, the grounds (Best 1987) of their rhetorical arguments manifested in three different types: definitions, estimates, and typifying examples.

**Definitions**

Most of the crusaders defined a “white slave” as one who was a slave in the strictest sense—entrapped and forced into prostitution against her will. For example, Sims (1910a) was explicit in his definition of a “white slave”:

> The characteristic which distinguishes the white slave traffic from immorality in general is that the women who are victims of the traffic are forced unwillingly to live an immoral life. The term “white slave” includes only those women and girls who are actually slaves—those women who are owned and held as property and chattels—whose lives are lives of involuntary servitude. (P. 14)

The illustration adorning the cover of Bell’s (1910) treatise—*Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls, or War on the White Slave Trade*—also attested to the imprisonment of young girls as white slaves: The doe-eyed innocence of the young girl clasping her hands in despair and raising a desperate prayer to the sky as a man leers in the background is particularly dramatic and thus sympathy evoking (Fig. 1).
Figure 1. The White Slave. Reprinted from E. A. Bell, 1910, *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls*, cover and facing page 146.
Likewise, Rev. Bell (1910) and Sims (1910b) were adamant in assuring their audience that these women were indeed slaves:

I am asked to say whether the unfortunate girls in these places are slaves in the sense that they cannot get away. My answer to that must depend upon your interpretation of “can not.”

To walk out on a winter’s day into the streets of Chicago, with nothing with which to buy a meal and no shelter and no friend under the wide, pitiless sky, is a heroic course to which some resolute Spartan matron might be driven in protection of her virtue, but it’s a course which can hardly be expected from a mistreated, deluded, ignorant, disgraced, modern American girl…. (Bell 1910:239, 40)

Let me make it entirely clear that the white slave is an actual prisoner. She is under the most constant surveillance, both by the keeper to whom she is “let” and by the procurer who owns her. Not until she has lost all possible desire to escape is she given any liberty. (Sims 1910b:65)

However, Roe (1912) implied that even if a women became a prostitute of her own free will, she should still be considered a white slave if she was detained under slave-like conditions: “They are procured into disreputable lives with or without their consent, and they are held slaves by the conditions which surround them” (p. 2).

Some of the crusaders were explicit in noting that the “white slavery” included white women only, while some defined it more broadly. As Rev. Bell (1910) declared, “by the white slave trade is meant commerce in white women and girls for wicked purposes” (p. 19). Likewise, Sims (1910a) stated, “The white slave trade may be said to be the business of securing white women and of selling them or exploiting them for immoral purposes” (p. 14). In contrast, Roe defined “white slavery traffic” as not limited to only white women:

The term white slavery, perhaps, is a misnomer, and not really descriptive, since the traffic reaches to every race and color, originating in Europe, where its victims are white…. (Roe 1912:1)

The phrase, white slave traffic, is a misnomer, for there is a traffic in yellow and black women and girls, as well as in white girls. However, the term has become so widely and extensively used that it seems futile to ever change it. (Roe [1911] 1979:97)

This signification of prostitution as white slavery may be interpreted as a reorientation device that was integral to the claims-making success of these crusaders.
By using the connotation of slavery as a rhetorical strategy, the crusaders constructed nearly all the women involved in prostitution as blameless victims of evil men and women—as girls unwittingly sold into sexual slavery by manipulative white slavers. Similarly, by depicting the prostitutes as sexual slaves entrapped and kept like prisoners, the crusaders construct the women as having no choice in the matter: they did not choose to be prostitutes but were forced. Consequently, similar to Loseke’s (1992) findings about abused women, this construction of their lack of choice reinforces their blamelessness and thus their deserving sympathy and aid in escaping the life.

Likewise, the white slave definition may have been used to invoke images of the enslavement of blacks. Thus, drawing on its presumably unjust practice and subsequent abolition, the white slave definition constructs prostitution as analogous to black slavery and therefore worthy of similar reform efforts. More direct analogies of white slavery to black slavery were present; I will examine these further in my discussion of the warrants present in the crusaders’ claims.

Roe’s (1912; [1911] 1979) inclusion of “yellow and black women and girls” in the “white” slave traffic is interesting, as it may act as a reorientation of white slavery to be more inclusive. Likewise, it may be read as a domain statement—increasing the domain of white slavery. In contrast, the other crusaders limited the domain of white slavery to only include white women and girls. The latter’s domain limitation and the former’s domain expansion perhaps could have been strategic. For example, by limiting their definition of white slavery to white women and girls, these crusaders perhaps wished to appeal to their predominantly white audience. In contrast, Roe perhaps wished to expand the domain of white slavery to increase the perceived magnitude of the problem. However, while Roe’s insistence that the white slave traffic included other than white women and girls, his persistence in using the nomenclature reinforces the notion that the enslavement of white women and girls was of primary concern.

When I address the warrants implicitly produced in these claims, I will further analyze this rhetorical strategy. However, it is important to note that this reconstruction of the majority of prostitutes to white slaves and thus blameless victims acted as a reorientation of the definition of the prostitution—largely casting the prostitutes as the
“victims” and thus “sympathy-worthy” rather than “victimizers” and thus “condemnation-worthy” (Loseke 1993).

In addition to constructing the domain of those victimized by white slave traders, the crusaders also made domain statements regarding the victimizers—who were the white slave traders. This domain statement was at times illustrated through broad declarations that “foreigners” were largely involved in the white slave trade. For example, Sims (1910), echoed by Dedrick (1910), pinpointed foreigners’ particular role in this problem, highlighting that ice cream parlors and fruit stores run by “foreigners” were “often a recruiting station, and a feeder for the ‘white slave traffic’” (Sims 1910:71). Likewise, Sims (1910) declared that many white slave traders were “recruited from the scum of the criminal classes of Europe” (p. 15-16). Zimmerman (1912) similarly pos ed that the “thousands of our younger men” involved in the white slave traffic were “usually those of foreign birth or the immediate sons of foreigners” (p. 36).

Moreover, various crusaders declared that specific immigrant groups and/or foreign nations were disproportionately involved in the white slave trade. Turner (1907) avowed that “largely Russian Jews” (p. 581) were responsible for the prostitution problem in Chicago. Other crusaders charged various other European as well as Asian countries as key participants in the international white slave traffic. Rev. Bell (1910) stated, “Many [white slave traders] are Jews, many are Italians, and Sicilians, some are Austrians, Germans, English, Americans, Greeks. But it is Paris that has made vice a fine art” (p. 26). Roe (1910a; [1911] 1979) similarly implicated the French, Jews of Eastern Europe and Russia, and Italians.

As these excerpts illustrate, various crusaders did directly accuse immigrants/foreigners as playing a significant role in the white slavery problem—some offering explicitly disparaging representations of these immigrant/foreign groups while others merely stating their involvement in white slavery. However, some crusaders were apt to claim that “Americans” as well as various nations/groups played their part in the white slavery problem as well, as the following excerpts illustrate:

The profitable and protected business of exploiting girls for immoral resorts soon attracted hosts of others from many races. American bred boys, men and women, ever on
the alert for making money soon grasped the idea that this was an easy way of acquiring an income….

It should be clearly understood that girl slavery is not a Jewish problem alone, neither is it a French nor an Italian problem. It is a problem for every good citizen in every country to solve. Jews and Gentiles alike have contributed to the great army of panders which now floods the entire earth. (Roe [1911] 1979:100, 102)

American traders of equal infamy, to the shame of the American name, have stocked Asiatic cities with American girls. (Bell 1910:260)

Thus, some of the crusaders constructed a broader domain of those responsible for the white slavery problem—attempting to establish that this problem was not limited to a particular color or creed. However, the substantial focus on particular immigrant/foreign groups’ involvement in the problem essentially countered this domain expansion.

Estimates

Incidence estimates were prevalent in the crusaders claims. Often the crusaders would cite “official” data obtained from police sources or the Vice Commission investigations, thus attesting to the validity of their argument by supporting their claims with official sources. These estimates were often offered as concrete figures, as the following excerpts illustrate:

In Twenty-second Street Red Light district, by police enumeration a few months ago, there were 1,100 girls living lives of prostitution, farther South, 1,200, making a total of 2,300. (Dedrick 1910:102-103)

The Vice Commission found 1,020 immoral resorts and about 5,000 lost women and girls. The commission estimated the profits of vice in Chicago at $15,000,000 a year. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.e)

…and at the end of that time twenty-two thousand pure young girls…must march out into this great soul market to take the place of the broken wretches…. (Zimmerman 1908:10)

Most of the crusaders, however, also presented general and often vague estimates about the white slavery problem:

Tens of thousands of Chicago’s young men have crowded the haunts of shame—without shame. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.e)
...[A] system which controls and ruins hundreds of thousands of women in our midst every year and which requires a constant sacrifice of more than seventy thousand young girls annually to feed its death and disease dealing machinery. (Zimmerman 1912:4-5)

While Sims estimates were also vague, he asserted that a true number of those ensnared in white slavery could never be gauged. However, he did counter this by saying that what figures were available were, in his opinion, a “conservative guess,” thus implying that the estimates may have been in fact understated and thus that the problem was larger than it might appear:

The evidence obtained from questioning some 250 girls taken within the last four weeks in Chicago houses of ill repute leads me to believe that not fewer than fifteen thousand girls have been imported into this country in the last year as white slaves. Of course this is only a guess—an approximate—it could be nothing else—but my own personal belief is that it is a conservative guess and well within the facts as to numbers. (CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908)

Similarly, while Roe offered some comparably concrete incidence estimates, when addressing the ability to discern how many women engaged in prostitution voluntarily versus those “enslaved” he subsequently acknowledged that a concrete number could not be ascertained:

However, all the unfortunates and outcasts of society living in either palaces or dens of vice are not slaves. Neither are all these immoral inmates bought and sold at the inception of their degrading careers. But many are marketed by dealers in vice. How many? No one can answer except to hazard a guess…. If it could be determined just how many poor creatures of circumstance or unbridled passion seek dissolute lives of their own free will, then it could be told whether those who wantonly made up the supply were equal to the demand. However, as to this it is difficult, if not quite impossible, to obtain figures. Therefore one must be content to know that evidently the voluntary supply is not sufficient to meet the demand…. (Roe [1911] 1979:169-170)

Interestingly, Roe in this statement did at least admit that some “poor creatures of circumstance or unbridled passion” willfully chose to be prostitutes, thus countering the construction that all prostitutes were “white slaves.” However, he then countered this by adding that “evidently the voluntary supply is not sufficient to meet the demand,” thus implying that the majority of prostitutes were in fact white slaves.
Likewise, perhaps attempting to counter the notion that the white slave problem was sensationalized and over-inflated, Roe emphasized that exaggeration and “fanciful figures” regarding white slavery were detrimental to the public’s acceptance of the “enormity” of this problem, and that “conservative and sane statements” were the proper route:

It behooves one to deal not with fanciful figures but rather with facts as one finds them in studying the white slave market….

In giving statistics, figures and proportions, if they must be stated, it is better that these should be understated than overestimated, for only by conservative and sane statements will the great mass of the people be aroused to the enormity of this atrocious traffic. (Roe [1911] 1979:170)

Similarly, George Kibbe Turner (1907) consistently implied through his phrasing that many “official” estimates were understated, thus insinuating that the problem was much worse than the known estimates:

The gross revenues from this business [prostitution] in Chicago, in 1906, were $20,000,000—and probably more. There are at least ten thousand professional prostitutes. (P. 580-581)

There are two hundred and ninety-two of these houses known and recorded in Chicago—with a capacity of ten thousand rooms…The gross receipts of these enterprises cannot be less than four million dollars a year; they are probably five million. The total amount expended there cannot be less than eight million dollars; it is probably ten million. (P. 581)

Surprisingly, growth estimates were not very common in the crusaders’ claims, the following excerpts illustrating some that were presented:

The business of the small places, the flats, cannot be estimated, but it is very large and is growing constantly…. (Turner 1907:581)

We…believe that the time for prudery and concealment is past and that honest men and women should know what there is to know about this thoroughly organized, solidly financed system of White Slavery flourishing and growing in America today. (Zimmerman 1912:4-5)

Range claims, however, were comparably more prevalent in the crusaders’ claims. Specifically, an indiscriminate range was often attested, wherein it was implied that no
one was safe from the white slavery traffic: all daughters were in danger of being entrapped by white slavers; all sons could be lured into the vice district to taste of forbidden fruit; all mothers and fathers could lose their daughters/sons at any minute to this great menace. Likewise, implicit in these range claims were that not only was any person vulnerable to white slavery but any place—be it the city, the suburbs, or the country, as the following excerpts illustrate:

Joe is not your son. Anna is not your daughter. But your Arthur and your Mabel are not safe while such appalling conditions are permitted to exist in our cities. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.k)

In this day and age of the world no young girl is safe! And all young girls who are not surrounded by the alert, constant and intelligent protection of those who love them unselfishly are in imminent and deadly peril. (Amigh 1910:119)

YOU may think that this educational campaign for better manhood and womanhood does not concern YOU, but it does, and that very closely. There is not a life that this social evil does not menace. There is not a daughter, or a sister, who may not be in danger. (Roe [1911] 1979:5-6)

…[W]hile those who sold them just a few years before go out in their diamonds and fine linen and their great automobiles to buy up more girls (it might be your daughter—father, mother—or it might be mine)…. (Zimmerman 1908:7-8)

Dedrick and Young in their range claims explicitly stress that no “class” of girls could be considered untouchable by the white slave traffic:

Many ask: “Who are these girls who go astray?”—having an idea that it is only the ignorant class who are down in sin. It is not so, and let me undeceive everyone on this point, though many, many of the ignorant class do go astray also. Satan is claiming our best, our VERY best girls of education, refinement, advantages and religious training. (Dedrick 1910:100)

Groups of children in the suburbs, where parents fancy their children safe, have been found going together to some unused house or barn for evil purposes. This is by no means uncommon and occurs among all classes. (Young [1911] 1979:433)

Similarly, an illustration in Roe’s ([1911] 1979) exposé dramatically depicts the indiscriminate range of those vulnerable to white slavery: “Sixty Thousand White
Slaves” plummet to their graves per year while an infinite queue of innocent “daughter[s]” await to replace the fallen (Fig. 2).
Figure 2. Indiscriminate Range of White Slavery Victims. Reprinted from C. G. Roe, [1911] 1979, *The Great War on White Slavery*, facing page 49.
Thus, crusaders’ claims attempted to construct an indiscriminate range for the vulnerability to white slavery. However, several crusaders argued that immigrant and “country” girls were particularly susceptible to the wiles of the white slave trader. Consequently, although they attempted to create an indiscriminate range in which anyone could be ensnared by white slavery, by subsequently devoting their claims to these particular groups they constructed a more limited range of those whom were vulnerable to the social problem. Nevertheless, to invoke fear for one’s own and subsequent investment in ameliorating the white slave problem, that anyone could be touched by white slavery was still claimed.

Typifying Examples

Typifying examples were extremely abundant in the white slavery crusader’s claims. As a rhetorical strategy, these typifying examples aimed to evoke sympathy from the audience and promote their empathy for the “victims” of white slavery (Best 1987). Likewise, they often drew on broader moral discourses such as those delineated by Loseke (1992) and Loseke and Fawcett (1995) to assert the victim’s innocence. For example, the following case presented by Bell highlighted the girl’s salvation through Christianity:

I was born in an infidel home, money was my god, my only delight beautiful clothing. I ran away from home at the age of fifteen, entering on a life of shame that I might have a life of ease and the beautiful dresses I coveted…. Not until the care of a precious young sister was thrown upon me, was my sleeping soul touched and the dormant sense of good aroused to protect her from the life of sin into which I had fallen. I placed her in a Christian home where nothing of my life was known…. Every day the contrast became more and more God’s instrument to draw me from the depth of sin into paths of peace and into His marvelous light. Finally, I could no longer endure going from my dear sister, who trusted me so sincerely, back to the horrors of a house of ill-fame…. So, not knowing where to turn or what to do, I went to a Christian “Home,” where erring women were taken in…. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.i)

This case constructs the initial moral depravity of the girl, her delight in superficial things. However, we see her “sleeping soul” awakened by the need to care for her sister and the Christian influences of her sister’s caretakers. Subsequently, her seeking refuge in the Lord establishes her morality.
A pamphlet produced and distributed by the Illinois Vigilance Association included several cases of girls’ entrapment into white slavery. The following tale of “three village girls” described the circumstances of their entrapment and offered testimony of their good moral upbringing and motivation for honorable work:

These cases involve three girls who came to Chicago from Nekoosa, Wisconsin, in April, 1911, to find employment. One of them, Minnie Brown, 18 years of age, was employed as seamstress in Forest Park; her sister, Margaret, 16 years of age, was employed as a domestic, and their cousin, Carmen Henkel, found a position with the Western Electric Company…. Firey [a procurer] became acquainted with Minnie Brown at Forest Park, and took her for a joy ride and then persuaded her to stay with him at the Jackson flat. She was an inmate there for five weeks and testified that she was never permitted to leave the place except in the company of Inez [a madam] or Fred Firey. On two occasions she was stripped and beaten for slight infractions of the so-called rules of the house…. Carmen was later procured to become an inmate of the same place and was there when the flat was raided. Margaret Brown was procured by Firey to become and inmate of the resort…. Witnesses from Nekoosa, Wisconsin, testified that these three girls had received the ordinary training of village girls before coming to Chicago, and that they were members of the church and of the village choir…. Letters received from the girls and their friends indicate that they appreciate what was done for them and that they are making every effort to redeem themselves. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.c)

Again, broader moral discourses are drawn upon in this case example. Interestingly though, while these girls are constructed as victims of a white slave procurer, which would attest to their innocence, in the final statement Rev. Bell notes, “they are making every effort to redeem themselves,” thus implying they were guilty, sinful. This turn of phrase perhaps reveals the reverend’s belief that even if the girls were presumably entrapped in white slavery against their will, they still have sinned in the eyes of the Lord and must thus repent.

Similarly, the following case described by Dedrick attested to the victim’s Christian upbringing and her innocence:

An instance of this and the steps by which a girl travels downward is found in that of a very dear, sweet girl, brought up in a Christian home, whom I found recently. Trouble at home a year and a half ago and she left… She worked about a year with a prominent firm, then in a department store. Through illness, she lost her position…. Found her in the hospital, weak, but able to leave, but nowhere to go but to hotel life. I took her to friends and a happier girl you would seldom find, especially to receive a letter from mother telling her to come home. She could scarcely wait and her one cry was “to see
my mother.” …. Rescued just at the danger point, not a bad girl, but naturally innocent, unused to these hard experiences. (Dedrick 1910:114-115)

Again, the girl’s near downfall is explained by loss of her job, her weakness and desperation, her “hard experiences”—thus evoking empathy from the audience.

In contrast to these appeals to Christian sensibilities, the following case cited by Roe emphasized how the drudgeries of grueling work could exacerbate girls’ vulnerability to the white slave traffic:

Marie…was lured away in Paris from a Pension where she worked from five in the morning till seven at night, in general house-work. She was fifteen when she was working in this way. Her wages would amount to about five dollars a month, in our money. She said that the work wore her out; and it was because the work was so hard and she had no pleasures and no money or time for them, that she went away with the people who afterward proved to be international white slave traders. (Roe [1911] 1979:291)

Lastly, Zimmerman related the following case, which is particularly sympathy evoking:

“…I saw my father bayoneted to the earth by Russian soldiers because he was a Jew. I saw my mother work over the washtub until her hands were bloody that I and my little brother might have bread and my virtue be protected. One day a man came to our house…saying he was agent for a steamship company and that he had good work in America for many girls, where they could earn as much in one month as they could earn in two years in Russia. My heart leaped with joy…. I left all—my mother, my brother. I came to America. Soon I could send for them, for I was strong and could work—work day and night…. Here [Chicago] I was taken from the Polk Street Station to Armour Avenue where by force I was ruined. I was there many months, sick and starving, and finally got out and crawled over to the West Side…but now I am dying and I want my mother.” (Zimmerman 1912:52-53)

This case example not only attests to the girl’s morality and innocence, but it draws on the immigrant dream of coming to America to build a better life for self and family—thus evoking sympathy for the girl’s courage and her noble feelings of responsibility toward her family.

Thus, these crusaders used typifying examples not only as means to grab their audience’s attention but also to promote the audience’s empathy toward those affected by the social problem of white slavery. Likewise, these typifying examples provided arenas
for asserting the morality and goodness of those victimized by white slave traffickers. Moreover, this strategy evoked the audience’s sympathy for the “victims”—facilitating the construction of “white slavery” as a social problem deserving of attention.

Rhetorics

This section presents the various rhetorics employed in the white slavery crusader’s claims, guided by Best’s (1987, 1990) notions of warrants and rhetorics of rationality and rectitude and Ibarra & Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical analytics. The following warrants figured heavily in the white slave crusaders’ claims: historical continuity with black slavery; value of children; blameless victims in need of protection; social factors as the primary cause of white slavery; value of civilization/social order; responsibility to confront white slavery; and “false modesty,” the double standard of sexuality, and the threat of venereal disease. Motifs (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993) were also abundant in the crusaders’ claims, with metaphors constructing white slavery and those responsible for it as savages and monsters, and war and hell/Satan/evil motifs peppering some of the crusaders’ claims.

Historical Continuity with Black Slavery

Not surprisingly, various crusaders made allusions to the injustices of the enslavement of blacks to incite action against the present white slavery problem:

No “white slave” need remain in slavery in this State of Abraham Lincoln who made the black slaves free. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.j)

Are we in Illinois, the State that sent Abraham Lincoln forth as leader in the conflict for freedom of the slaves of the south, going to let an evil, worse, yea, far worse than that ever was, or could be, exist and triumph, and not rise up in arms against it? (Dedrick 1910:98)

THIRTY-TWO PAGES OF STRIKING PICTURE showing the workings of the blackest slavery that has ever stained the human races. (Bell 1910:3)

[T]he foulest slavery the world has ever known… (Roe [1911] 1979:6)
It behooves the sons and daughters of the brave men who freed the black slaves to rise in another and holier crusade to free the white slaves from a bondage blacker and more damning than any the world has yet known. (Boynton 1910:404)

…[T]he white slave traffic which would, by contrast, make the Congo slave traders of the old days appear like Good Samaritans. (CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908)

I gradually learned the inside lines of the saddest story America has ever known since the black mothers of our Southland were torn from their black and white babies and with shrieks of agony and heartstrings bleeding and souls rent with blackened horror were sold to death on the plantations of Louisiana and Mississippi…. (Zimmerman 1908:7-8)

As these excerpts illustrate, several of these associations of white slavery to black slavery were invoked to demonstrate white slavery as being comparably worse and more atrocious than the enslavement of blacks. To speculate the reasons for this phenomenon, the sexual nature of white slavery was perhaps perceived as comparably more detestable than the enslavement of blacks for (primarily) labor purposes. Likewise, persisting Victorian constructions of women as asexual and the value placed upon women’s sexual purity by society perhaps made the crusaders envision their sexual enslavement as particularly abhorrent. Moreover, lingering racist sentiment of the superiority of whites and the inferiority of blacks perhaps prejudiced the crusaders’ beliefs that the enslavement of white women was necessarily far worse than the enslavement of blacks.

Value of Children

A warrant (Best 1987) often expressed in the crusaders’ claims was that of the “value of children,” which is congruent with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical idiom of *rhetoric of loss*, in which something “sacred” is seen as threatened by a social problem. This warrant was largely articulated in the persistent connotation of those victimized by white slavery as “girls.” Likewise, this warrant was portrayed through emotional testimonies of the girls and sometimes boys’ innocence and youth, as the following excerpts illustrate:

The money earned by these night businesses…much of it tainted, and some of it dripping red with the blood of immature, unprotected, or unguided young people 12 to 20 years of age. These businesses literally conspire for the destruction of young people…. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.f)
And in this lies the revolting side of the situation. On the one hand the victims, pure, innocent, unsuspecting, trusting young girls—not a few of them mere children. On the other hand, the white slave trader, low, vile, depraved and cunning—organically a criminal. (Sims 1910a:16)

It is girls whose ages are from 13 to 22 who are going astray, even as young as 9 years; deceived, betrayed, led away, through wiles of abominable men, whose business is to traffic in girls. (Dedrick 1910:102)

There is nothing in the world of such priceless value to a father or a mother as the honor, the purity, the good character of a daughter.... And still there are many thousands of parents entrusted by Providence with the safe-keeping of this priceless treasure who are themselves in the position of discharging that great responsibility with closed eyes, with dull ears and with a childish belief that there is no real peril threatening the safety of their daughters! (Amigh 1910:118)

We are making...a fight for the girlhood and the boyhood of this and other lands: a fight for the children—for the little girl who is growing up—the little boy. (Zimmerman 1912:87-88)

Blameless Victims in Need of Protection

In close conjunction with the “value of children” warrant, that those involved in the white slavery were largely “blameless victims in need of protection” was also prevalent in the crusaders’ claims. Likewise, this warrant invokes Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical idiom of rhetoric of unreason, wherein white slave traders are constructed as manipulating and actively conspiring to entrap their victims. This warrant figured heavily in claims of the entrapment of girls into the white slave trade, wherein the girls were portrayed as innocents falling victim to the snares of white slavery all around them:

BLAMELESS GIRLS ENSNARED IN CHICAGO...blameless Chicago virgins have been lured to apartments on Wabash avenue, under the shadow of churches of cathedral importance, and then sold into the adjacent white slave market—the illegal red light district. (Bell 1910:278-9)

In other words, these watchers for human prey scan the emigrants as they come down the gang plank of a vessel which has just arrived and “spot” the girls who are unaccompanied by fathers, mothers, brothers or relatives to protect them. (CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908)

A HIDDEN DANGER. The danger begins the moment a girl leaves the protection of Home and Mother. (Dedrick 1910:108)
The dragnets of the inhuman men and women who ply this terrible trade are spread day and night and are manipulated with a skill and precision which ought to strike terror to the heart of every careless or indifferent parent. The wonder is not that so many are caught in this net, but that they escape! (Amigh 1910:120)

Almost all positions alluring to young girls have been used to catch them in the great net these procurers have set for them. (Roe 1910b:169)

Various crusaders pinpointed “country” girls as being especially susceptible to the wiles of the white slavers, as the following excerpts illustrate:

In view of what I have learned in the course of the recent investigation and prosecution of the “white slave” traffic, I can say, in all sincerity, that if I lived in the country and had a young daughter I would go any length of hardship and privation myself rather than allow her to go into the city to work or to study…. The best and the surest way for parents of girls in the country to protect them from the clutches of the “white slaver” is to keep them in the country. (Sims 1910b:70-71)

…[O]ur country girls are in more danger from white slave traders than city girls…. The country girl is more open to the enticements of city life, being more truthful, perfectly innocent and unsuspecting of those whose business it is to seek their prey from girls of this class. (Dedrick 1910:105)

Chicago detectives investigating the white slave traffic claim that the small towns and villages afford the most lucrative fields for men and women engaged in the business of pandering girls. (Roe [1911] 1979:162-163)

Similarly, some crusaders claimed that white slave traders targeted immigrant girls. Sims proclaimed “the foreign girl is more hopelessly at their mercy” (CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908), and, to illustrate the dangers to immigrant girls, related an “awful narrative” of an Italian girl, “innocent and rarely attractive for a girl of her class, having the large, handsome eyes, the black hair and rich Olive skin of a typical Italian” (Sims 1910), accompanied by an illustration of her entrapment by “friends” who were in fact “two of the most brutal of all white slave traders” (Fig. 3).
“FRIENDS” MEETING EMIGRANT GIRL AT THE DOCK

“The girl was met at New York by two ‘friends’ who took her in charge. These ‘friends’ were two of the most brutal of all the white slave traders who are in the traffic.”

Foreign girls are more helplessly at the mercy of white slave hunters than girls at home. Every year thousands of girls arriving in America from Italy, Sweden, Germany, etc., are never heard of again.

Figure 3. Immigrant Girl as Blameless Victim. Reprinted from E. A. Bell, 1910, *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls*, facing page 18.
Social Factors as the Cause of White Slavery

In constructing those associated with white slavery as blameless victims, the crusaders had to necessarily claim something as to blame for their misfortunes. Consequently, the claims-makers recurrently constructed them as victims of various social factors that were beyond their personal control. For example, the crusaders claimed that various characteristics of the city exacerbated the white slavery problem. At times, the crusaders made general statements about the city; as Turner (1907) broadly admonishes, “The City—from scarlet Babylon to smoky Chicago—has always been the great marketplace of dissipation” (p. 576). Roe ([1911] 1979) illustrates a particularly dismal portrait of city life:

No, the picture [the procurer] paints does not show the tired, languid girls of the city, wearily wending their way homeward from the day’s work…hurrying to catch the car or the elevated train in the morning, the crowding and jostling of the men and women struggling to find a vacant seat as they ride to the center of din and noise; the pulling, jerking and hauling to be the first one out of the car…. At noon a quick lunch in a cheap dyspepsia factory, and then the grinding routine of the afternoon…. (P. 155-56)

Housing situations in the city, such as tenements and lodging or boarding houses, were often pinpointed as contributing to the prostitution problem. The crowding of tenement housing was admonished as providing too close of quarters where children were exposed to the nature of sexual relations at too early of an age. The crusaders were particularly wary of women’s boarding houses, which they viewed as permitting their residents’ too much freedom and not providing acceptable quarters for entertaining gentlemen callers:

One, two or perhaps three room tenements, in which the commonest decencies of life cannot be observed, are inevitable schools of vice. (Young [1911] 1979:434)

American wage-earning girls on the other hand present a different picture. While many of them find homes in private families or among friends, many others are rooming in houses where there is no one to look after them. Many of them have no sitting room in which to receive men friends and have to use their bedrooms for this purpose. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.d)
Another danger, and a serious one, is our lodging houses of today, many of which are houses of shame, hidden from public eye. Let a girl just coming to the city beware of these for in many, many instances, I am very sure, it is just such an existence, no home life.…

Boarding houses are not much of an improvement, though in many cases a little more home life. Another evil and serious danger, and only another of Satan’s waiting rooms, is the entertaining of gentlemen friends in her room—true, this little room is the only place she has—and here is one of the birthplaces to immorality and temptation constantly before her. (Dedrick 1910:109, 110)

The burgeoning offerings of commercialized recreations were also a favorite target of the crusaders, who argued white slave traffickers frequented these “shallow cheap amusements” (Roe [1911] 1979:156) in search of fresh victims. These various forms of commercial recreations were viewed as particularly dangerous because most girls frequented these places without chaperones and thus unprotected from the dangers that presumably abounded. Several of the crusaders held particular trepidations for the dance halls and saloons, where procurers trolled for victims—the presence of alcohol and access to nearby hotels further placing young girls’ virtue in jeopardy:

**DANCE HALLS AND WINE ROOMS**—More girls are procured from the dance halls and concert rooms with saloons attached than from any other single source. Very few of the halls are under proper regulation and they are constantly frequented by procurers. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.c)

One of the most fascinating allurements of city life to many a young girl is the dance-hall, which is truly the ante-room to hell itself. Here indeed, is the beginning of the white slave traffic in many instances. (Dedrick 1910:112)

An illustration in Bell’s (1910) collection provides a visual example of this warrant, portraying a man luring a hesitant young woman into a dance hall flanked by a “wine café” and hotel that rents rooms “by day or week”—foreshadowing the demise of this innocent young lady (Fig. 4).
Figure 4. Dance Hall as a Dangerous Amusement. Reprinted from E. A. Bell, 1910, *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls*, facing page 35.
Various other forms of commercialized recreations were denounced as well and for analogous reasons, including amusement parks, excursion boats, and nickel theaters (Amigh 1910; Bell 1910; CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.c; Dedrick 1910; Roe 1910b, [1911] 1979; Young [1911] 1979, Zimmerman 1912). Even such outwardly benign amusements as ice cream parlors and fruit and/or candy stores—namely those run by “foreigners”—were identified as places where white slavers trolled for victims:

One thing should be made very clear to the girl who comes up to the city, and that is that the ordinary ice cream parlor is very likely to be spider’s web for her entanglement…. Many evidences point to the conclusion that there is a kind of fellowship among these foreign proprietors of refreshment parlors which would make it entirely natural and convenient for the proprietor of a city establishment of this kind, who is entangled in the “white slave” trade, to establish relations with a man in the same business and of the same nationality in the country town. (Sims 1910b:71-72)

An illustration from Bell’s (1910) collection encapsulates the dangers of the ice cream parlor—a swarthy young man wiling an innocent young woman, with a “foreign” owner lurking in the background (Fig. 5).
Figure 5. Ice Cream Parlor as a Dangerous Amusement. Reprinted from E. A. Bell, 1910, *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls*, facing page 19.
Additionally, some crusaders noted that working women’s low wages and poor employment conditions in department stores and factories made them vulnerable to the temptation of prostitution and the wiles of white slave traders, as the following excerpts illustrate:

These places [dance halls and saloons] and the hotels cater to the demand for ruining young girls—especially the low-paid employees of department stores and factories, which furnish the majority of the English-speaking women in the profession in Chicago. (Turner 1907:581)

After conversing with many thousands of fallen women and misguided girls, I believe that the principal causes of their downfall are the following, in the order named: … 6. Insufficient wages in stores and factories…. (Bell 1910:246)

Fathers, mothers, did you ever stop and ask yourselves, how can these girls dress themselves the way they are required to nowadays in these stores and do it honorably on the salary that many of them receive? It will bear investigation. A serious cause for the downfall of many girls is the small wages which so-called Christians are paying, which is barely enough for mere existence. (Dedrick 1910:113)

The question of white slavery is economic as well as social. The condition of the working girl, the low salaries paid by employers, the desire for better clothes, and the great increase of the number of girls earning a livelihood contribute their share to the downfall of girls. (Roe 1910b:164)

Some crusaders also implicated corrupt policemen and politicians as exacerbating the white slavery problem, charging that these public officials took bribes and/or shares of profits in exchange for protecting white slavers from prosecution:

“Organization for Exploiting Savagery”—The addition of the police force completes the great organization for the exploitation of savagery in the City of Chicago. The dealer in dissipation, the ward boss, and the police official are its chief members…In doing this it consolidates every influence hostile to well-organized society, from the robber and prostitute to the corrupt police official, in a great body whose continual influence is to impair or break down civilization. (Turner 1907:590)

Does one for a moment believe that this white slave business could have grown to such importance if it had not been protected by officials who often maintain systems of blackmail, graft and tribute as revolting as they are dangerous to the general welfare of society? It is fairly safe to say that wherever houses of vice are operating in defiance of the laws, and most of them are so doing, some one is getting protection money. (Roe 1912:7)
The groups of men who chiefly carry it on [white slave trade] are cunning and in some way have secured political protection and as it is necessary for them to secure fresh material they have their agents in every country. (Henrotin [1911] 1979:93)

For this infamy of the sale of innocent girls for vice and the whole wider, deeper, fouler vice system is a part of governmental policy, not in New York and Chicago alone, but all over the Country, under Republican and Democratic administration. The very district attorney’s office that exposes there particular instances of crime is one of the strong pillars of the system of which the crime is only an outcropping. (Zimmerman 1912:33)

**Value of Civilization/Social Order**

Various crusaders eluded either explicitly or implicitly to a perceived breakdown in civilization/social order as key in the white slavery problem. Turner (1907) denounced cities, including Chicago, as dens of “savagery” where the necessary constraints for social order have failed, as the following excerpts illustrate:

> Why have the primary basic guarantees of civilization broken down in Chicago…. The answer can be simple and straightforward: because of the tremendous and elaborate organization—financial and political—for creating and attracting and protecting the criminal in Chicago….
> “The Great Business of Dissipation”—The criminal is a savage, nothing more nor less. Civilization builds up painfully our definite, orderly rules of life—work, marriage, the constant restraint of the gross and violent impulses of appetite. The criminal simply discards these laws and slides back again along the way we came up—into license, idleness, thieving, and violence. He merely lapses back into savagery. To understand the matter of crime in great cities, the first step is to measure the positive forces working continually to produce savagery there. (P. 575-76)

Various crusaders also noted a breakdown in family as contributing to the white slavery problem. Rev. Bell (1910) was particularly critical of “parental inefficiency” (p. 246), and Roe (1910b) offered similar accusations:

> After conversing with many thousands of fallen women and misguided girls, I believe that the principal causes of their downfall are the following, in the order named: 1. Parental inefficiency, through lack of character, knowledge or vigilance. (Bell 1910:246)

> No words of judge or moralist are too strong to condemn the procurer and his master, the divekeeper. But what must be the feelings of the father and mother who thoughtlessly leave their young daughters exposed to these serpents? A mother bird is more watchful of her chicks or a cat of her kittens…. 
But what must the father and mother of such a boy and the father and mother of such a girl, think of themselves and the way they have discharged their duty in bringing up their children? (Bell 1910:248)

We can only warn them [“young girls”] to be more cautious, to investigate carefully before going away from home with people they do not know. Fathers and mothers are too negligent in this regard, and through their laxity and carelessness they have allowed their daughters to be entrapped. (Roe 1910b:169)

Mothers and daughters have grown apart. Never before in the history of the world has it been quite so necessary for mothers to make extra efforts to hold their daughter close to them as it is today.…

In olden days mother and daughter sat by the fire and knitted and darned and sewed. Confidences were exchanged and mother and daughter knew each other intimately, while today quite often they are employed in offices, stores or factories.…

There should be a realization of modern conditions by mothers, and they should make greater advances to get closer to their daughters.… (Roe [1911] 1979:51-52)

Roe (1910b) also pointed to parents’ greedy social aspirations and shirking of their familial duties as exacerbating the white slavery problem:

…Mothers and fathers… Do not be too anxious to make money, or for higher position in the social life at the expense of your daughter. Do not be over ready to cast off the burden of supporting your family by sending your daughter out to learn a livelihood at an early age, lest the price you get be the price of a soul. (P. 173)

Responsibility to Confront White Slavery

Several of the crusaders invoked an appeal to a responsibility/duty for battling white slavery, which is substantively equivalent to Best’s (1987) rhetoric of rectitude, wherein “values of morality require that a problem receive attention” (p. 116).

This warrant was sometimes expressed through claiming a neglect of responsibility, as the following excerpts illustrate:

The sworn testimony showed a condition of affairs that would be a disgrace to the most ignorant, vicious and debased people. That such things are allowed in a republic where the people rule…is a sad commentary upon the average indifferance of the authorities and the people, which should be called criminal indifference. (Bell 1910:232-233)

…[T]hus women have at last put their false modesty aside and are doing their part to recognize their responsibility for the continuation of this blight on the family relationship, and this stigma on civilization. (Henrotin [1911] 1979:94)
Similarly, Roe and Zimmerman expressed this neglect of responsibility by impassioned appeals to American ideals of freedom/liberty:

What mockery it is to have in our harbor in New York the statue of Liberty with outstretched arms welcoming the foreign girl to the land of the free! How she must sneer at it and rebuke the country with such and emblematic monument at its very gate when she finds here a slavery whose chains bind the captive more securely than those in the country from which she has come! What a travesty to wrap the flag of America around our girls and extol virtue and purity, freedom and liberty, and then not raise a hand to protect our own girls who are being procured by white slave traders every day! (Roe 1910a:153)

…[W]e appeal to the mothers and fathers of America, in the name of God and the heartbroken mothers and fathers of other lands…to wipe from our flag the leprous blotch of shame which permits the importing into our Republic every year of thousands of helpless girls to be ground up in the murder mills of the segregated harlotry of such districts as the Twenty-second Street district of Chicago, for it was the blood-covered hand of that district that reached across the lands and seas and into that Russian home and tore from it little Gezie Bruvatsky and led her across the waters and under the very shadow of the Statue of Liberty itself…led her past the gates of Ellis Island, on past the Statues of Washington and Jefferson, of Lincoln and Grant, and into the burning fire of American public prostitution…. (Zimmerman 1912:55)

Often this warrant was expressed through a general claim that awakened public conscience and civic duty required people to take action against white slavery, as illustrated below:

The responsibility for a broad and systematic campaign of enlightenment rests with the religious and social agencies now existent in every community—the churches, the women’s clubs, the civic leagues and associations. The press, too, should give a reputable publicity and exert its influence directly and on educational lines, to the end that the public may know the gravity of the evil and its conditions. (CHS, EB, Box 6, September 1908)

Those who have consistently and honestly fought white slavery fully realize that to convict the slave traders is but to scratch at the surface of the problem. This has been but the first great task. The next is to arouse the public conscience to its duty. (Roe 1912:6)

This warrant sometimes manifested in an explicit reference to a “Christian” duty to confront the problem:

“Imperative Civic Duty”—Men are born with certain inalienable rights—and certain unshirkable duties…. Our work is primarily and always evangelistic. But incidentally and inevitably, as we battle with evil and seek to make better men, we must also contend
for better civic conditions. Christians who think they can neglect the public morals and evade civic responsibility, ought to reflect upon the ninth chapter of Ezekial, where terrible judgment is executed at the house of God because of indifference to civic evils. “If thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? And He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? And shall not He render to every man according to his works?”—Proverbs 24:12. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.f)

…Remember, the Master Himself allowed a fallen woman to wash His feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head. It was a fallen woman who was first to see the omissions and deficiencies of hospitality forgotten by others. Are not fallen women included within the scope of the Master’s great commission?

…Again, let me recall to your mind, Jesus Himself forgave and renewed repentant ones. Even when a woman had fallen to the depths of sin and degradation He still called her “woman.” (Dedrick 1910:99)

Rev. Boynton (1910) was explicit in describing a “pastor’s part” or duty in addressing the white slavery problem:

The man who is set to guard the moral interests of a community must go into the deeps and darks of his city. He must know first hand what the dangers to youth are, where the traps for girls and boys are set, what the bait used is, how the ruin is wrought and what the remedies are….

A Church ought to die fighting itself that refuses to give battle to the White Slave Traders! Shame on the minister and the Church that is indifferent under the revelations that are made every day showing to what depths the vile creatures of the red light districts have sunken to gain a little more of cruel gold! God will not hold guiltless men and women who, hearing the stifled cries of the enslaved, heed them not! (P. 401, 404)

Additionally, Roe (1912) made specific claims that, with the vote, women would be in a more-advantaged position to fulfill their civic duty to eradicate white slavery. Concurrently, he declares that women voters would not tolerate public officials’ ignoring the white slavery problem:

The vice problem has perplexed all ages and all peoples, but in the past men alone have ruled. Now that women are coming into their own right let us see what they may do toward the solution of this problem…. This is the political sore which women should help cure.

Mighty things are waiting to be accomplished, and these things women might help accomplish with their ballot. (P. 6-7, 10)

Various others involved in the fight against white slavery, who pinpointed inadequate knowledge about sexuality as a factor that exacerbated the problem, invoked
this warrant by arguing it was the duty of parents, teachers, physicians, and clergymen to educate their children about sexuality:

…[P]arents and teachers are morally bound to treat all questions of sex in the same, simple, straight-forward, truthful way that other life problems are treated.

Responsibility for the proper instruction of youth in all matters regarding sexual development and the care of the sexual apparatus, together with the great social problem of sexual right living, must in the nature of the case rest upon the shoulders of the parents. (Hall [1911] 1979:412)

The physicians, the clergymen and the laymen have all been awakened to a realization of our duties, at least, so far as education is concerned. It is up to us to see to it that all the boys and girls know something of the mystery of life that they may guard against the dangers and the temptations that confront them. (Mack 1910:296)

It seems to me that good people, pious fathers and mothers, who let their girls grow up and go out into the world without a word of real instruction that will protect them in such crises which may come in life to any woman, are not wholly innocent—I am tempted to say are frightfully guilty of the destruction of their own daughters…. (Bell 1910:238)

“False Modesty,” the Double Standard, and the Threat of Venereal Disease

While these may be interpreted as three separate warrants, they merit discussion in concert since they were often explicitly or implicitly intertwined in the claims. The warrant of “false modesty”—the failure to teach children and young adults about sexuality matters—was evinced in several of the white slave crusaders’ claims as a paramount factor that exacerbated the white slavery problem:

The time for prudishness, false modesty, indelicacy is over; too long has Satan been aided in his onward march in this way….

A TIMELY WARNING. Parents who do not believe in the warnings given on these lines but say, as many do, “Wait, time enough when they are older, then let them find out for themselves; experience is the best teacher,” should remember this: Ignorance is not innocence, and it is but the preface to the book of vice. (Dedrick 1910:101, 107)

Most American girls have too little knowledge of the world before marriage, and too much afterward. Knowledge of the right sort has been veiled too much with mystery both for the boys and the girls. Mothers and fathers have inherited affected prudery, false modesty and hypocritical innocence. Casting all these aside is the greatest step forward to better morals and cleaner citizenship which the public men and women and the progressive educators of our time have made. (Roe 1912:10)
Too long have we buried our heads in the sand; too long have we been silent on these great subjects; too long have we lied to our little ones, and thereby helped to bring about the destruction of so many of them. (Mack 1910:295)

It [“White Slave Traffic” and prostitution] has grown and fed on ignorance and silence. (Henrotin [1911] 1979:94)

Likewise, various crusaders argued that the double standard of sexuality—wherein men’s sexual promiscuity was tolerated if not encouraged, while women were to be chaste and virtuous without exception—perpetuated the white slavery problem. Bell invoked both false modesty and the double standard in the following passage:

Mr. Edward Bok, editor of The Ladies' Home Journal…wrote: “First: We parents must first of all get it into our heads firm and fast to do away with the policy of silence with our children, that has done so much to bring about this condition. Our sons and our daughters must be told what they are, and they must be told lovingly and frankly. But told they must be. “Second: We fathers of daughters must rid ourselves of the notion that has worked such diabolical havoc of a double moral standard. There can be but one standard: that of moral equality…. (Bell 1910:287-88)

Roe ([1911] 1979) made the following passionate plea regarding the hypocrisy of the double standard and its perpetuation of prostitution and white slavery:

What a travesty it is to say to the prodigal son, who sowed his wild oats and committed all the sins against God and man, you are forgiven, come home and we will kill the fatted calf, and then turn around and chastise, frown upon and forever brand as a social outcast the prodigal daughter, who has just sinned once perhaps. (P. 53)

Some crusaders made explicit appeals to how the double standard of sexuality endangered innocent women and children, as men’s sowing of “wild oats” exposed their current or future wives and children to venereal disease—a warrant invoking both Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical idiom of rhetoric of loss, wherein innocents are victimized by the social problem, and rhetoric of endangerment, wherein threats to health and body are invoked:

…[T]here is a frightful amount of mutilation of women that is made necessary by the sins of their husbands—“wild oats” sown before or after marriage. Deformity and imbecility of children are often due to the vice of one or both parents. Untold personal and domestic
anguish and shame accompany the bodily consequences of vice. Unchastity murders love. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.e)

In the United States there are 60,000 blind. Physicians estimate that from 10,000 to 20,000 of these owe their blindness to the wild oats which their fathers sowed before or after marriage—for their wives and children to reap. This is only one of the many consequences of unchastity and the traffic in vice. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.d)

…Were the evil effects of these diseases limited to those who seek clandestine indulgence, discussion of this distasteful topic might be reserved for them only; but since he who has acquired either of these diseases is, for an indefinite period, a possible source of contagion to his associates—especially to his bride and her children—the essential facts should be understood by every adult. (Belfield 1910:299-300)

Likewise, several crusaders often made references to an overall societal threat of venereal disease—again invoking Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical idiom of *rhetoric of endangerment*:

The general public must be made to realize the enormous extent and serious character of these diseases.…. When a girl is induced to take up an immoral life she is quickly infected with the diseases that go with that misconduct, and is dead while she lives and a source of death to others…. Constantly they are spreading the pestilence to the men and youths who patronize them…. (Bell 1910:281-82)

Dr. Green’s speech contained a remarkable statement of the physical evils resulting from vice and was a strong plea for a law to repress the pest-houses, which he said are the nests and breeders of the diseases. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.b)

The leper of the orient was segregated and isolated…. The syphilitic of modern times, however, with a disease no less contagious at certain stages of its course, mingles in society…. Thousands of innocent people, right-living men, women, and little children come in contact with the virus and get an infection which may ruin the health and happiness for all the future. (Hall [1911] 1979:418)

The illicit sexual relation is the chief though not the only factor in the dissemination of the two serious venereal diseases; so prevalent are these in our large cities that at least half the adult male population of all social grades, according to conservative estimates, contract one or both of them…. (Belfield 1910:299)

During the last three years the Societies of Social Hygiene have by lectures and pamphlets shown the community how great is the physical danger which menaces the health of men, women and children through the spread by professional and clandestine prostitutes of venereal disease…. (Henrotin [1911] 1979:94)
Motifs

Motifs, as described by Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) were abundant in the crusaders' claims. Several of these motifs may be classified as demonizing the white slave traffic and white slave traders—constructing them as inhuman, monstrous, and the like. For example, Turner (1907) repeatedly created the image of those involved in the white slave trade and crime in general as “savages”—complementing his warrant that these problems evidenced deterioration in civilization. Moreover, Turner’s “savagery” motif was often simultaneously evoked with derogatory depictions of immigrants and racial minorities—even when he was discussing victimization of these groups—as the following excerpt illustrates:

If a new colony of foreigners appears, some compatriot is set at once to selling them liquor. Italians, Greeks, Lithuanians, Poles,—all the rough and hairy tribes which have been drawn into Chicago,—have their grade exploited to the utmost….

The European peasant, suddenly freed from the restraints of poverty and of rigid police authority, and the vicious Negro from the countryside of the South—especially the latter—furnish and alarming volume of savage crime…. None of these folk, perhaps, have progressed far along the way of civilization; but under the exploitation in Chicago they slip back into a form of city savagery compared to which their previous history shows a peaceful and well-ordered existence. (Turner 1907:578, 580)

Similarly, several other crusaders evoked demonizing images of the white slave traffic and its traffickers as inhuman, monstrous creatures. Rev. Bell (1910) called the white slave traffic a “hideous monster” (p. 4) and its traffickers “wild beasts” (p. 259) and “loathsome criminals…[that] drink the heart’s blood of mothers and eat the flesh of their daughters” (p. 269). Roe ([1911] 1979) also deemed white slavery a “hideous monster” (p. 96). Rev. Boynton (1910) described them as “vile creatures” (p. 404), Amigh (1910) labeled white slave traders “the dragnets of the inhuman men and women” (p. 120), and Parkin (1910) denounced them as “the most despicable and inhuman of all criminals” (p. 332). The following excerpts illustrate yet more evocative elaborations of this motif:

The men and the women who engage in this traffic are more unspeakably low and vile than any other class of criminals…. There is no more depraved class of people in the world than those human vultures who fatten on the shame of innocent young girls. …[T]here is in every big city a class of men and women who live by trapping girls into a life of degradation and who are as inhumanely cunning in their awful craft as they are in other instincts; that these beasts of the human jungle are as unbelievably
desperate as they are unbelievably cruel, and that their warfare upon virtue is as persistent, as calculating, and as unceasing as was the warfare of the wolf upon the unprotected lamb of the pioneer folk in the early days of the Western frontier. (Sims 1910:16, 68)

… [A] hideous monster, known as white slavery, has crept in among us and is undermining our homes. Its poisonous venom has corrupted and diseased our boys. It has coiled its slimy tentacles around our girls and strangled purity and innocence…. (Roe [1911] 1979:371)

Likewise, Rev. Bell employed a “snake” motif several times—perhaps implicitly (and in one instance explicitly) an allegory to the biblical tale of the serpent’s temptation of Eve—as illustrated by the following excerpts:

From the day that the serpent beguiled Eve by his craftiness until now, there have been few days or nights when some daughter of Eve has not been deceived or forced into an evil life by some serpent or other.

In this place among the half-dressed inmates we noticed a modestly gowned young woman, sitting at a small drinking table opposite something that ought to have been a man. The thing’s name was Neil Jaeger…. When I began to question the snake, it hissed, “Mind your own business.”

The unspeakable divekeeper—why do the American people tolerate such a viper as this?

Every father and mother, every youth and maiden should be instructed at once in the right way and put on guard against the reptiles that lure unprotected girls…. (Bell 1910:19, 223-24, 262, 281)

Another category of motifs present in the crusaders’ claims was an evangelical, “fire and brimstone” type. These motifs were most prevalent in religious-affiliated crusaders. For example, Rev. Bell often employed motifs of “hell,” “sin,” “evil,” “wickedness,” and the like in his claims:

\[
\text{DANGER! BEWARE of the RED LIGHTS and of the HELL of FIRE!—“As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! For why will you die?” “For the Wages of Sin is Death; but the Free Gift of God is Eternal Life in Christ Jesus, Our Lord.”} \text{(CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.h)}
\]

“Evangelistic Always”—Pastors, deaconesses, city missionaries, foreign missionaries on furlough, evangelists, judges, lawyers, physicians, “Gideons,” and other consecrated men and women—perhaps seven hundred in all—have taken part in this midnight ministry in darkest Chicago, snatching the lost from the fire in the very vestibule of hell. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.f)
We pray for all the sinning, the tempted, the imperiled night life of our city, and of the cities of mankind. … [T]he moral slaughter of girlhood and youth connected with the evil businesses of the night life of cities, shriek out a terrible challenge to Christ’s people. Watchman, what of the night? (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.e)

Dedrick, a “rescue missionary for the Moody Church” (p. 98) also frequently used this class of motifs in her claims:

Satan is claiming our best, our VERY best girls…. Another evil and serious danger, and only another of Satan’s waiting rooms, is the entertaining of gentlemen friends in her room.… Look out for the signs Satan is putting up all over our cities like this: “Ladies Entrance,” “Family Entrance,” which has been the “entrance” of many a precious girl to a life of sin…. All over these places [amusement parks] Satan has his agents stationed, seeking victims.

One of the most fascinating allurements of city life to many a young girl is the dance-hall, which is truly the ante-room to hell itself. (Dedrick 1910:100, 110, 111, 112)

Various crusaders used a “war” motif in their claims. As argued by Gorelick (1989), the war motif infers that the social problem is something that must be battled with force. Likewise, the war motif used in the crusaders’ claims drew a distinct dichotomy between a “right” and a “wrong” side: it is a battle against good and evil. Moreover, it implied that the fight was organized—that an army had been amassed and would conquer, as the following excerpts illustrate:

Dedicated to the Army of Loyal Workers who, in the name of God and Humanity, have enlisted in this Holy war for the Safety and Purity of Womanhood. This magazine [Woman’s World] has already printed or caused to be printed and circulated fully fifty million pages, and it is enlisted for the war—war on the most shameful crime of debauching and exploiting the youth of both sexes. (Bell 1910:7, 10)

Because the sins of the night make war upon the soul and wreck the body…. Therefore the Church of God must make war upon the ruinous sins and wicked businesses of the night, which make war upon the soul and upon the home, and upon the Church which is the earthly home of the soul. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.g)

Country ministers have great opportunity in this warfare on behalf of women and girls…. (Boynton 1910:404)

Yes, the greatest fight the world has ever known is now in progress…we find warring valiantly against those who barter and sell the souls and bodies of our daughters, the army of civilization. The soldiers are the people of all nations. The weapons are publicity,
education, enlightenment, honest laws for social purity and the proper enforcement of these laws. (Roe [1911] 1979:371)

Lastly, various other motifs were employed in the crusaders’ claims but to a comparably lesser extent. The motifs of “scourge” and “danger” were used a few times—“this awful scourge of white slavery” (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.a), “this monstrous soul scourge…the danger begins the moment a girl leaves the protection of Home and Mother…another danger still, and a serious one…” (Dedrick 1910:104-105, 108). Additionally, “social evil” was used to describe prostitution in general with white slavery as a component: “The social evil in its various forms is among the chief dangers that confront civilization” (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.f), and Roe (1912), “…the only effective way to abolish white slavery is to abolish the whole social evil…. White slavery furnishes the fuel that feeds the flame of the social evil” (p. 6).

Conclusions

The separate conclusions (Best 1987) drawn by the white slavery crusaders may be grouped in the following categories: Christian efforts to combat white slavery; objectives regarding sexuality; new and/or improved social policies/programs; parental efficiency; and keeping country girls at home.

Christian Efforts to Combat White Slavery

The ministers and missionaries of the white slavery crusaders pointed to Christian-driven efforts as key in battling white slavery in Chicago. Rev. Bell established his Midnight Mission and proposed that more “night churches” were needed as havens for patrons of the “evil night businesses of the cities” to repent:

Night churches should be established, for the worship of God, for the preaching of the gospel on the church plane by the ablest preachers and with music of a high order, for bringing to bear upon the problems of the night the best thought and effort of the great ecclesiastical bodies. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.g)

Rev. Bell also encouraged Christians to take part in the mission’s work, as the following excerpt illustrates:
Christian people of established character and experience in winning souls are invited to take part in our midnight protest against iniquity and this ministry of Christlike love to the imperiled and perishing. No one whose heart is “fixed, trusting in the Lord,” need be afraid of being defiled by touching pitch. Jesus was not defiled by the tears of the woman who was a sinner in the city, nor by eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. But if necessary, we ought to wade in pitch to recover the jewels that are lost, and to warn away the innocent and tempted. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.f)

Rev. Boynton (1910) also lauded the Midnight Mission’s efforts and additionally stressed the “pastor’s part” in the crusade against white slavery:

…The most fruitful and most possible kind of effort on behalf of the outcasts is in the open air meetings, the street gatherings, where the gospel can be sung and preached by the hour. Crowds of men, mostly young men, stand for hours listening to the familiar hymns and the old, old story of the Cross. (P. 409)

Country ministers have great opportunity in this warfare on behalf of women and girls…. There is a need for education, outspoken, persistent warnings that parents must be compelled to hear… There is need that the Pastor co-operate with existing organizations that have for their purpose the suppression of this frightful evil. Already in nearly every city of any size there are companies of good people banded together to wipe out the White Slave Traffic. Let the Pastor seek out such folk and give them a hearty word of cheer. Such action will attract other persons of influence and wealth and give character and power to the crusade…. (P. 404-405)

Similarly, some of the reformers upheld that the white slaves would find salvation in acceptance of Christianity and that a good Christian upbringing would prevent girls’ entrapment into white slavery:

Not every girl who leads a life of sin and shame is by any means a white slave in the full sense of the word, as the white slave traffic exists, though truly a slave she is, for God is no respecter of persons and the same judgment will be hers unless she hastens home to Father’s House, where room to spare and warm welcome awaits her. Not many open doors await her in this world. (Dedrick 1910:99-100)

I believe…that the final solving of this reeking, hideous question lies in the moral and Christian teaching and protection of the growing girls of our land. (Zimmerman 1908:15)

Objectives Regarding Sexuality

 Concurrent with the warrants related to sexuality, the crusaders proposed various solutions to the white slavery problem that were sexuality-related. Specifically, several
crusaders proclaimed the “false modesty” that perpetuated the white slavery problem must come to an end and that parents, pastors, doctors, and all persons must be straightforward with children and young adults in matters of sexuality:

It is not enough to hint softly at these horrors. The truth must be told as plainly as the preacher’s Bible and the physician’s microscope tell it. Delicacy is excellent intelligent the truth, but the delicacy that suppresses the truth is sin. Our loins are to be girt about with truth—our loins, the apostle says, the region of our sex life—girt with truth, not with ignorance and false modesty. (Bell 1910:281)

…If this great good to our social life [reform efforts against WST] could not be brought about by publicity, there would not be any reason for bringing before the people and into the midst of the family circle facts which are so black and revolting. But to know and understand we must cast aside false modesty, take off our kid gloves and handle this great social problem with our naked hands. (Roe 1910a:139-140)

There can be no doubt that Judge Lindsay of Denver, Judge Mack of Chicago, and MR. Edward W. Bok of the Ladies’ Home Journal, are right in insisting upon greater frankness between parents and children and that every child should have a sex education at home instead of being compelled to pick it up from contaminating sources on the street and at school…. In face of the horrifying disclosures brought to me in the form of legal evidence, every boy and girl of high school age should be taught something of the awful physical as well as the moral consequences which lurk behind allurements of the life in which the “white slave’ is the central figure. These things cannot be presented in the public prints, but the father who keeps close to his boy and the mother who is a companion to her daughter may reveal these things, in the home, in a way which may save almost untold suffering. (Sims 1910:72)

The physicians, the clergymen and the laymen have all been awakened to a realization of our duties, at least, so far as education is concerned. It is up to us to see to it that all the boys and girls know something of the mystery of life that they may guard against the dangers and the temptations that confront them. (Mack 1910:296)

In addition to casting aside “false modesty,” some crusaders argued that the end of the double standard of sexuality was necessary to curb the white slavery problem:

There should be but one standard of morals, and the same rules of conduct should be applied to the man and the woman. That which is wrong for the woman should be wrong for the man, and when civilized society shall have established such a standard then we shall have gone a long way toward the solutions of the social evil problems. (Roe [1911] 1979:53)

Our standards are not high enough. Why a lawfully wedded husband should fix it up with his conscience to act so basely towards his wife we have yet to find out. But it is a wrong standard and I am glad to be able to say to the wives and mothers in this audience that almost without exception when I say to young men “Fellows, isn’t it time that we
have a single standard of purity for men and women?” they respond the same way you have responded and it is a question of education and we must keep it up. (Hall 1910:293)

Some crusaders were explicit in proclaiming that a more formalized sexuality education was critical to combating venereal disease and its relation to the white slavery problem and prostitution. Dr. Winfield Scott Hall ([1911] 1979) advocated for formal sexuality education but explicitly stressed that this education must be “segregated” by sex and age as to avoid “glittering generalities” and provide age and sex-appropriate information to the specific groups:

By this I mean that boy hearers should be separated from men hearers. Mothers should be segregated from fathers. Furthermore, mothers and daughters should be addressed in separate audiences…..

It is easy to see that in an address to a mixed audience of parents and children, sex problems would have to be discussed in a most general and indefinite way. The circumlocutions would be so veiled and the allusions so remote that the speaker would probably be only vaguely understood by the more intelligent and experienced of his audience; while he would probably be grossly misunderstood by the less intelligent and inexperienced…. (P. 413-414)

Dr. Hall also specifically used the phrase “social hygiene” and noted its teaching “must begin in early childhood, and its importance as a part of education should never be lost sight of by parents or teachers until the individual is well launched in the adolescent period” (p. 411). Additionally, Ellen Henrotin ([1911] 1979) described the efforts put forth by the Chicago Woman’s Club via its “joint Committee of the Philanthropy and Reform Departments on Social Hygiene,” which included “courses of lectures to teachers and parents, and [had] supplied speakers for clubs and associations” all over Chicago (p. 94).

New and/or Improved Social Policies/Programs

The majority of the crusaders’ proposed solutions to the white slavery problem could be classified under this broad category of new and/or improved social policies/programs. For example, Turner (1907), who pinpointed a corrupt and archaic governmental system as the impetus behind the prostitution problem, thus concluded that
With the simplification of the processes of city government; with the abolishing of the wards and the ward boss and the ward delegate in the nominating conventions; with the substitution of nominations and elections by the people—not of the mayor, nor of the present machinery for the representation of special interests in city government, but of men to act as department heads, nominated directly, elected directly, and held directly responsible to the people—the organization for the sale of dissipation in cities will lose its present control in city administration, and the people will gain it. (P. 592)

Similarly, various crusaders concluded that the tacit sanction of a segregated prostitution district and/or regulated prostitution was not to be tolerated and should be vehemently advocated against, as the following excerpts illustrate:

We have steadily proclaimed that the market for girls is the tolerated house, and have denounced a red light district as a human stockyards for the sale of girls and the destruction of young men…. We have maintained a hot protest against every form of regulation of vice which is of the nature of an executive permit to break the laws and destroy the youth of both sexes. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.e)

SEGREGATION MAKES A SLAVE MARKET. It is impossible to abolish brothel slavery and to license, either formally or practically, the slave market, the red light district. While the dive keeper enjoys the indulgence of the mayor and the police and of their masters, the citizens, he will keep his dive—and his dive must be restocked with new victims…. (Bell 1910:259)

The Committee has recommended the abolition of segregated vice districts and has discovered awful conditions to exist, but Chicago is equal to the task of cleaning them out. (Roe [1911] 1979:203)

What stand do you take? Shall we, or shall we not abolish the public vice districts of Chicago? (Zimmerman 1912:10)

Several crusaders proposed the need of various new legal enactments and/or rigid enforcement of present laws to effectively combat the white slavery problem. For example, crusaders such as Rev. Bell (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.e) and Roe (1912) proposed injunction and abatement laws—wherein citizens or the State’s attorney could petition that a house of prostitution was a “public nuisance,” and, upon a judge’s ruling that the house was in fact a “public nuisance,” all property would be confiscated and the house closed down—were needed and should be strongly enforced. Rev. Bell and his constituents (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.e) as well as Roe (1910a) and Parkin (1910) advocated for federal as well as state laws prohibiting and delineating the punishment of those that
participating in the importing/exporting of women across state lines for “immoral purposes.” Similarly, Amigh (1910) noted that “… practically every state has some laws against that traffic—but I do not know of any state in which the laws now on the statute books are adequate to deal with the situation as it should be dealt with” (p. 119). U.S. District Attorney Sims (1910) lauded his prosecutions of white slave traffickers, stating that

[W]hen caught, they generally are willing to arrange to pay heavy fines. These offers have, of course, been refused and we have taken the position that we will in no case accept merely a fine. In all these cases already tried we have asked the court to impose jail sentences and we expect to continue that policy…. The rule in my office with reference to this class of cases is to show no quarter—to extend no consideration of any kind. We are requiring heavy bail and asking for imprisonment in the penitentiary in case of conviction. (P. 16)

Similarly, Roe (1910a) argued that harsher penalties were needed for white slave traffickers, noting that an initiative was being made to “make the first offenses punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary from one to ten years” (p. 148). Likewise, Roe advocated for a new Illinois law monitoring the transportation of women into or out of the state “for immoral purposes,” noting that “the age limit should be omitted from the present Illinois law, which does not punish those bringing girls over the age of eighteen into that state” (p. 148).

Concurrently, Roe proposed several other social policies. For example, he argued that a city commission should be established to monitor “houses of ill-fame and their inmates” and a “public bureau of information” where names of these “inmates” would be available so “parents and friends could easily learn the whereabouts of girls who have not been heard from” (Roe 1910a:150). Additionally, believing that economic hardship sometimes pushed girls into prostitution, Roe ([1911] 1979) posed that more boarding homes for girls receiving low salaries were required, particularly “near the loop district, that the expense of carfare, and in some cases lunches, might be saved” (p. 296). Moreover, he argued that homes for former white slaves were needed:

…[W]hat shall we do with the girls after they are liberated from the houses? Some have parents, some are ashamed to go back home, while others are diseased. Certainly it
seems a pity to turn them out and let them battle against the prejudice of a “past life.” Homes and institutions for girls are often filled or the doors are barred against fallen women. The solution of the problem is a home for white slaves in every large city in the country. Such a home should be well equipped with a hospital to cure disease contracted in disreputable houses, and then there should be schools in the institute for training the girls for useful lives, where sewing, cooking, music, art, and other things are taught. In this way the girls would be fitted to earn honest and wholesome livelihoods when they go out to face the world. (Roe 1910a:152-153)

Additionally, various crusaders claimed that grassroots as well as broad-based educational campaigns about white slavery were necessary to combat the problem:

We distribute leaflets specially prepared and attractively printed in two colors, telling plainly the criminality of vice and the ruin that it brings upon the body and brain and character of transgressors…. This educational work is carried on in friendly co-operation with the Chicago Society of Social Hygiene—organized by the Chicago Medical Society—which supplies us with pamphlets and leaflets for this purpose…. (CHS, EB, Box 6, n.d.f)

“The Chicago Tribune Says:”…What is greatly needed as a supplement to vigorous prosecution of offenders is a campaign of education…. The problem is enormous, but it can be solved largely by educational means. The responsibility for a broad and systematic campaign of enlightenment rests with the religious and social agencies now existent in every community—the churches, the women’s clubs, the civic leagues and associations. The press, too, should give a reputable publicity and exert its influence directly and on educational lines, to the end that the public may know the gravity of the evil and its conditions. (CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908)

The public opinion upon this subject should be moulded [sic] by an extensive educational campaign…. Publicity will not only change the public conscience and stir it to action in the apprehension and conviction of offenders, but will give to girls and women a knowledge of the schemes used by the white slave procurers, expose the methods of those in this business, and will, to a certain extent, prevent the unwary ones from being victimized. (Roe [1911]1979:184)

Parental Efficiency

Rev. Bell was particularly adamant about “parental inefficiency” as the root cause of the entrapment of girls into white slavery. Thus, he offered the following conclusion:

Every good man and woman must do his or her whole duty against the hideous traffic in girlhood. Preachers, editors, teachers, physicians and rulers, being natural leaders of the people, have very great responsibility. But all else will follow if this end be gained—Parental Efficiency. (Bell 1910:249)
Keep Country Girls at Home

This conclusion was not widely professed by the crusaders against white slavery. However, Sims advised parents to keep country girls at home versus sending them to the city to work or go to school was “the best and surest way” (1910a:71) to protect them from white slavery, as “no girl can safely go to a great city to make her own way who is not under the eye of a trustworthy woman who knows the ways and the dangers of city life” (CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908). Similarly, Roe ([1911] 1979) pleaded for girls to stay in the country, offering the following sentimental appeal:

Stay rather at home where all is pure, beautiful and really grand, for no artisan can build forests and mountains like the great Creator has given you; no artist can paint the growing grain and the flowers as beautiful as He. The crowded smelling car cannot supplant the good old houses and carriage. Nor is love so sweet in the gilded drawing room as in the winding shady lane where the moon mellows the heart and fills the soul with joy. (P. 156)

Discussion

To conclude, I first provide a summary of the grounds, rhetorics, and conclusions, which I gathered from the primary data sources. I then discuss the claims-making styles employed by the various crusaders. Subsequently, I discuss the crusaders’ reflection of xenophobic and racist discourses in their claims about white slavery. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the rhetorical power of the crusaders’ claims in light of their rhetorical features as well as their resonance with broader discourses present in the Progressive Era.

Summary of Findings

Grounds

The crusaders grounded their claims regarding white slavery through defining, estimating, and giving examples of the problem. The domain of who was to be considered a “white slave” diverged between different crusaders, with some defining a “white slave” as exclusively a white woman/girl entrapped into prostitution and held
under slave-like conditions, while Roe (1912; [1911] 1979) expanded the domain of white slavery to include those of “every race and color” (Roe 1912:1) and those who freely chose a life of prostitution but were then held under slave-like conditions. In contrast, through a continuous emphasis of immigrants/foreigners as largely responsible for the white slave trade, the domain of who were “white slave traders” was essentially narrowed. Additionally, by framing the prostitution problem as “white slavery,” the crusaders reoriented the definition—reconstructing prostitutes as “victims” and thus sympathy-worthy and white slave traffickers/procurers as “victimizers” and thus worthy of condemnation.

While the crusaders offered both concrete and “official” as well as generalized estimates of the magnitude of the white slavery problem, Roe ([1911] 1979) and Sims (CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908) argued that a true statistical representation of the problem’s magnitude was unattainable—and Turner (1907) consistently intimated that the known numbers were underestimated. Moreover, the crusaders declared an indiscriminate range of those vulnerable to white slavery but subsequently focused on “country” and immigrant girls as being particularly susceptible to the wiles of the white slave trader. Lastly, the identification with and sympathy for victims of white slavery were evoked via the crusaders’ frequent use of elaborately-detailed and heart-wrenching case examples of girls’ entrapment and sexual enslavement.

Rhetorics

Various warrants were presented in the crusaders’ claims. The historical continuity of white slavery and the enslavement of blacks were often alluded; however, white slavery was frequently portrayed as comparably more despicable than black slavery. In congruence with a general slavery theme, the crusaders continuously reiterated that those entrapped into white slavery were blameless victims in need of protection—and that “country” and immigrant girls were particularly at risk. Accordingly, the crusaders pointed to various social factors as the impetus behind white slavery, including the following: the general inhospitableness of city life; poor city housing conditions; commercialized recreation, particularly the dance hall and saloons;
women’s low wages; parental inefficiency; and police/political corruption. The crusaders lauded the value of civilization and social order via blaming the “savagery” (Turner 1907) of the city and “parental inefficiency” (Bell 1910:246) and avarice for the prostitution problem. They claimed that everyone had a Christian and/or civic responsibility to attack white slavery to uphold American values of freedom and liberty. Moreover, the crusaders often attacked “false modesty” surrounding the needed discussion of sexuality and the double standard of sexuality that threatened innocent wives/children with venereal disease as fuelling the white slavery problem. Lastly, the crusaders used various motifs to describe white slavery as a problem and the white slave traffickers, including demonizing metaphors, war motifs, and “fire and brimstone” motifs of hell, Satan, and evil.

Conclusions

The crusaders against white slavery forwarded various conclusions drawn from the presented grounds and justified by the proposed warrants. The ministers and missionaries of the white slavery crusaders claimed that Christianity-based efforts were crucial for combating white slavery, including open-air meetings, night churches, and pastors and parishioners’ direct involvement in spreading the gospel to those unfortunate souls trapped as white slaves and also those patronizing them. Several crusaders advanced objectives dealing with sexuality, including ending “false modesty” through more explicit sexuality education, upholding a single standard of sexuality for both men and women, and education on the dangers of venereal disease. Similarly, various new and/or social programs/policies were advocated, including the following: revamping the corrupt and archaic governmental system, which perpetuated the prostitution problem; complete intolerance and opposition of segregated vice districts; various new and/or better enforced legal enactments, including injunction and abatement laws, inter and intrastate white slave traffic laws that delineated harsher and more strictly enforced punishments, and a commission to monitor houses of ill-fame; broad-based educational campaigns; affordable boarding houses for working girls; and boarding houses for escaped/rescued white slaves. Lastly, Rev. Bell (1910) argued that “parental efficiency”
was key to the protection of girls, while Sims (1910a; CHS, EB, Box 6, September, 1908) and Roe ([1911] 1979) advocated for keeping country girls at home in the country, where parental supervision and the wholesome rural atmosphere could better protect them from the wiles of the white slave trafficker.

Claims-Making Style

Upon reviewing Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) six types of claims-making styles, I hesitate to categorize the crusaders’ claims-making styles as any of these given examples, as I believe none of the six types presented wholly exemplify the crusaders’ styles. However, I venture to declare that crusaders affiliated with religious organizations, such as Rev. Bell (Midnight Mission), Dedrick (Moody Church), and Rev. Boynton (Lexington Avenue Baptist Church), presented their claims via an evangelical style, as evinced by their primary emphasis on Christianity as salvation to those entrapped by white slavery and those patronizing white slaves, and appeals to Christian duty to fight the white slavery problem. Likewise, Rev. Bell and Dedrick’s claims were often very “fire and brimstone”-like in style—as my previous discussion of the motifs they employed demonstrates.

However, Rev. Bell and his constituents also often presented detailed estimates and scientific evidence in their claims; thus, one might also argue that these crusaders employed elements of a scientific style as defined by Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993). Similarly, crusaders such as Roe, Sims, and Turner sometimes modeled Ibarra and Kitsuse’s civic style—attempting to present their claims as “unstylized” and thus genuine and sincere. However, their frequent demonstrative claims deter me from definitively classifying this group in this particular claims-making style. Likewise, Roe’s ([1911] 1979) inclusion of 32 illustrations “Portraying this Terrible Slavery” (p. 1) and Bell’s (1910) “Thirty-Two Pages Striking Pictures Showing the workings of the blackest slavery that has ever stained the human race” (p. 3) lent a very dramatic style element to the claims. Therefore, while elements of scientific and civic style were present in the crusaders’ claims, the more sensationalized aspects of the claims overshadowed these comparably reserved aspects.
Xenophobia and Racism in the Crusaders’ Claims

As attested in the previous research on Progressive-Era white slavery (Feldman 1967; Connelly 1980; Rosen 1982; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Grittner 1990; Linehan 1991), some crusaders’ claims were peppered with xenophobic as well as racist sentiment. For example, Turner (1907) proffered descriptions of “Italians, Greeks, Lithuanians, and Poles” as “rough and hairy tribes” (p. 578), declared of the “European peasant” and the “vicious Negro from the countryside of the South” that “none of these folk, perhaps, have progressed far along the way of civilization” (p. 580). Zimmerman (1912) offered the following:

…America is becoming more and more un-American every day. Each ship, each train Westward or Eastward bound, is now daily dumping into our Land, so lately the goal of the home-seeker from Germany, Sweden, Ireland, etc., the real future citizen—thousands of the scum and vice and criminal element of South Eastern Europe, Asia and the Orient, and remember, too, that a short five-years of residence here converts the filthiest criminal from Turkey, Arabia, Syria, Italy, or of any place else where vice and brutality reign supreme, into an American citizen with the right to vote into office men who will and are sworn to protect and aid in every possible way the Jewish, Russian, French or Chinese whore-master as he rents a shanty and proceeds to fatten on the very life-blood of the young girlhood of this and other lands. (Zimmerman 1912:7-8)

Concurrently, xenophobic sentiment was at times illustrated through broad declarations that immigrants/foreigners were disproportionately involved in the white slave trade, as was previously addressed in my discussion of the crusaders’ domain statements regarding who were white slave traders. As the various excerpts from this discussion illustrate, various crusaders did directly implicate immigrants/foreigners as playing a significant role in the white slavery problem—some offering explicitly disparaging representations of these immigrant/foreign groups while others merely stating their involvement in white slavery. Rev. Bell (1910) also made the following impassioned plea laced with some derogatory connotations:

Unless we make energetic and successful war upon the red light districts and all that pertains to them, we shall have Oriental brothel slavery thrust upon us from China and Japan, and Parisian white slavery, with all its unnatural and abominable practices, established among us by the French traders. Jew traders, too, will people our “levees” with Polish Jewesses and any others who will make money for them. Shall we defend our American civilization, or lower our flag to the most despicable foreigners—French,
Irish, Italians, Jews and Mongolians? … On the Pacific Coast eternal vigilance alone can save us from a flood of Asiaticism [sic], with its weak womanhood, its men of scant chivalry, its polluting vices and its brothel slavery.

Zimmerman (1912) offered the following statement that described Chinese immigrants’ patronizing of white slaves—teeming with derogatory depictions of this group:

2130 Armour Avenue, Chicago…is exclusively for the use of...a class of men with whom no white laborer will live or work…the lop-shouldered, smuggled-in, pig-tailed opium parched Chinese. It is a crying shame today against our Churches, our Union Labor and our Law that there is allowed to exist on a public street, in the second city in the United States, a public stock-market for wrecked girlhood where the filthy Chinese, in rows, wait their turn to rent for ten minutes of unparalleled Asiatic debauchery, the bruised, bleeding wreckage of our American home or the girl who came to us a few months ago—to the greatest Christian Republic the World has ever built, from some European home and a mother, asking only a chance to go to work with her bare hands and earn a decent living. The American citizen refuses to admit the Chinaman to this country, refuses to work with him, refuses him all rights accorded other aliens coming to us, and yet, for the blood profits of vice and politics, allows to be placed to his exclusive privilege that which a short time ago was our Nation’s best and cleanest womanhood. (Zimmerman 1912:51)

However, some of these same crusaders were also apt to counter their highlighting of immigrant/foreign groups’ involvement in the white slave problem by asserting that these statements were not denouncements of the race/creed as a whole but merely the crimes committed by certain segments of this population:

We do not speak against them for their nationality, but for their crimes. American traders of equal infamy, to the shame of the American name, have stocked Asiatic cities with American girls. (Bell 1910:260)

I do not mean to intimate by this that all the ice cream and fruit “saloons” having foreign-born proprietors are connected with the “white slave” traffic—but some of them are, and this fact is sufficient to cause all careful and thoughtful parents of young girls to see that they do not frequent these places. (Sims 1910b:71-72)

Likewise, many of the examined crusaders neither directly nor indirectly implicated immigrants/foreigners as being disproportionately involved in the white slave trade. However, the at times subtle and other times flagrantly derogatory depictions of certain immigrant/foreign groups by some of the examined crusaders reinforces the findings of
previous research that some of the white slave crusaders’ claims reflected a xenophobic discourse propagated during the Progressive Era.

Rhetorical Power of Claims

As presented in previous literature, the majority of Progressive-Era prostitutes were not entrapped into prostitution via white slave traffickers and/or held as white slaves (Rosen 1982; Hobson 1987; Grittner 1990). In fact, by Rosen’s (1982) estimate, approximately ten percent of prostitutes were “white slaves.” Moreover, in the examined claims, various crusaders readily admitted that a concrete estimate of how many prostitutes were indeed “white slaves” was ultimately unattainable. Yet, the crusaders against white slavery persisted in constructing the prostitution problem as largely a problem of “white slavery.” Thus, deconstructing the crusaders’ claims reveals insights regarding the persuasiveness of their construction of white slavery as a social problem and their attempts to overcome the dearth of concrete statistics.

In my interpretation, various rhetorical devices present in the crusaders’ claims were critical to their persuasiveness. Doubtless the most powerful rhetorical device of the crusaders was their unrelenting construction of those involved in prostitution as “white slaves.” The extremely detailed descriptions of women’s entrapment by wily white slave traders and subsequent imprisonment in slave-like conditions were key to constructing prostitutes as “victims” and thus sympathy-worthy, versus “victimizers” and thus condemnation-worthy (Loseke 1993). Moreover, even when admitting that some may have freely chosen to become prostitutes, the crusaders countered by claiming that the majority of prostitutes were in fact white slaves, thus persisting in constructing them as blameless victims in need of protection. In essence, these claims, similar to constructions of “wife abuse” in Loseke’s (1992) analyses, constructed the prostitute as a person who could not “‘cope with the outside world without some assistance and intervention,’ as ‘too demoralized to assert herself,’ as ‘bewildered and helpless,’ and as ‘overwhelmingly passive and unable to act on her own behalf’” (p. 28).

Similarly, various warrants expressed in the crusaders’ claims further reinforce the notion of white slaves as blameless victims. For example, by declaring that young
girls—“not a few of them mere children” (Sims 1910a:16) were targeted by the white slave traders, the crusaders constructed children as primary victims of this problem. Thus, the crusaders forwarded a “child-victim” (Best 1987, 1990) claim, which is “uncontroversial” (1990:5) and thus readily ratified. Moreover, various social factors were delineated as the blame for women/girls’ entrapment into white slavery—thus reiterating the construction of them as blameless victims in need of protection. By claiming that the white slavery problem was exacerbated by “savagery” (Turner 1907) bred by the vastness of the city, “parental inefficiency” (Bell 1910:246), the persistence of “false modesty” and the double standard (Dedrick 1910; Bell 1910; Roe 1912, [1911] 1979), and society’s failure to meet its responsibility to protect women/girls from white slavery, once again these women/girls are constructed as blameless victims in need of protection.

The crusaders’ elaborate use of typifying examples further buttressed the persuasiveness of their claims. These examples provided emotional appeals that constructed the “morality” (Loseke and Fawcett 1995) of the white slavery victims—attesting to the good, moral-upbringing of the victims and their subsequent fall into white slavery due to unforeseeable and undeserved circumstances. Likewise, these detailed and heart-wrenching cases grabbed their audience’s attention as well as evoked the audience’s empathy toward those victimized by the white slave trade. Consequently, rather than condemn the women/girls as deserving of their plight, this rhetorical device evokes the audience’s sympathy for the “victims.”

Furthering empathy toward the victims of white slavery, the crusaders’ construction of vulnerability to white slavery was another key rhetorical device. By arguing that any woman/girl—be she a “country” girl, and immigrant, of privileged class or working class, etc.—could at any given moment be ensnared in the white slave trader’s net of debauchery, the crusaders exploded the range of vulnerability. Thus, as Best argues, the crusaders “[made] everyone in the audience feel that they have a vested interest in the problem’s solution” (Best 1987:108)—particularly if they had a daughter at stake.
Likewise, some elements of the crusaders’ claims-making style were key rhetorical devices, in my interpretation. For example, the *evangelical style* of Reverends Bell and Boynton and of missionary Mabel Dedrick—with “fire and brimstone” appeals to Christian duty, quoting of Biblical passages, and references to “hell” and “Satan”—presumably would have resonated well with their target audience: Christians. Similarly, Roe’s elaborate descriptions and quotations from white slave trials were engaging and dramatic. Similarly, the photographs/illustrations that were interspersed in both Rev. Bell (1910) and Roe’s ([1911] 1979) collections dramatically encapsulated the crux of the white slave problem—providing a concretized realness that words alone could not capture.

Lastly, many of the claims offered by the crusaders resonated with broader discourses present during the Progressive Era and thus gained persuasive power. While I will offer in-depth discussion in my concluding chapter of how resonance with broader discourses and “master frames” (Snow and Benford 1986, 1992; Benford and Snow 2000) impacts the persuasiveness of claims, I will briefly explore these rhetorical features at present. As previously discussed, the xenophobic rhetoric employed by some of the crusaders resonated with a broader xenophobic discourse propagated in the Progressive Era. Claims that depicted various aspects of city life as unsavory, such as crowded housing, poor working conditions with pitiful pay, tawdry commercialized recreations, and corrupt city officials, resonated with a broader anti-urban discourse present in this time period. Similarly, some crusaders’ nostalgic depictions of and their pleas to keep girls safe in the country again resonated with this broader anti-urban discourse. Additionally, claims about young working girls’ vulnerability to white slave traders due to their poor wages, procurer’s trolling of these work places for fresh victims, and girls’ attending various amusements without chaperones, resonated with broader discourses of anxiety regarding women’s unprecedented foray into the workforce and subsequent relative economic and social independence. Similarly, various claims constructing girls as blameless, innocent victims entrapped into white slavery resonated with broader gender and sexual discourses that women’s sexual purity was a priceless treasure that needed protection—protection that had to come from without, as women by nature were
naïve and unable to protect themselves from the wiles of wicked men. Furthermore, the claim that women’s enfranchisement would necessarily help combat white slavery resonated with a broader maternalist discourse that women by nature would have a moralizing effect upon the public sphere. Moreover, appeals to the need for widespread sexual education that challenged the double standard of sexuality and aimed to combat venereal disease resonated with broader social hygiene discourses. Several crusaders’ appeals to Christian duty to combat the white slavery problem as well as their evangelical claims-making style resonated with a social gospel discourse present during the Progressive Era. Finally, an overall appeal to public conscience and civic responsibility to fight white slavery resonated with a broader Progressive discourse that social problems were a problem of the community as a whole, and thus the community must all be engaged in ameliorating them.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE BATTLE AGAINST “VICE”

Introduction

The Vice Commission and the Committee of Fifteen

With $18,000 in funding from municipal and private sources, the Vice Commission of Chicago (VCC) embarked on an exhaustive study of the “Social Evil” in Chicago in 1910. Various civic officials and reformers comprised the VCC, including the following: judges and lawyers; University of Chicago professors, various ministers, priests, and rabbis; social settlement workers; businessmen; and medical professionals. As declared by the Chairman of the VCC, “a more representative body of men and women could not be found in the City of Chicago” (Sumner 1913:98). At the investigation’s onset segregation and regulation were the current practices for dealing with vice in Chicago, and the various members of the VCC were uncertain as to whether a viable alternative existed (Sumner 1913). However,

Then began the constructive period, months filled with progressive studies based upon incontrovertible facts, with never a backward step, illuminating conferences, wide-spread investigation in other cities as well as Chicago, the fullest possible discussion and debate amongst its member in frequent meetings oftentimes from four to twelve hours in duration, with the result that new uncertainty was changed to a final certainty and thirty minds were absolutely unanimous in their conclusions…. That there must be constant repress of this curse on human society is the conclusion of this Commission after months of exhaustive study and investigation…. (Sumner 1913: 98)

Thus, “Constant and persistent repression of prostitution, the immediate method; absolute annihilation the ultimate ideal” became the mantra of Chicago social reformers. Following the VCC’s lead, the privately-funded Committee of Fifteen (C15) was organized. Comprised of various leading Chicago social reformers, its purpose: “To aid the public authorities in the enforcement of the laws against pandering and to take measures calculated to prevent traffic in women” (CHS, CB, April 30, 1914).
Analysis

My analysis in this chapter was guided by the same theoretical frameworks as in Chapter Three: Best’s (1987, 1990) analytics were used primarily, complemented by Loseke (1992, 1993) and Loseke and Fawcett’s (1995) analytics as well as Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) framework.

Grounds

Grounds (Best 1987) generally manifested throughout the claims in three different types: definitions, estimates, and typifying examples.

Definitions

The VCC provided several definitions setting boundaries as to who was and who was not a part of the vice problem. For example, the VCC distinguished between different classes of prostitutes, ranging from the “professional,” to the “semi-professional,” to the “clandestine.” The professional prostitute was “an inmate of a house” (VCC 1911:285) and thus presumably engaged in prostitution as a full-time profession. The semi-professional prostitute was defined as follows:

…I[girls who are employed during the day, and use this method of finding excitement or increasing their income. The ages of these girls range from 16-21, and they work in department stores, factories, as domestic servants, as waitresses, as stenographers, and in other occupations. (VCC 1911:92)

Thus, the semi-professional was a working girl that supplemented her meager income by prostituting. In contrast, the class of clandestine prostitutes was broadly defined as “the immoral girls or women, married or otherwise” and was believed to “form a large class in Chicago” (VCC 1911:71). From this definition, it appears that a clandestine prostitute did not even take money for her services. This classification is similar to W. I. Thomas’s ([1923] 1967) description of “charity girls”:

Girls of the class who have “fellows” tend to justify sexual intimacy if they are “going to marry”, if the man says he will marry if there are “consequences”, if the relation is with only one man, and not for money. These are called “charity girls” by the professional prostitutes. (P. 119)
However, Thomas then followed this description with the following:

When the girl has had some experience in sexual life she will multiply and commercialize her casual relationships. Girls talk of these matters, say “they all do it”, create a more favorable opinion of it, and show the less sophisticated girl how to make easy money. (P. 119)

This statement implies that many “charity girls,” when learning that they might profit from their “casual relationships,” take the next step to semi-professional prostitution.

But, Thomas then proceeded with the following:

The shop or office girl who makes sexual excursions does not usually become a public prostitute. Her work is more attractive, her income better, she has more class, frequently a home, and she may often find marriage among her acquaintances. There are also girls who do not work, who live in comfortable homes, and are yet found on the street; married women who prostitute themselves in order to have luxuries; women who go on the street when work is slack and return to work; others who limit their relations to a small group of men; mistresses who are promiscuous between periods when they are kept by one man; factory girls and other workers who regularly supplement the work of the day by work on the street. There is thus a general tendency to avoid identification with the prostitute class. Illegal sexual relations are becoming more individualized. Even regular prostitution is not and has never been so fixed a status as we should suppose; it is rather a transitory stage from which the girl seeks to emerge by marriage or otherwise. (P. 119-20)

Thus, Thomas seemed to demarcate the “public prostitute” and the “prostitute class” as a category analogous to the VCC’s “professional” prostitute. Moreover, he does not explicitly lump those engaging in “illegal sexual relations” as a class of prostitution, unlike the “clandestine” and the “semi-professional” delineated by the VCC (of which he was a member) that appear to encompass all the above circumstances described by Thomas. Likewise, Thomas noted the fluidity of prostitution, arguing that it was primarily a “transitory” existence rather than a permanent status.

The VCC also denoted a class of male prostitute, which they interchangeably described as “sex perverts” and “female impersonators.” As described by the VCC,

…[M]en who impersonate females are among the vaudeville entertainers, in these saloons. Unless these men are known, it is difficult to detect their sex. They solicit men at the tables for drinks the same as the women, and ask them to go upstairs for pervert practices. (VCC 1911:126)
The VCC devoted a significant discussion to the “sexual perversion,” which it believed “to be enormously prevalent and growing in Chicago” (p. 296), an excerpt of which follows:

It appears that in this community there is a large number of men who are thoroughly gregarious in habit; who mostly affect the carriage, mannerisms, and speech of women; who are fond of many articles ordinarily dear to the feminine heart; who are often people of a good deal of talent; who lean to the fantastic in dress and other modes of expression, and who have a definite cult with regard to sexual life. They preach the value of non-association with women…and yet with one another have practices which are nauseous and repulsive…. (P. 297)

However, the only specific relation the VCC made between this group and prostitution was the fore-mentioned “female impersonators” role in prostituting.

In addition to delineating various classes of prostitutes, the VCC defined other persons that played a role in the vice problem. Furthermore, the VCC repeatedly stressed that vice was a highly organized business controlled and perpetuated by men, the following excerpt illustrating this point:

It is a man and not a woman problem which we face today—commercialized by man—supported by man—the supply of fresh victims furnished by men—men who have lost that fine instinct of chivalry and that splendid honor for womanhood where the destruction of a woman’s soul is abhorrent, and where the defense of a woman’s purity is truly the occasion for a valiant fight. (VCC 1911:47)

Thus, this excerpt established that men are primarily responsible for the vice problem. Likewise, it appeals to the gender-stereotypical notions that men are protectors and defenders of women’s “purity” and that women should be treated with “chivalry” and “splendid honor.”

One specific role in the vice problem was the “pander,” his/her operations described below:

…[P]anders often work in groups and are in communication with gangs in other cities. These individuals and members of these gangs are very often waiters in saloons, bartenders and proprietors of saloons and houses of prostitution. They are scattered all over the city, and the individuals are known to each other, and confer together when their services are demanded. (VCC 1911:176)
This excerpt not only defined who was a “pander” but also inferred that this group was an organized business operation—its purpose, to procure girls/women for purposes of prostitution. Similar to the pander was the “procurer” and the “procuress”:

The supply of victims of the social vice, both female and male, is increased and perpetuated far beyond the number whose vicious inclinations lead them astray, by the direct, persistent, often concerted efforts of procurers. They include both men and women, bartenders, waiters in saloons and restaurants, managers and employes [sic] in theaters, nickel shows, penny picture arcades, employers, floor walkers and inspectors in stores and shops, keepers of employment offices, hackmen, expressmen and runners at railway stations and boat landings, midwives and doctors, fortune tellers, cadets, keepers and attendants in dance halls, private recreation parks, assignation houses, hotels and flats, call houses, disorderly salons, and houses of prostitution. (VCC 1911:230)

This excerpt establishes that procurers/procuresses are putting forth “direct, persistent, often concerted efforts” to supply girls/women for prostitution, which invokes Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of unreason, wherein this group was constructed as actively conspiring to lead victims into the life of prostitution. Moreover, the exhaustive list of those involved in procuring established quite a broad domain for those suspect of contributing to the prostitution problem. Further, various commercialized amusements as well as women’s places of employment were constructed as threatening.

The VCC elaborated further on the role of the “cadet”—a term that “is generally used in place of the uglier title ‘pimp’”—in the prostitution problem:

The report of The Committee of Fifteen (New York City) issued in 1902, thus describes this type: “The ‘cadet’ is a young man, averaging from eighteen to twenty-five years of age, who, after having served a short apprenticeship as a ‘lighthouse’ secures a staff of girls and lives upon their earnings. He dresses better than the ordinary neighborhood boy, wears an abundance of cheap jewelry, and has usually cultivated a limited amount of gentlemanly demeanor. His occupation is professional seduction.”

The cadet is the go-between, he is the agent through whom business is directed toward his own woman, or the house in which she works…. In many cases, he is the lover or “sweetheart,” and by some power so attaches his girl to himself that she will never betray him no matter if he has beaten and abused her…. Often the “cadet” belongs to political organizations, and exchanges shady work at the polls for protection from men I power for his “woman.” (VCC 1911:184)

Again, this excerpt constructs prostitution as a highly organized and lucrative business operation, involving apprenticeships, specific roles, and explicit financial relationships.
Likewise, a tie is made between prostitution and corrupt political practices—a theme which arose often in claims about the vice problem. Moreover, while not labeled “white slavery” in this excerpt, the described relationship between the girl and her “cadet” resonates with the white slavery discourse discussed in Chapter Three.

That said, while not their primary focus, the VCC did give some discussion to the “white slave traffic,” as the following excerpt illustrates:

The subject of the so-called White Slave Traffic has attracted much attention throughout this and foreign countries. The term “white slave,” is a misnomer. As a matter of fact the traffic is not confined to white girls, but to all unfortunate girls and women of all colors, races and nationalities. The use of this term, however, is authorized by the National Government and was incorporated in the international law on the subject. A “white slaver” in reality is a man who employs men or women or goes out himself to secure girls upon some false pretense, or misrepresentation, or when the girl, intoxicated or drugged, and not in possession of her senses, is conveyed to any place for immoral purposes.

If the girl is wayward and goes of her own free will she would not be a white slave in the true sense of the word; nor the man or woman who induced her to go or accompanied her to an immoral place a “white slaver.” However, any man or woman who induces or accompanies any woman to enter an immoral place is guilty under the Illinois Pandering Act. (VCC 1911:41)

In congruence with some of the crusaders discussed in Chapter Three, the VCC declared that “white slave” is a “misnomer,” as all girls/women regardless of their “colors, races and nationalities” were ensnared in the white slavery. Thus, the domain of white slaves was broadly defined. This statement also defined who was to be considered a “white slaver,” and, by not demarcating a particular social group or sex as being engaged in this occupation, again broadly constructed the domain of white slavers. However, the VCC did make a clear distinction between those who were and were not white slaves: if a girl chose “of her own free will” to enter a life of prostitution, she was not to be truly considered a white slave. Likewise, although the man or woman who “induced” a girl to become a prostitute or “accompanied her to an immoral place” was not defined as a “white slaver,” they were still defined by law as a “panderer.”

Taylor (CHS, CB, 1914b) also briefly addressed “white slavery” and its prevalence:
Because of that term “white slave” there is a current belief that a great many of them are absolutely coerced by physical force. A comparatively small proportion are so coerced, as far as we could find, and yet, those that were, made you blush for your civilization.… It includes the least proportion of the victims that have thus been caught like wild animals by people that go out gunning for them.

Thus, similarly to the VCC discussion of white slavery, Taylor made a clear distinction that “white slaves” were those “absolutely coerced by physical force” and noted that this type of prostitute constituted a small proportion of the vice problem. However, he still demonized those involved in the white slave traffic and felt empathy for the small proportion of girls who were ensnared in the white slavers’ net.

The C15, on the other hand, claimed that white slavery “exists as a hard, grim, uncompromising reality” (CHS, CB, 1911:1). Moreover, the C15 declared:

Statistics taken in scores of cities within the past two years prove that the demand for girls in places of ill repute is far in excess of the number who enter voluntarily.… This Committee does not claim that all unfortunate girls are the victims of these procurers,

But it does claim
That a large proportion, other than those who enter disreputable lives from congenital and economic causes, are victims of the commercial traffickers in girls.

And further—
The members of this Committee most emphatically believe in the constancy, virtue and inherent goodness of the average girl no matter what may be her birth and station or the temptations thrown in her way. And it is for this very reason that the Committee believes—actually knows—that keepers of disorderly resorts are forced to secure, through agents, young girls who are in most cases too decent to willingly enter immoral places. (CHS, CB, 1911:2)

Thus, contrary to the VCC, the C15 constructed white slavery as a “large proportion” of the vice problem. Further, the C15 claimed that the “constancy, virtue and inherent goodness of the average girl” necessitated that a large proportion of prostitutes must have been forced or coerced into the life.

Thomas ([1923] 1967) devoted more attention to white slavery as an aspect of prostitution. The following excerpt highlights the methods of the white slaver:

The most sensational aspect of the girl’s delinquency is connected with white slavery and the character called “pimp”, “cadet” or “souteneur.” If a young and simple girl is abducted or captured in the most brutal and audacious way she may nevertheless become broken and submissive, as an animal is broken and trained. She will then be put on the
street to “hustle”, or in a house, and her earnings collected. She is held first by fear and then acquires habits and works with the system, like a trained animal. (P. 141)

Thomas’s depiction constructs the white slave as an innocent victim of the entrapments of the white slaver. Moreover, by describing the white slave as “broken and submissive, as an animal is broken and trained,” he succinctly constructs the victim as reduced to subhuman and having no strength of will to escape her plight, thus promoting the representation—analagous to that found in Loseke’s (1992) analyses—that the white slave is “‘bewildered and helpless,’ and…‘overwhelmingly passive and unable to act on her own behalf’” (p. 28).

While the VCC did not pinpoint any particular group as primarily responsible for the white slave traffic and thus enlarged its domain, Thomas ([1923] 1967) offered the following statement:

Italians and Jews have been noticeably identified with white slavery. The Italian methods are particularly atrocious, showing the same desperation as their black-hand operations. At the same time Italian girls and Irish are the most intractable among the nationalities. The Jewish operations tend to the form of business organization. (P. 145)

Thus, Thomas comparably limited the domain of the white slave traffic, placing the primary blame on Italians and Jews. Additionally, he offers some derogatory and stereotypical constructions of these nationalities—invoking Italian mafia images and Jews’ preoccupation with business affairs—which resonated with broader xenophobic discourses propagated in the Progressive Era.

In contrast, while the VCC did not implicate a particular group for being responsible for victimizing girls/women, the VCC did pinpoint specific groups as being particularly victimized by vice. Immigrant girls/women were believed to be particularly vulnerable to vice procurers, as the following excerpt illustrates:

The immigrant woman furnishes a large supply to the demand. Generally virtuous when she comes to this country, she is ruined and exploited because there is no adequate protection and assistance given her after she reaches the United States. …Much needs to be done, however, to protect the innocent immigrant who is betrayed and led into an immoral life after landing in New York or elsewhere. The care of immigrant women, upon their arrival in Chicago, needs supervision. Immigrant girls should not be left to private expressmen and cab drivers, to be lost to their relatives and friends in the city,
because of incorrect addresses or the carelessness or vicious intent of the drivers. (VCC 1911:40)

Likewise, the VCC offered a detailed description of how the “colored population” in Chicago was particularly impacted by the vice problem:

The history of the social evil in Chicago is intimately connected with the colored population…

So whenever prostitutes, cadets and thugs were located among white people and had to be moved for commercial or other reasons, they were driven to undesirable parts of the city, the so-called colored residential sections…

In addition to this proximity to immoral conditions young colored girls are often forced into idleness because of a prejudice against them, and they are eventually forced to accept positions as maids in houses of prostitution.

Employment agents do not hesitate to send colored girls as servants to these houses. They make the astounding statement that the law does not allow them to send white girls but they will furnish colored help! …

The apparent discrimination against the colored citizens of the city in permitting vice to be set down in their very midst is unjust, and abhorrent to all fair minded people. Colored children should receive the same moral protection that white children receive.

The prejudice against colored girls who are ambitious to earn an honest living is unjust. Such an attitude eventually drives them in to immoral surroundings. They need special care and protection on the maxim that it is the duty of the strong to help the weak. (VCC 1911:38-39)

Through discussing the inequities forced upon the “colored” citizens of Chicago and the prejudice they experienced, the VCC invoked equal rights rhetoric—resonating with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) idiom of rhetoric of entitlement, wherein guarantees of individual freedom and liberty and the value of egalitarianism is exalted.

Various claims offered by those battling vice served to reorient the public views of the prostitution problem. For example, the VCC (1911) addressed the broad assumption that prostitution was a “necessary” evil, countering with the following:

But that prostitution as a commercialized business or anything akin to it, is necessary, can never be conceded. We assume that by earnest, wise, united, and persistent effort on the part of individuals and organized groups in society, we can do something—how much we can only discover by trial. To say we can do nothing may be left to the morally inert; of course, they can do nothing—but evil. (P. 26)

Resonating with a broader Progressive discourse that with “earnest, wise, united and persistent effort” a social problem can be conquered, the VCC reoriented the vice
problem from a “necessary” evil that must be tolerated to a social problem that must be overcome. Moreover, again resonating with a broader Progressive discourse, it accused those of not addressing this problem as “morally inert” and “evil.” The VCC also offered the following declaration that reorients the problem from a simple dichotomous interpretation of the institution of prostitution—either a woman was or was not a prostitute—to a more nuanced understanding of prostitution:

[W]omen prostitutes have been in the past all grouped together; young and old, confirmed prostitutes and girls who have made but their first misstep, were all placed in one class, as impelled into the life by their own evil inclinations. This naïve explanation to account for such a prevalent institution still survives among those whose experience of life has been so limited as to allow them no conception of the subtle and complicated social conditions which produce the social evil. (P. 263)

Thus, this statement, when considered with the subsequent discussions of the myriad social factors that were believed to drive women into prostitution, acts to reorient prostitutes from immoral individuals “impelled into the life by their own evil inclinations” to victims of various social inequities. Taylor (CHS, CB, 1914b) also questioned the beliefs about the necessity of prostitution:

I presume that there were very many of those thirty commissioners who really believed that some form of prostitution was an absolute necessity. I am very sure that some of the commissioners believed that the segregation of so much of that social evil as could be segregated and placed under police surveillance was the least of two evils. But the facts from Chicago and fifty other American cities and from abroad, the facts form the cities where it was licensed, where the city became a partner in the infamous traffic, the facts from the armies and the navies, the facts from police records despite police opinion, were simply overwhelming, and drove us together and brought us out a psychological and moral and spiritual unit. (P. 3)

Again, resonating with Progressive discourse regarding thorough examination of “facts” and drawing the necessary conclusions regarding social policy, Taylor reorients the prostitution problem from necessary to combatable.

Another reorientation device used by the VCC was to construct prostitution as a vast, commercialized business enterprise controlled by men, as the following excerpt illustrates:
The first truth that the Commission desires to impress upon the citizens of Chicago is the fact that prostitution in this city is a Commercialized Business of large proportions with tremendous profits of more than Fifteen Million Dollars per year, controlled largely by men, not women. (VCC 1911:32)

Additionally, the VCC revealed that “so-called respectable citizens” who owned properties used for the purposes of prostitution were sharing in the profits of this big business, thus reorienting the problem to include “respectable citizens” as well as “vile and abandoned men”:

In juxtaposition with this group of professional male exploiters stand ostensibly respectable citizens, both men and women, who are openly renting and leasing property for exorbitant sums, and thus sharing, through immorality of investments, the profits from this Business.

The Commission has secured a large list of owners of houses where prostitution is openly practiced. In some instances these owners are vile and abandoned men who make a business of exploiting these unfortunate women. And side by side with these men, ignorant and vile, stand so-called respectable citizens who are also sharing in the increased values from property used to extend the business of prostitution. (P. 33, 88)

Thus, in addition to reorienting the understanding of the vice problem, this statement expanded the domain of prostitution to include “respectable” citizens.

Estimates

The VCC (1911) offered scads of incidence estimates in their claims. They also highlighted the “official” nature of their sources, as they worked from existing police records on prostitution in Chicago, which they subsequently contended were far understated, and then complemented these records with their own observations. These estimates ranged over the various aspects of the “Social Evil,” including but not limited to the following: the number of prostitutes “who devote their time wholly to the business,” estimate 5,000 (p. 70); and an estimated $15,699,449 total annual profit from prostitution in Chicago, with $8,476,689 from “rentals of property and profits of keepers and Inmates,” $4,307,000 from “sale of liquor, disorderly saloons only,” and $2,915,760 from “sale of liquor in houses, flats, and profits of Inmates on commissions” (p. 113). Furthermore, they often presented very detailed calculations regarding how these
estimates were projected—the following excerpt of the calculation of a portion of the annual profit just one of the many examples:

RECAPITULATION OF THREE RESTRICTED DISTRICTS (HOUSES AND FLATS ONLY)...Total $6,917,900. This appalling aggregate covers only the houses and flats in the three so-called restricted districts. In addition to these houses and flats, the police list gives 17 assignation hotels in the 2d, 3d and 4th precincts, having 1086 rooms, and 6 in the 27th and 28th precincts, having 45 rooms. These rooms rent for from 25 cents to $2.

Assuming that each room is rented only once each night at an average price of 50 cents, and that this is all profit (as most of these rooms are rented many times each night, and many of them for higher prices) the sum of $206,407 must be added to the above aggregate for rental only.... Estimating that only one prostitute entertains once each night in each room at a price of $1, the "body rental" amounts to $412,815.... It is an ultra-conservative assumption that considering the total business done, these sums may be called "profits." To conclude with the police list, 10 houses with 26 inmates, 36 flats with 73 inmates and 19 assignation hotels having 91 rooms are given for the 38th precinct, North Side.

We thus have, dealing with the police list only a grant total profit from the two factors mentioned, from tolerated or regulated vice in the city of $7,865,144.

And even this is not all. The investigation of the Commission, which covered only a part of the city, showed 398 disorderly saloons catering to immoral women, practically assignation rooms, or houses of ill-fame, in which 928 prostitutes were seen; it showed 33 hotels over saloons, 37 hotels not over saloons, 82 rooms over saloons, 24 houses over saloons, and 60 rooms not over saloons. None of these saloons, houses, hotels or assignation places are given on the police list, or considered in the above statement.

Estimating on the lowest basis given above (and omitting entirely the 398 disorderly saloons and the 928 prostitutes seen in them), a sum amounting to $611,545 must be added, considering each "hotel" as a flat with two inmates only, and each of the 24 houses as having only two. The final sum is therefore $8,476,689.00. (P. 102-103)

However, while offering such detailed estimates, the VCC often qualified their statements by emphasizing that these estimates, while as official and rigorous as could be expected, were "ultra conservative":

These statements may seem exaggerated and highly colored, but a careful, ultra conservative study of conditions in this municipality has put the Commission in possession of absolute facts upon which to base these conclusions. (VCC 1911:33)

The Commission, after careful examination of the data at hand, has made an ultra conservative estimate covering the annual profits of those interested in the Social Evil in Chicago. (VCC 1911:71)
As a preface to mathematical statements, and to show that the figures given are ultra-conservative, take the following excerpts from statements given in conferences before the Commission…. (VCC 1911:96)

This incessant reiteration of an “ultra conservative” caveat implied that the “Social Evil” was larger than the official data represented, thus constructing a greater enormity of the problem. Likewise, this measure was perhaps intended to account for the elusiveness of estimating the number of “clandestine” prostitutes in Chicago, as illustrated by the following excerpt:

As intimated, the Commission has not sought to inquire into the extent of clandestine prostitution in the city. The clandestine prostitutes (or more correctly the immoral girls or women, married or otherwise) form a large class in Chicago. Because of the peculiar phase of the evil it was impossible for the Commission to investigate conditions or make an estimate of the number in this class. (VCC 1911:71)

Graham Taylor (CHS, CB, 1914b), a member of the VCC, reinforced this notion that estimating the true magnitude of the “Social Evil” was near impossible:

The magnitude of this system [“commercialized, segregated, police-protected vice”] is little imagined. It is only guessed at. Its proportions are estimated by wild guesses of numbers…. The clandestine type of this evil can never be estimated and possibly can never be directly dealt with. (P. 1)

Interestingly, Taylor, a member of the VCC and thus witness to the detailed estimations projected for the prostitution problem in 1910-1911, three years later declared that “its proportions are estimated by wild guesses of numbers”—a statement that throws question regarding his confidence in the VCC investigation.

The C15 offered various estimates of the number of prostitutes and establishments supporting prostitution throughout its annual reports, often focusing upon how their reform efforts had decreased the magnitude of the problem, as the following excerpts illustrate:

The results are a little less than marvelous. Open street soliciting has been reduced at least 80%. Hundreds of houses of prostitution, which were as open as meat markets, have been closed. Segregated vice districts have been banished and the volume of vice has been reduced tremendously. No statistics are available which can be considered accurate, but it is a safe estimate that the number of houses of prostitution has been
reduced at least 60%; that is, there are not forty houses of ill fame where there were a hundred four years ago, and the business in those that are left has been very materially reduced. (NL, GT, n.d.:12-13)

We have a list of five hundred eighteen (518) places where immorality was carried on more or less openly one year ago, or since, which are now closed or against which we can obtain no evidence. The list includes seventy-three (73) disorderly saloons and four hundred forty-five (445) houses of ill-fame or assignation….

It is variously estimated that from one to three thousand professional prostitutes have left the city during the last year. I think one thousand is a very conservative estimate and that three thousand is too high….

One reliable police official informs me, that, in his judgment, sixty per cent of the professional prostitutes throughout the entire city have gone out of business. I think this estimate is too high, but that tremendous inroads have been made in the vice situation in Chicago, no sane person can deny. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1914)

The C15, while lauding its reform efforts, cautioned against overestimating the decrease in the problem, admonishing, “Yet we must not deceive ourselves. The vice king is not dethroned…we may hold what we have gained and make still further inroads into the vice situation. There is much to be done” (CHS, CB, April 30, 1914). While presenting concrete figures in their annual report for the year ending April 30, 1914, the C15 offered more obscure estimates for the subsequent year:

It is to be regretted that there is no way of obtaining the exact facts respecting the number of houses of prostitution which have been closed through the direct and indirect efforts of this Committee….

…Many hundreds of houses in this great city have been purged of immoral women….

…During the year just closed there has been such a tremendous overthrow of resorts…that I have thought it best not to take the time of our small force to check off all the places now standing idle or occupied for some other purpose. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1915)

Thus, although the estimates presented were vague in comparison with the previous year, the C15 still attests that due to their reform efforts, “many hundreds” of houses of ill repute had met their demise. However, as in the previous year, the C15 warned that vice was “Down but not Out”:

It would be folly to assume that commercialized vice has been banished from Chicago…. No vice is still with us, but prostitution as a business enterprise has received such a
terrific blow that all the efforts of the vice kings to revive this wretched traffic will prove futile if decent citizenship maintains its present attitude. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1915)

Thus, again while extolling its accomplishments, the C15 maintains the need of its existence by constructing the vice problem as still a looming adversary.

Similarly—and prior to the C15’s incorporation—the VCC provided vague estimates of the waning of vice as a social problem. The VCC (1911) declared, “Present day conditions are better in respect to open vice than the city has known in many years” (p. 28), as well as the following:

It is only fair to say that the conditions on the streets in the downtown business district at present are much better than they have been in many years in the City of Chicago. The improvement has been gradual during the past three or four years. (P. 91)

Moreover, Mayor Busse, presiding at the time of the VCC investigation, prefaced the VCC report with the following statement:

I think we can fairly assume that our vice problems is exactly like that of any American city. To exploit publicly the details of it, can serve no useful end and such exploitation is not the purpose of this commission proposition. On the other hand exploitation may do much harm by leading the uniformed to believe that conditions exist here which are of recent origin or which are worse than exist in other American cities.

As a matter of fact, the conditions incident to the vice problem in Chicago—a problem as old as the city itself—are better than they have ever been within present day memory. This I think will be conceded by all who are fully acquainted with the facts. But we all want still better conditions if they can be had. (VCC 1911:3)

Thus, not only declaring that vice in Chicago was on a downswing, the mayor assured the public that the “Social Evil” was no worse in Chicago than any other city in the Union—a statement no doubt made to not only reassure the public but to implicitly note his political administration’s role in improving the situation as well as saving face by constructing Chicago’s vice presence as the norm, not the exception.

However, while the mayor and the VCC made blanket statements that the vice problem was in a downturn, the VCC did also offer the following growth estimate:

The following extract from a report made by a missionary worker gives her impression of conditions on the North Side: “From the river to Chicago avenues, including Wells, LaSalle and Clark streets, are certainly growing worse very fast. It is simply alarming.
Dearborn avenues, North Clark street, is fast becoming a red light district. I have worked in all these places and can speak from deep experience. It is going farther north all the time, even as far as North avenues. On all the cross streets, from the river to Chicago avenue, one can see soliciting going on almost any time of night.

This conclusion has been verified by the field investigation. One worker who has covered the North Side from the river to Chicago avenues, State, Wells and Clark, and all intersecting streets, three different times in as many years, declares that conditions are worse in that section than they were three years ago. (VCC 1911:91-2)

This growth estimate does not only imply a magnitude of growth but also a spread of vice into areas where it did not exist before, thus increasing the geographic range of the problem.

While few, those battling vice did offer some claims that constructed an indiscriminate range regarding those susceptible to this social problem. The VCC (1911) declared that “even the purest and least suspecting members of the social order” were in danger of the “Social Evil”:

> The evils of which it [the “Social Evil”] is the cause and the perils with which it besets the lives of even the purest and least suspecting members of the social order afford ample justification for the most earnest efforts to abate and conquer it. (P. 261)

Similarly, a circular distributed by the Chicago Society for Social Hygiene (CSSH), primarily concerned with vice’s relationship with venereal disease, warned that “against these greater black plagues the venereal diseases, there is no natural immunity; we are all susceptible, mere contact with the virus infects us” (NL, GT, 1907). In “an appeal to the fathers and mothers of Chicago” accompanying a donor pledge card, the C15 made this impassioned plea:

> It is conservatively estimated that five thousand recruits from among the daughters of fathers and mothers must be drawn into this net every year. Shall your daughter be among them? It takes many thousands of young men and boys, to make this horrible business in Chicago profitable. Are your sons among them? Thousands of homes in Chicago are overshadowed by this pestilential cloud called vice. Is your home in the shadow?

> The Committee of Fifteen was also instrumental in restoring thirty-two girls to their parents or have them committed to correctional institutions. If any of them had been your girls, would you have appreciated it to the extent of furnishing means to pursue the fight?

> We should have several thousand fathers and mothers enlisted in this warfare. Will you not be among them, for the sake of your sons, your daughters, your homes and
Thus, this plea for financial support strategically constructed the “Social Evil” as indiscriminate—that at any moment, “you and yours” could be touched by its viciousness. Consequently, it behooves the fathers and mothers to join the cause to protect their families from its far-reaching grasp.

**Typifying Examples**

The VCC offered innumerable citations of “typical cases” in their report. The following provides a brief synopsis of the categories in which typical cases were often grouped as well as the approximate number of individual cases:

- Twenty-seven cases illustrating the “conditions surrounding houses, flats, and assignation rooms and hotels” (p. 75);
- Four druggists and five physicians who solicited drug orders from and/or provided drugs, “including cocaine and morphine,” to houses of prostitution (p. 85);
- Forty-one real estate agents “willing to rent flats or houses for immoral purposes” (p. 89);
- Twenty-two bartenders and waiters “connected with disorderly saloons” (p. 123);
- Eighteen “typical cases in connection with saloons” (p. 132) and four “special typical cases” (p. 134);
- Sixty-five cases of police officers’ neglect of duty and/or collusion with prostitutes (p. 151-160);
- A “table giving data regarding thirty inmates of houses of prostitution in Chicago” (p. 166-67);
- Upwards of 82 cases of “professional and semi-professional prostitutes” soliciting in dance halls (p. 185-198);
- Twelve women who worked in department stores but were also seen prostituting (p. 211);
- Thirteen employment agents who agreed to send young girls/women to houses of prostitution as servants (p. 218);
- Twelve midwives who agreed to perform abortions (p. 225);
- Forty children working as street vendors and messenger boys in vice districts (p. 242-44);
- Sixteen “typical instances” of immoral behavior between boys and girls in “confectionary and ice cream parlors” (p. 249)

The diversity of categories presented above illustrates that the VCC investigated variegated aspects of what they believed was connected with the vice problem as a whole. The majority of the cited cases were very brief in their presentation; likewise, often either pseudonyms or subject numbers were used in place of names to maintain
subject anonymity. One may interpret the very straightforward presentation and concern for anonymity as guided by Progressive notions of proper social-scientific methods: presenting cases as factual and objective, and protecting the anonymity of those studied. However, some of the brief cases provided snapshots of what caused the women to become prostitutes—the reasons given evoking some sympathy for the women’s plights, as the following illustrate:

One woman, Mollie (X61), lives near Oak Park and solicits in (X62). Her husband is dying in (X62a). She said that she began this life only recently because of her extra expense in caring for her husband. (VCC 1911:79)

Paullette solicited on corner of Curtis and West Madison streets, is 22 years old, married. “Hustles” to support two-year-old baby. (VCC 1911:93)

These cases highlighted how these women began prostituting to support their families, analogous to Loseke and Fawcett’s (1995) concept morality of activity, wherein the victims are constructed as devoted family members and thus deserving of sympathy.

Several of the cases highlighted in the table regarding thirty “inmates” in a house of prostitution (p. 166-68) also highlighted various dire straits as being the cause. For example, six women reported that they spent their money and/or became a prostitute to support their families. Twelve women blamed various economic reasons why they were driven into prostitution, including the following: “could not earn enough to live on” as a department store worker; “could not make ends meet” doing housework; “low wages” as a dressmaker; in “poverty” as a waitress; and general statements such as “no work; no money,” “unable to get work.” Similarly, a couple of women noted “insufficient education for clerk” work and “not education enough for other work” than housework as the cause for their becoming a prostitute. Nine of the women reported they were “seduced” by men and subsequently became prostitutes. All of these “causes” for becoming a prostitute construct the women as victims of various factors, be it economic and educational inequalities, responsibilities toward family, or treacherous men’s seductions. Thus, these examples are presented to evoke sympathy for the victims.

In addition to these brief case citations, the VCC did include a few extended discussions of particular cases, such as the following:
A second class of women is the widow or divorced woman with children. Many of these women are left without support and are incapable of earning a living in the industrial world, and finally resort to the saloon as an avenue to making money. As an illustration, a woman now known as “the (X338a)” solicits in the (X339) Café at (X340) South Halsted street. She told the investigator she was a widow with two children. When her husband died she attempted to work but found it impossible to support herself and her children on the wages she received. As she had a fine voice she began to sing in cafés. At this time she had no idea of “hustling,” but when she had to sit and drink with men, night after night, she was advised by the waiters, by proprietors and by men she drank with to “hustle,” as “she could make so much more out of it.”

She resisted the temptation, however, until one night she was attracted by a “cadet,” and it was through his influence that she began a life of prostitution, giving him part of the proceeds. (VCC 1911:127-28)

Again, this typifying example constructs the woman as a victim: she was driven to prostitution due to desperation, not personal immorality. Likewise, this case example resonates with Loseke and Fawcett’s (1995) concepts of morality of activity and morality of biography, as this woman is constructed as a devoted, widowed mother who tries to do honest work to support her two children but is driven by desperation to prostitution. Thus, again, this case example is constructed to evoke sympathy from the audience. Moreover, this example resonates with broader Progressive discourse that criticized the inadequate income of women’s work.

Rhetorics

This section presents the various rhetorics present in the claims of those battling vice, informed by Best’s (1987, 1990) notions of warrants and rhetorics of rationality and rectitude and Ibarra & Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical analytics. The following categories of warrants were paramount in the claims: historical continuity with previous social problems; awakened public conscience and responsibility to fight vice; value of children; social factors as contributing to vice problem; feeblemindedness and the vice problem; venereal disease and the “double standard” of sexuality; and blameless victims in need of protection. Motifs (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993) were also employed by those battling vice, with generic social problems motifs as well as metaphors constructing the vice problem and those responsible for it as monsters and inhuman, and a war/battle motif being particularly prevalent.
Historical Continuity with Previous Social Problems

The VCC made the following allusion to historical continuity between the “Social Evil” and previous social problems:

As plagues, epidemics and contagious diseases old as the world have given way before the onslaught of medical science; as slavery in this country has been rooted out by the gradually growing conviction of an American conscience; so may the Social Evil be repressed proportionately as the American people grow in righteousness and in the knowledge of this curse, which is more blasting than any plague or epidemic; more terrible than any black slavery that ever existed in this or any other country; more degenerating to the morals and ideals of the nation than all other agencies against decency combined. (VCC 1911:26-7)

This warrant presented society as victorious in the past over lesser social ills and thus capable of overcoming a far worse social problem as was the “Social Evil.” Again, similar to the crusaders examined in Chapter Three, the VCC, when comparing vice to the enslavement of blacks in America, constructed the Social Evil as “more terrible than any black slavery that ever existed.” As discussed in Chapter Three, the sexual nature of white slavery, lingering Victorian ideals of women’s sexuality, and racist sentiment perhaps prejudiced the crusaders’ beliefs that the enslavement of white women was necessarily far worse than the enslavement of blacks.

Awakened Public Conscience and Responsibility to Fight Vice

References to the awakening of public conscience and responsibility to address the vice problem abounded in the claims of those battling vice. As evidenced in the excerpt from the previous section, the VCC made claims that the “growing conviction of an American conscience,” and “the American people grow[ing] in righteousness and knowledge” of the vice problem compelled the public to take responsibility and take action against this social ill that was “more degenerating to the morals and ideals of the nation than all other agencies against decency combined” (p. 26-27). The following excerpts from claims by the VCC and its members as well as the C15 include similar allusions:
We believe that Chicago has a public conscience which, when aroused, cannot be easily stilled—a conscience built upon moral and ethical teachings of the purest American type—a conscience which when aroused to the truth will instantly rebel against the Social Evil in all its phases. (VCC 1911:25-26)

In the discussion of the means of rescue and reform, it is natural that emphasis should be placed upon institutions and agencies which have proved of value or promised relief. Yet it must be remembered that the most serious evils of this traffic in virtue are not physical but moral, and that the most effective means of counteracting them must ever be in the elevation of the moral sentiment of the community to a sense of individual responsibility for upright conduct in behalf of decency and virtue. (VCC 1911:261)

Pending the report and recommendations of the committee there has been a surprising rally of public sympathy against restoring the suppressed disorderly resorts in the former segregated district….

The Tribune…adds “now that we are tardily facing this dark question, the conscience and the intelligence of the community demand that it be dealt with not superficially and cynically, but courageously, scientifically and with effect.”

The Record-Herald “without much hesitation, associates itself with those enlightened and humane men and women who oppose segregation and advocate rational, gradual repression of the social evil.”

…[T]he whole situation promises the assurance of an enlightened, constructive, progressive public policy for carrying on and [out] the clarion summons of the Vice Commission, “Constant and persistent repression of prostitution the immediate method; absolute annihilation the ultimate ideal”…. (Taylor 1912b:255-56)

The conscience of Chicago was awakened by work done under the direction of a small group of private citizens. It was startled into energetic action by the report of the Vice Commission—a report of marvelous insight and revelation. At once the small group of citizens took advantage of the more alert public conscience and organized and incorporated in 1911 the Committee of Fifteen…. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1915)

Correspondingly, the VCC made appeals specifically to defending the “honor of Chicago” by fighting vice:

The honor of Chicago, the fathers and mothers of her children, the physical and moral integrity of the future generation demand that she repress public prostitution. (VCC 1911:25)

It is abhorrent to the moral sense of a community like Chicago—the second largest city in the country—a city rightly ambitious to stand high in the world’s achievements for civic and social betterment—that there should be within its borders a group or groups of men, vicious and ignorant to a degree—who are openly and defiantly breaking the laws of the State, and bringing into ill repute the honor of the city. (VCC 1911:32)
Congruently, Sumner (1913) declared, “The integrity of the home, the nation and the individual himself demands the repression of the social evil as a commercialized business” (p. 96). As illustrated by these examples, this warrant resonated with a broader Progressive discourse: when the citizen’s sleeping conscience is awakened, they will ambitiously arise to their moral and civic duty to fight social problems and thus restore the integrity of their community.

Value of Children

Those battling vice often invoked the warrant of the value of children. The VCC offered the following in their report’s introduction:

Protection of Children. We often forget that society owes much to the protection of the children. Those of mature years can be left generally to guard themselves; but in the case of youth and ignorance, society must take the part of the elder brother, and in many cases, the part of the father as an educator and guardian.

From its study of existing conditions in Chicago the Commission feels that if there is to be any permanent gain in the fight against the Social Evil in this city, much care and thought must be given the problem of child protection and education.

…[C]hildren in certain sections of the city are surrounded by many immoral influences and dangers. They are compelled by reason of poverty to live within, or in close proximity to, restricted prostitute districts. Even in residential sections children come in contact with immoral persons, and gain an early knowledge of things which may influence their whole life and guide them in the wrong direction. (VCC 1911:35)

This excerpt declares that while parents have a moral duty to protect their children, society at large has a moral as well as civic duty to protect the children in its midst. Likewise, the VCC implied that all children were vulnerable to the vice problem, be they impoverished and thus living “in close proximity to, restricted prostitute districts” or “even in residential sections”—a statement that constructs the range of those children touched by vice as indiscriminate. However, the VCC devoted considerably more attention to children living within close proximity of vice districts, as they were perceived as being in more immediate danger:

It is a notorious fact that many children of all ages are compelled by poverty or circumstances to live within or in close proximity to the restricted districts in Chicago. Because of this these children are subjected to great moral dangers. They become familiar with scenes of debauchery and drunkenness until they are careless and
indifferent. Their moral standards are lowered to such an extent that it is difficult to fill their minds with wholesome thoughts and high ideals. In addition to the presence of prostitutes near their homes, the children are in danger from vicious men and boys who frequent such districts. (VCC 1911:237)

Thus, the close proximity to vice placed children—presumably of most concern, girls—in immediate danger of being victimized by “vicious men and boys” who frequented the vice districts. Moreover, the exposure to “debauchery and drunkenness” was argued to have essentially irreparable damage upon the children’s moral standards, thus desensitizing them to the immorality around them and, presumably, leading them down the path to vice. Consequently, the implication was that something had to be done to save these children from these evils for the sake of their value as children as well as ameliorating the growth of future vice.

The VCC report devoted an entire section entitled “Child Protection and Education.” At the beginning of this section, the VCC offered a clarifying paragraph as to who were considered “children” in the eyes of the investigators:

According to the law all persons under the age of twenty-one years are considered wards of the State of Illinois, and their persons are subject to the care, guardianship and control of the courts, provided, however, that guardianship of the child be had by the court before child has reached eighteen years. For the purpose of this report then, it is understood that this study refers to the protection of all children whatever their age, and education of all young persons between the age of puberty and the age of majority. (VCC 1911:236)

Thus, the range of who was to be considered a “child” was quite broad—ranging from infancy to twenty-one-year-olds. Concurrently, however, the VCC argued that one must take into consideration the following:

…[I]mmoral influences and dangers which surround children and young people affect them to a greater or less degree according to their ages. For instance, if the child is quite young, these evil impressions may become fixed and have a marked influence throughout its whole life, or these evil impressions may be counteracted by wise methods, if administered in time. After the age of puberty these influences become grave and often result in the immediate downfall of the child. This downfall becomes permanent unless heroic measures are taken to save him. (P. 236)

Thus, the VCC constructed younger children, while vulnerable to “evil impressions,” as more readily saved from the permanent damage of such influences. In contrast, the
children at the age of puberty and beyond were in comparably dire straits and possibly beyond saving “unless heroic measures” were taken.

The VCC devoted considerable discussion to the “immoral influences and dangers” besetting children in Chicago. They criticized the close proximity to schoolhouses of “disorderly saloons…frequented by dissolute and vicious men and immoral women,” where the upstairs rooms were “used for immoral purposes, and the school authorities testify that the children may see into these rooms from the school windows and from the playground” (p. 239). The VCC elaborated further on the dangers of “vicious and degenerate men” as follows:

The court records show that vicious and degenerate men seek out young boys and girls and fill their minds with filthy and obscene suggestions and teach them lewd and unnatural practices. Some of these men frequent the neighborhood of school houses and distribute obscene cards and literature. They go to public parks and take liberties with innocent children. Some of these men are afflicted with chronic venereal diseases, and have a superstition that they can be cured of their trouble by transferring it to a virgin…. As a result, innocent children both boys and girls, have been contaminated. (P. 240)

The rhetorical features of this excerpt resonate with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of loss as well as their rhetoric of unreason idioms: children are depicted as blameless innocents that are being purposively targeted by these “vicious and degenerate” men. Likewise, the rhetoric of endangerment is invoked through the assertion that these men consciously infect children with venereal diseases. The VCC subsequently addressed “venereal disease among children,” declaring “one of the saddest aspects of the whole problem of the social evil is the fact that hundreds of innocent children have become infected by venereal diseases” (p. 241)—a statement that again resonates with the fore-mentioned rhetorical idioms.

The VCC also were concerned with various “economic and home conditions affecting children and young people” and their relation with vice. For example, children employed in various roles in the vice district were of great concern to the VCC:

*Newsboys.* Small boys are selling papers in and about the restricted district…

*Street Vendors.* In addition to the newsboys selling papers late at night in the vicinity of restricted districts, there are many little boys and girls engaged in selling gum near disorderly and suspicious cafes and saloons where prostitutes were soliciting….
Messenger Boys. The (X1177) Telegraph Company occupies office at (X 1178), which is their nearest branch office to one of the restricted districts. There are about eight messenger boys employed here, ranging from fifteen to eighteen years of age. The majority of these boys are colored. These messengers are called upon to work at all hours of the day and night. As part of their duties they answer calls from prostitutes, to purchase lunch at nearby restaurant, or to go [to] drug stores to purchase drugs and various articles. In this way the messenger becomes an important link in the system whereby cocaine and various other drugs used by habitués are secured by them. (VCC 1911:241-43).

Again, the assumption was that this exposure to the “immoral influences” of the vice district assaulted the moral standards of these children. Likewise, the children were perceived as being economically exploited, resonating with a broader Progressive discourse that criticized children’s exploitation in the industrial world.

The VCC was also concerned with providing for the welfare of children born out of wedlock. In a section of their report entitled “More Humane Treatment of Extra-Conjugal Maternity,” the VCC (1911) offered the following:

The law should at the least provide whereby the parents should support the child; good results would undoubtedly follow. It would at least prevent the innocent child from suffering from the brand which society now places upon it. This law under which the child would inherit from the father or mother would perhaps have the effect of making the girl and her parents more anxious to secure the co-operation of the father, and of inducing the parents of the girl to receive her into their home. As it is at present, thanks to the foundling homes, etc., it is entirely too easy to abandon children.

Just as the law compels the father, when he is able, to support his minor children, so it is urged, the law should extend to the support of children where there has been no lawful marriage. For the children, in the interests of the state, need to be brought up in a respectable manner, cared for, supported, and educated, to become reputable citizens. (P. 282-83)

This excerpt directly appeals to the value of “the innocent child” suffering by society’s unfair branding of the child as illegitimate. Likewise, it appeals to the “interests of the state” in raising its children to be respectable citizens.

Social Factors as Contributing to Vice Problem

Those battling vice implicated various social factors as contributing to the vice problem. Working girl’s low wages and poor working conditions were overwhelmingly proclaimed as creating the girl’s extreme vulnerability and thus temptation to become
prostitutes for survival. As was presented in my discussion of typifying examples, low wages were often offered by prostitutes as what led them to prostitution. The following excerpts from the VCC report further illuminate this warrant:

\textit{The Economic Side of the Question.} The life of an unprotected girl who tries to make a living in a great city is full of torturing temptations. First, she faces the problem of living on an inadequate wage: Six dollars a week is the average in mercantile establishments. The girl who has no home soon learns of “city poverty” all the more cruel to her because of the artificial contrasts. She quickly learns of the possibilities about her, of the joys of comfort, good food, entertainment. Attractive clothes. Poverty becomes a menace and a snare. One who has not beheld the struggle or come in personal contact with the tempted soul of the underpaid girl can never realize what the poverty of the city means to her. One who has never seen her bravely fighting against such fearful odds will [n]ever understand….

Hundreds, if not thousands, of girls from country towns, and those born in the city but who have been thrown on their own resources, are compelled to live in cheap boarding or rooming houses on the average wage of six dollars. How do they exist on this sum? …But there is no doubt that many girls do live on even six dollars and do it honestly, but we can affirm that they do not have nourishing food, or comfortable shelter, or warm clothes, or any amusement, except perhaps free public dances, without outside help, either from charity in the shape of girls’ clubs, or friends in the country home; How can she possibly exist to say nothing of live? Is it any wonder that a tempted girl who receives only six dollars per week working with her hands sells her body for twenty-five dollars per week when she learns there is a demand for it and men are willing to pay the price? …Which employer wins the half starved child to his side in this unequal battle? (VCC 1911:42-43)

The VCC painted a dismal picture of the plight of the working girl, forced into prostitution due to economic desperation. Likewise, while the VCC conceded, “many girls do live on even six dollars and do it honestly,” they constructed her situation as still destitute. This excerpt is constructed to evoke sympathy for working girls that turn to prostitution by depicting them as victims of economic inequality. Sumner (1913) offered a similar plea:

Are flesh and blood so cheap, mental qualifications so common, and honesty of so little value, that the manager of one of our big department stores feels justified in paying a high school girl, who has served nearly one year as an inspector of sales, the beggarly wage of $4.00 per week? What is the natural result of such an industrial condition? Dishonesty and immorality, not from choice, but necessity—in order to live. We can forgive the human frailty which yields to temptation under such conditions, but we cannot forgive the soulless corporation which arrests and prosecutes this girl—a first offender—when she takes some little articles for personal adornment…. Is it any wonder that a tempted girl who receives only six dollars per week working with her hands sells
her body for twenty-five dollars per week when she learns there is a demand for it and men are willing to pay the price? (P. 104-105)

Sumner takes this claim one step further by directly questioning the moral conscience of the “manager of one of our big department stores” and the “soulless corporation” who forces his employee into “dishonesty and immorality, not from choice, but necessity—in order to live.” Again, this excerpt evokes sympathy for the working girl—constructing her as a blameless victim faced with no other alternative but to become a prostitute for her mere survival. However, like the VCC, Sumner conceded that not all working girls faced with abject poverty succumb to prostitution:

It would be unjust, however, to cast any reflection upon those girls who are brave and pure, but intimating that because they earn so small a wage they must necessarily be in the same class with those other girls who, unable to survive longer the heroic battle against poverty and self-sacrifice, have succumbed and gone down. (P. 106)

Consequently, while in the former claim Sumner attempted to construct working girls that succumb to prostitution as having no choice but to do so, in the latter claim he constructs a subtle moral distinction between the “brave and pure” girl who withstands the temptation and the “class” that has “succumbed and gone down.”

Related to working girls’ low wages, those battling vice also sometimes cited the girls’ lack of education and skills as putting them at a disadvantage in the marketplace. Some of the typifying examples discussed earlier noted this as a factor in causing girls to become prostitutes. The following excerpts further illustrate this warrant:

[M]ost of these women or girls are not necessarily unintelligent, but certainly, from their opportunity and environment since birth, uneducated, unskilled and with little opportunity or possibility for social advancement or betterment. (VCC 1911:110)

On the public rests the mighty responsibility of seeing to it that the demand is not supplied through the breaking down of the early education of the young girl or her exploitation in the business world. What show has she in the competitive system which exists today? Whatever chances may be, to stand or to fall, she is here in hordes in the business world as our problem. Let us do something to give her at least a living wage. If she is not sufficiently skilled to earn it let us mix some religious justice with our business and do something to increase her efficiency which she has never been able to develop through no fault of her own. (Sumner 1913:104)
Doctor Katharine B. Davis...has made a careful analysis of the life-histories of 647 prostitutes...which throws light on the conditions under which girls begin their sexual delinquency.

As to schooling of the girls, “fifty individuals or 7.72 per cent, cannot read or write any language...45.3 per cent have never finished the primary grades, while an additional 39.72 per cent never finished the grammar grades. Thirteen individuals had entered but not finished high school; only four individuals had graduated from high school; three had had one year at a normal school, and one out of 647 cases had entered college.” In addition, the average wage of the girls who had worked was very low. (Thomas [1923] 1967:116-118)

Again, the working girl is constructed as a victim, as she has been unable to cultivate skills due to “little opportunity” and “through no fault of her own.”

Correspondingly, the VCC also showed concern for various aspects of working conditions that contributed to girls’ falling into prostitution. For example, the VCC (1911) offered the following regarding department store work:

The girl in the department store is confronted with certain temptations which are ever pressing harder upon her. The first of these is the procuress, the second the “cadet,” and third, the man directly over her, who may even be the manager or the proprietor himself.

*The Procuress.* The woman who appears before the girl’s counter or in the waiting room and compliments her on her good looks and bewails with her the injustice which prevents her from having the beautiful clothes to which she is entitled and the good times, because of her youth and beauty. Too often the girl listens and accepts the “elegant” lady’s invitation to come to her flat for dinner or to spend Sunday….

*The “Cadet.”* This boy or man may be seen any evening near the employes’ [sic] exit of department stores with the avowed purpose of making the acquaintance of some attractive girl and bear her off in triumph to the restaurant and the theater….

*Married Men.* Married men are among the worst offenders against salesgirls, and use all sorts of methods to induce them to accept invitations to dine, or go to the theater. These men come to the counter while their wives are shopping, and thus enter into conversation with the girls. They are very bold and aggressive in their actions, and if the girls resent these attentions, some of these men actually report them to the floor walkers, claiming they neglected their business. In some cases these complaints have led to the discharge of the girls in the store….

*Men Employers, Salesmen and Women.* Some salesgirls will testify their downfall was caused by their employers.... The superintendent of (X985e) department store mistreated his stenographer.... After her downfall, she left the store.... A matron at one of the large department stores once told a salesgirl she was foolish to work there, as she could make money easier in the “sporting life.” About two weeks later this girl resigned, and was found by a detective from this store in a basement saloon on Madison street. (P. 203, 207-209)
Thus, the VCC depicted department store girls as surrounded by persons actively conspiring toward their downfall, be it into commercial prostitution or as a mistress—resonating with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) *rhetoric of unreason*. The following excerpt from the VCC report bemoaned the department store and factory working conditions:

…”[T]he present economic and insanitary conditions under which the girls employed in factories and department stores live and work, has an effect on the nervous forces of the girl in such a way as to render her much more susceptible to prostitution.

This is true as a basis. The whole tendency of modern life, which places a greater strain on the nervous system of both men and women of all classes than has ever been placed at any time in the history of the civilized world, cannot but help, to a great extent, develop considerable eroticism. The sexual senses of the brain, as well as the seminal parts, are from the very nature of their natural functions, susceptible organisms and they will be the most readily influenced by modes of life, and highly speeded modern life must stimulate these organisms. (VCC 1911:198-99)

This argument is interesting, as it was claimed that “highly speeded modern life” placed a “greater strain on the nervous system” and thus unnaturally stimulated eroticism in workers. While resonating with a broader Progressive discourse that criticized modern industrial life, this particular claim seems unique in its specific reference to the impact of industrial life on “eroticism.”

The VCC also implicated employment agencies as contributing to the vice problem, as the following excerpt illustrates:

One of the most serious problems in any large city is the practice of certain employment agencies in sending young girls and women to houses of prostitution, assignation flats and hotels as servants. Once in these places, surrounded by indications of ease and excitement these girls are not always able to withstand the temptation and soon become regular inmates. (VCC 1911:218)

Moreover, as was mentioned earlier, the VCC was particularly concerned about employment agents’ sending “colored” girls as servants to houses of prostitution.

Commercialized recreations were also cited as significant contributors to the vice problem. Counted among these recreations of concern were dance halls, amusement parks, confectionary and ice cream parlors, “cheap theaters,” public parks, and lake steamers or “excursion boats.” One concern was that panders/procurers presumably trolled these amusements looking for fresh victims, as the following excerpt implied:
Procurers find their victims, quite frequently, by lurking around places where girls congregate. Amusement parks, skating rinks, public dance halls, nickel theatres, excursion boats…are haunted by the panders and procurers. (CHS, CB, 1911)

Likewise, the vice crusaders argued that many professional and semi-professional prostitutes frequented these places—thus placing young boys in jeopardy of being seduced and innocent girls in jeopardy of being coaxed into this lifestyle, as the following excerpts about dance halls and excursion boats portray:

There are approximately 275 public dance halls in Chicago…. Many of these halls are frequented by minors, both girls and boys, and in some instances they are surrounded [sic] by great temptations and dangers. Practically no effort is made by the managers to observe the laws regarding the sale of liquor to these minors. Nor is the provision of the ordinance relating to the presence of disreputable persons observed. In nearly every hall visited, investigators have seen professional and semi-professional prostitutes. (VCC 1911:185)

The excursion boats, as a rule, carry an element which is more or less disorderly…. There are several classes of these disorderly groups on the holiday boats; first, girls who are evidently professional or semi-professional prostitutes, together with young men whom they find it easy to attract; second, the class of vile young men who make these excursion trips for the purpose of seeking out girl recruits…. (VCC 1911:215)

Additionally, the lack of supervision of girls and boys at these amusements—which made them susceptible to procurers/panderers as well as able to easily engage in immoral behaviors—was of primary concern:

Social workers who have paid particular attention to conditions in amusement parks in the city declare that incidents have come to their notice showing a laxity of supervision, and the moral dangers surrounding young girls who frequent these places for amusement. (VCC 1911:213)

The excursion boats, as a rule, carry an element which is more or less disorderly…. There are several classes of these disorderly groups on the holiday boats…and third, a group which is very important, especially when the preventive end of the work is considered as conducted by the Juvenile Protective Association. The following is a typical story which illustrates this last group: A young couple who are sweethearts starts on one of these excursions. The trip is longer than is expected, or the girl is taken sick. A state room is secured and this one act may change the whole aspect of the future relationship of these two and may entirely spoil what might have developed into a happy married life. (VCC 1911:215)
The five and ten cent theaters which have sprung up all over the city are conducted in an orderly manner….The great danger seems to be that which always besets children congregated without proper supervision….

Investigations by individuals interested in the welfare of children have pointed out many instances where children have been influenced for evil by the conditions surrounding some of these shows. Vicious men and boys mix with the crowds in front of the theaters and take liberties with very young girls.

…Many liberties are taken with young girls within the theater during the performance when the place is in total or semi-darkness. Boys and men slyly embrace the girls near them and offer certain indignities. (VCC 1911:247)

A city ordinance declares that it shall be unlawful for any person owning, conducting or managing candy and fruit stores or ice cream parlors to allow any male under the age of twenty-one years or any female under the age of eighteen to remain in such places between the hours of 10:00 P.M. and 7:00 A.M. unless accompanied by one or both parents. This ordinance also forbids these stores to maintain curtains, screens or partitions of any kind that will serve to divide such places into small rooms or compartments….

There is no doubt that conditions surrounding many of these candy and fruit stores and ice cream parlors in certain districts of the city are particularly dangerous to young boys and girls. In fact the court records show that a large number of young girls have been ruined in these places. (VCC 1911:249-50)

Thus, the VCC concluded regarding commercialized recreations,

Thus the perils of unregulated and unsupervised recreation are responsible for hundreds of girls now in homes and reformatories, and many of these girls would bear witness that their irregular experience came to them as an incident to visits to theaters, walks at night in parks, picnics, steamer rides, etc. Those whose young daughters are carefully guarded can never imagine or realize the perils to which the young, ignorant pleasure-loving girls are exposed. (VCC 1911:268)

Related to parents’ lack of supervision of their children’s recreations, those battling vice often pinpointed the breakdown of the family as contributing to the vice problem. The VCC was particularly concerned about the role of divorce in the vice problem, as illustrated by the following excerpt:

The Vice Commission, after exhaustive consideration of the vice question, records itself of the opinion that divorce to a large extent is a contributory factor to sexual vice. No study of this blight upon the social and moral life of the country would be comprehensive without consideration of the causes which lead to the application for divorce. These are too numerous to mention at length in such a report as this, but the Commission does wish to emphasize the great need of more safeguards against the marrying of persons
physically, mentally and morally unfit to take up the responsibilities of family life, including the bearing of children. (VCC 1911:41-42)

The VCC elaborated further upon its call for “safeguards” that would deter the “physically, mentally and morally unfit” from marrying and bearing children:

Selection Guarded. An application for a license of any kind, whether it be to construct a house, run a push cart, peddle shoe strings, or keep a dog, must be accompanied with evidences that the applicants are responsible and reliable agents. But for a marriage license, one person, unattended and unknown and, as far as one can know, an epileptic, a degenerate, or who has in his blood a loathsome venereal disease, may pass his name through a window with that of a similarly questionable female, likewise unknown, and be granted the divine right to perpetuate his kind and in turn thereby placing a burden and a blight on society and the community for generations to come. The whole subject of selection in connection with the institution of marriage is of vital importance in connection with the social evil. Unwise selection produces innumerable contributory agencies through unhappy marriages, inherited degeneracy and diseases, and the divorce evil. (VCC 1911:42)

Elements of this excerpt invoke Best’s (1987) rhetoric of rationality, wherein society is claimed to benefit from ratifying the claims: passing legislation to prohibit “unwise selection” will decrease the “burden and…blight on society and the community for generations to come.” Moreover, this rhetoric resonates with a broader eugenics discourse that was propagated during the Progressive Era.

Those battling vice also noted bad home conditions as contributing to vice. These proposed conditions included lack of supervision over children’s amusements by parents, as the following excerpt illustrates:

Bad home conditions often drive the daughters of the family into prostitution and the sons into lives of crime. In such cases the parents are indifferent or ignorant. They allow their children to seek improper amusements without question or guidance. Many cases have come to light where girls have gone to dances or the theater and remained away from home all night telling their parents they stayed with girl friends. Again, they are not required to come home at any hour, the door is left unlocked and the wayward children return at all hours of the night. (VCC 1911:245)

Likewise, Taylor (1911) as well as the VCC noted the following aspects of bad home conditions as contributing to the vice problem:
In a large proportion of cases home conditions contributed to, if they did not cause, the downfall of daughters or wives. Intemperate or vicious parents, or brothers and sisters; deserted, separated, and divorced fathers and mothers; homes which forced upon the children, rather than protected them from, immorality; marriages that were sales into vice; childhood left to grow wild without religious training or any instruction to develop the instinct of self-preservation; —these are some of the domestic conditions from which the cries of lost lives pierce the heart. Scores of them described conditions at home which were directly responsible for their downfall. Before the Juvenile Court, the wrong done to young girls and even to little children are with awful frequency charged to their own fathers, brothers, uncles, or cousins. Some were literally sold by their own mothers others by their husbands. (Taylor 1911:244)

Additionally, early exposure to sexual relationships due to crowded housing arrangements, and concomitant sexual relationships with boarders and incestuous relations with family members were cited as contributory to girls’ fall into vice:

Many families in the congested districts take in boarders who sleep in the same room with members of the family. This accustoms children to the presence of strangers and it is no wonder that they lose their moral sense and easily accept the improper attention of others…. Aside from the dangers resulting from insanitary conditions, bad housing breeds vice and crime. (VCC 1911:245)

Many young girls who are nominally under the protection of their own families have either been mistreated by members of their family or have been made the victims of their neglect. A little lame girl 12 years of age may be cited as an illustration from a large group. She was absent from school. On investigation, it was found that her father had mistreated her. The child was used by a boarder, 46 years old, who paid the father $4.50 a week for board and the use of the child. (VCC 1911:265)

Among the girls committed [to the State Training School in Chicago] from other sections of the State, 31 allege that the companion of their first experience in sexual irregularity was a member of their own family, and 16 Chicago girls had the same experience. In 19 cases it was the father, in 5 the uncle, in 8 the brother or older cousin who had wronged the child; in 72 other cases, girls brought in as delinquents before the Juvenile Court had been wronged in this way, 32 by their own fathers. (VCC 1911:175)

Healy (1913; 1929) devoted considerable attention to the role of crowded housing in the breakdown of the family via breeding immorality among children:

Let an individual be brought up under animal-like conditions of bodily exposure, which is made necessary by crowded housing conditions, and what chance, knowing the strength of early impressions, can we believe such an individual has for the development of anything save an animal-like conception of what, for the sake of our civilization, should be regarded as our most intimate functions. The possible imaginative perversions which may be built up on such a background of experience are to be witnessed in some of the
extraordinary court cases where girls may give false but damaging testimony against even their own brothers or fathers. I know of nothing which so knocks away the underpinnings of social and moral integrity as such unfortunately acquired sex knowledge. (Healy 1913:88)

After all, respect for parents, and for the integrity of family relationships, and for the human body itself, is largely the basis of the morality of our civilization, and nothing so easily militates against this respect as crowded living conditions. It is hardly necessary to enlarge upon this, hardly necessary to show the relationship of tenement house life, and of crowded shanties, and of irresponsible boarders in the home, to the development of perverted sex instincts among children. This is another subject we cannot take space to do justice to, but we may be allowed to say that until communities realize the dangers from crowded housing there is simply bound to be a considerable quota of prostitutes and other loose-living people emerge from these conditions. (Healy 1929:291)

Interestingly, while the VCC, of which Healy was a member, accepted girls’ claims of being sexually victimized by family members, Healy apparently did not wholeheartedly accept these claims and, rather, deemed that this type of “false but damaging testimony” were “imaginative perversions” bred by “unfortunately acquired sex knowledge.”

As mentioned previously, the VCC bemoaned “intemperate” parents as contributing to children’s immorality and concomitant vulnerability to vice. Additionally, the VCC devoted considerable discussion of how sales of alcohol in houses of prostitution and the “disorderly” saloon were significantly intertwined with the vice problem. The VCC (1911) declared that “the profits from the sale of beer and other liquors” in houses, flats, and hotels that catered to prostitution was “enormous” (p. 82). Sumner (1913) declared the following:

…I have become absolutely convinced that this [the saloon] is the most damnable institution at present existing in our social life. It is the greatest supporter of the Social Evil and the house of prostitution that exists. It is the greatest reaper of the profits of the Social Evil. You have only to know something of the tremendous profit from the money spent in houses of prostitution for drink to see this…. The saloon may have come to us as an American institution, but it should never be allowed to exist as at present conducted. (P. 102)

In regards to the “disorderly saloon,” the VCC offered the following:

There can be no doubt that the profits of an orderly, well conducted saloon under proper management, are large,—but when the tremendous profit made by the disorderly saloon which not only allows, but seeks the aid of the prostitute as an adjunct to its business (and is permitted to do so) is considered, further light is thrown upon the subject. These
saloons, with rear rooms frequented by prostitutes soliciting men to buy drinks and for immoral purposes, either directly connected with rooms or hotels in the same building, or indirectly with others in the near vicinity are virtually houses of prostitutions, and the nuclei of vice, the places where many take the initial step, and on the other hand the business headquarters and rendezvous of the lowest characters of both sexes. (VCC 1911:108)

While drunkenness per se did not appear to be of concern to the VCC, the following connections between vice and saloons were of primary interest: prostitutes soliciting customers to buy drinks as well as soliciting them for sexual services; proprietors bailing out prostitutes that frequented their establishments; “vulgarity” and lewd behavior in saloons by patrons as well as entertainers; children being permitted in saloons; and men being swindled via buying “counterfeit” drinks for prostitutes. Moreover, collusion of brewing companies and liquor interests with vice interests was suspected: while the “Brewery Companies, the Liquor Dealers’ Protective Association of Illinois, and the Wholesale Liquor Dealers’ Association” had “all gone on record as in favor of the elimination of the sale of liquor in connection with prostitution,” the VCC declared that prostitutes were “permitted and encouraged in no less than 236 saloons” and that “many of these disorderly saloons are under the control of brewery companies” (p. 119).

Alcohol as well as drug abuse among prostitutes was also discussed as a factor contributing to the vice problem, as the following excerpts illustrate:

Once plunged into this life…the prostitute sinks lower and lower…. She is driven to excessive indulgence in all kinds of vice, besides the one particular vice so abhorrent, in order to bring extra profits to her keeper, and to the men who profit off her sin and shame. These attendant vices, such as drink and the use of drugs, coupled with the demands upon her nervous system in performing the services demanded of her, soon render her the most pitiful of all beings. (VCC 1911:45-46)

It is generally recognized that immoral women and their “cadets” are addicted to the use of cocaine and morphine as well as other drugs and liquor. Most of the cocaine purchased by habitués is secured through physicians. Much of the morphine is nearly always obtained from druggists by merely asking for it and paying the price asked. (VCC 1911) (84-85)

Those battling vice also considered municipal corruption as a contributing factor to the vice problem. The VCC gave various cases examples witnessed by investigators of policemen’s neglect of duty in regards to vice. However, the VCC argued that any
corruption of police and the municipal system was largely due to the fault of the citizens’ indifference to the vice problem:

This tolerance and indifference toward the law by the citizens have gone so far in Chicago, that for years the people have seen develop under their very eyes a system of restricted districts under police regulation, the result of which has been to nullify the law, and render it inoperative….

So it happens that the people of Chicago, by their tacit consent, have put aside the operation of the law, and made it a thing to be manipulated this way or that, according to expediency.

Again, it is submitted that it is not fair to lay the blame entirely upon the police, the servants of the people, who as servants, do their employer’s will.

As a result of this attitude toward the law on the part of the community, the police department has been in a sense demoralized and has come to exercise a discretion which was never intended it should have.

…[A]nd if it can be shown that the police have abused the discretion given them by the people; that by their connivance, the Social Evil is fostered and allowed to grow, through bribery and corruption, then the facts should be ascertained to the end that the public be aroused to it responsibility, and that such practices cease.

No fair-minded man would say that this large body of men has been swept into this system of bribery and corruption and that they deliberately foster the Social Evil. To so affirm would be a libel not only against the Department, but against the City of Chicago.

But it is within reason to say that owing to the peculiar conditions which the people have allowed to exist so long, temptations have developed which some have not been able to resist. (VCC 1911:144-45)

Sumner (1913) offered a similar declaration of the public’s share in the blame for tolerance of vice, as follows:

The law is only so powerful as the public opinion which supports it. It is the habit of Americans when they make laws to insist on ethical ideals. They will not compromise. They have been endowed, however, with a fine ability to be inconsistent, and having once declared their ideals to find no difficulty, when it comes to the administration of the laws, to allow officials to ignore them; to do things not in the laws; and to substitute a practice which is a de facto law, though technically illegal. This is the basis of graft and the greatest evil in Municipal government. (P. 99)

In contrast, Taylor (1909, 1914b, 1913a) did not explicitly make an concessions that the public was to blame for permitting conditions that encouraged police corruption; instead, Taylor directly implicated police and political corruption as contributing to the vice problem, as the following excerpts illustrate:
We have some chance to estimate the financial investment in this commercialized vice by the forms of those investments, the profits that are made, the blackmail that is levied, the bribery of public officials—all counting up into the millions in our large cities….

There is an artificial stimulation, by the allowance of these segregated districts and by the connivance of the police…. He [Sims] cleaned out the whole mess almost as by magic, demonstrating the fact that with an honest police force, the commercialized, segregated vice could not exist. (CHS, CB, 1914b:1, 5)

It is obvious in New York and Chicago as it has been in some other cities that the effort to secure a morals commission for city governments is intended not only to repress and prevent the social evil but also quite as much to protect and improve the morals of the police, which are corrupted under the present conditions. (Taylor 1913a:62)

Similarly, the C15 declared it had been “relentlessly vigorous in its attack upon corrupt policeman” (NL, GT, n.d.). However, like the VCC, they criticized blanket statements that the entire police force was corrupt, as the following excerpt illustrates:

There is a tendency on the part of some organizations to criticise [sic] the police department as a matter of course. However well deserved such criticism may be in other lines, it is only fair to say that in the matter of hunting down procurers, we have received very courteous treatment and very effective service from every commanding officer and patrolman with whom we have come in contact. (CHS, CB, 1911:13)

Thus, while police and municipal corruption was pinpointed as contributing to the vice problem, some of those battling vice highlighted citizens’ neglect of their civic duty to insist that police officials uphold the law as part and parcel of the corrupted law enforcement system.

While discussed only briefly, the VCC (1911) also addressed the practice of abortions by midwives and druggists who prescribed “abortion drugs and instruments over the counter, or through advertisements in papers” (p. 224) and its relation to the vice problem. While the VCC admitted that they had not the time nor the resources to investigate this aspect of the vice problem thoroughly, and that there was “some doubt as to whether or not there is any connection between the practice of abortion and the social evil” (p. 223), they did offer the following:

Everyone will agree, however, that any experience which tends to undermine the moral sense of girls or young women is dangerous and should be prevented. Incidents are on records where girls who have had abortions performed have become reckless and discouraged, and have actually entered upon a life of prostitution. (VCC 1911:223)
Thus, the VCC posed that there possibly was some correlation between abortion and vice—and that the mere fact that the practice “undermine[d] the moral sense of girls or young women” necessitated that some measures be taken to protect girls from midwives and abortionists.

Feeblemindedness and the Vice Problem

While not overwhelmingly present in their claims, some of those battling vice discussed the feeblemindedness among prostitutes. The VCC offered the following:

The superintendent [“of a large State school for delinquent girls”] emphatically asserts that “the girls who come to us, possessed of normal brain power, or not infected with venereal disease, we look upon as a prize indeed, and we seldom fail to make a woman worth while of a really normal girl, whatever her environment has been. But we have failed in numberless cases, where the environment has been all right, but the girl was born wrong. Normal girls, who have drifted into houses of ill-fame, can be saved, for they will help the work of saving themselves, and when once they understand, the work is well under way. For moral imbeciles there will be little else than forcible restraint that will keep them right.” (VCC 1911:229)

Thus, the VCC constructed feebleminded girls as in essence beyond reform. Healy (1913) offered similar testimony:

I should hesitate to deal in any way with statistics, but I am ready to say from my own experience, as well as from the findings of others, that there exists a very considerable percentage of feeblemindedness and aberrational mental traits among the public women of any large city. I could cite you, were it necessary, cases after cases of epilepsy among immoral girls or women, and could show you the innate tendency towards moral laxity which exists among mental defectives. This is not only passive but sometimes frightfully active. One poor mother ventured to tell me that her feebleminded daughter had seduced simply scores of boys in her community. (P. 88-89)

Thus, Healy claimed that a “very considerable percentage” of prostitutes were feebleminded or had “aberrational mental traits”—drawing on a dominant psychiatric discourse present in the Progressive Era regarding the psychological traits of prostitutes. Likewise, Healy constructed the feebleminded girl as morally lax and hypersexual, much like the “hypersexual female” (Lunbeck 1987) discussions present in the psychiatric community during the Progressive Era. Thus, Healy implied that the “moral laxity which exists among mental defectives” was, in concurrence with the VCC, essentially beyond
reform. However, as this immorality was due to inherited and thus presumably immutable traits, the feebleminded prostitute was not to blame for her fall: genetic preconditions beyond her control placed her at a moral disadvantage.

**Venereal Disease and the “Double Standard” of Sexuality**

Those battling vice often discussed venereal disease as a significant factor of concern in association with the vice problem, thus drawing on a broader social hygiene discourse that was propagated during the Progressive Era. Particularly, of greatest concern were men contracting venereal disease from prostitutes and then contaminating their present or future innocent wives and children. The VCC devoted an entire section to the specific discussion of “the Social Evil and its Medical Aspects,” wherein it was claimed, “It has been clearly proved through many and accurate sources that no danger to the integrity of the race is so great as the diseases which accompany prostitution” (p. 289). Likewise, the second paragraph of the entire report exemplified the gist of discussion relating to this topic:

Prostitution is pregnant with disease, a disease infecting not only the guilty, but contaminating the innocent wife and child in the home with sickening certainty almost inconceivable; a disease to be feared with as great horror as a leprous plague; a disease scattering misery broadcast, and leaving in its wake sterility, insanity, paralysis, the blinded eyes of little babes, the twisted limbs of deformed children, degradation, physical rot and mental decay. (VCC 1911:25)

This excerpt draws on both Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) *rhetoric of endangerment*, wherein a social problem is depicted as a threat to health, as well as *rhetoric of loss*, wherein precious innocents—a good wife and child—are victimized by the husband/father’s sexual misadventures. The following excerpts further illustrate the concern for the innocent women and children’s plight:

There is no more shocking crime than the infection of innocent persons, nor one having such a tremendous effect on the physical and moral welfare of a family, and yet there is no legal redress. A wife may be infected and really die from a venereal infection contracted from her husband. So far as our laws go she is helpless. (VCC 1911:278)

…[W]here one woman is maimed or killed by the brutal violence of her husband, a score are maimed or killed by the venereal diseases contracted from their husbands, most of
whom suppose themselves cured before marriage. …[W]here one child is blinded by the brutality of the father, perhaps fifty lose their eyesight at birth through the gonorrhoea [sic] of the mother contracted from the father—there are at least 10,000 such victims among our blind fellow citizens. …[W]here one child is crippled through the neglect or violence of the father, perhaps a hundred are maimed or even destroyed before birth through the taint of his syphilis. …[A] considerable percentage (the data necessary for exact statement do not exist) of the idiotic, imbecile and insane in our charitable institutions are a curse to themselves and a burden to the community through the venereal taint implanted before their birth. (NL, GT, 1907)

The CSSH also bemoaned innocent wives and children’s infection by promiscuous husbands. However, this organization coached its claims in civil liberties rhetoric, similar to Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of entitlement, wherein individual freedoms and liberties are constructed as encroached upon by others:

A personal liberty which is limited only by the equal liberty of others, is the cornerstone of community life.

The spirit of community law is the maintenance of that personal liberty through education: it defines for each individual the rights of others; it teaches him that encroachment upon the rights of another is a crime against the common weal, to be prevented by the commonwealth, through punishment when necessary; and it warns that ignorance of law—that of man as well as that of nature—affords no protection against punishment.…. The more insidious encroachments upon individual rights have often long escaped recognition and prohibition by the State…. Public attention is now focusing upon another insidious and prevalent form of murder and robbery—namely, the contamination of wives and children through the venereal diseases of husbands who suppose themselves cured before marriage. Through these diseases many wives and more children are destroyed outright, and many more are robbed of their birthright to health of body and mind. (NL, GT, 1907)

Thus, these excerpts construct the husband as a victimizer, exposing his innocent wife and children to venereal disease. However, the following excerpt offers that the husband by no means intentionally endangered his family:

This contamination of wives and taint of offspring is usually the result of ignorance on the part of the husband. For though men are generally self-indulgent and lax in sex matters, and though they will recklessly expose themselves to venereal disease, yet physicians unanimously testify that the vast majority of venereal patients refuse to marry so long as they know that their contagion would be transmitted to their prospective wives and children. (NL, GT, 1907)
Consequently, “ignorance” rather than complete disregard for wives/children’s safety was to blame. Often brought forth in concert with the venereal disease discussion was the exacerbation of the problem due to the double standard of sexuality, wherein men’s promiscuity was tolerated if not condoned while women were held to a single standard of chastity and virtue. The following excerpts illustrate common criticisms of the double standard and its part in the vice problem:

So long as there is lust in the hearts of men it will seek out some method of expression. Until the hearts of men are changed we can hope for no absolute annihilation of the Social Evil. (VCC 1911:27)

She suffers, but what of him? She goes down, and is finally sacrificed to a life of shame, but what of him? He escapes as a “romancer.” It is not just! (VCC 1911:44)

There is only one moral law—it is alike for men and women. Again, there is a contract called matrimony which is a solemn contract made between those who love. It carries with it the elements of vested rights—even a solemn promise before God. A signature represents honor—it is there—likewise a promise it is there. Has this contract been keep inviolate? If not, why not? (VCC 1911:47)

Don’t go on saying that little people subjected to these constraining conditions are willfully wicked, “ruined.” God forgive us for saying that awful word, “ruined.” Why don’t we say it against the men? We counted fifteen men for every twenty-four hours, with every inmate. Talk about your fallen girl. There are fifteen of your brothers and husbands and fathers, to every one of those, and equally ruined. They may be dangerous purveyors of disease, of demoralization, just because of the double standard. (CHS, CB, 1914b:4)

Any success that may attend this effort must tend…(4) to strengthen the self-respect and self-control of manly young men in sexual matters; by showing them that morals, while taught by all worthy religions, is not the outgrowth of any religious creed; nor is it the sign of “goody-goody” effeminacy—both of these mistaken ideas are prevalent among young men; but that moral is the wisdom born of human suffering, the message of kindly warning from experience to the inexperienced. (NL, GT, 1907)

Thus, those battling vice were attacking the double standard of sexuality and instead advocating for the necessity of a single standard of chastity for both men and women.
Blameless Victims in Need of Protection

Overarching the previously discussed grounds and warrants is a warrant that constructs various persons as blameless victims. For example, the pinpointing of working girls’ low wages, lack of educational skills and opportunities, and grueling working conditions as driving them into prostitution constructed them as victims of social factors beyond their control—social factors that could be ameliorated to protect them from vice. Similarly, the discussions of children as victims invoked this warrant. Likewise, the discussion of “colored” people experiencing prejudice and discrimination that entangled them in the vice problem constructed them as blameless victims in need of protection. Women/girls who were “ruined” and thus fell into prostitution were blameless victims of the double standard of sexuality. Innocent women and children infected with venereal disease were constructed as blameless victims of their husbands/fathers’ promiscuity. The discussion of procurers haunting various establishments, prowling for fresh victims, constructed naïve, innocent girls as blameless victims—the following excerpt a particularly sympathy-evoking depiction:

The end of the battle is not yet for those girls who struggle on alone and unprotected with their more pressing financial problems. The greatest menace is before her—the Man. See her as he meets her at the door of her place of employment! See her as she returns to her cheap boarding house! Huddled away among coarse and vulgar male companions, lonely, underfed and hungry—hungry not only for food, but for a decent shelter, for a home, for friends, of a sympathetic touch or word; tired from a hard day’s toil even to the point of recklessness—starving for honest pleasures and amusements—and with what does she meet? The advances of men without either a spark of bravery or honor, who hunt as their unlawful prey this impoverished girl, this defenseless child of poverty, unprotected, unloved and uncared for as she is plunged into the swirling, seething stream of humanity; the advances of men who are so low that they have lost even a sense of sportsmanship, and who seek as their game an underfed, tired, and a lonely girl. (VCC 1911:44)

This particular excerpt resonates with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of unreason, wherein persons actively conspire against their victims. The following excerpts more explicitly illustrate this rhetoric:

It would take a stronger will than maybe your daughter has or a greater experience than she ought to have had to extricate herself from the network that is insidiously and by prolonged effort woven around the victim. (CHS, CB, 1914b:5)
Even in the scant snatches printed from these case histories, from which all traces which could lead to identification are eliminated, there are to be read between the lines and in the touches of real life that survived the process of investigation and censorship, life stories of pathetic interest. While some declared themselves to be “born bad,” “naturally bad,” “always immoral,” others were victims of conditions and circumstances for which they were less responsible than their families, their employers, or the community. (Taylor 1911:243-44)

Thus, throughout the grounds and warrants previously discussed, the thread of this warrant permeates.

Motifs

Those battling vice employed various motifs in their claims. References to “evil” were prevalent. The VCC repeatedly used the phrase “Social Evil” to refer to the vice problem. The singular term “evil” was also often used by those battling vice as a more generic term that embodied the vice problem. Similarly, vice crusaders repeatedly used the terms “menace” and “danger” in their claims, both generic social problems motifs.

A demonizing motif, wherein the vice problem and those responsible for it were depicted as monstrous and inhuman, was at times employed by those battling vice, as the following excerpts illustrate:

“...gives and insight, as thus shown forth, into its bald brutality, its monstrous perversion of nature, its naked ugliness when stripped of its cheap glamour, and its hideous proportions viewed in the glare of common day light.”

This stern unveiling of vice leaves public prostitution on the pages of this terrible arraignment, standing in the open, stripped of all veiled appeal to the imagination; in all its bare, coarse, sordid, cruel, outraging, repulsive infamy...at thing to be feared and hated, guarded against and attacked.... (Taylor 1911:242, 245)

All about us are dens of iniquity in which dwell beasts which ensnare and destroy those who might become law-abiding citizens. (NL, GT, n.d.:11)

Formerly, these vile creatures [panders] would so abuse the women under their control that the women could be induced to give evidence against them.... (CHS, CB, April 30, 1915)

By far, the most prevalent motif employed by those battling vice was a war/battle motif. As discussed in Chapter Three, the war motif infers that the social problem is
something that must be battled with force (Gorelick 1989), draws a distinct dichotomy between a “right” and a “wrong” side, and implies that an organized front has been amassed to battle the social problem. Taylor was particularly adept at employing this motif, as the following excerpts illustrate:

It is time to raise the question, “Where are we in the war against the segregation of vice?”

Some things are certain. War against vice has been declared in Chicago. The forces for and against it are lined up as never before. The line of battle has been drawn more definitely than ever before. This fact in itself is a great change for the better. To have formed the forces in battle array is in fact a great advance into the enemy’s country. Hitherto there has been little more than the skirmishing of small groups. They have merely been bushwhacking about the solid front and the formidable redoubts of the segregate districts…. (CHS, CB, n.d.)

That the war on vice is a fight to the finish becomes constantly clearer. The campaigns waged against it are growing at once more extensive in area and more intensive locally. The variety and effectiveness of the attacks upon the strongholds of vice attest the versatility and the ability of the aggressors. (Taylor 1913b:811)

The C15 also often invoked the war motif, with talk of “warfare” and “battle”:

If in any community a band of true citizens should become organized for battle against the enticing and dangerous forms of vice which flourish in defiance of law, and fearlessly hold to their purpose, the spectacle which the setting sun beheld at Bull Run would not compare with the consternation which would overwhelm law breakers. (NL, GT, n.d.:12)

The chief weapon used in this warfare has been publicity. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1914)

Yet we must not deceive ourselves. The vice king is not dethroned. His territory has been invaded, and he has been tremendously hampered, but he is yet a formidable adversary in Chicago, and it is only by pushing the warfare with relentless determination that the battle for decency may be won. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1914)

The generous support granted heretofore by many citizens of Chicago is again bespoken as the warfare against commercialized vice moves onward toward its goal, ULTIMATE SUPPRESSION. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1915)

WANTED! Reinforcements on the Firing Line Against Commercialized Vice (NL, GT, [1913])
Conclusions

Those battling vice drew various conclusions (Best 1987) as to what steps were necessary to combat the vice problem in Chicago, which may be grouped in the following categories: intolerance of segregated vice districts; venereal disease and sex hygiene education; and new and/or improved social policies/programs.

Intolerance of Segregated Vice Districts

The VCC’s (1911) broadest and most emphasized conclusion, echoed in publications by its various members, follows:

CONSTANT AND PERSISTENT REPRESSION OF PROSTITUTION THE IMMEDIATE METHOD: ABSOLUTE ANNIHILATION THE ULTIMATE IDEAL. (P. 25)

As the VCC further elaborated,

Some who have a superficial knowledge of the “Continental System” of segregation and regulation based on a cursory reading or surface investigation might bring it forward as a method of relief. One has but to read scientific works on the subject; to study the reports of international conferences held in Europe, and to hear the findings of careful investigators to see the unreliability and futility of such a system…. (P. 26)

Apparently, proponents of police-regulated, segregated vice districts often argued that without these districts, vice would not be annihilated but would merely spread into “respectable” residential neighborhoods. However, the C15 countered these claims with the following:

…I[t] has been the policy of this Committee to prevent this evil [“the exodus of prostitutes from one section of the City only to settle down in more respectable neighborhoods”] as far as possible—first, by systematically following up all information which may lead to the discovery of new places which are opened by those who have been ejected by owners or by the police; second, by making it more difficult to lease property for illicit purposes by publishing the names of the owners who intentionally or carelessly allow their property to be so used; third, by arousing respectable citizens to a point of cooperation that they may notify the Committee whenever any place in their neighborhood is opened for such immoral purpose. (NL, GT, September 23, 1913)

Moreover, the C15 offered the following response to the “scatteration bugaboo”: 
We are, of course, hearing much about the scattering of prostitutes into the residential sections…. All the advocates of segregation fall back upon this bugaboo in defense of their own pet theory. However, actual facts cannot be produced to demonstrate that this scattering has produced conditions at all comparable with the evils which resulted from the “wide open” town. That there has been some such scattering is true, and personally I am glad of it—the more well-to-do and respectable a neighborhood is, the better equipped it is to prevent the inroads of vice. At one of our meetings recently, Jenkin Lloyd Jones said: “If there is one thing more pernicious than segregated vice, it is segregated virtue. The boulevards are responsible for the alleys.” Mayor Harrison, in his Annual Message, knew whereof he spoke when he said: “The breaking up of the segregated district in Chicago has not spread the social evil into the residential districts as was feared would be the result.” (CHS, CB, April 30, 1915)

Thus, not only was “scatteration” being addressed by the C15 and its constituents, but it was argued that this scattering brought vice closer to home to “respectable” citizens, thus necessitating that they be engaged in fighting the problem with the better resources they had due to their advantages. Likewise, quoting the authority of the Mayor, the C15 argued that this “scatteration” phenomenon did not come to pass. Taylor (1912b) reiterated this argument:

The Daily News strongly cautions the committee against ignoring the illegality of a return to the former policy, and asks “What agencies want the lawless dives restored to the city and turned over once more to the supervision of the police? Does public opinion desire it? No. The closing of the segregated district thus far has created no serious problem for this community. On the other hand, it has locked the terrible doors through which unprotected girls, by thousands every year, are lured to slavery and early death.” (P. 256)

Therefore, closing the segregated vice districts was deemed a solid, scientifically-proven approach to ameliorating vice in Chicago.

**Venereal Disease and Sex Hygiene Education**

As presented in the discussion of grounds and warrants, venereal disease was viewed as part and parcel to the vice problem and thus necessitated addressing. Those battling vice offered various recommendations directed at dealing with the presumed inexorable link between prostitution and venereal disease. Among these suggestions was that the Department of Health should be given jurisdiction to investigate houses of prostitution for venereal diseases, and, if found diseased, order immediate closing of the
houses (VCC 1911). Likewise, the VCC recommended that the Department of Health should perform annual investigations of the “extent of venereal diseases in Chicago…together with the sources of infection.” (p. 63). Similarly, the VCC concluded that hospitals receiving city funds should be required to establish wards specifically for the treatment of venereal diseases. The VCC also recommended the strict enforcement of city ordinances that prohibited advertisements by “quack” doctors for treatment of venereal diseases.

The VCC as well as the CSSH (NL, GT, 1907) also recommended that men should be required by law to provide “medical certificates” that attested that the “bearer is free from syphilis, gonorrhoea [sic] and other venereal diseases” (VCC 1911:56) before they could obtain marriage licenses—a conclusion deemed necessary to protect innocent wives and children from men’s sexual misadventures as well as prevent the reproduction of “degenerates” born of venereal infection. Along these same lines, the VCC also recommended, “Parents should demand a signed statement from a reputable physician that the man asking permission to marry their daughter is free from venereal disease” (p. 64). Focusing on men as vectors of venereal disease to their innocent wives without considering that the wives could engage in illicit sexual activity and thus contract venereal diseases as well implied that women were above reproach—and reiterated that wives were blameless victims. However, while this focus on men was presented in the “Recommendations” section of the VCC report, in the chapter exploring “The Social Evil and its Medical Aspects,” it was recommended that “no marriage…be legal unless both parties furnish certificates of health and freedom from venereal diseases given by legally qualified physicians” (p. 292)—thus recognizing that women as well as men could be the guilty party.

While the majority of these previous conclusions addressed the aftermath of venereal disease, the primary preventive measure proposed by those battling vice was sex hygiene education. As the CSSH (NL, GT, 1907) stated, “To secure the protection of prospective wives and unborn children from loss of life and health through venereal disease, the community needs therefore chiefly education…. ” The CSSH also offered the following recommendations:
It is suggested...that every venereal patient should receive from the physician, druggist or “patent” medicine vendor whose aid he seeks, a printed card of needful information—to be supplied or approve by the State authorities—as a part of the treatment; (c) that a circular furnished to each student by every education institution for young men; (d) that fathers should recall the sexual temptations and mistakes of their own youth; should realize that their boys will acquired knowledge of sexual matters either in the street or at home; and that the father, rather than an older playmate or a prostitute, should be the son’s confidant and counselor in this matter of vital importance. (NL, GT, 1907)

Again, men are constructed as the primary purveyors of venereal disease to innocents—thus, educational efforts must be focused on them.

In the following excerpt, the VCC focuses on sex hygiene education in relation to combating venereal disease:

The time is ripe for a united attempt to diminish venereal diseases. To accomplish this both sexes should be taught the social and personal dangers of the black plague, far more to be dreaded than the white plague—venereal disease. They should be taught with emphasis that these diseases, like all other contagious diseases, may be innocently acquired and transmitted. Woman peculiarly needs such instruction, not only that she may protect herself, but that she may protect her child against danger from those to whose care it may be intrusted.... The work of national, state and municipal organizations with the fundamental aim of instruction in sexual hygiene and sanitations should be encouraged and broadened. The public should be educated when practicable by exhibits as to the results of venereal diseases, its causes and its germs, its methods of spreading and control. In this instruction the viewpoint should be that of prophylaxis and not the impracticable one of creating terror. (P. 292)

Thus, the VCC argued that sound, scientific instruction on the dangers of venereal diseases and the methods of preventing infection were of paramount importance. Likewise, reiterating the innocence of women and children, the VCC recommended that women were “peculiarly” in need of sex hygiene instruction in order to protect themselves as well as their children.

The VCC (1911) also argued that in addition to sex hygiene education focusing on venereal disease prevention, sex instruction must include “religious conviction and sound moral teaching” as well to protect children from the “immoral influences and dangers which are constantly surrounding young children”: 
The Commission believes that in the case of children beyond the age of puberty sex hygiene may be taught in schools under carefully trained and scientifically instructed teachers. For younger children the parents should do the teaching as the part of a sacred duty. In the case of the father being unwilling to do so, let the family physician be asked to teach the son. The mother, with her maternal instinct, will find the way and means to warn the daughter of the dangers which may beset her. In colleges and universities sex hygiene should be universally taught. The Commission feels that the teaching of sex hygiene in schools is an important movement which promises great advances in the promotion of child protection for the future. But it is certain that knowledge of sex hygiene alone can never be successful in saving the child until it is based upon religious conviction and sound moral teaching. (P. 36-37)

The VCC, in this excerpt, emphasizes the “sacred duty” of parents to teach their younger children about sex hygiene. Interestingly, while in the immediately previous excerpt the VCC stated that women were in specific need of sound, scientific sex hygiene knowledge to instruct their children, now they stated that “the mother, with her maternal instinct, will find the way and means to warn the daughter of dangers which may beset her.” This counter-argument invokes gender-stereotypical notions of women having a “maternal instinct” that necessarily suits them to protect their children as well as reinforces the Victorian ideal that discussion of sexuality with women is indecent.

New and/or Improved Social Policies/Programs

Those battling vice offered various conclusions that can be grouped in to category. One such recommendation was the formation of a Morals Commission of five members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council, the “duty of said commission” as follows:

[T]o take all legal and necessary steps towards the effectual suppression of bawdy and disorderly houses, houses of ill-fame or assignation within the limits of the City of Chicago, and within three (3) miles of the outer boundaries of the city; to collect evidence of the violation of any state laws and city ordinances concerning any of such houses, and the keepers, inmates and patrons of the same; and to institute and carry on prosecutions in the name of the City of Chicago against any of said houses, said keepers, inmates and patrons. (VCC 1911:51)

In tandem with the Morals Commission, the VCC proposed the establishment of a Morals Court that would deal specifically with cases related to vice.
Several of these proposed policies/programs were concerned with enforcement of laws and/or introducing new legislation regarding prostitution and its related problems. For example, believing that divorce was linked with the vice problem, the VCC (1911) stated that it “condemns the ease with which divorces may be obtained in certain States, and recommends a stringent, uniform divorce law for all States” (p. 55). Similarly, deducing that abortion services by midwives played some role in the vice problem, the VCC proposed that the “Department of Health investigate and report on the question of the practice of midwifery in Chicago, with such recommendations looking to its improvement as may be deemed proper” (p. 63). The C15 published the names of owners whose properties were being used for prostitution purposes, stating that this practice has “a four-fold effect”:

…[I]t has directly caused the dislodgment of hundreds of keepers; it has made it much harder for keepers of immoral resorts to find safe abiding places; it has stimulated the administration and the Police Department to greater activity, and has thrown the vice interests of Chicago into panic. (CHS, CB, April 30, 1914)

The VCC proposed the following injunction and abatement law that empowered citizens to take direct action against prostitution:

We recommend the enactment of State laws and City ordinances whereby a house of prostitution may be declared a public nuisance, and containing provisions expressly giving to any citizen the right to institute simple and summary proceedings in equity for the abatement of nuisance. (P. 56-57)

The VCC recommended the “relentless prosecution and punishment of professional procurers,” the “constant prosecution of all keepers and inmates of existing houses of prostitution, as well as owners of property rented or leased for immoral purposes,” and that “fines should be abolished and imprisonment or an adult probation system substituted” (p. 57) when dealing with prostitution. The VCC elaborated further on why the fining system just perpetuated the vice problem:

This system leads to many abuses and is in no way reformatory. If a girl does not have the money to pay her fine or secure bail, she must borrow, often from men, and this generally adds a link in the chain which binds her to an immoral life. If she has money the fine or the cost of the bail bond will probably make her penniless. In either case she
must return to the street, the house of the saloon, and plunge into reckless excesses in order to earn the money. First offenders, especially, instead of being fined or imprisoned should be placed on probation under the care of intelligent and sympathetic women officially connected with the court. These women can not only watch over these unfortunate girls and advise with them, but can secure employment for them or return them to their homes. (VCC 1911:46)

This excerpt once again highlighted the exploitation of prostitutes by men. Likewise, an implicit reference to a maternalist discourse was presented—implying that “intelligent and sympathetic women officially connected with the court” would act as surrogate mothers and thus protectors of the “unfortunate girls”—justifying the need for women professionals.

In addition to women probation officers, the VCC (1911) recommended various other professional positions should be filled by women—again reinforcing a maternalist discourse that women professionals were necessary to “mother” delinquent girls:

Federal inspectors on the trains, some of them women...could make it easy for the girl who wants to reach her relatives and friends to do so, and difficult for those who have entered the country by fraud and misrepresentation to accomplish their purpose. (P. 227)

We recommend that women officers be added to the police force, whose duty should be to render assistance to women or girls throughout the city, especially at all railroad stations or other places where inexperienced women are liable to need help. We also recommend that some of these women officers be able to speak foreign languages. (P. 62)

These occasional prostitutes when arrested by the police are frightened and confused. They are new to the life and not having as yet attached themselves to the usual crowd, who watch for such cases to bail them out or to pay their fines, they receive the maximum sentence. This is the psychological moment in which the probation officer can influence the girl. Such cases should all come before one judge in one court, and the officers in charge should be experienced women. When the officer is the right sort she can be a friend to such a girl, which is often all that is needed. (P. 280-81)

As was illustrated in discussions of warrants present in the claims, those battling vice were particularly concerned with the role commercialized recreations played in the prostitution problem. Consequently, several recommendations were made regarding commercialized recreations. The VCC (1911), reinforcing the belief that procurers trolled places of amusements looking for victims as well as the notion that youth were
allowed too much freedom to engage in immoral behaviors while unsupervised at these recreations, offered the following as a “general recommendation”:

We recommend that the daily press publish and appeal or protest to parents that their children be not given too much liberty; that parents and guardians accompany children of all ages upon their amusement excursions. (P. 65)

The VCC (1911) proposed various regulations for lake steamers/excursion boats, including the following: strict enforcement of laws against using boats “for prostitution purposes”; “more officers with police powers on board”; the suppression of “all gambling devices” (p. 55); and “greater publicity” regarding “the conditions which exist on lake steamers so that parents will warn their sons and daughters of the moral dangers surrounding them while on such excursions” (p. 65). Various recommendations were made by the VCC regarding public dance halls, including prohibiting “intoxicating liquor” (p. 60) from being sold and requiring licensing fees for public dance halls. Regarding “moving picture shows,” the VCC proposed that city ordinances “should be revised in such a way as to provide for the presentation of pictures in well lighted halls” (p. 61). Regarding public parks, the VCC offered the following recommendations to the park commissioner:

I. The parks should be better policed and playgrounds supervised more carefully. 
II. Managers of dancing pavilions should be more vigilant in excluding professional prostitutes. III. Soliciting by prostitutes within park enclosures should be rigidly suppressed. IV. Park managers should extend greater protection to unaccompanied young girls, especially in the evening. V. Public parks should be better lighted and equipped with search lights. Seats should be removed from deep shadows. (P. 64)

In addition to regulating commercialized recreation, those battling vice offered various recommendations for alternative recreations. The VCC (1911) suggested that “municipal dance halls should be established, properly policed and supervised” (p. 61). The VCC also offered the following suggestions for providing “healthful and carefully guarded places of recreation” for Chicago youth:

Let Chicago increase her small parks and recreation centers. Let the churches give of their facilities to provide amusement for children. Let the Board of Education extend its efforts in establishing more social centers in the public schools. Let the city provide
clean dances, well chaperoned—as they are now in the public schools Social Centers. (P. 36)

Again, these conclusions reinforce the value of children and the as well as the duty to protect them from being victimized by procurers for vice.

The VCC (1911) offered various other recommendations specifically aimed at protecting children from vice and its related evils. For example, the VCC recommended a “permanent Committee on Child Protection” (p. 58) be appointed. Concerned about messenger boys working in the vice districts late at night, the VCC recommended “an amendment to the present child labor law to the effect that no person under the age of twenty-one be employed in the night messenger service” (p. 56). Similarly, the VCC proposed the following:

A law should be enacted providing a penalty against any corporation or person employing messenger boys, or knowingly sending any messenger boy under twenty-one years of age to any disorderly house, unlicensed saloon, inn, tavern, or other unlicensed place where malt or spirituous liquors or wines sold, on any errand or business whatsoever. (P. 57)

Concerned about protecting the welfare of children born out of wedlock, the VCC offered the following recommendations:

XX. We recommend legislation providing for the organization of a sympathetic agency with paid agents who have followed a special instruction, and who would be charged with the regular supervision of the children of unmarried mothers. XXI. We also recommend that the City or County provide a physician with assistants who shall receive the reports of agents and inquire into the state of health of such children and care for those who are sick. XXII. We further recommend that this general guardianship and regular supervision over all such children of the City be extended until they have passed through the school age. XXIII. We recommend that Section 8, Chapter 17, of Hurd’s Revised Statutes relating to Bastardy be amended by striking out the words, “He shall be condemned by the order and judgment of the Court to pay a sum not exceeding $100 for the first year after the birth of such child, and a sum not exceeding $50 yearly for the nine years succeeding said first year, for the support, maintenance and education of such child,” and amending same so that responsibility for the care and support of the child of an unmarried mother shall be borne by the father until the child’s majority. (P. 58)
The VCC was also concerned with protecting newly-arrived immigrant girls, fearing procurers disproportionately victimized them. Thus, the VCC (1911) offered the following recommendations:

A Federal Bureau of Immigration should be established in great distributive centers, such as Chicago, to provide for the safe conduct of immigrants from ports of entry to their destination. Efficient legislation should be enacted and present laws enforced in such a manner as to deal with the traffic in women within the boundaries of each State as thoroughly as the Federal authorities have dealt with the international traffic. (P. 55)

III. Immigrant homes for foreign girls should be established and supported by different nationalities. IV. Immigrant girls should be warned not to go to employment agents who advertise in the press, especially in foreign languages, until the agents have been investigated. (P. 65)

The VCC—continuously attributing many girls’ fall into prostitution as attributable to their low wages, poor working conditions, and limited housing options—proposed various recommendations to address this problem. The VCC offered the following recommendations targeting employment agencies that sent girls to houses of prostitution:

III. We recommend that the State authorities or the Morals Commission conduct an investigation of employment agencies. IV. The advertisements of employment agents who advertise in Chicago papers published in foreign languages should be carefully watched and the advertisers investigated. V. Publishers should be warned against inserting the advertisements of suspicious employment agencies. VI. Employment agents should be carefully instructed regarding the law applicable to them. (P. 56)

Upholding the belief that social scientific study was necessary to ascertain the proper steps for addressing working girls’ precarious economic situation, the VCC proposed that “philanthropic and other organizations should conduct “an intensive study” to assess

…[T]he working conditions and wages paid by those establishments in Chicago which depend upon the labor of girls and women. This investigation should also ascertain living conditions, cost of living of different groups, and decide on what constitutes a “living wage” for each group. (P. 65)

The VCC was also concerned about housing options available to working girls due to their poor salaries; thus, they proposed that “more hotels and homes should be established
for working women and girls” (p. 65). Likewise, believing that girls needed improved education and skills to secure better employment to live independently, the recommended that “girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen should receive definite vocational training in continuation schools” (p. 63).

The VCC also proposed various conclusions on how to address rehabilitation of prostitutes and “semi-professional” prostitutes and a distinct group they referred to as “semi-delinquent” and “wayward” girls—arguing that a the latter were not to be associated with the former and should receive different treatment. They proposed that a “second school for wayward girls” was necessary, as the present single institution was overcrowded and nearing unmanageability. The VCC (1911) also recommended the following “more intelligent treatment of semi-delinquent girls”:

It is evident that better methods of classification should be adopted so that the semi-delinquent girls would not be classed with the delinquent, nor, except in extreme cases, or where diseased, placed in an institution for delinquents like that at Geneva. They should be sent to a school where industrial training is given to them and their industrial value increased. The atmosphere of such a school should be that of a boarding school, and as soon as any girl shows sufficient ability to earn a living, and a desire to do so, she should be allowed to leave on probation, under the supervision of a probation officer, who is a woman of experience and training. (P. 280)

Again, the VCC reiterated its belief that girls’ lack of “industrial training” was an important factor in their succumbing to prostitution. Likewise, by classifying them as “semi-delinquent,” the VCC implies that this group is not beyond rehabilitation. Similarly, the VCC offered the following, answering the question “How Can Unfortunate Women Be Rescued?”:

How can these unfortunate women be helped and saved to society? Some well meaning persons declare that they should be left to their fate; that they are criminals, and should be treated as such. The Commission does not feel that this is an answer to the problem. They are human beings still, for a time stumbling in the depths of sin and shame, but notwithstanding how low they have sunken in the social scale they can be rescued, if by some method they can be made to feel the touch of divine sympathy and human love.... To put them in prison with no provisions for their spiritual or physical needs would only tend to degrade them still lower and send them back to a life of shame in some other community in a worse condition than they were before. (VCC 1911:46)
Once more, the VCC constructs these “unfortunate women” as still capable of rescue; thus, treating them as mere criminals “left to their fate” is not the progressive approach to solving the vice problem. Likewise, this excerpt evokes sympathy for these women.

In contrast, the VCC offered the following recommendations for “old and hardened” professional prostitutes:

Old and hardened offenders, weakened by disease, their wills sapped and gone by drugs and the artificial excitement of their degraded lives, should be sent to an industrial farm with hospital accommodations on an indeterminate sentence. Obviously it is necessary that some such measures of almost drastic control should obtain, if such women are to be permanently helped and society served. (P. 47)

Thus, professional prostitutes were deemed beyond hope and thus best dealt with by segregating them on farms where their diseased bodies could be contained and treated during an “indeterminate sentence”—which leaves a disturbing sense of infinite confinement. Similarly, the VCC, believing that professional prostitutes abused alcohol and drugs and obtained cocaine and morphine from druggists, proposed the following recommendation:

We recommend that the Department of Health institute a rigid investigation into the use of cocaine and other noxious drugs, with a view at least of limiting such sales by the druggists. (VCC 1911:63)

Believing that “disorderly saloons” were intrinsically linked with the vice problem, the VCC offered several recommendations directed at these establishments. Wishing to protect children, the VCC (1911) proposed, “licenses of saloons in the near neighborhood of school houses and other public institutions should be revoked” (p. 59). Under the auspices of the proposed Morals Commission, the VCC recommended that the liquor interests, such as the Brewers’ Exchange and the Wholesale and Retail Liquor Dealers’ Associations, be pressured to follow the legal regulations for saloons. Likewise, the VCC proposed that the Morals Commission’s responsibilities include the following:

Enforce the laws and regulations, especially those, (a) Prohibiting the harboring of prostitutes and disorderly persons in saloons. (b) Prohibiting wine rooms and stalls in saloons. (c) Prohibiting assignation rooms, houses of prostitution and “hotels” in
The VCC also recommended the following regulations should be established for saloons:

IX. No women without male escorts should be permitted in saloons.  X. No professional or paid escorts for women should be permitted in any saloon.  XI. No solicitation for drinks or for prostitution purposes by men or women should be permitted in any saloon.  XII. No immoral or vulgar dances or entertainments should be given in any room connected with saloons.  XIII. The ordinances prohibiting wine rooms should be strictly enforced and any attempt to provide booths, screens, curtains about tables in rear rooms of saloons should be immediately suppressed.  XIV. All connections leading to rooms over saloons from any part of saloon should be immediately and permanently closed.  XV. The violation of any of these rules and regulations should be sufficient to secure the permanent revocation of a saloon license. (P. 60)

Lastly, believing that police corruption was a significant factor in perpetuating the vice problem, the VCC offered various recommendations aimed at combating this corruption. Under the auspices of the Morals Commission, the VCC proposed that police should be under “strict surveillance,” that “policemen who are guilty of gross or petty graft in their relations with saloons” (p. 59) should be discharged, and that policemen should be frequently rotated. The following recommendations were also directed at improving policing practices regarding vice:

I. Accurate monthly reports on all places in the City of Chicago where immoral and dissolute persons congregate, should be made to the General Superintendent of Police by inspectors of all police divisions.  II. If any inspector, captain or officer fails to report to the General Superintendent of Police all places where immoral and dissolute persons congregate, as suspicious or otherwise, he should be reduced in rank or dismissed from the service.  III. Inspectors of police should immediately report to the General Superintendent of Police all known assignation hotels and suspected places of like character and these places should be immediately suppressed.  IV. When complaints are received by the General Superintendent of Police, he should have them investigated by officers directly connected with his private office, and a report should be made to him direct at the earliest possible moment.  V. A special morals police squad should form a part of the police force of the city. (P. 62)
Discussion

As in Chapter Three, the following section contains the following: (1) a summary of the grounds, rhetorics, and conclusions, which I gathered from the primary data sources; and (2) a discussion of the claims-making styles employed by those battling vice. I then explore how those battling vice employed the Progressive discourse of the value of scientific investigation. Lastly, I discuss the rhetorical power of the crusaders’ claims in light of their rhetorical features as well as resonance with dominant Progressive discourses.

Summary of Findings

Grounds

Those battling vice offered various examples that aimed to define the parameters of the vice problem. The range of who was and who was not to be considered a prostitute was broadened significantly via categorizations of “professional,” “semi-professional,” and “clandestine” prostitution, which ran the gamut from full-time prostitutes—the “professionals”—to women who engaged in sexual behavior outside of marriage—“clandestine” prostitutes. Likewise, male “sex perverts” were brought into the fold by the VCC’s discussing “female impersonators” as soliciting men for prostitution purposes. The VCC also presented an exhaustive list of who was involved in procuring for vice, constructing the problem as a vast commercialized business controlled by men. While white slavery was not the primary focus of those battling vice, the VCC and the C15 defined white slavery in the strictest sense: Only women—regardless of race or color—who were forced or coerced into prostitution against their will were to be considered white slaves. However, while the VCC believed white slaves to represent a “small proportion” of the vice problem, the C15 believed them to be a “large proportion.” Moreover, while the VCC and the C15 did not stipulate that any particular group was disproportionately responsible for the white slave traffic, W. I. Thomas pinpointed Italians and Jews as primarily responsible. Similarly, the VCC specifically noted that immigrant and “colored” girls were at a greater risk of being pulled into vice, as
procurers preyed upon newly-arrived immigrant girls in railroad stations and employment agencies were likely to send immigrant and “colored” girls into the vice districts for domestic labor.

Those battling vice also offered claims aimed at reorienting the public’s understanding of the vice problem. For example, the VCC and the C15 challenged the notion that prostitution was a “necessary” evil that must be tolerated, countering this belief by arguing that prostitution was like any other social problem: It was surmountable and it was society’s moral duty to overcome the problem. Likewise, those battling vice reoriented understanding of the problem by constructing most prostitutes as not by nature immoral and wicked but as victims of various social inequities that drove them to prostitution through desperation or coercion by others. Similarly, popularly held that prostitution was a business controlled by women, those battling vice reoriented the problem to be a vast, commercialized business controlled by men. Additionally, the vice problem was reoriented to include “respectable” citizens—these “so-called” respectable citizens owning the vice properties were fingered as guilty of perpetuating the vice problem.

Those battling vice also grounded their claims by providing estimates of the vice problem. The VCC was meticulous in providing “typical cases” and finely-calculated estimates, all of which were deemed the most “official” data available on the problem. However, the VCC continuously stressed that the estimates were “ultra-conservative”—thus implying the problem was far larger than could be gauged with even official data sources. Nonetheless, both the VCC and the C15 proclaimed that the vice problem was on a downturn in Chicago, largely due to their and others’ reform efforts; yet, vice was still constructed as a pressing problem that needed even more attention. Furthermore, the range of the vice problem was constructed as indiscriminate—implying that any citizen at any time could fall into its grasp—thus making the problem even more pressing.

Lastly, those battling vice offered various typifying examples of the vice problem. The VCC offered numerous “typical cases,” which were often brief and maintained subject anonymity—thus striving for a social scientific ideal of objective research. However, these cases were sometimes peppered with details that often constructed the
prostitutes as victims of circumstances beyond their control, such as poverty, poor wages, and family responsibilities. Thus, these cases buttressed the construction that many prostitutes were victims with little choice in the matter of becoming a prostitute—they did it out of desperation and responsibility to their families.

Rhetorics

Those battling vice offered various warrants to justify taking action against the prostitution problem. They drew historical continuity between vice and previous social problems that had been overcome, thus implying that vice could be surmountable as well. They continuously appealed to the public’s awakened conscience and responsibility to battle the vice problem. They appealed to the value of children, arguing that children were innocents that the public had a duty to protect, that children were disproportionately and unfairly impacted by the vice problem due to society’s neglect, and that the vice interests specifically preyed upon these innocent children.

Those battling vice examined various social factors as contributing to the vice problem, among them the following: working girls’ low wages, poor working conditions, lack of educational and job skills, and victimization by unscrupulous employment agencies; commercialized recreations, where procurers trolled for victims and youth were allowed too many liberties to engage in immoral sexual behavior; the breakdown of the family, including intemperance, incest, poor living conditions, and lack of parental supervision over children; saloon and alcohol interests’ role in the vice problem; alcohol and drug abuse among prostitutes; the role of abortions given by midwives in the vice problem; and police corruption’s role in sustaining the vice problem, including blaming the public for tolerating and thus encouraging lax in enforcement. Feeblemindedness among prostitutes was also considered, those concerned noting the following: that feeblemindedness was believed to be prevalent among prostitutes, as the feebleminded girl was thought inherently immoral and hypersexual; and, due to the genetic nature of feeblemindedness, these prostitutes were beyond reform. Venereal disease and the double standard of sexuality were also of concern to those battling vice: of primary concern were innocent wives/children being infected with venereal disease from their
husbands/fathers and the double standard’s role in perpetuating this cycle. Lastly, overarching all these warrants was the notion that the majority of prostitutes were blameless victims in their plight.

Those battling vice also employed motifs in their claims. The use of the phrase “Social Evil” to describe prostitution was prevalent, particularly in the VCC report. Generic social problems motifs, such as “evil,” “menace,” “danger,” and the like were scattered throughout the claims. Some of those battling vice also employed a demonizing motif, wherein the vice interests preying upon innocent girls/children were constructed as monstrous and inhuman. However, a war/battle motif was by far the most prevalently used, particularly by the C15.

Conclusions

Those battling vice offered numerous conclusions regarding how to ameliorate and ideally annihilate the vice problem. Of utmost importance was to end the tolerance of segregated vice districts—an approach deemed sound due to the rigorous investigation of the VCC. Various recommendations were made in regards to combating venereal disease, including inspecting and condemning infected houses of prostitution, providing hospital wards specifically for venereal disease treatment, cracking down on “quack” treatments advertised in newspapers, requiring medical certificates attesting that the marriage license applicants were disease free, and instituting a vast sex hygiene education campaign.

In addition to these conclusions, various recommendations pertained to instituting new/improved social policies/programs. The VCC proposed that a municipal Morals Commission was necessary to oversee all directives for combating vice. Various criminal justice initiatives were proposed, including the following: instituting injunction and abatement laws; vigorous prosecution of procurers; minimizing police corruption through increased surveillance of police practices; providing more institutions for semi-delinquent and wayward girls, in which rehabilitative programs would be offered; and increasing women criminal justice workers. Several regulatory measures were proposed for commercialized recreations, and stricter enforcement of saloon regulations was
suggested. In concern for protecting children from vice and for their general welfare, the following recommendations were proposed: the establishment of a Committee on Child Protection; laws that would ensure paternal financial support of illegitimate children until their majority; and providing wholesome recreation. Various protective measures directed at immigrant girls were proposed, including having women officers at railroad stations to assist newly-arrived immigrant girls, providing homes for immigrant girls, and protecting them from unscrupulous employment agencies. Lastly, several recommendations were made for improving working girls’ situation, including studies of wages and working conditions with the goal of improving them, providing affordable housing for working girls, and offering more vocational training to improve their job skills and marketability.

Claims-Making Style

While the claims-making styles of those battling vice did not conform to any of the styles delineated by Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993), in my interpretation they—and particularly the VCC—predominantly employed a social scientific style. As the following section’s discussion is specifically devoted to the use of social scientific style by those battling vice and its resonance with a broader Progressive discourse that exalted scientific investigation, my present discussion will be limited. However, I will briefly highlight various examples that support this style classification. For instance, the VCC provided extremely detailed descriptions of how they collected their information, from what official sources they drew data, how they calculated their estimates, and included an appendix of tables reporting data. Likewise, the VCC was adamant about maintaining the anonymity of those they researched, replacing names of persons and places with subject numbers, thus emulating the ideal of objectivity in solid social scientific research. Moreover, the VCC made various recommendations for more scientific studies of the conditions related to vice to ascertain reform needs based on collected evidence. Thus, the VCC went to great pains to emulate the Progressive ideal of scientific investigation.
The Discourse of Scientific Investigation

As just discussed, those battling vice were very conscious of the Progressive ideal of scientific investigation and thus attempted to emulate the ideal through their studies of the vice problem. Likewise, the discursive practices of those battling vice often resonated with this broader discourse. For example, the Mayor of Chicago prefaced the VCC (1911) report with the following:

Executives have acted, in doing this [localizing vice in segregated districts], with the best of motives and often times with the advice of Ministers of the Gospel, and other men of character. The only criticism that can be offered is that none of these moves was based on careful investigation and far-seeing planning. Our statute books—State and Municipal—are corded with laws on the subject. Quite generally such laws have been ignored, since every one knew that they were not based on careful thought, either by trained students or investigators, or men closely in touch with the situation; rather have they grown out of temporary outbursts of sentiment. (P. 3)

Thus, Mayor Busse upheld “careful investigation and far-seeing planning” by “trained students or investigators”—ideals of Progressive social scientific investigation—as necessary to successfully combat Chicago’s vice problem. Similarly, Healy (1913) and the C15 (NL, GT, n.d.) expounded:

Those of us who have at all invaded the field perceive that no work on the subject will prove satisfactory unless there is union of well conducted biological studies with psychological investigations…. (Healy 1913: 87)

The chief requisite in any such organized effort against viciousness is to be sure of the sufficiency of evidence in any contemplated action…. Evidence must be obtained by trained investigators. (NL, GT, n.d.:8)

Correspondingly, the VCC (1911) and Taylor (CHS, CB, 1914b) presented the VCC’s investigation as indicative of sound scientific practices, as the following excerpts illustrate:

The Commission is an investigating and not a prosecuting body. The ordinance by which it was created gave it no powers of prosecution and specifically stated the object in view to be—to obtain the results of a scientific study of existing conditions and to point out methods of relief for such.

The Commission has carefully omitted from the report all names of offenders against the law, as well as addresses. It has also refrained from publishing the numbers of police officers who have been actually seen violating police rules regarding conduct
while on duty as well as overlooking the violation of the law and of police regulations. In place of these the Commission has used the letter “X” with a number following. These definite addresses, names and numbers, however, are on file in the records of the Commission.

It must be remembered that the typical cases throughout the report are taken from the daily reports of the field investigators in the employ of the Commission, and are given as their findings. (VCC 1911:30)

We had our sub-committees, one on the relation of the liquor traffic to the social evil, another on the sources of supply of victims of the vice, another on the relation of amusements to the social evil, and so on. Each sub-committee prosecuted its own inquiry, of course, under the direction of the central organization and the chief investigator. Investigations were made fearlessly and absolutely without regard to consequences. Official investigators were employed. They were carefully and conscientiously checked up by investigators of a different class. When the evidence was gotten in, it was laid before the sub-committee in typewritten form with affidavits, and sometimes supplemented by personal interviews with the victims with whose careers or destinies the facts dealt. These sub-committee reports were turned in to the main committee. Every word of every sub-committee’s report was heard by the main committee and then given back to the executive committee and—only after the most careful correlation, challenge, checking up, and verification—was published. (CHS, CB, 1914b:2)

These excerpts purport to the “scientific” nature of the VCC investigation, highlighting the measures to maintain the anonymity of those investigated, providing “typical cases” as evidence to support their findings, and presenting the meticulous verification process to which all data presumably was subjected—thus emulating the Progressive ideal of scientific investigation.

Those battling vice sometimes criticized the lack of careful scientific study of the vice problem by others, as the following excerpts illustrate:

It is, however, impossible to secure any exact data from these homes and institutions [“small institutions which receive delinquent girls, and even prostitutes”]. The reports are always colored by the temperament of those who make them, and are, therefore, either optimistic or pessimistic, without justification in carefully compiled figures. The deaconesses, the sisters and the lay workers bring to their hard and ungracious task a divine patience and faith, but in some cases it is evident that the same amount of effort expended in a more scientific manner, and with the application of more advanced ideas of institutional work would result in greater efficiency. (VCC 1911:276-77)

Very little attention has been given to this branch of social work [“rescue homes”]…. Almost all other kinds of philanthropic and social effort have been scientifically investigated, statistics compiled and a serious study made of the results. The time has come in which the same investigation should be made of the class of agencies which
attempt to serve this class of women…. From the neglect and lack of criticism has resulted the retention of antiquated methods and ineffectual [sic] management. The Russell Sage Foundation could accomplish no more valuable work than a really exhaustive and scientific investigation of the institutions, prisons and homes to which these classes of women are committed or to which they go voluntarily. The Commission recommends to the Foundation the prosecution of such an inquiry. (VCC 1911:284)

Again, these criticisms resonate with the broader Progressive discourse of the value of scientific investigation. Similarly, various battlers of vice noted that sensational appeals not grounded in scientific proof were detrimental to the cause, as the following excerpts illustrate:

If any force can overcome the persistence of the social evil and eradicate commercialized vice it is “The spirit which dominates the work of the bureau—not sensational, or sentimental, or hysterical, not a sprit of criticism of public officials, but essentially a sprit of constructive suggestion and of deep scientific, as well as humane, interest, in a great world problem.” (Taylor 1913b:811)

Sensationalism should be avoided. My long experience teaches me that the people will respond if the cold facts regarding the non-enforcement of law and the conditions resulting therefrom are sanely and persistently brought to their attention.

One of the best illustrations of the awakening of the public conscience may be seen in the actual facts in the history of Chicago’s reform movement. Chicago’s conscience was stirred from its slumber by the publication of the Vice Commission’s Report in 1911. It was kept awake by the demands from pulpit, platform, and press that something be done about it. The cold facts given in that report were at first almost unbelievable, but there were so convincingly and overwhelmingly proved that Chicago was aroused. (NL, GT, n.d.:5)

The Committee deliberated for some time before making public, these further statements owing to a strong desire to avoid all appearance of sensationalism. (CHS, CB, 1911:1-2)

A key aspect of the Progressive ideal of scientific investigation of social problems was that the results of inquiry should be used to ameliorate the problem and thus morally uplift the community. Thus, the following excerpts from the VCC report and the C15 attested to this ideal:

That there must be constant repression of this curse on human society is the conclusion of this Commission after months of exhaustive study and investigation—a study which has included the academic with the practical; moral ideals with human weaknesses; honesty of administration with corruption; the possible with the impossible. It has sought to meet all question fairly; it has made every effort to work with intelligence; it has kept
constantly in mind that to offer a contribution of any value such an offering must be, first, moral; second, reasonable and practical; third, possible under the Constitutional power of our Courts; fourth, that which will square with the public conscience of the American people. (VCC 1911:25)

Such an organization [Committee of Fifteen] should have no official connection with the constituted authorities or with any political party or faction. It should remain absolutely independent as a citizens’ body for the moral uplift of the community, assisting and cooperating with officials in all possible ways. (NL, GT, n.d.:8)

Therefore, while in conflict with most contemporary notions of objective scientific investigation, objectives of uplifting the greater society through morally as well as scientifically informed social reforms were tightly intertwined with the ideal of Progressive scientific investigation.

Rhetorical Power of Claims

The VCC investigation of the vice problem in Chicago was unprecedented in its scope and methodology (Anderson 1974). Consequently, various other large metropolitan areas followed suit and sponsored vice investigations, emulating the investigative methods of the VCC. Likewise, drawing from the findings of the VCC, various Chicago social reformers supported the C15’s efforts to follow up on the vice problem. Thus, the claims made by the VCC and the C15 apparently were persuasive in rousing reformers to fighting vice in Chicago. Therefore, deconstructing the claims of those battling vice provides insight as to the persuasive power of their rhetorical features.

Various rhetorical devices employed by those battling vice were critical to their persuasiveness, in my interpretation. Perhaps the most critical was the VCC’s presentation of its investigation as highly scientific and rigorous, reflecting their social scientific style. Their extensive descriptions of their methodology, citation of numerous “typical cases” to support their findings, and presentation of copious estimates regarding the “existing conditions” related to vice lent their claims an official air of credibility. Likewise, the very structured and organized presentation of their report added more credibility to the claims. In contrast to the comparably sensationalized appearance of the white slave crusaders’ claims at the time, the VCC report was probably interpreted as having more authority. Similarly, that the VCC was appointed by the city probably
increased its credibility in the eyes of the public and thus increased the persuasiveness of their claims.

While for the most part the VCC and the C15 did not construct prostitutes as “white slaves,” they did still construct them largely as blameless victims in their plight. Highlighting that economic desperation was a primary cause for many girls/women becoming prostitutes, those battling vice constructed these women as having essentially no choice but to turn to this life to survive. Likewise, through the typifying examples presented, the prostitutes were shown as trying desperately to survive via legitimate means, but with all the odds set against them, finally succumbing to prostitution. Thus, those battling vice constructed them as blameless victims in need of society’s protection. Similarly, the focus upon procurers and men as exploiting women further constructed the prostitutes as victims and thus worthy of sympathy and assistance. Moreover, the impression that a highly organized syndicate existed for procuring prostitutes also buttressed this victim construction.

The focus on protecting children furthered this construction of victims being disproportionately victimized by vice interests. By officially defining children as through 18-21 years-of-age, they broadened the range of what were to considered children and thus whose welfare was the duty of the city to protect. Children were constructed as victims in numerous ways: their close proximity to vice districts endangered them; employers sending them into vice districts to peddle newspapers and gum; trying to innocently seek recreation at commercial amusements, with procurers and “sex perverts” stalking them; victims of venereal disease contracted from their fathers; and victims of poor family and living situations. Thus, those battling vice forwarded a “child-victim” (Best 1987, 1990) claim, which is “uncontroversial” (1990:5) and thus readily ratified.

Lastly, many of the claims offered by those battling vice resonated with broader discourses present during the Progressive Era and thus gained persuasive power. As stated in Chapter Three, I will devote in-depth discussion in my concluding chapter of how resonance with broader discourses and “master frames” (Snow and Benford 1986, 1992; Benford and Snow 2000) impacts the persuasiveness of claims. However, I will briefly highlight presently how the resonance with broader discourses increased the
persuasive potential of the claims presented by those battling vice. As previously discussed, the scientific rhetoric employed by some of the crusaders resonated with a broader Progressive discourse of the value of scientific investigation propagated in the Progressive Era. Likewise, claims that focused upon such issues as crowded housing, working girls’ poor working conditions and low wages, commercialized recreations, and corrupt city official, resonated with a broader anxieties regarding urbanization discourse present in the Progressive Era. Similarly, claims about young working girls’ vulnerability to procurers due to their poor wages and working conditions, procurer’s trolling of these work places for fresh victims, and girls’ attending various amusements without chaperones, resonated with broader discourses of anxiety regarding women’s unprecedented foray into the workforce and subsequent relative economic and social independence. Similarly, various claims constructing girls as blameless, innocent victims succumbing to prostitution resonated with broader gender and sexual discourses that women’s sexual purity was a priceless treasure that needed protection—protection that had to come from without, as women by nature were naïve and unable to protect themselves from the wiles of wicked men. Furthermore, recommendations of women police officers, probation officers, judges and the like resonated with a broader maternalist discourse that women by their maternal nature were more suited to protect girls from procurers. Moreover, appeals to the need for widespread sexual education that challenged the double standard of sexuality and aimed to combat venereal disease resonated with broader social hygiene discourses. Finally, the continuous appeal to public conscience and civic responsibility to combat vice resonated with a broader Progressive discourse that social problems were the responsibility of the community as a whole—and that civic and moral duty compelled action against them.
CHAPTER FIVE: HULL HOUSE WOMEN AND THE “SOCIAL EVIL”

Introduction

Hull House

Established in 1889 by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Star and prospering throughout the Progressive Era, Hull House became “a prototype for settlements around the country” (Wheeler and Wortman 1977:70)—promoting scientific investigation, social reform, universal social services provided by government agencies, and community responsibility. Located in the heart of Chicago’s teeming immigrant communities, Hull House afforded the opportunities to address numerous social issues, such as poverty, child welfare, juvenile delinquency, and housing problems. Accordingly, the Hull House reformers conducted several social investigations throughout the Progressive Era, wherein

[T]hey would suspect that a certain problem existed, gather data documenting that such a problem did exist, form a policy for social action based on this factual evidence, and then lobby political and community forces to alleviate or eliminate the problem. (Deegan 1988:41)

Likewise, it became a haven for many women sociologists (Deegan 1988). The reform emphasis that saturated the research interests of now-renowned women sociologists, such as Jane Addams, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Edith and Grace Abbott, resulted in the male-dominated academic world deeming them as social workers and their interests as more suited to an applied setting. Consequently, when faced with sex discrimination in the academic world, Hull House became a “necessary outlet for educated women who wanted to learn, use their training, and retain their ‘feminine’ world views and values” (Deegan 1988:39).
Analysis


Grounds

In the claims made by the Hull House women regarding prostitution and related problems, the grounds of their rhetorical arguments manifested in three different types: definitions, estimates, and typifying examples.

Definitions

Upon analyzing the Hull House women’s domain statements regarding the prostitution problem, apparently the boundaries of what was considered prostitution were nebulous. For example, while Jane Addams (1912a) initially defined the “social evil” as including the “sexual commerce permitted to exist in every large city…wherein the chastity of women is bought and sold” and that the “illicit affection between men and women…should always remain distinct from commercialized vice….” (p. 9), she later expanded her definition of the problem to include “clandestine prostitution,” which began with girls “accepting invitations to dinners and places” (p. 216) and seemingly involved these fore mentioned “illicit affection[s].” Similarly, Bowen ([n.d.] 1984) drew the boundaries between “professional” and “occasional” prostitutes—“women who go into the life every now and then that they may supplement their meager wages” (p. 11) While Breckinridge and Edith Abbott ([1912] 1970) did not address the definition of prostitution specifically, they did discuss the “incorrigible” or “disorderly” girl, who was often charged as such by the juvenile court on the following grounds:

Sometimes she refuses to stay at home and keeps a room in a disreputable quarter of the city… she associates with vicious persons, refuses to work and brings money home without working; goes away and stays for days, is strongly suspected of being immoral …or she stays out all night and “admits that one night she stayed at a hotel with a young man.” In general, the incorrigible or disorderly girl is one who “has a bad reputation in the neighborhood,” one who has been going with bad company and staying away at night. (P. 35)
Breckinridge and Abbott ([1912] 1970) also discussed the cases of delinquent girls who were charged with “immorality”—stating, “no explanation of the term ‘immorality’ is necessary” (p. 37). They then explained that “the word ‘immorality’ is never used in the petition or the statement of the case if it can be avoided,” and that “the offenses disguised in the court records under the terms ‘incorrigibility’ or ‘disorderly conduct’ are in substance much the same as those plainly described as immoral” (p. 37). The avoidance of labeling a girl as officially “immoral” reveals the extreme stigma that was perceived to be associated with this label—and the gender-stereotypical notion that girls were to be chaste and pure. Breckenridge and Abbott then cited that “a careful study of the case histories of the girls brought into court during the first ten years showed that 209 girls had frequented or had been inmates of houses of prostitution…” (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970:37). Thus, Breckinridge and Abbott seemingly included delinquent girls’ “incorrigibility,” “disorderly conduct,” and “immorality” as within the domain of the prostitution. Moreover, it appears from these excerpts that the primary concern regarding girls’ delinquency was sexual misconduct, again reiterating gender-stereotypical concerns regarding girls’ sexual chastity.

Additionally, in the Hull House women’s claims, the domain of the “social evil” apparently included—or perhaps was synonymous with—“white slavery.” Addams (1912a) continuously signified the “social evil” as synonymous with the “white slavery traffic.” In fact, the majority of Addams discursive practices were saturated with “white slavery” references rather than “social evil” or “prostitution.” Similarly, Grace Abbott (1917) was primarily concerned with in-transit immigrant girls being victimized by “white slavers.”

Consequently, and in congruence with the crusaders discussed in Chapter Three, a “white slavery” definition acted as a reorientation device that constructed nearly all the women involved in prostitution as blameless victims of evil men and women—as girls unwittingly sold into sexual slavery by manipulative “white slavers.” Likewise, the “white slave” definition may have been used to invoke images of the American enslavement of blacks. Thus, this reconstruction of the majority of prostitutes as
blameless victims reoriented prostitutes as the “victims” and thus “sympathy-worthy” rather than “victimizers” and thus “condemnation-worthy” (Loseke 1993).

Similarly, the overall vague definitions of what was constituted as the “social evil” may be interpreted as expanding the domain of the social problem. As defined by the Hull House women, the domain of prostitution could encompass anything from “illicit affections,” to “clandestine prostitution,” (Addams 1912a) to “occasional prostitution,” (Bowen [n.d.] 1984) to general “immorality” (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970). Thus, adhering to these definitions, the domain of prostitution expands to encompass several gradations. Furthermore, this broad construction of any sexual relationships engaged in by women outside of marriage as some form of prostitution reinforced gender-stereotypical notions of the desirability of women’s chastity and concomitantly constructed this extramarital sexual behavior as deviant.

**Estimates**

Incidence estimates were also presented in the Hull House women’s claims regarding prostitution, sometimes as numerical estimates but also as indistinct statements. Typically, and particularly in Addams’s claims, the incidence estimates were vague sentiments about the magnitude of the problem:

[T]he overwhelming pity and sense of protection, which the recent revelations in the white slave traffic have aroused for the thousands of young girls….

He is but one of thousand of weak boys, who are constantly utilized to supply the white slave trafficker….

The federal report on ‘women and Child Wage Earners in the United States’ gives the occupation of the majority of girls who go wrong as that of domestic services. (Addams 1912a:11, 51, 167)

[P]ublicity thus making clear that a large number of women have entered the hideous life against their own volition…. (Addams 1912b:5)

Moreover, within these particular excerpts, children were constructed as the primary victims of white slave traders, thus depicting them as blameless victims deserving sympathy and protection—a theme that permeated the Hull House women’s claims.
Addams (1912a), however, did provide some more concrete incidence estimates, declaring that the VCC report “estimates the yearly profit of this nefarious business as conducted in Chicago to be between fifteen and sixteen millions of dollars” (p. 57) and “that twenty thousand men daily responsible for the evil in Chicago live outside of the city” (p. 198). Not only were these concrete, but also they came from “official” sources, such as the city-appointed VCC.

Bowen, Grace Abbott, and Breckinridge and Edith Abbott’s incidence estimates of prostitution and associated problems, in contrast to Addams, were more likely to be concrete numerical figures:

[T]he Vice Commission of Chicago…states that the investigation of 119 women who had gone wrong, and who were found leading immoral lives in houses, dance halls and on the streets, shows that 38 stated that they had entered the career because of their need for money…. (Bowen [1911] 1937:158)

We have in Chicago—and these are police figures—486 disreputable houses, with 1,602 presumably disreputable inmates; although the number of inmates is probably nearer 10,000…. It has been estimated that not only are three-fourths of the prostitutes of the country girls under twenty, but also that four-fifths have entered this profession because of poverty…. (JPA [1910] 1984:56)


The Chicago Vice Commission (1911) found 13 out of 28 employment agencies willing to supply servants to a supposedly immoral place, in violation of the employment agency law…. In the investigation made by the United States Immigration Commission, 17 out of 22 licensed agents were found to be willing to furnish girls for work in an alleged “sporting house.” (Abbott 1917:30)

Again, these estimates were given more credibility, as they were substantiated by the VCC investigation. Moreover, those women involved in prostitution were constructed as victims of extraneous circumstances, namely, of “poverty” and “need of money” and unscrupulous employment agencies. Thus, prostitutes were constructed as blameless victims—a construction that saturated the Hull House women’s claims.

Surprisingly, growth estimates were not prevalent in the Hull House women’s claims; Addams’s made one claim about “clandestine prostitution,” in which she stated there “is no doubt that that the growth of the social evil at the present moment, lies in this
direction” (1912a:216). However, Addams also declared that the prostitution problem had been reduced due to successful reform efforts, claiming that due to Clifford Roe’s efforts in combating white slavery, “white slave traders have become so frightened that the foreign importation of girls to Chicago has markedly declined” (p. 25).

In contrast to growth and reduction estimates, range claims were more readily used, both explicitly and implicitly. Addams (1912a) continuously reiterated that the “social evil” was present “in every city”—thus implying an indiscriminate geographic range of the prostitution problem. Likewise, Addams (1912a) declared “the grave social evil [could] at any moment become a dangerous personal menace” (p. 102). Similarly, when addressing venereal diseases’ association with prostitution, Addams made pleas for the indiscriminate range of the problem:

A well-known authority states the one breeding-place of these disease germs, without exception, is the social institution designated as prostitution, but, once bred and cultivated there, they then spread through the community, attacking alike both the innocent and the guilty. (Addams 1912a:182)

This excerpt also invoked Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of endangerment, wherein a social problem is constructed as harmful to the health of the community. Likewise, the statement that “both the innocent and the guilty” were impacted by venereal disease constructed a personal interest in combating these diseases, as even the “innocent” could be infected.

Thus, the Hull House women’s claims attempted to construct an indiscriminate range for the vulnerability to prostitution. However, the Hull House women claim-makers primarily focused on immigrant and “colored” girls, the “working” girls, and “country” girls—thus implying that these groups were most vulnerable to personal victimization by “white slavers” and to the “social evil.” Consequently, although they attempted to create an indiscriminate range in which anyone could be ensnared by prostitution, by subsequently devoting their claims to these particular groups they constructed a more limited range for those whom were directly affected by the social problem. Nevertheless, that anyone at anytime could be touched by the “social evil” was still claimed—thus creating a personal investment in addressing the problem.
Typifying Examples

Typifying examples were prevalent in the Hull House women’s claims. Likewise, the examples given, while listed as “typical” cases, were very heart wrenching and thus sympathy-evoking. Bowen related a tale of “a little girl in a short white dress with long black curls down her back” who was “sold by her mother at the age of 12 into a disreputable house” (JPA [1911-1912] 1984). This example invokes Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) *rhetoric of loss*, wherein something “sacred,” i.e. childhood, is threatened by a social problem. Likewise, it points to a breakdown in family, a warrant that permeated the Hull House women’s claims.

Addams provided abundant and detailed individual case histories of those affected by the prostitution, the following example particularly sympathy evoking:

The following story, fairly typical of the twenty-two involving economic reasons, is of a girl who had come to Chicago at the age of fifteen, from a small town in Indiana. Her father was too old to work and her mother was a dependent invalid. The brother who cared for the parents, with the help of the girl’s own slender wages earned in the country store of the little town, became ill with rheumatism. In her desire to earn more money the country girl came to the nearest large city, Chicago, to work in a department store. The highest wage she could earn…was five dollars a week. This sum was of course inadequate even for her own needs and she was constantly filled with a corroding worry for “the folks at home.”…

For a long time the young saleswoman kept her position in the department store, retaining her honest wages for herself but sending everything else to her family. At length however, she changed from her clandestine life to an openly professional one when she needed enough money to send her brother to Hot Springs, Arkansas, where she maintained him for a year. She explained that because he was now restored to health and able to support the family once more, she had left the life “forever and ever.”… (Addams 1912a:62)

This excerpt contains the *morality of biography* and *morality of activity* rhetorics described by (Loseke and Fawcett 1995). The morality of biography rhetoric is invoked through the depiction of this girl as working hard to support herself and her family. Likewise, the morality of activity rhetoric is invoked by depicting the girl as a devoted daughter that recognizes her duty to support her family. Via these rhetorics, Addams invoked extreme sympathy for this girl and the “twenty-two” others with seemingly analogous stories. Similarly, Addams pointed to working girls’ low wages as a primary factor that drove girls to desperation and thus succumbing to prostitution to survive.
Thus, these working girls were constructed as essentially having no choice but to become prostitutes. Consequently, they were constructed as blameless victims of economic inequality. Moreover, this construction resonates with Loseke’s (1992) assertion, drawing on Clark’s (1987) research, that, in order to claim sympathy, victims of social problems must be constructed as being in a ‘‘dire situation,’ as ‘not complicit’ in creating their problems, and as ‘morally worthy’’ (Loseke 1992:45). Thus, the prostitute in this scenario was constructed as: (1) being in a desperate situation to support her invalid family; (2) not complicit in creating her problem, as she was forced into prostitution due to poor wages and family responsibilities; and (3) morally worthy because she was presumably only engaging in prostitution to support her family, and because she obviously knew it was an immoral profession that she wanted to escape, as she had left the life “forever and ever” once her brother was able to support their parents again.

Breckinridge and Abbott related a case history that drew on these same moral discourses:

Somewhat similar, perhaps, is the case of a young Jewish girl whose father was dead and who was helping to support the family of seven children under quite hopeless circumstances. The mother was in delicate health, the children were sickly, and they lived in a poor, miserable place over a stable where a horse was kept. The girl worked very hard in a factory, giving her mother everything she earned, but finally, as if she had thrown up her hands in a sudden impulse of despair, she became quite reckless and immoral. She earned money first by going to low rooming houses, and then, at the age of fifteen, to a house of prostitution. (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970:77)

Addams (1912a) offered another case of “Marie,” a victim of the international traffic in women, an excerpt from which follows:

Marie has since married a man who wishes to protect her from the influence of her old life, but although not yet twenty years old and making an honest effort, what she has undergone has apparently so far warped and weakened her will that she is only partially successful in keeping her resolutions, and she sends each month to her parents in France ten or twelve dollars, which she confesses to have earned illicitly. It is as if the shameful experiences to which this little convent-bred Breton girl was forcibly subjected, had finally become registered in every fibre [sic] of her being until the forced demoralization has become genuine. She is as powerless now to save herself from her subjective temptations as she was helpless five years ago to save herself from her captors.

Such demoralization is, of course, most valuable to the white slave trader, for when a girl has become thoroughly accustomed to the life and testifies that she is in it of
her own free will, she puts herself beyond the protection of the law. She belongs to a legally degraded class, without redress in courts of justice for personal outrages. (P. 20-21)

The moral discourse related via this case example is quite interesting. Addams constructs those victimized by white slave traders as subjected to such degrading, awful circumstances that their “demoralization has become genuine.” Consequently, even if they try to redeem themselves and live a moral life, immorality has become such a “fiber of [their] being” that such efforts are hopeless. Thus, the white slave is constructed first as a victim by her coercion into prostitution and is secondly constructed as blameless in her moral lapses because she has been so thoroughly degraded by the experience. Additionally, Addams presumes that no girl would freely choose to become a prostitute, and a girl who proclaims to be “in it of her own free will” only does so because the degradation has so broken her will that she believes herself to be in the life due to her own choice. This construction resonates with the “abused wife” construction found by Loseke (1992): the girl is constructed “as a person who ‘cannot cope with the outside world without some assistance and intervention,’ as ‘too demoralized to assert herself,’ as ‘bewildered and helpless,’ and as ‘overwhelmingly passive and unable to act on her own behalf’” (p. 28).

Thus, the Hull House women claims-makers used typifying examples not only as means to grab their audience’s attention but also to promote the audience’s sympathy for those affected by the social problem. In turn, this strategy constructed prostitutes as blameless victims—depicting the sheer desperation that drove women into prostitution and thus facilitating the construction of the “social evil” as a social problem deserving of attention.

Rhetorics

The following section discusses the various rhetorics employed by the Hull House women, guided by Best (1987, 1990) and Ibarra & Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical analytics. The following warrants figured prominently in the Hull House women’s claims: historical continuity with black slavery; alliance with other social movements; the value
of children, blameless victims in need of protection, social factors as contributing to the prostitution problem, the value of social order/control, and a social responsibility to eradicate prostitution.

**Historical Continuity with Black Slavery**

As I discussed earlier, the oft-used definition of prostitution as “white slavery” implicitly invoked an analogy of prostitution to the American enslavement of blacks. However, in addition to this implicit reference, Addams (1912a) explicitly proposed an analogy between the problem of black slavery and the present “white slavery” problem:

> Those of us who think we discern the beginnings of a new conscience in regard to this twin of slavery, as old and outrageous as slavery itself and even more persistent, find a possible analogy between certain civic, philanthropic and educational efforts directed against the very existence of this social evil and similar organized efforts which preceded the overthrow of slavery in America.…

> Few righteous causes have escaped baptism with blood; nevertheless, to paraphrase Lincoln's speech, if blood were exacted drop by drop in measure to the tears of anguished mothers and enslaved girls, the nation would still be obliged to go into the struggle. (P. 4, 6)

Thus, Addams used a warrant of “historical continuity” (Best 1987) with black slavery to justify action regarding the problem of “white slavery.” However, in contrast to the reformers in Chapters Three and Four, she did not make the claim that white slavery was a far worse evil than black slavery.

**Alliance with other Social Movements**

Addams (1912a) made specific reference to the alliance between the social evil and other “contemporaneous social movements”—claiming that

> [T]he most immediate help in this new campaign against the social evil will probably come thus indirectly from those streams of humanitarian effort which are ever widening and which will in time slowly engulf into their rising tide of enthusiasm for human betterment, even the victims of the white slave traffic. (P. 181)
By claiming alliances between movements, Addams established the anti-prostitution movement as key to broader “humanitarian efforts” to improve society overall. Moreover, establishing alliances with other social movements compelled those involved in those movements to recognize their shared interests with the anti-prostitution movement and thus compelled them to join the forces against prostitution.

Among the social movements Addams believed allied with the prostitution problem was the movement to battle venereal disease. As Addams stated,

> [P]hysicians and sanitarians…well know that the social evil is directly responsible for germ diseases more prevalent than any of the others, and also communicable…. The medical profession agrees that, as the victims of the social evil inevitably become the purveyors of germ diseases of a very persistent and incurable type, safety in this regard lies only in the extinction of commercialized vice…. (P. 181-82)

This excerpt not only allies the movement against prostitution with the public health movement against venereal disease, but also invokes Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of endangerment, wherein social problems are constructed as endangering persons’ health.

Addams (1912a) also proclaimed an alliance between the anti-prostitution movement and the “great movement against alcoholism,” noting that

> A careful scientist has called alcohol the indispensable vehicle of the business transacted by the white slave traders, and has asserted that without its use this trade could not long continue. Whoever has tried to help a girl making an effort to leave the irregular life she has been leading, must have been discouraged by the victim’s attempts to overcome the habit of using alcohol and drugs. Such a girl has commonly been drawn into the life in the first place when under the influence of liquor and has continued to drink that she might be able to live through each day. Furthermore, the drinking habit grows upon her because she is constantly required to sell liquor and to be “treated.” (P. 188)

In addition to constructing an alliance between the temperance movement and the anti-prostitution movement, Addams again constructed prostitutes as victims. Under the influence of alcohol, girls are unwittingly “drawn into the life,” and the depravity of their actions necessitates that they be intoxicated “to live through each day.” Likewise, the prostitute is “required” to solicit drinks in saloons, and thus develops a “drinking habit.” Thus, the prostitute is constructed as a victim.
Addams (1912a) also devoted extensive discussion to the alliance between the equal suffrage movement and the anti-prostitution movement. As Addams stated,

On the horizon everywhere are signs that woman will soon receive the right to exercise political power, and it is believed that she will show her efficiency most conspicuously in finding means for enhancing and preserving human life, if only as the result of her age-long experiences. That primitive maternal instinct, which has always been as ready to defend as it has been to nurture, will doubtless promptly grapple with certain crimes connected with the white slave traffic; women with political power would not brook that men should live upon the wages of captured victims, should openly hire youths to ruin and debase young girls, should be permitted to transmit poison to unborn children…. Life is full of hidden remedial powers which society has not yet utilized, but perhaps nowhere is the waste more flagrant than in the matured deductions and judgments of the women, who are constantly forced to share the social injustices which they have no recognized power to alter. (P. 191-92)

This excerpt resonated with a maternalist discourse propagated during the Progressive Era, which declared that women by their nature were nurturing and moral. Thus, any venture by women into the public sphere—in this case, voting—would necessarily have a moralizing effect. Therefore, women’s vote would have a moralizing effect, as women would not tolerate the prostitution problem. Likewise, Addams implicitly invoked equal rights rhetoric via her claim that women’s “matured deductions and judgments” are wasted by their not having the power to alter “social injustices” via voting power. Additionally, Addams drew historical continuity between women’s involvement in the anti-slavery movement and the equal suffrage movement:

As the first organized Women’s Rights movement was inaugurated by the women who were refused seats in the world’s Anti-Slavery convention held in London in 1840, although they had been the very pioneers in the organization of the American Abolitionists, so it is quite possible white slavery will bring many women into the Equal Suffrage movement, simply because they too will discover that without the use of the ballot they are unable to work effectively for the eradication of a social wrong. (P. 197)

Lastly, Addams (1912a) claimed an alliance between the anti-prostitution movement and the “International Socialism” movement. As Addams stated, this movement

[H]as always included the abolition of this ancient evil in its program of social reconstruction, and…the leaders of the Socialist party have never ceased to discuss the
economics of prostitution with its psychological and moral resultants. The Socialists contend that commercialized vice is fundamentally a question of poverty, a by-product of despair, which will disappear only with the abolition of poverty itself; that it persists not primarily from inherent weakness in human nature, but is a vice arising from a defective organization of social life; that with a reorganization of society, at least all of prostitution which is founded upon the hunger of the victims and upon the profits of the traffickers, will disappear. (P. 204-5)

Yet again, Addams drew the connection between economics and prostitution, this time backed by Socialist tenets. Thus, prostitutes were constructed as blameless victims of an economic system that breeds inequality and exploitation by profit-seeking traffickers.

Value of Children

Perhaps the most explicit warrant I gleaned from the Hull House women’s claims for action against the prostitution was the value of children—a warrant substantively equivalent to Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical idiom of rhetoric of loss, wherein something “sacred” is constructed as threatened by the social problem. This warrant was largely expressed in the persistent connotation of those allegedly involved in the “social evil” as “girls” and “boys.” Likewise, the claims-makers incessantly noted that those entrapped in prostitution and “white slavery” were “little” children of “extreme youth” and thus were innocent victims worthy of sympathy and deserving of protection, as the following examples illustrate:

This slaughter of the innocents, this infliction of suffering upon the new-born, is so gratuitous and so unfair, that it is only a question of time until an outrageous sense of justice shall be aroused on behalf of these children….

There is something literally heart-breaking in the thought of these little children who are ensnared and debauched when they are still young enough to have every right to protection and care.

It is incomprehensible that a nation whose chief boast is its free public education, that a people always ready to respond to any moral or financial appeal made in the name of children, should permit this infamy against childhood to continue! Only the protection of all children from the menacing temptations which their youth is unable to withstand, will prevent some of them from falling victims to the white slave traffic. (Addams 1912a:132, 136, 137)

Shall we not heed these figures and begin the new year with renewed energy, profiting by our mistakes of the past and resolved to so protect and cherish our city children, that in
place of the delinquents of the past, we shall help to raise the upright citizens of the future? (JPA [1910] 1984:58)

But more than that she has brought home to us as only these tragic, overwhelming events can bring, the need for our children of livable homes and of wholesome, attractive recreation. We have felt again in this girl's life the everlasting plea for a fair chance—a chance for our boys and girls to go to school and to play and to develop into useful citizens. (JPA [1914-1915] 1984:20)

And, finally, it will appear that throughout the whole story runs the thread of civic neglect by the city and of its lack of intelligent care for this priceless treasure of the youth in its midst…. (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970:45)

**Blameless Victims in Need of Protection**

In close conjunction with the value of children warrant, that those involved in the “social evil” were largely blameless victims in need of protection was also prevalent in the Hull House women’s claims—analogous to Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetorical idiom of *rhetoric of unreason*. This warrant was particularly present when referring to “girls” and was often coupled with discussions of “white slavery,” as the following quotations illustrate:

A new publicity in regard to the social evil is a striking characteristic of the last decade. This publicity has disclosed that thousands of these so-called “fallen” women are piteously young, and that thousands of others lost their chastity when they were helpless, unthinking little girls, many of them violated by members of their own households in that crowding which life in a large tenement postulates. Even the wretched women whom we call degenerate have often been captured as children and deliberately debased. (Addams 1912b:5)

Our federal Pandering law prohibits the taking of girls from one state to another for the purpose of prostitution, and by the provision that a second offense shall be punished by a penitentiary term, protects girls from the machinations of evil men and women. (Bowen [n.d.] 1984:2)


This has been the work of the League…and as to the girls and women, protecting them from the perils of the white slave trade and prostitution…. in some cases their situation has been found precarious in the extreme, and the offices of the League have been of the greatest assistance in rescuing them from perils from which there would probably have been no other avenue of escape. (IPL [1909-1910] 1984:5, 9)
The claim that “thousands of these so-called ‘fallen’ women are piteously young, and that thousands of others lost their chastity when they were helpless, unthinking little girls” invokes Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of loss. Likewise, as will be discussed more later, these excerpts proclaim that various “perils” are beset for children and young women by the vast syndicate of white slave traders and procurers, invoking Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of unreason, wherein those responsible for the prostitution problem are actively conspiring to entrap victims.

Interestingly, the claims regarding boys’ relations to the “social evil”—either as recruiters for girls, working in or near the vice districts, or as patrons—were also saturated with rhetoric that constructed the boys as blameless victims. Consequently, the boys could be perceived as simultaneous victims and victimizers. However, the claim-makers stressed that their youth and circumstances compelled boys into their role in the “social evil”—thus maintaining the boys’ victim status:

The entire system of recruiting for commercialized vice is largely dependent upon boys who are scarcely less the victims of the system than are the girls themselves.…. We cannot assume that the youths who are hired to entice and entrap these girls are all young fiends, degenerate from birth; the majority of them are merely out-of-work boys, idle upon the streets, who readily lend themselves to these base demands because nothing else is presented to them.…. Several American cities have of late become much concerned over the temptations to which messenger boys, delivery boys, and newsboys are constantly subjected when their business takes them into vicious districts. The Chicago vice commission makes a plea for these “children of the night” that they shall be protected by law from those temptations which they are too young and too untrained to withstand. (Addams 1912a:49, 51, 124)

Boys as well as girls need protection…. Many such boys come to the city from country towns, and in their ignorance of city dangers are in as much need of protection as are young country girls. (Bowen [n.d.] 1984:5)

Thus, both boys and girls were constructed as blameless victims of strangers waiting to entrap them. However, immigrant working girls were also constructed as victims of their own parents’ “avarice” or “tyranny.” Addams, Bowen, and Breckinridge and Edith Abbott all made claims that their families sometimes unduly exploited the working girls and that “white slave traffickers” preyed upon the girls’ family loyalties:
Certain it is that the long habit of obedience, as well as the feeling of family obligation established from childhood, is often utilized by the white slave trafficker. (Addams 1912a:88)

Many times the girl is helped along the downward path by reason of the fact that her parents demand all of her earnings, and even refuse her small sums of money for any kind of amusement, such as 5-cent theaters. (JPA [1909] 1984:41)

Many have suffered from neglect because of the poverty of the family, and that some have been sacrificed to undue family thrift… The cases of young girls who are exploited by parents who want to buy a home or who are avaricious and miserly, are almost too pitiful to record….

These are all more or less typical cases of the way in which economic pressure may, if accompanied by ignorance, or degradation, or avarice, exploit and victimize young girls. (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970:45-46, 82-83)

Thus, working girls were constructed as victims of economic inequities as well as their family’s greed or “undue family thrift” that forced them to turn over their meager wages to their parents.

Addams (1912a) and Bowen ([n.d.] 1984) also presented prostitution as a vector for venereal disease that men spread to their present or future innocent wives and children—a warrant that incorporates Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of endangerment idiom as well as their rhetoric of unreason:

A well-known authority states the one breeding-place of these disease germs, without exception, is the social institution designated as prostitution, but, once bred and cultivated there, they then spread through the community, attacking alike both the innocent and the guilty. (Addams 1912a:183)

By this means [medical certification of being disease-free to obtain a marriage license] thousands of children would be protected, for medical statistics show that insanity, a large percentage of miscarriages, a heavy infant mortality and eighty per cent of blindness from birth are caused by communicable diseases, from which women and children are the innocent sufferers. (Bowen [n.d.] 1984:12)

Thus, wives and children were constructed as blameless victims of husbands/fathers’ sexual misadventures.
The “Double Standard” of Sexuality

Similar to reformers in Chapters Three and Four, Addams argued that the double standard of sexuality, wherein men’s promiscuity was tolerated if not tacitly encouraged, was threatening to the “human welfare” of society. As was previously discussed, men’s sexual incontinence was seen as endangering to innocent wives and children, as infection with venereal disease was believed a significant threat. Thus, to combat the infection of innocent wives/children, Addams argued that a single standard of chastity and continence should be upheld for men as well as women, as the following excerpt illustrates:

Through their socialization, the desirability of chastity, which has hitherto been a matter of individual opinion and decision, comes to be regarded, not only as a personal virtue indispensable in women and desirable in men, but as a great basic requirement which society has learned to demand because it has been proven necessary for human welfare. To the individual restraints is added the conviction of social responsibility and the whole determination of chastity is reinforced by social sanctions…. As woman, however, fulfills her civic obligations while still guarding her chastity, she will be in position as never before to uphold the “single standard,” demanding that men shall add the personal virtues to their performance of public duties. Women may at last force men to do away with the traditional use of a public record as a cloak for a wretched private character, because society will never permit a woman to make such excuses for herself…. (Addams 1912a:210-12)

Thus, a single standard of “chastity” is upheld as necessary to protect public welfare. And, again, the notion that women’s foray into the public sphere will have a moralizing effect—resonating with Progressive maternalist discourse—was forwarded in these claims.

Social Factors as Contributing to the Prostitution Problem

In constructing those associated with the “social evil” as blameless victims, the Hull House women had to necessarily claim something as to blame for their misfortunes. Consequently, the claims-makers continually constructed prostitutes as victims of various social factors that were beyond their personal control. For example, the Hull House women claimed that various characteristics of the city exacerbated the prostitution problem. Addams, Grace Abbott, and Breckinridge and Edith Abbott all pointed to city
housing, such as “overcrowded” tenements and “furnished rooms,” as contributing to the “social evil”:

Perhaps one of the saddest aspects of the social evil as it exists today in the modern city, is the procuring of little girls who are too young to have received adequate instruction of any sort and whose natural safeguard of modesty and reserve has been broken down by the overcrowding of tenement house life. (Addams 1912a:122)

In this kind of overcrowding, which every housing investigation shows to be common, the lack of privacy and of the restraints which privacy brings may be, with the complete absence of evil intent on the part of either the man or the girl, the sole cause of her ruin. (Abbott 1917:70)

The problem of furnished rooms has long been connected with the city problems of vice and immorality. …the furnished room, especially when let by the day as well as by the week, affords a convenient meeting-place for people of loose habits, and there can be no doubt that furnished rooms in this country are often put to the lowest uses. Very near, often indeed adjoining, the houses which are used by men and women of immoral character are houses in which the rooms furnished with housekeeping necessities are let to poor families. On the West Side from the river to Curtis Street, and between Lake and Van Buren streets is another section of tolerated vice, a considerable part of which…is included in the furnished-rooms district. Because this toleration does not amount to thorough segregation…respectability and vice in its worst forms live side by side. (Breckinridge and Abbott 1910:293)

As discussed in Chapter Four, overcrowded tenement housing was perceived as deleterious as children were believed to be exposed to sexual relations at an early age due to the “lack of privacy”; consequently, their “natural safeguard of modesty and reserve” was “broken down.” Likewise, crowded tenement housing was believed to be an environment that encouraged incestuous abuse of children (Addams 1912b). Similarly, as attested by Breckenridge and Abbott, “furnished rooms” were crowded as well, often used for rendezvous between “people of loose habits” and often let to respectable “poor families” who were subsequently exposed to the immoral behaviors.

The allurements and dangers of “commercialized” recreational venues, such as public dance halls, cabarets, amusement parks, five-cent theatres, and excursion boats, and the concomitant perceived dearth of “wholesome” recreational facilities were also frequently cited as exacerbating the prostitution problem:

…[A] majority of the dance halls of Chicago do not offer safe or wholesome recreation for young people. Many of them are a disgrace to the city and too often feeders for the
underworld….In such halls all the laws of common decency are violated, and they are frequented by evil-minded men and women seeking victims. Proprietors either connive at or participate in this use of their halls, and no effort whatever is made to protect young people. (Bowen 1911:384)

"Dance Halls controlled by Saloons--Recreation Commercialized"--The results of this investigation show that the public dance halls of Chicago are largely controlled by the saloon and vice interests. The recreation of thousands of young people has been commercialized, and, as a result, hundreds of young girls are annually started on the road to ruin, for the saloonkeepers and dance hall owners have only one end in view, and that is profit. (Bowen [1912b] 1937:241)

Those whose profession it is to procure girls for the white slave trade apparently find it possible to decoy and demoralize most easily that city girl whose need for recreation has led her to the disreputable public dance hall or other questionable places of amusement. (Addams 1912a:150)

It has been asserted that more girls are recruited for houses of ill-fame from the dance halls than from any other place, because men find it easy to go to these halls for evil purposes. (Bowen [1910] 1937:149)

The methods pursued on excursion boats are similar to those of the dance halls, in that decent girls are induced to drink quantities of liquor to which they are unaccustomed….Thus the lake excursions, one of the most delightful possibilities for recreation in Chicago, through lack of proper policing and through the sale of liquor, are made a menace to thousands of young people to whom they should be a great resource. (Addams 1912a:156)

[I]t [community] failed to provide the children in its midst with opportunities for clean, well planned, and wholesome play…. The new desires and secret longings with reference to which she is given no dignified instruction find unlimited gratification in the paths opened before her by the commercialized recreation and the vice of the city. (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970:156-157)

"Crowds of Children Around Theatre Entrances"—The observation of the investigators was that outside the theatres there was always a crowd of children who were attracted by the lurid advertisements and sensational posters, and these crowds were often worked by evil-minded men, who are generally to be found where little girls congregate. The boys and men in such crowds often speak to the girls and invite them to see the show, and there is an unwritten code that such courtesies shall be paid for later by the girls. (Bowen [1909/1911] 1937:2-3)

Last spring we found that perhaps the most dangerous place for young people in Chicago was the cabaret. Complaints against these places poured in upon us from schools, parents, individuals, and working men, who were horrified at the numbers of young girls seen leaving cabarets in the early morning hours…. It is a travesty on our police system that citizens have to beg saloonkeepers to obey the law. The parents of Chicago are justified in expecting that laws forbidding the
serving of minors in saloons with intoxicating liquors will be enforced. Why is it, then, that in almost any saloon with cabaret entertainment, boys and girls, obviously minors, can be found drinking at any hour of the evening. The cabaret under present conditions is a menace to society. It should be regulated and made law abiding and minors should be excluded. (JPA [1915-1916] 1984:42, 45)

As in the previous chapters, commercialized recreations were seen as deleterious due to the belief that procurers’ trolled these establishments looking for fresh victims. Likewise, the lack of adult supervision at these amusements was perceived as allowing youth too much liberty to engage in immoral sexual behavior. Addams (1912a) discussion of the indecency of dance halls as well as the actual dancing at public dance halls further illustrates this point:

Often the only recreation possible for young men and young women together is dancing, in which it is always easy to transgress the proprieties. In many public dance halls, however, improprieties are deliberately fostered. The waltzes and two-steps are purposely slow, the couples leaning heavily on each other barely move across the floor, all the jollity and bracing exercise of the peasant dance is eliminated, as is all the careful decorum of the formal dance. (Addams 1912a:107)

The public dance halls, filled with frivolous and vapid young people in a feverish search for pleasure are but a sorry substitute for the immemorial dances on the village green in which all of the older people of the village participated. Chaperonage was not then a social duty, but natural and inevitable, and the whole courtship period was naturally guarded by the conventions and restraint which were taken as a matter of course and had developed through years of publicity and simple propriety. The modern city is content, however, to turn over all the public provision for dancing to the proprietors of "halls," who deliberately use it as a snare to vice and at the best make money from this insatiable desire on the part of young people. We have no sense of responsibility in regard to their pleasures and continually forget that amusement is stronger than vice and that it alone can stifle the lust for it. We see all about us much vice which is merely a love for pleasure "gone wrong," the illicit expression of what might have been not only normal and recreative pleasure, but an instrument in the advance of a higher social morality….

(Addams 1907:494)

Likewise, as was briefly mentioned earlier in regards to the alliance between the temperance movement and the anti-prostitution movement, saloonkeepers and the “liquor interests” were named as a factors contributing to the problem of prostitution:

Many children are also found who have been decoyed into their first wrong-doing through the temptation of the saloon…That children may be easily demoralized by the
influence of a disorderly saloon was demonstrated recently in Chicago… (Addams 1912a:112)

We may soberly hope that some of the experiments made by governmental and municipal authorities to control and regulate the sale of liquor will at last meet with such a measure of success that the existence of public prostitution, deprived of its artificial stimulus of alcohol, will in the end be imperiled. The Chicago Vice Commission has made a series of valuable suggestions for the regulation of saloons and for the separation of the sale of liquor from dance halls and from all other places known as recruiting grounds for the white slave traffic. There is still need for a much wider and more thorough education of the public in regard to the historic connection between commercialized vice and alcoholism, of the close relation between politics and the liquor interests, behind which the social evil so often entrenches itself. (Addams 1912a:190-91)

In one [dance] hall a young boy, evidently new to the city, was seen looking for a partner. He was taken in hand by a prostitute, who, after drinking with him all the evening, persuaded him to give up his job the following day and go with her to St. Louis to act as cadet for a disorderly house. (Bowen 1911:385)

Additionally, working girls’ employment, low wages, and poor working conditions were often claimed as critically linked to the problem of the prostitution. Bowen ([1912a] 1937) discussed girls’ employment in hotels and restaurants as problematic, as the following excerpts illustrate:

"Girls Entering Hotel Life Practically All Moral, but Often Do Not Remain So"—The physical hardships which are endured by these girls are nothing compared to the moral dangers to which they are exposed. The girls who go to work in the hotels are for the most part decent and honest. They know that they will have to work hard and that their wages will be rather low, but they take the positions because they wish to earn an honest living. They are generally ignorant of the dangers in the hotels and yet, according to the testimony gathered by the investigator from the housekeepers, very few of these originally honest girls come safely through the dangers to which they are constantly exposed.

"Majority of Girls Who Work in Hotels Go Wrong Sooner or Later"—The method employed by the investigator when visiting a hotel was to say to the housekeeper that she wanted to find a position for a young girl in whom she was interested, and almost without exception the housekeeper would say, "I would not advise you to put a young girl in a hotel. There are too many temptations and the girls are not able to resist them." Following are some of the remarks made by the housekeepers: "Unless a girl pays no attention to the remarks of the traveling men she will certainly go wrong." "I know of no occupation a girl can follow where she has the temptations which surround her in a hotel." "The temptations in a hotel are more than one can imagine. I do not like to see a young girl led into temptation as she would be in a hotel." (P. 252)

"How one Girl [waitress] Became a Prostitute"—An unscrupulous head waiter in the place where she was employed often invited her to go to the theater with him after her hard day's work was over, and he finally succeeded in accomplishing her ruin. From this
on it was only a step to accepting the advances from men who patronized the restaurant where she worked. She continued to give her mother her pay enveloped unopened, but the extra money which she earned in an illicit manner she kept for herself. It was not long before her mother's suspicions were aroused, and after watching the girl she soon found out her mode of life. Reproaches followed and the girl, feeling her independence and resenting her mother's interference, left her home and soon drifted into the ranks of the professional prostitute. (P. 258)

Addams and Bowen pointed to department store work as being particularly dangerous, while claiming factory work was less deleterious:

It is perhaps in the department store more than anywhere else that every possible weakness in a girl is detected and traded upon. All girls who work down town are at a disadvantage as compared to factory girls, who are much less open to direct inducement and to the temptations which come through sheer imitation. (Addams 1912a:64, 71)

The department store girl is much more subject to temptation than is the girl who works in the factory, for the latter is more protected during her working hours as she comes in contact only with her fellow-workers, while the department store girl meets a large number of other people and is constantly surrounded by the articles which are so dear to the feminine heart. (Bowen [1911] 1937:154)

The small wages these girls receive have no relation to the standard of living which they are endeavoring to maintain. Discouraged and over-fatigued, they are often brought into sharp juxtaposition with the women who are obtaining much larger returns from their illicit trade. (Addams 1912a:57)

According to a census taken by the Woman's Trade Union League of Chicago 15 to 30 per cent of the women employed in the department stores of Chicago are not receiving a living wage; they may earn an existence, but not enough to secure fullness of life, and when a girl wearies of it she quickly learns of the possibilities of a career which seems to offer luxurious living with abundance of recreation. Is it any wonder that she sometimes chooses “the easiest way?” (Bowen [1911] 1937:158)

Of these [“disreputable house] inmates many are young girls who, because of long hours of work, unsanitary conditions of labor and starvation wages, have been unable to keep their heads above water and have grasped at the only opportunity which the city ever holds open to the unprotected girl. (JPA [1910] 1984:56)

Drawing from these excerpts, department stores were constructed as dangerous places of employment for the following reasons: procurers/procuresses trolled these places looking for new victims; the wages and working conditions were so pitiful, and the temptations to buy the “articles which are so dear to the feminine heart” led girls to choose “the easiest
way”—prostitution—to make more money to buy luxuries. Again, working girls that succumbed to prostitution were constructed as blameless victims pushed into the life by economic necessity and the wish for creature comforts. The following excerpt further illustrates the dangers besetting the department store girl:

The department store has brought together…a bewildering mass of delicate and beautiful fabrics, jewelry and household decorations such as women covet…and in the midst of this bulk of desirable possessions is placed an untrained girl with careful instructions as to her conduct for making sales, but with no guidance in regard to herself…Because she is of the first generation of girls which has stood alone in the midst of trade, she is clinging and timid, and yet the only person, man or woman, in this commercial atmosphere who speaks to her of the care and protection which she craves, seeking to betray her. Because she is young and feminine, her mind secretly dwells upon a future lover, upon a home, adorned with the most enticing of the household goods about her, upon a child dressed in the filmy fabrics she tenderly touches, and yet the only man who approaches her there acting upon the knowledge of this inner life of hers, does it with the direct intention of playing upon it in order to despoil her. Is it surprising that the average human nature of these young girls cannot, in many instances, endure this strain? (Addams 1912a:65-67)

This excerpt resonates with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of unreason, wherein procurers actively conspire to entrap their victims—preying upon their innermost desires to be cared for and protected and happy in married bliss. Moreover, this rhetoric displays gender-stereotypical notions of girls’ primary ambition in life: marriage and children. Furthermore, again working girls are constructed as blameless victims that fall into prostitution because of their naïveté and inherent feminine vulnerability.

Interestingly, while Addams repeatedly stressed that working girls’ poor economic standing was a primary reason for their succumbing to prostitution, she then offered the following statement:

Although economic pressure as a reason for entering an illicit life has thus been brought out in court by the evidence in a surprising number of cases, there is no doubt that it is often exaggerated; a girl always prefers to think that economic pressure is the reason for her downfall, even when the immediate causes have been her love of pleasure, her desire for finery, or the influence of evil companions. It is easy for her, as for all of us, to be deceived as to real motives. In addition to this the wretched girl who has entered upon an illicit life finds the experience so terrible that, day by day, she endeavors to justify herself with the excuse that the money she earns is needed for the support of some one dependent upon her, thus following habits established by generations of virtuous women who care for feeble folk. (Addams 1912a:59-60)
Thus, Addams countered her own argument by stating that this blame of “economic pressure as a reason for entering an illicit life” was “often exaggerated”; consequently, in this excerpt prostitutes are not constructed as blameless victims of economic conditions but as “wretched” girls who become prostitutes because of factors within their control. However, Addams nearly immediately returns to her construction of working girls’ that succumb to prostitution as doing so primarily due to economic hardship and discusses this phenomenon at great length.

While department store girls were constructed as comparably more vulnerable than factory girls because procurers haunted these workplaces, Addams also constructed the working conditions in factories as deleterious to working girls, as the following excerpt illustrates:

…[T]he increasing nervous energy to which industrial processes daily accommodate themselves, and the speeding up constantly required of the operators, may at any moment so register their results upon the nervous system of a factory girl as to overcome her powers of resistance. Many a working girl at the end of a day is so hysterical and overwrought that her mental balance is plainly disturbed…. [A]nd doubtless as more is known of the nervous and mental effect of over-fatigue, many moral breakdowns will be traced to this source. It is already easy to make the connection in definite cases: “I was too tired to care,” “I was too tired to know what I was doing,” “I was dead tired and sick of it all,” “I was dog tired and just went with him,” are phrases taken from the lips of reckless girls who are endeavoring to explain the situation in which they find themselves. (P. 72-74)

This rhetoric resonated with a broader Progressive discourse that criticized modern industrial conditions. Moreover, it linked these conditions as so trying upon girls’ “nervous system” and so weakening to their will as to drive them to immorality. Likewise, Addams (1912a) stated, “Yet factory girls who are subjected to this overstrain and overtime often find their greatest discouragement in the fact that after all their efforts they earn too little to support themselves” (p. 76)—again constructing working girls that succumb to prostitution as victims of economic hardship. Addams elaborated further:

Of course a girl in such a strait does not go out deliberately to find illicit methods of earning money, she simply yields in a moment of utter weariness and discouragement to the temptations she has been able to withstand up to that moment. The long hours, the
lack of comforts, the low pay, the absence of recreation, the sense of “good times” all about her which she cannot share, the conviction that she is rapidly losing health and charm, rouse the molten forces within her. A swelling tide of self-pity suddenly storms the banks which have hitherto held her and finally overcomes her instincts for decency and righteousness…. (P. 77)

In addition, Addams and Grace Abbott claimed employment agencies acted as “recruiters” for “white slavers” and “disreputable” houses and had little concern about sending girls—particularly “colored” girls—to do domestic work in such places—thus placing these girls in jeopardy:

In addition to the colored girls who have thus from childhood grown familiar with the outer aspects of vice, are others who are sent into the district in the capacity of domestic servants by unscrupulous employment agencies who would not venture to thus treat a white girl. The community forces the very people who have confessedly the shortest history of social restraint, into a dangerous proximity with the vice districts of the city. This results, as might easily be predicted, in a very large number of colored girls entering a disreputable life. (Addams 1912a:118-119)

The Chicago Vice Commission (1911) found 13 out of 28 employment agencies willing to supply servants to a supposedly immoral place, in violation of the employment agency law. Four of these agencies, however, said that they would send a woman but not a girl; and three others thought the law was not designed to protect colored women and offered to supply them, with apparently no fear that the law would be used for the protection of the Negro girl. (Abbott 1917:30)

Both Addams and Abbott expressed particular concern for the victimization of “colored” girls. Addams’s statement that “colored” persons have “confessedly the shortest history of social restraint” is interesting. Addams continued this discussion as follows:

The Negroes themselves believe that the basic cause for the high percentage of colored prostitutes is the recent enslavement of their race with its attendant unstable marriage and parental status, and point to thousands of slave sales that but two generations ago disrupted the negroes’ attempts at family life. Knowing this as we do, it seems all the more unjustifiable that the nation which is responsible for the broken foundations of this family life should carelessly permit the Negroes, making their first struggle towards a higher standard of domesticity, to be subjected to the most flagrant temptations which our civilization tolerates. (P. 119)

Addams constructed that the continuing impact of slavery was blamed for the breakdown of foundations of the “Negro” family. Consequently, “colored” persons were not to
blame for their vulnerability to vice: the “nation” was responsible due to the continuing repercussions of the unjust enslavement of blacks.

Thus, the Hull House women repeatedly cited social factors, such as questionable housing arrangements, commercialized recreation, alcohol and saloons, working girls’ circumstances, corrupt employment agencies, and the continuing detrimental consequences of slavery as key factors leading to the downfall of many a girl. Via this focus on extraneous social factors as compelling or coercing girls into prostitution, it was constructed that people and society as a whole preyed upon girls’ innocence and vulnerability. Consequently, girls that succumbed to prostitution were constructed as blameless victims that society was compelled to help.

Unlike the other Hull House women, Addams also implicated political or municipal corruption as a key factor that exacerbated the “social evil”—claiming “political bosses” had malevolent influences on liquor interests and police, which were tightly intertwined with the problems of vice:

In reality the police, as they themselves know, are not expected to serve the public in this matter but to consult the desires of the politicians; for, next to the fast and loose police control of gambling, nothing affords better political material than the regulation of commercialized vice. (Addams 1912a:36)

There is still need for a much wider and more thorough education of the public in regard to the historic connection between commercialized vice and alcoholism, of the close relation between politics and the liquor interests, behind which the social evil so often entrenches itself. (Addams 1912a:191)

Any probe into the vice conditions of the city made by a grand jury or an efficient public commission uniformly discovered that prostitution was a root source of political corruption. Although laws declaring it illegal had been placed upon the statute books, laws which even the hardiest politician dared not repeal out of respect for public opinion, nevertheless the police, backed by universal cynicism, openly considered the laws too impracticable to be enforced, and not only deliberately decided not to enforce them but actually defined the conditions under which lawbreaking was permitted. This police connivance at prostitution inevitably created a necessity for both graft and blackmail…. Prostitution protected by a thick hedge of secrecy, imperceptibly renewing itself through changing administrations, was the unbreakable bank to which every corrupt politician repaired when in need of funds. (Addams 1930:324)

Via this assertion, Addams again placed primary fault for the prostitution problem on other social factors rather than individual prostitutes. Likewise, this assertion resonated
with broader Progressive discourses that condemned corrupt municipal systems as responsible for various social ills.

**Value of Social Order/Control**

The value of social order/control was also presented in the Hull House women’s warrants. This warrant manifested in two ways: claims about the breakdown of community and of family restraints. For instance, when making claims about the breakdown in community restraints, Addams revealed a nostalgic longing for the perceived cohesion and social control that small communities afforded and a concurrent dissatisfaction with the city’s deficiency of these qualities:

> The social relationships in a modern city are so hastily made and often so superficial, that the old human restraints of public opinion, long sustained in smaller communities, have also broken down. Thousands of young men and women in every great city have received none of the lessons in self-control which even savage tribes imparted to their children when they taught them to master their appetites as well as their emotions. These young people are perhaps further from all community restraint and genuine social control than the youth of the community have ever been in the long history of civilization. (Addams 1912a:104)

> The very fact that the existence of the social evil is semi-legal in large cities is an admission that our individual morality is so uncertain that it breaks down when social control is withdrawn and the opportunity for secrecy is offered. The situation indicates either that the best conscience of the community fails to translate itself into civic action or that our cities are too large to be civilized in a social sense. (Addams 1912a:205)

Thus, according to these claims, while the vastness of the city produced feelings of isolation and freedom from communal restraints, it also caused the breakdown of family restraint. Likewise, this rhetoric resonated with a broader anxieties regarding urbanization discourse that was propagated during the Progressive Era.

In addition to this proclamation that the vastness and isolation of the city bred social disorder, the Hull House women also alleged their existed a lack of supervision and social control over children—of most concern, girls—which was often attributed to immigrant parents’ overwork, their ignorance and sometimes disinterest regarding their children’s recreations, and their slow Americanization:
Even those girls who immigrate with their families and sustain an affectionate relation with them are yet often curiously free from chaperonage...[Immigrant mothers] themselves were guarded by careful mothers and they would gladly give the same oversight to their daughters, but the entire situation is so unlike that of their own peasant girlhoods that, discouraged by their inability to judge it, they make no attempt to understand their daughters' lives. (Addams 1912a:28-29)

Who cannot recall at least one of these desperate mothers, overworked and harried through a long day, prolonged by the family washing and cooking into the evening, followed by a night of foreboding and misgiving because the very children for whom her life is sacrificed are slowly slipping away from her control and affection? (Addams 1912a:114-115)

Many parents are utterly indifferent or ignorant of the pleasures that their children find for themselves. (Addams 1912a:151)

[T]hat many of the children suffer from a lack of parental care and discipline because the parents are strangers in a strange land and cannot foresee the dangers to which the children will be exposed, nor train them to resist temptations which appear in novel guise, nor protect them in the hour of real trial. (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970:45-46)

Again, economic hardship was alluded to as requiring immigrant mothers to work outside of the home and thus rendering them unable to adequately fulfill their duty as mother. This sentiment also resonated with gender-stereotypical notions of women’s proper place being within the domestic sphere. Moreover, these excerpts illustrate the Hull House women’s primary concern that immigrants were not well-equipped to manage in this “strange land” and thus—if primarily for the sake of their children—needed assistance in adjusting to the new world. However, while the immigrant parents were claimed as “too slow” in their Americanization, Grace Abbott voiced concerns about the immigrant girls’ hasty assimilation:

A too rapid Americanization is dangerous, and the girl who leaves her own people and eats strange American food, learns a new language, and modifies her old country clothes and manners, often wrongly concludes that all her old world ideals are to be abandoned and that in American she is to live under a very different moral code from the one her mother taught her. (Abbott 1917:25)

Yet again, the breakdown of family restraints was blamed for immigrant girls’ immoral behaviors.
Responsibility to Eradicate Prostitution

A final warrant that was prevalent in the Hull House women’s claims regarding prostitution was the claim that this problem deserved attention because the audience had a personal and social responsibility to improve society. This warrant was substantively equivalent to Best’s (1987) rhetoric of rectitude, wherein it is argued that moral duty compels action against a social problem. Addams often professed this warrant through discussions of a “new conscience” that was compelling people to deem the prostitution eradicable rather than inevitable, and to accept the responsibility to stamp it out:

But evils so old that they are imbedded in man's earliest history have been known to sway before an enlightened public opinion and in the end to give way to a growing conscience, which regards them first as a moral affront and at length as an utter impossibility. (Addams 1912a:3)

May the new conscience gather force until men and women, acting under its sway, shall be constrained to eradicate this ancient evil! (Addams 1912a:13)

As was illustrated in Chapters Three and Four, appeals to the public “conscience” to eradicate prostitution were prevalent among the Chicago reformers’ claims. Moreover, this rhetoric resonates with the broader Progressive discourse that claimed moral and civic duty compelled society to address social problems. Similarly, Addams appealed to this sense of moral duty to combat prostitution via claiming that people’s sense of “compunction” or guilt about turning a blind eye to those victimized by the “social evil,” their “new conscience” of their past “hypocrisy” toward this problem, and their realization that the “social evil” was not “inevitable and almost normal” had and would impel them to take action against this social problem, as the following excerpts illustrate:

City officials, policemen, judges, attorneys, employers, trades unionists, physicians, teachers, newly arrived immigrants, clergymen, railway officials, and newspaper men, as under a profound sense of compunction, were unsparing of time and effort when given an opportunity to assist an individual girl, to promote legislation designed for her protection, or to establish institutions for her rescue. (Addams 1912a:x)

The very fact that the conditions and results of the social evil lie so far away from the knowledge of good women is largely responsible for the secrecy and hypocrisy upon which it thrives. (Addams 1912a:196)
In the last excerpt, Addams made specific reference to the irreligiousness and hypocrisy of the “so-called Christian civilization” that condemned prostitutes as “fallen,” and vice as a necessary evil. Not only does this excerpt appeal to good-Christians’ duty to combat prostitution: this rhetoric resonated with a broader social gospel discourse present during the Progressive Era, wherein it was claimed that battling social problems was a key responsibility of being a good Christian. Addams (1912b) devoted considerable discussion to the failure of “the Church” to adequately address the prostitution problem, the following excerpts illustrating the crux of her claims:

One result of this irreligious attitude toward prostitution with its inevitable corollaries has been the development of the so-called worldly-minded Christian; thousands of decent men have developed a peculiar distrust of human nature, a cynicism which assumes that certain proportion of men in every community will so inevitably violate the laws of chastity as to make the prostitute a social necessity, and the free masonry among men in regard to her does much to lower the moral tone of the whole community. (P. 3)

The Christian Church cannot hope to eradicate the social evil until it is willing to fairly make it the test of its religious vitality, to forget its ecclesiastical traditions, to drop its cynicism and worldliness, to go back to the method advocated by Jesus himself for dealing with all sinners, including not only the harlot, but, we are bound to believe, even those men who live upon her earnings and whom we call every foul name. The method of Jesus was nothing more nor less than sheer forgiveness, the overcoming of the basest evil by the august power of goodness, the overpowering of the sinner by the loving kindness of his brethren, the breaking up of long entrenched evil by the concerted good will of society. (P. 6)

Again, Addams’s claims resonate with the social gospel discourse propagated during the Progressive Era.

Similarly, Bowen, Breckinridge, and Edith Abbott’s claims display this warrant through claiming that responsibility was neglected—thus invoking feelings of guilt or “compunction” from their audience:
Do not these figures show that the city has a moral responsibility which it has failed to assume? Are they not a challenge to the church? Have we not, as a community, failed to pay sufficient attention to the disreputable places which are wrecking human lives? (JPA [1910] 1984)

That such conditions can exist as fourteen-year-old children resorting either to rooming houses or to houses of prostitution, is an indictment of the community as frightful as the fact of their betrayal by the fathers and brothers is of unregulated family life…. (Breckinridge and Abbott [1912] 1970:159)

Thus, these excerpts construct the society at large as to blame for the continued prostitution problem, due to its neglect of duty to protect innocent girls from this menace by combating the problem. Again, these claims resonated not only with Best’s (1987) *rhetoric of rectitude*, but also with a broader Progressive discourse that moral and duty compelled action against prostitution. The following excerpts further illustrate this point:

> From the human as well as the economic standpoint there is an obligation resting upon the state to discover how many victims of the white slave traffic are the result of social neglect, remedial incapacity, and the lack of industrial safeguards, and how far discontinuous employment and non-employment are factors in the breeding of discouragement and despair. (Addams 1912a:93-94)

> Many who are feeling a new responsibility for the care and protection of the immigrant, are moved especially by sympathy with his helplessness in his new surroundings; others by concern for the reflex effect on the community. (IPL [1913] 1984:9)

As was discussed previously, Addams saw a key alliance between the equal suffrage movement and the anti-prostitution movement, her primary argument: via the vote, women would have a moralizing effect on the public sphere and would not abide the toleration for prostitution. Additionally, Addams made a special plea, claiming if women were “enfranchised”—if they had the vote—their sense of “civic responsibility” would necessarily drive them to combat prostitution. Likewise, she claimed that women as voting-citizens would never tolerate the “social evil” to the degree that male political participants had:

> If political rights were once given to women, if the situation were theirs to deal with as a matter of civic responsibility, one cannot imagine that the existence of the social evil would remain unchallenged in its semi-legal protection….
Most good women will probably never consent to break through their ignorance save under a sense of duty which has ever been the incentive to action to which even timid women have responded. At least a promising beginning would be made toward a more effective social control, if the mass of conscientious women were once thoroughly convinced that a knowledge of local vice conditions was a matter of civic obligation, if the entire body of conventional women, simply because they held the franchise, felt constrained to inform themselves concerning the social evil throughout the cities of America….

Women are said to have been historically indifferent to social injustices, but it may be possible that, if they once really comprehend the actual position of prostitutes the world over, their sense of justice will at last be freed, and become forevermore a new force in the long struggle for social righteousness…. [N]ever do the sails of the ship of state push forward with such assured progress as when filled by the mighty hopes of a newly enfranchised class. Those already responsible for existing conditions have come to acquiesce in them, and feel obliged to adduce reasons explaining the permanence and so-called necessity of the most evil conditions. On the other hand, the newly enfranchised view existing conditions more critically, more as human beings and less as politicians. (Addams 1912a:192, 196-98)

This excerpt contains various appeals declaring that the women’s suffrage will awaken women’s sense of “civic responsibility,” “duty,” “civic obligation,” and “justice” as well as their value of “social righteousness,” thus compelling them to combat the prostitution problem. Moreover, Addams alluded to a reorientation of prostitution from a necessary evil to a social evil, arguing that the “newly enfranchised” would view the prostitution problem “as human beings and less as politicians” and thus, not fettered by political interests, would be able to see prostitution for what it truly was—a social evil that must be suppressed.

Motifs

Prostitution as a “social evil” was the most prominently used motif, which Addams (1912a) frequently employed, as did Bowen ([n.d.] 1984). Other generic social problems vocabulary, such as “perils,” “menace,” “dangers,” and the like peppered the Hull House women’s claims. Additionally, Addams (1912a) did employ a war/army motif once, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

We can discern the scouts and outposts of a similar army advancing against this existing evil…. May America bear a valiant part in this international crusade of the compassionate, enlisting under its banner not only those sensitive to the wrongs of others, but those conscious of the destruction of the race itself, who form the standing army of
humanity's self-pity, which is becoming slowly mobilized for a new conquest! (Addams 1912a:5, 219)

As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, this motif essentially constructs the following: (1) that the social problem is something that must be battled with force (Gorelick 1989); (2) that a distinct dichotomy exists between a “right” and a “wrong” side; and (3) that an organized front has been amassed to combat the social problem.

Addams also employed some evangelical-like motifs, as the following excerpt illustrates:

…[T]he long struggle ahead of these newer associations will doubtless claim its martyrs and its heroes, has indeed already claimed them during the last thirty years. Few righteous causes have escaped baptism with blood. (Addams 1912a:6)

Certainly all the great religions of the world have recognized youth's need of spiritual help during the trying years of adolescence. The ceremonies of the earliest religions deal with this instinct almost to the exclusion of others, and all later religions attempt to provide the youth with shadowy weapons for the struggle which lies ahead of him, for the wise men in every age have known that only the power of the spirit can overcome the lusts of the flesh… (Addams 1912a:100-101)

Another motif that pervaded the Hull House women’s claims was that of a protector. The following excerpts provide illustrations of this motif:

This has been the work of the League—welcoming the newcomers, seeing that they reach the homes to which they are destined, guarding them against wrongs at the railroad stations, labor employment agencies, and work camps…and as to the girls and women, protecting them from the perils of the white slave trade and prostitution…. (IPL [1909-1910] 1984:5)

During the years 1907-1908 the Woman's Trade Union League of Chicago organized a committee to visit newly-arrived immigrant women and girls for the…purpose of helping them escape those dangers which threaten their moral well being in a great city…. (IPL [1909-1910] 1984:8)

Women need the information and protection such a bureau could give in order to safeguard their virtue. Both men and women need it to avoid exploitation. The country is disadvantaged by the number of those who become sources of peril or burdens on its philanthropic resources.

To continue the work of visiting and rendering assistance to newly arrived, unprotected women and girls, (IPL [1909-1910] 1984:9,11)
Only officials of vigorous conscience can deal with this traffic; but certainly there can be no nobler service for federal and state officers to undertake than this protection of immigrant girls.…

Certainly the immigration laws might do better than to send a girl back to her parents, diseased and disgraced because America has failed to safeguard her virtue from the machinations of well-known but unrestrained criminals…may we not hope that in time the nation's policy in regard to immigrants will become less negative and that a measure of protection will be extended to them during the three years when they are so liable to prompt deportation if they become criminals or paupers?…Certainly no one will doubt that it is the business of the city itself to extend much more protection to young girls who so thoughtlessly walk upon its streets. (Addams 1912a:25, 34)

This motif resonates with Ibarra and Kitsuse’s (1993) rhetoric of unreason, wherein it is constructed that persons are conspiring against their victims—thus, protection must be provided for the vulnerable. Moreover, it resonates with gender-stereotypical notions that women were naïve a vulnerable and thus could not protect themselves.

Conclusions

Although the separate conclusions drawn by the Hull House women were varied, they may be grouped under the following sub-categories: the abolition of prostitution, objectives regarding sexuality, “wholesome” and regulated recreation, and new and/or improved social policies/programs.

Abolition of Prostitution

Of all five Hull House women claims-makers, only Addams made an outright call for the abolition of prostitution. In fact, she boldly stated that “some such gradual conversion to the point of view of abolition is the experience of every society or group of people who seriously face the difficulties and complications of the social evil” (Addams 1912a:6). She briefly mentioned alternatives to abolition, such as “regulation, reglementation, segregation, licensed systems, and certification” but quickly offered testimonies that admonished these proposed solutions as faulty and dangerous to society:

At the present moment, even the least conscientious citizens agree that, first and foremost, the organized traffic in what has come to be called white slaves must be suppressed and that those traffickers who procure their victims for purely commercial purposes must be arrested and prosecuted. (Addams 1912a:17)
The medical profession is virtually united in the conclusion that so long as commercialized vice exists, physicians cannot guarantee a city against the spread of the contagious poison generated by it. 

...safety in this regard lies only in the extinction of commercialized vice. (Addams 1912a:181-182)

All over the world are traces of changed attitude toward the social evil. Not only are American cities such as Chicago recommending a restrictive measure looking toward final abolition, but European cities such as Vienna are doubting the value of their long established reglementation and are therefore logically facing the same conclusion. (Addams 1912b:6)

Therefore, at least in Addams’s claims, the only “serious” conclusion that could be drawn from discussions of the “social evil” was that it must be abolished in its entirety—to insure the safety and social order of society.

Objectives regarding Sexuality

As discussed previously, Addams drew and alliance between the anti-prostitution movement and the movement against venereal disease. Consequently, Addams offered various recommendations to address the connection between venereal disease and prostitution as well as broader sexuality issues and their association with the “social evil.” For example, Addams proclaimed that “only when moral education is made effective and universal will there be hope for the actual abolition of commercialized vice” (Addams 1912a:137). Specifically, Addams concluded that proper formal sexuality education from the “nobler influences” was necessary to control the “primal instincts” that facilitated the falsely assumed necessity of prostitution:

The expert educational opinion which they represent is practically agreed that for older children the instruction should not be confined to biology and hygiene, but may come quite naturally in history and literature, which record and portray the havoc wrought by the sexual instinct when uncontrolled, and also show that, when directed and spiritualized, it has become an inspiration to the loftiest devotions and sacrifices. The youth thus taught sees this primal instinct not only as an essential to the continuance of the race, but also, when it is transmuted to the highest ends, as a fundamental factor in social progress…. (Addams 1912a:99)

[Young men]…on the streets or in the poolrooms where they congregate their conversation, their tales of adventure, their remarks upon women who pass by, all reveal that they have been caught in the toils of an instinct so powerful and primal that when left
without direction it can easily overwhelm its possessor and swamp his faculties…. Could the imaginations of these young men have been controlled and cultivated, could the desire for adventure have been directed into wholesome channels, could these idle boys have been taught that, so far from being manly they were losing all virility, could higher interests have been aroused and standards given them in relation to this one aspect of life, the entire situation of commercialized vice would be a different thing. (Addams 1912a:106)

These excerpts allude to the Progressive notion that a single standard of sexuality should be upheld—thus debunking the double standard that men must be allowed to indulge in their “sexual instinct” while women must be chaste and pure. Moreover, these excerpts resonate with the broader social hygiene discourse that sexuality education was necessary to purvey that sexual continence was the ultimate ideal for both men and women.

Similarly, Addams claimed that open public discussion of sexuality issues not only by schools but also by newspapers, doctors and church leaders—an end to the conspiracy of silence—was necessary to combat the “social evil”:

To establish such an education [about venereal diseases] and to arouse the public in regard to this present menace apparently presents insuperable difficulties. Many newspapers, so ready to deal with all other forms of vice and misery, never allow these evils to be mentioned in their columns except in the advertisements of quack remedies; the clergy, unlike the founders of the Christian religion and the early apostles, seldom preach against the sin of which these contagions are an inevitable consequence; the physicians, bound by a rigorous medical etiquette, tell nothing of the prevalence of these maladies, use a confusing nomenclature in the hospitals, and write only contributory causes upon the very death certificates of the victims. (Addams 1912a:186-186)

[I]f it is made clear that youth is ensnared because of its ignorance of the most fundamental facts of life, then it is the duty of the church to promote public instruction for girls and lads which shall dignify sex knowledge and free it from all indecency…. All over the world are traces of changed attitude toward the social evil…. The medical profession is abandoning its century old position of secrecy and connivance; leading educators are at last urging adequate instruction for all youth. (Addams 1912b:5, 6)

Again, these excerpts resonate with broader social hygiene discourse presented during the Progressive Era. Namely, it was believed that ignorance about sexuality matters left men, women, and children vulnerable to the various ills associated with prostitution—specifically, infection of venereal diseases. Likewise, sexuality education was necessary
to teach “proper” sexual relationships to children—specifically, that sexual relations should be confined within the marriage relationship.

“Wholesome” and Regulated Recreation

Since the Hull House women pinpointed commercialized recreational venues as aggravating the prostitution by encouraging “immorality” due to lack of supervision of youth at these amusements and providing ample opportunities for the victimization of both girls and boys by “white slavers,” “procurers,” and “procuresses,” a resounding conclusion drawn from the grounds and warrants was the need for more “wholesome” recreational options for children and young adults, as well as stricter regulations of “commercialized” recreation—particularly the regulation of alcohol at dance halls:

Until municipal provisions adequately meet this need, philanthropic and social organizations must be committed to the establishment of more adequate recreational facilities. (Addams 1912a:157)

[1]If it is found that the army of girls and men required in this vile business is constantly recruited from the young heedlessly looking for pleasure in vicious dance halls, on crowded excursion boats, in careless amusement parks, then it is the obligation of the church to guard and cleanse these pleasures and to provide others free from danger. (Addams 1912b:5)

We need in Illinois a strict enforcement of the state law which provides that no minors shall be admitted to dance halls where intoxicating liquor is sold, unless accompanied by their parents or guardians… We also need a law which shall provide that the sale of liquor shall be eliminated from the dance halls. (Bowen [n.d.] 1984:9)

I would advocate in every city a department of recreation, just as we have department of health, whose function should be not only to regulate and to supervise places of amusement run for commercial reasons but to establish and maintain municipal theaters and municipal dance halls, where there might be proper chaperonage, and where the girls could obtain in a legitimate manner the amusements which they are constantly seeking. (Bowen [1910] 1937:149)

These conclusions resonate with the warrant of the value of children as well as children as blameless victims, seeking much-needed amusements in places flanked with evil procurers waiting to ensnare them in prostitution. Thus, the Hull House women declared
it was the duty of the city and churches to provide these wholesome recreations to protect Chicago youth from the prostitution problem.

Additionally, Bowen stipulated that not only should these recreational venues be regulated but also that women police would be most suited for the job. Bowen and the JPA argued that women police officers would better protect the girls from victimization—that they would “mother” the girls:

We need women police in the theaters of every city…. The darkened room affords opportunity for familiarity, and there should be women police to see that conventionalities and decencies are observed…. There should be women police in our dance halls—the happy hunting ground of the white slave trader—to watch the girls and also the boys, to warn the girls when they are seen taking too much liquor and to watch that if intoxicated they are not accompanied from the hall by young men who have plied them with liquor for illicit purposes. They should also see that young unsophisticated boys are not victimized by professional prostitutes who take advantage of inexperienced youths who come to the city for the first time and visit the dance halls to “see the sights.”…. Women police should be stationed on pleasure boats and at bathing beaches and should ever be on the alert for conditions which demoralize children. We need women police in our amusement parks to mingle with the crowds at the gates and to save young girls from accepting invitations from men who hope to be repaid later in the evening…. (Bowen 1913:64)

The Association has long felt the need of women police and we were finally able to convince the mayor of their absolute necessity. Ten such women were appointed and so far, in spite of many difficulties and some opposition on the part of the police force, they have done most excellent work. The idea was not that they should arrest criminals and drunkards nor regulate the street traffic, but that they should visit the amusement parks, theatres, dance halls, etc., in order to see that the ordinance prohibiting the sale of liquor to minors is enforced, to warn girls who are seen drinking to much liquor and see that they do not leave these places accompanied by disreputable young men. (JPA [1912-1913] 1984:46)

Again, Bowen’s excerpts resonate with the broader maternalist discourse of the Progressive Era, which claimed that women would have a moralizing effect on the public sphere. Likewise, this discourse justified women joining the police force—thus, stereotypical gender notions were used by Bowen to carve a professional niche for women.
New and/or Improved Social Policies/Programs

The final category of conclusions expressed in the Hull House women’s claims was the need for new and/or improved social policies/programs to facilitate suppressing prostitution. These conclusions essentially comprise two sub-categories: legal enactments and new programs and agencies.

Bowen ([N.d.] 1984:5, 6, 9-13) posed several new legal enactments that were “necessary” to combat prostitution. For example, concerned for young boys welfare, she proposed a law was needed to protect boys under 18 from “professional prostitutes, and from the criminal assaults of evil minded men” and a law “forbidding boys under 21 to be messenger boys.” Harkening back to concerns regarding commercialized recreations, she suggested strict enforcement of laws that forbade minors unaccompanied by a parent or guardian from being admitted to dance halls that sold “intoxicating liquor” and a new law that forbade liquor sales in dance halls. Believing working girls’ low wages were linked to their succumbing to prostitution, she proposed a minimum wage law that would provide girls with a living wage was necessary. And, to combat the passing of venereal disease to innocent children and/or wives, she recommended that the enactment of a state law requiring marriage licenses and medical certificates insuring the “contracting parties were free from disease.” Similarly, Addams’s concern regarding working girls’ low wages and poor working conditions led her to propose the following:

[I]f it is discovered that the brothels are filled with over fatigued and underpaid girls…then it is obviously the business of the church to secure legal enactment which shall limit the hours of labor, fix a minimum wage and prescribe the conditions under which young people may be permitted to work. (Addams 1912b:5)

As working women enter fresh fields of labor which ever open up anew as the old fields are submerged behind them, society must endeavor to speedily protect them by an amelioration of the economic conditions which are now so unnecessarily harsh and dangerous to health and morals. The world-wide movement for establishing governmental control of industrial conditions is especially concerned for working women….

[I]t is apparently better to overcome the dangers in this new and freer life, which modern industry has opened to women, than it is to attempt to retreat into the domestic industry of the past; for all statistics of prostitution give the largest number of recruits for this life as coming from domestic service and the second largest number from girls who live at home with no definite occupation whatever. (Addams 1912a:91-92)
Thus, Addams did not advocate that girls not be allowed to work in “modern industry” but that wages and working conditions should be closely examined to find ways to ameliorate the industry’s hardship. Likewise, Addams again draws an alliance between the anti-prostitution movement and the socialist movement through the following conclusion:

The socialists talk constantly of the relation of economic law to destitution and point out the connection between industrial maladjustment and individual wrongdoing, but certainly the study of social conditions, the obligation to eradicate vice, cannot belong to one political party or to one economic school. It must be recognized as a solemn obligation of existing governments, and society must realized that economic conditions can only be made more righteous and more human by the unceasing devotion of generations of men. (P. 94)

The Hull House women claimed various new programs and agencies were necessary to safeguard girls against the dangers of prostitution. Addams, Bowen, and Grace Abbott all advocated for regulated employment agencies and vocational bureaus and/or trade schools that would aid the working girls:

Certainly during the trying times when a girl is out of work she should have much more intelligent help than is at present extended to her; she should be able to avail herself of the state employment agencies much more than is now possible, and the work of the newly established vocational bureaus should be enormously extended. …

When vocational bureaus are properly connected with all the public schools, a girl will have an intelligent point of departure into her working life, and a place to which she may turn in time of need, for help and advice through those long and dangerous periods of unemployment which are now so inimical to her character. (Addams 1912a:90, 128)

Then we need a law which shall provide for the supervision of all employment agencies. … If such employment agencies could be regularly inspected, and if the law was enforced requiring them to give the names of girls whom they had placed and the places to which they had been sent, it probably would protect a large number of young women. (Bowen [n.d.] 1984:7)

The final remedy suggested for this situation is the reorganization and strengthening of the State Free Employment Agencies. (Abbott 1908:305)

Again, the assumption reiterated through these conclusions was that many girls were driven to prostitution by economic desperation or by unscrupulous employment agencies that sent them to work in the vice district.
Additionally, Bowen and Grace Abbott—to insure the protection of newly arriving immigrant girls from “white slavers” and the like—encouraged the federal regulation of these girls’ arrivals by federal protective bureaus:

We need in Chicago some sort of federal regulation which shall provide for the large number of young immigrant girls who come to this country and for whom government responsibility ceases when they leave Ellis Island. They should be put upon a train under the care of some official and when they reach Chicago should be housed in some place where they can be kept until their friends are communicated with, instead of being left as at present to the mercy of any white slave trader…. (Bowen [n.d.] 1984:8)

Women need the information and protection such a [federal protective] bureau could give in order to safeguard their virtue. (IPL [1909-1910] 1984:9)

These excerpts reinforce the notion that immigrant girls were particularly vulnerable and thus blameless victims of conniving procurers.

Likewise, and offering a similar argument to Bowen’s about the need for women police, Abbott argued that women inspectors were needed to ensure the safety and protection of the immigrant girls. Furthermore, she stressed the need for these women inspectors to be well “trained” to be perceived as professionals and thus taken seriously:

The women in the Immigration Service are “matrons”—the cross between a housekeeper and a chaperon who is rapidly disappearing in the best public and private institutions. Without the same pay as inspectors, these matrons are not expected to measure up with the men in intelligence and ability, although they often do. But they have, largely for these reasons, not been able to make much impression on the “Service” and have not secured the adoption of standards of comfort and consideration which trained women could institute in a place like Ellis Island….

The “presence” of a woman in an Immigration Station is sentimentally supposed to give protection, but any practical person knows that ability, training, and resourcefulness on the part of women officials are necessary if they are to render the services which the immigrant women and girls really need. (Abbott 1917:78-79)

These excerpts resonate with the broader Progressive professional discourse that highly trained professionals were necessary to adequately address social problems.

Concerned with the protecting children, Addams (1912a) also lauded efforts to propose “protective legislation” regarding children, as the following excerpt illustrates:
This is another illustration that the beginnings of social advance have often resulted from the efforts to defend the weakest and least-sheltered members of the community. The widespread movement which would protect children from premature labor, also prohibits them from engaging in occupations in which they are subjected to moral dangers. (P. 124-25)

Again, this conclusion resonates with the warrant of the value of children as well as the warrant that constructed children impacted by prostitution as blameless victims in need of protection. Similarly, Addams offered the following conclusion regarding children’s blameless infection by venereal disease:

Our generation, said to have developed a new enthusiasm for the possibilities of child life, and to have put fresh meaning into the phrase “children’s rights,” may at last have the courage to insist upon a child’s right to be well born and to start in life with its tiny body free from disease. Certainly allied to this new understanding of child life and a part of the same movement is the new science of eugenics…. Its organized societies publish an ever-increasing mass of information as to that which constitutes the inheritance of well-born children. When this new science makes clear to the public that those diseases which are a direct outcome of the social evil are clearly responsible for race deterioration, effective indignation may at last be aroused, both against the preventable infant mortality for which these diseases are responsible, and against the ghastly fact that the survivors among these afflicted children infect their contemporaries and hand on the evil heritage to another generation….

This slaughter of the innocents, this infliction of suffering upon the new-born, is so gratuitous and so unfair, that it is only a question of time until an outraged sense of justice shall be aroused on behalf of these children. (P. 130-32)

Again, this excerpt appeals to the value of children, “children’s rights” and the duty to protect these blameless victims from venereal disease associated with prostitution. Moreover, it resonates with the broader eugenics discourse that was propagated during the Progressive Era, attesting that this “new science” was crucial in combating “race deterioration” caused by venereal infections being passed from generation to generation.

Discussion

The following discussion includes a summary of the grounds, rhetorics, and conclusions gathered from the primary data sources. I then discuss the claims-making styles employed by the Hull House women. Subsequently, I explore their use of maternalist discourse and the role of women in the public sphere within their claims
regarding prostitution. Finally, I consider the rhetorical power of the Hull House women’s claims per their rhetorical features as well as their resonance with broader Progressive discourses.

Summary of Findings

Grounds

The Hull House women grounded their claims regarding the “social evil” through defining, estimating, and giving examples of the problem. They expanded the domain of the “social evil,” which now encompassed “professional,” “occasional,” and “clandestine” prostitutes as well as “white slaves” and “immoral” delinquent girls. Likewise, through defining most prostitutes as “white slaves,” they reoriented the definition of the “social evil”—changing those involved to “victims” and thus worthy of sympathy. They provided both indistinct and “official” numerical estimates of the problem. While they claimed an indiscriminate range existed regarding vulnerability to prostitution, they ostensibly narrowed the range of vulnerability by discussing immigrant and “colored” girls as being particularly vulnerable. Lastly, they offered heart-wrenching, detailed descriptions of individual examples of those affected by the “social evil,” which drew on various moral discourses, constructed the victims as ostensibly blameless, and thus evoked sympathy for those affected by the social problem.

Rhetorics

The Hull House women provided several warrants (Best 1987) justifying why taking action against prostitution was necessary. Addams (1912a) argued the historical continuity between white slavery and the enslavement of blacks compelled society to take action against prostitution. Similarly, Addams (1912a) claimed various alliances between the anti-prostitution movement and other social movements, including the social hygiene movement against venereal disease, the temperance movement, the equal suffrage movement, and the international socialist movement. Appealing to the value of children, they claimed that those affected by this problem were disproportionately children.
Similarly, they claimed those affected were largely blameless victims and thus deserved sympathy and protection. Consequently, they proposed several social factors as the blame for the prostitution, including the following: poor city housing conditions; commercialized recreation, alcohol, and lack of “wholesome” recreation; women’s employment conditions, their low wages and poor working conditions, and shady employment agencies; police and political corruption; breakdown of black families due to lingering consequences of slavery; and hypocrisy and self-righteousness. They implicated the breakdown of community and family restraints in the urban environment—thus appealing to the value of social order/control, and they claimed that civic, moral, and personal responsibility required that some action be taken to eradicate prostitution.

Various motifs permeated the Hull House women’s claims. Generic social problems motifs were employed, such as “evil,” “menace,” “danger,” “peril,” and the like. Likewise, the phrase “social evil” was repeatedly used to describe the prostitution problem. Additionally, Addams (1912a) employed a war motif in some of her claims. Lastly, the motif of protector of vulnerable innocents pervaded the Hull House women’s claims.

Conclusions

The Hull House women drew several conclusions, based in the grounds and justified by the warrants proposed. Addams called for the complete abolition of prostitution. Likewise, Addams—concerned with the link of venereal disease and prostitution, and particularly with the infection of innocent wives and children by sexually promiscuous husbands/fathers—proposed that sexuality education, open discussion of sexuality issues, and enforcing a “single standard” of sexual continence and chastity would alleviate the social problem. Pinpointing commercialized recreational venues as aggravating the prostitution by encouraging “immorality” due to lack of supervision of youth at these amusements and providing ample opportunities for the victimization of both girls and boys by procurers, the women claimed the regulation of commercialized recreation and promotion of “wholesome” recreation was key to
combating the “social evil.” Likewise, the women argued that women police officers were needed to “mother” the children attending these recreational venues. They also proposed several new and/or improved social policies/programs, including the following: various legal enactments, including minimum wage laws, alcohol regulation, child labor laws, and marriage certificates insuring freedom from venereal disease; regulation of employment agencies and creation of vocational bureaus and trade schools to prepare women for occupations; and protective bureaus employing women inspectors to safeguard newly-arrived immigrant girls from “white slavers” and other “evil minded” persons.

Claims-Making Style

I hesitate to categorize the Hull House women’s claims-making styles under the examples given by Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993), as I believe none of the six types presented truly exemplify the women’s claims-making styles. Yet, I venture to declare that the Hull House women strove to present their claims in a social scientific style, through explaining their methods of gathering data and grounding their conclusions in the data. Addams (1912a) offered the following description of the materials used to inform her treatise on the “ancient evil” of prostitution:

As head of the Publication Committee, I read the original documents in a series of special investigation made by the [Juvenile Protective] Association on dance halls, theatres, amusement parks, lake excursion boats, petty gambling, the home surroundings of one hundred Juvenile Court children and the records of four thousand parents who clearly contributed to the delinquency of their own families. The Association also collected the personal histories of two hundred department-store girls, of two hundred factory girls, of two hundred immigrant girls, of two hundred office girls, and of girls employed in one hundred hotels and restaurants. (P. ix-x)

Thus, the Hull House women aimed to conduct a thorough social scientific investigation. Similarly, Addams (1912a) offered the following statements that resonated with a broader Progressive discourse of the necessity of scientific research to make informed decisions regarding reform efforts:
Another point of similarity to the child labor movement is obvious, for the friends of the children early found that they needed much statistical information and that the great problem of the would-be reformer is not so much overcoming actual opposition…as obtaining and formulating accurate knowledge and fitting that knowledge into the trend of his time. From this point of view and upon the basis of what has already been accomplished for “the protection of minors,” the many recent investigations which have revealed the extreme youth of the victims of the white slave traffic, should make legislation on their behalf all the more feasible. (P. 135)

Modern philanthropy, continually discovering new aspects of prostitution through the aid of economics, sanitary science, statistical research, and many other agencies, finds that this increase of knowledge inevitably leads it from the attempt to rescue the victims of white slavery to a consideration of the abolition of the monstrous wrong itself. (P. 143-144)

Bowen ([N.d.] 1984) offered the following statement that also resonates with this broader Progressive discourse of the value of social scientific investigation:

“Constant Study of Conditions Necessary to Further Intelligent Legislation”—The Juvenile Protective Association would urge further intelligent legislation which shall do away with conditions which so clearly tend to make men and women immoral, as well as a stricter enforcement of existing laws. (P. 13)

Thus, the Hull House women exalted social scientific investigation of the prostitution problem as crucial to proposing sound recommendations for its amelioration. However, as the claims are peppered with sentiment, to deem them “scientific” by contemporary standards is a stretch. Nonetheless, objectives of uplifting the greater society through morally as well as scientifically informed social reforms were tightly intertwined with the ideal of Progressive scientific investigation, as the following excerpt illustrates:

Sympathetic knowledge is the only way of approach to any human problem, and the line of least resistance into the jungle of human wretchedness must always be through the region which is most thoroughly explored, not only by the information of the statistician, but by sympathetic understanding. (Addams 1912a:11)

Addams’s (1912b) claims-making style markedly changed when addressing the “contemporary church” and the “Christian’s duty toward the social evil.” Specifically, her claims-making style became almost evangelical. Her claims were styled to appeal to the Christian morals of her perceived audience, as she claimed that the hypocrisy and
“self-righteousness” of the “so-called” Christian was “irreligious” and consequently aggravated the problem of the “social evil”:

…Jesus himself was most explicit in the declaration of His own position in regard to the harlot. He did not for a moment imply that she could not be drawn into the radius of that wondrous affection…. It is certainly easy to point out the moral and religious disaster resulting from [the prostitute’s] exclusion, fostering the “I am holier than thou” attitude which is the inmost canker of the spiritual life…. The Christian Church cannot hope to eradicate the social evil until it is willing to fairly make it the test of its religious vitality, to forget its ecclesiastical traditions, to drop its cynicism and worldliness, to go back to the method advocated by Jesus himself for dealing with all sinners, including not only the harlot, but, we are bound to believe, even those men who live upon her earnings and whom we call every foul name…. (Addams 1912b:3, 5)

Maternalist Discourse and Women’s Role in the Public Sphere
Addams (1912a), Bowen (1913), and Abbott (1917) all made appeal to women’s role in attacking the prostitution problem, with Addams and Bowen explicitly couching their claims in “maternalist” (Ladd-Taylor 1994) rhetoric. When claiming that women’s enfranchisement would be key in combating prostitution, Addams stated, “That primitive maternal instinct, which has always been as ready to defend as it has been to nurture, will doubtless promptly grapple with certain crimes connected with the white slave traffic” (p.192). Addams also declared that “in equal suffrage states important issues regarding women and children, whether of the sweat-shop or the brothel, have always brought out the women voters in great numbers” (p. 193)—again appealing to women’s maternalist instinct to protect themselves and children. Similarly, Bowen (1913), after divulging the need for women police officers, stated, “In fact, we need women police to ‘mother’ the girls in all public places where the danger to young people is great” (p. 64). Thus, Addams and Bowen’s use of maternalist rhetoric implies that the maternal “instinct” placed women in a privileged position to protect young girls and boys from the trappings of prostitution.

In contrast, Abbott (1917) did not phrase her claim for women Immigration Service inspectors in the maternalist rhetoric that the mere presence of women officials would offer protection to these vulnerable young girls and women. Rather, she criticized
this assumption and emphasized, “any practical person knows that ability, training, and resourcefulness on the part of women officials are necessary if they are to render the services which the immigrant women and girls really need” (p. 79). Thus, Abbott did not justify women’s professional involvement in protecting young girls and women through maternalist rhetoric.

However, whether or not maternalist rhetoric was employed, the Hull House women did appear to be carving a public role—be it professional or civic—for women in regards to the prostitution problem. Bowen (1913) drove home the necessity of women police for ameliorating prostitution while Abbott (1917) also advocated for well-trained women Immigration Services inspectors, thus carving a professional niche for women in addressing prostitution. Similarly, while in the examined texts Addams did not explicitly implicate women’s professional role in ameliorating the prostitution problem, her spirited rally for women’s enfranchisement did seek to broaden women’s civic participation in the public sphere. Thus, echoing previous research (Baker 1984; Sklar 1985; Deegan 1988; Fitzpatrick 1990; Flanagan 1990; McGerr 1990; Pascoe 1990; McClymer 1991; Muncy 1991; Deutsch 1992; Koven and Michel 1993; Kunzel 1993; Clapp 1994; Ladd-Taylor 1994; Odem 1995; Rynbrandt 1997; Abrams 2000; Abrams and Curran 2000; Lagler 2000; Stivers 2000; Knupfer 2001), the Hull House women through their anti-prostitution claims did appear to be carving a professional and civic niche for themselves in the public sphere. Likewise, the justification of women’ professions—that women would have a moralizing effect on the public sphere—resonated with a broader maternalist discourse present during the Progressive Era.

Rhetorical Power of Claims

Hull House settlement was viewed as a model settlement, and the social reformers affiliated with this settlement—Jane Addams, Grace and Edith Abbott, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Louise de Koven Bowen—were highly regarded as social reformers (Abrams and Curran 2000). These women conducted investigations that were perceived as rigorous and informative—so much so that the VCC relied heavily upon their data when investigating the vice problem. Thus, those with prestige and power in Chicago
deemed the claims made by the Hull House women regarding the prostitution problem accurate and informative. Consequently, deconstructing these women’s claims regarding prostitution provides insight into their persuasive power.

Overarching all of the grounds, warrants, and conclusions presented by the Hull House women was the construction of prostitutes as blameless victims of circumstances beyond their control—a powerful rhetorical tool. For example, the rhetorical device of defining prostitution as analogous to “white slavery,” in my opinion, was integral to the claims-making of these women. Constructing prostitutes as girls unwittingly sold into sexual slavery by manipulative, conniving, and “evil minded” men and women, the Hull House women reconstructed prostitutes as “victims” and thus “sympathy-worthy” rather than “victimizers” and thus “condemnation-worthy” (Loseke 1993). Consequently, their claims gain persuasive power.

Furthermore, the Hull House women’s attempts to construct the range of vulnerability to prostitution as indiscriminate increased the persuasive power of their claims. As Best states, “by arguing that anyone might be affected by a problem, a claims-maker can make everyone in the audience feel that they have a vested interest in the problem’s solution” (Best 1987:108). By arguing that anyone at anytime could be directly or indirectly touched by the “social evil”—whether it be abduction into “white slavery” or innocent women and children’s contraction of a venereal disease from wayward husbands/fathers—the persuasive potential of these claims was greatly facilitated. Likewise, this buttressed the notion that prostitution disproportionately impacted innocent, blameless victims.

Likewise, the women’s choice of typifying examples not only grabbed their audience’s attention but also evoked the audience’s empathy with those affected by the social problem as well reinforced the notion that the majority of prostitutes were blameless victims. In turn, these emotional appeals drew on broader moral discourses and thus established the “morality” (Loseke and Fawcett 1995) of the individuals affected—constructing them as hard-working, family-devoted, upstanding citizens who fell prey to circumstances beyond their control. Furthermore, these cases constructed prostitutes as so demoralized, so helpless that they could not of their own volition free
themselves from the terrible life to which they had succumbed. Consequently, rather than condemn these individuals as deserving of their plight, the audience should feel sympathy for the “victims” and should help them—a powerful persuasive argument.

Similarly, the warrants contained in the women’s claims are saturated with constructions of blameless victims. The Hull House women’s unremitting claims that children were disproportionately affected by the “social evil” were a key persuasive warrant. As Best (1987, 1990:5) acknowledges, the “child-victim” claim, wherein children are constructed as “menaced by deviants…vulnerable to harms intentionally inflicted by others…not held responsible for their plight” is “uncontroversial” and thus readily ratified. Additionally, by constructing prostitutes, “white slaves,” and young boy “procurers” as innocent victims of extraneous factors, the claims-makers greatly increased the chances of their claims being accepted by a sympathetic audience.

Furthermore, various social factors were claimed as largely to blame for girls and boys fall into the “social evil”—thus reiterating the construction of those affected by or involved with prostitution as blameless victims in need of protection. Moreover, claiming the “social evil” was exacerbated by isolation bred by the vastness of the city, the lack of supervision and attention, and the widening cultural gap between children and their parents, once again the girls and boys affected by the “social evil” were constructed as victims—victims of the breakdown of communal and family social restraints that were presumably characteristic of urban life. Accordingly, the warrant of “responsibility to eradicate prostitution” reinforces the blameless victims construction: if the victims are overwhelmingly innocent, blameless children who are ensnared into the “social evil” due to social factors beyond their control and the breakdown of the social order/control, the public has a moral responsibility to help these victims. Conclusively, these elements of the Hull House women’s claims have high rhetorical currency—thus putting them at an advantage for ratification. As Best (1987) simply states, “presenting victims as blameless makes it more likely that claims will be ratified” (p. 110).

Lastly, and a point to which I will devote further discussion in my concluding chapter, the Hull House women’s claims resonated with several broader social discourses and “master frames” (Snow and Benford 1986, 1992; Benford and Snow 2000), that were
present in the Progressive Era, which theoretically strengthened their persuasive ability. Addams drew on several discourses via claiming alliances between the anti-prostitution movement and various other Progressive social movements. For example, her claims regarding venereal disease, combating the double standard of sexuality, and the need for sexuality education resonated with the broader social hygiene discourse propagated during the Progressive Era. Similarly, her proclaiming an alliance between the temperance movement and the anti-prostitution movement allowed her to draw on Progressive temperance discourses. Her discussions of the alliance between the equal suffrage movement and the anti-prostitution movement drew heavily upon Progressive maternalist discourse. Similarly, the other women reformers drew on this maternalist discourse to justify women’s professional positions, claiming that women professionals were needed to protect—to “mother”—wayward children. Moreover, their claims regarding the deleterious impact of crowded housing, commercialized recreations, and the breakdown of family and communal restraints in urban areas resonated with broader anxieties regarding urbanization discourses prevalent during the Progressive Era. Likewise, continued focus upon working girls’ low wages and poor working conditions and discussions of socialist political thought resonated with both discourses critical of modern industry as well as anxieties regarding women’s unprecedented foray into the labor force. Lastly, appeals to social responsibility and duty to address the prostitution problem resonated with a broader Progressive discourse that lauded active community involvement and responsibility in addressing the various social ills of society.
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

My discussion section includes the following: (1) an exploration of the continuity and disjuncture between the crusaders’ claims, considering how broader discourses, values and interests, boundary crossing, and perceived audiences similarly and differentially shaped their claims; and (2) a discussion of master frames (Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Benford and Snow 2000) evidenced in the crusaders’ claims, including the following: injustice frame, social duty frame, social control frame, and rights frame.

Continuity/Disjuncture between Crusaders’ Claims

At the onset of my study, I anticipated that the separate crusaders would have markedly different rhetorical styles and strategies. Consequently, drawing from the secondary literature I grouped crusaders by these anticipated differences, demarcating one group as “white slave crusaders,” another as the “vice battlers,” and lastly the Hull House women. However, as became apparent throughout my analyses, these separate crusaders used strikingly similar rhetorical styles and strategies; likewise, they drew on similar broader Progressive discourses and master frames. This is perhaps not that surprising, as many of these crusaders worked on the same social committees, belonged to the same reform organizations, and had similar social backgrounds and interests. Thus, as I indicated in Chapter Two, much boundary crossing was occurring between these groups. Consequently, a close examination of their rhetorical claims reveals the influences of these groups upon each other’s claims. Likewise, much of the information on which their claims were based came from identical sources. For example, the Hull House women often cited the VCC report in their claims, and Addams (1912a) also referenced specific cases from Clifford Roe’s prosecutions against white slavery.
Similarly, in addition to their own investigations, the VCC (1911) obtained information via “ninety-eight conferences” from several organizations, including Hull House, the Immigrant Protective League, the Juvenile Protective Association, and the Midnight Mission. Furthermore, some of the subsequent publications by VCC members cited cases from Roe and/or Bell’s treatises. Therefore, again the boundary crossing between these groups was evidenced.

Before opening this discussion, I would like to briefly return to my theoretical discussion of the interpretive practice analytic (Holstein and Gubrium 1994; Gubrium and Holstein 1999). As Gubrium and Holstein (1999) argue, the interpretive practice analytic

[E]ngages both the hows and whats of social reality; it is centered in both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds, and the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality constituting activity. (P. 2)

Furthermore, the analytic of interpretive practice allows for inferences of the whys (Gubrium and Holstein 1999). As Gubrium and Holstein discuss, while qualitative inquiry traditionally shuns causal interpretations, the analytic of interpretive practice allows for some speculation about the causal why. More specifically, the analytic of interpretive practice allows the researcher to explore how:

[D]iscursive practice…provides the footing for answering why recognizable constellations of social order take on locally distinctive shapes…. [while] Discourse-in-practice provides the footing for answering why discursive practice proceeds in the direction it does, toward what end, in pursuit of what goals, in relation to what meanings. (P. 32)

My analyses in the individual analytical chapters largely focused upon the discursive practices of the separate crusaders, exploring how they socially constructed the prostitution problem via the grounds, warrants, and conclusions they presented. I did, however, devote some discussion in the separate analytical chapters to the crusaders’ discourse-in-practice—how their rhetorical strategies reflected, reinforced, and/or challenged broader discourses present in the Progressive Era. In this section, I will
further explore the reflexive relationship between the discursive practices and the
discourse-in-practice of the separate crusaders, devoting more discussion to how broader
Progressive discourses shaped the crusaders’ claims. Likewise, I will discuss how the
crusaders often did not merely appropriate broader discourses but rather artfully
contoured the discourses to fit their particular aims/agendas.

**Progressive Discourses and the Crusaders’ Claims**

As was evidenced throughout my analyses, much continuity surfaced between the
claims of the separate crusaders. Much of this continuity may be attributed to the
presence of various broader discourses that shaped the crusaders’ claims. In Gubrium
and Holstein’s (1999) words, these discourses served as “configurations of meaning and
institutional life that inform[ed] and shape[d]” the crusaders’ “reality constituting
activity” (p. 2). However, as Gubrium and Holstein elucidate, these discourses did not
determine the crusaders’ claims; rather, these broader discourses shaped the possibilities
for what could be claimed. Yet, the crusaders could still mold these claims to fit their
own interests, values, and agendas—thus illustrating the reflexive relationship between
the claims and the broader discourses present during the Progressive Era. Presently I will
discuss the continuity and disjuncture between the crusaders’ claims in light of several
broader discourses’ role in shaping the separate crusaders’ claims and the crusaders’
molding of these discourses to fit their individual interests, values, and agendas.

As the extant literature continuously attests, Progressive-Era social reformers had
various anxieties regarding the social ills of urbanized society during this time period
(Wiebe 1967; Connelly 1980; Kirschner 1986; Grittner 1990). All of the examined
crusaders’ claims reflected this broader discourse. Among these urban ills were crowded
housing, commercialized recreations, breakdown of family and communal restraints, and
municipal corruption—all of which all the examined crusaders constructed as
contributing to the prostitution problem. Thus, this broader discourse shaped the separate
crusaders’ claims similarly, in that some aspect of this discourse was present in all the
crusaders’ claims.
However, while this broader discourse shaped the crusaders’ claims, there were differences between some of the crusaders in the localized expression of these discourses within the claims that reflected a disjuncture between the values/interests of the separate crusaders. For example, while all the crusaders expressed that municipal corruption played a role in the prostitution problem, the VCC shifted the blame for this corruption to the citizens’ neglect in demanding enforcement of the law rather than placing primary blame with the police and government, which was the common claims forwarded by the other examined crusaders. As the VCC was a municipally-sponsored committee, their interests apparently influenced this aspect of their claims, as shifting the blame protected their interests. In contrast, crusaders such as the Hull House women and Rev. Bell, whose reform efforts were independent of municipal support, could afford to be more openly critical of municipal corruption, as their interests would not be as readily compromised. Similarly, Addams was just as likely to extol the virtues of country life as white slavery crusaders Roe and Sims. However, Addams and the other Hull House women’s suggestions to improve working girls’ employment conditions and wages reflected advocacy for working women’s interests. In contrast, Roe and Sims upheld that keeping girls at home in the bucolic grandeur of the country was the “best and surest way” (Sims 1910a:71) to protect them—thus reflecting their differing values and trepidation regarding working girls’ foray into the labor force. Similarly, while all the crusaders implicated commercialized recreations as part and parcel to procuring of innocent young girls into prostitution and/or white slavery, Sims (1910b) and Amigh (1910) pinpointed establishments owned by “foreigners” as particularly deleterious, thus reflecting their xenophobic tendencies. Conclusively, while all the examined crusaders’ claims were shaped by this broader discourse, they claims also reflected their differential values and interests.

Intertwined with Progressive-Era anxieties regarding urbanization were anxieties regarding industrialization and capitalism (Lubove 1962; Connelly 1980). Likewise, as continuously attested in the extant literature, reformers had many trepidations regarding women’s unprecedented foray into the workforce during the Progressive Era (Connelly 1980; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Meyerowitz 1988). The examined crusaders
reflected these broader discourses, largely through their expressed concern regarding working girls’ low wages and poor working conditions, which were believed to essentially force women into prostitution. All of the crusaders implicated employers’ capitalism-bred greed as to blame for the low wages and poor working conditions of working girls. The VCC and the Hull House women noted lack of opportunity and educational or work skills placed many working girls at an economic disadvantage. Likewise, various entities were seen as conspiring against working girls, including procurers lurking in their places of employment and unscrupulous employment agencies. Consequently, the VCC and the Hull House women proposed various measures were necessary to assuage this contributor to the prostitution problem, including studying the working girls’ economic situation and establishing living wages, regulating employment agencies, and improving working conditions.

Again, while all the examined crusaders drew on this broader discourse, they specifically molded this discourse within their claims to fit their values and interests. For instance, reflecting their primary concern regarding working girls’ conditions, the Hull House women offered comparably detailed recommendations for how to improve the working girls’ lot, while the VCC’s offered recommendations regarding working girls’ situations reflected their secondary place of concern. In contrast, the crusaders against the white slave trade only offered that girls should be kept at home as long as possible rather than be thrown out into the work world. As these crusaders were primarily concerned with saving white slaves, defined in the strictest sense as those entrapped against their wills and held as sexual slaves, it possibly comes as no surprise that they did not offer conclusions regarding working girls’ low wages and working conditions. While briefly offering that low wages and poor working conditions might contribute to the prostitution problem, to allow that the majority of prostitutes were not literally forced into the life defied the construction “white slaves” as the primary problem of concern.

As attested in the extant literature, discourses surrounding various anxieties regarding the mass influx of immigrants were prevalent during the Progressive Era (Wiebe 1967; Connelly 1982; Kirschner 1986; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988). Likewise,
many of the “new” immigrants, particularly Eastern European, Italian, and Jewish immigrants, were viewed by many nativists with trepidation and prejudice (Feldman 1967; Connelly 1982; Goldstein 2001; Allerfeldt 2003). As previous research on the crusades against white slavery found, the examined white slavery crusaders did implicate Eastern European, Italian, Jewish, as well as Chinese immigrants as key groups responsible for the white slave trade. Likewise, as was discussed in detail in Chapter Three, these constructions were often peppered with xenophobic and racist sentiment. However, crusaders such as Roe, Rev. Bell, and Sims also offered that “Americans” traders were just as likely to be involved in the white slavery traffic as immigrant groups; thus, this discourse was not wholeheartedly embraced. Similarly, the Hull House women were also interested in combating the white slavery problem; however, as strong advocates for the immigrant community, they never implicated that immigrants were largely responsible for the problem. This discourse was also reflected in all of the examined crusaders’ claims via anxieties regarding newly-arrived immigrant girls’ safe transportation and concerns regarding immigrant girls’ exploitation by employment agencies. However, again reflecting their advocacy role for the immigrant community, the Hull House women appeared to show more concern and proposed more thorough recommendations regarding protecting immigrant girls’ from white slavers.

Similarly, all the separate crusaders drew on the broader discourse of white slavery in their construction of the prostitution problems. However, the perceived nature and prevalence of “white slavery” differed among the examined crusaders. The majority of crusaders examined in Chapter Three constructed all prostitutes as white slaves by default. Moreover, while Roe ([1911] 1979) did allow, “All the unfortunates and outcasts of society living in either palaces or dens of vice are not slaves,” he quickly segued by
claiming, “One must be content to know that evidently the voluntary supply is not sufficient to meet the demand” (p. 169-70). Similarly, the Hull House women more often than not constructed prostitutes as white slaves through frequent use of the terminology. Likewise, the C15 declared that white slavery “exists as a hard, grim, uncompromising Reality—a Fact that the citizens of Chicago, (where the practice is particularly vicious) can no longer doubt” (CHS, CB, 1911:1) and reiterated Roe’s belief that those coerced into prostitution far exceeded those that entered voluntarily. In contrast, the VCC proclaimed while white slavery was a part of the prostitution problem, to its knowledge it represented a small proportion of the overall problem.

As attested in the extant literature, the social hygiene movement focused particularly on the association of venereal disease with prostitution, advocating for widespread sex education campaigns that focused on establishing a single standard of sexuality for both men and women and thus denounced the double standard that endangered innocent wives and children to infection due to their husbands/fathers philandering (Lubove 1962; Burnham 1973; Anderson 1974; Brandt 1987; Hobson 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Gilfoyle 1991; Luker 1998). Again, all the examined crusaders employed social hygiene discourse. Burnham (1973), Brandt (1987), and Hobson (1987) indicated that the prestige associated with physicians’ endorsement of social hygiene gave more legitimacy to their claims. This perhaps accounts for the examined crusaders—many of which were not physicians—appropriating this discourse in their claims. However, several VCC members were physicians, which reflects the VCC’s considerable attention to the “medical aspects” of prostitution, namely venereal diseases’ relation to the prostitution problem. Likewise, from a purely rhetorical interpretation, the social hygiene discourse was probably more readily ratified because it largely focused on innocent wives and children as victims.

During the Progressive Era and concurrent with the anti-prostitution movement, the temperance movement was also in full force (Hobson 1987; Gusfield 1963). Thus, not surprisingly, all of the examined crusaders drew on temperance discourses by constructing problems related to alcohol as intertwined with the prostitution problem. Addams explicitly claimed an alliance between the temperance movement and the anti-
prostitution movement, discussing the use of alcohol to dupe unwitting girls into prostitution and the concomitant necessity to abuse alcohol “to live through each day” (p. 188). The VCC, Hull House women, and the crusaders against white slavery discussed at great length the link between saloons, dance halls where alcohol was sold, and the prostitution problem. Likewise, the VCC highlighted the intemperance of parents as a “bad home condition” that contributed to the vice problem.

As was discussed earlier, a discourse that extolled rigorous scientific investigation as necessary for informed social change was propagated during the Progressive Era (Wiebe 1967; Bledstein 1976; Kirschner 1986; McCormick 1997). All of the examined crusaders’ claims reflected this broader Progressive discourse. In Chapter Four, I devoted in-depth discussion to how the discursive practices of those battling vice resonated with this broader discourse. Moreover, the VCC, in pursuit of the Progressive ideal of scientific investigation, strongly emphasized the need to not sensationalize the prostitution problem. In my opinion, this reiteration of not providing sensationalized statistics and broad generalizations was not only forwarded to emulate Progressive scientific investigation: The VCC was also likely to be responding to the various white slavery narratives that proliferated during the Progressive Era, which did sensationalize the problem. Thus, the interest of emphasizing scientific investigation over sensationalized generalizations was twofold. Similarly, as I discussed previously, the Hull House women presented their methods as scientifically sound. Correspondingly, crusaders against the white slave traffic, such as Rev. Bell and Roe, often presented detailed estimates and scientific evidence in their claims, thus striving to emulate the Progressive ideal of scientific investigation.

Conclusively, various broader discourses propagated during the Progressive Era shaped the examined crusaders’ claims. Often, the separate crusaders’ claims drew so heavily upon these discourses that they were nearly identically reproduced via their rhetorical choices. However, at times the differential appropriation of these discourses reflected the differing values, interest, and agendas of the examined crusaders. I will discuss this notion further in the following sections that focus on the values/interests of
the crusaders and their concomitant influence on their claims as well as how boundary crossing among the crusaders and perceived audiences shaped their claims.

Values/Interests as Shaping the Crusaders’ Claims

As forwarded via the contextual constructionist perspective (Best 1987, 1993), claims-makers’ values and interests may significantly shape their claims. Thus, claims often reflect the values and interests of the claims-makers, and divergence among claims-makers’ rhetorical choices reflect differential values/interests among claims-makers. Within my analyses, and as I have discussed in the previous section, the continuity between the separate crusaders’ claims reflected similarity between their values/interests; likewise, the disjuncture between the separate crusaders’ claims reflected their differential values/interests. Presently I will further elaborate on how the following values/interests similarly and/or differentially shaped the examined crusaders’ claims: middle-class values/interests, professional values/interests, gendered values/interests, and religious values/interests.

Middle-Class Values/Interests

As is illustrated in the secondary literature, and as I discussed in Chapter One, the examined Chicago reformers held various professional positions that attributed them middle-class status (Anderson 1974; Linehan 1991). Consequently, their values and perspectives were shaped by their class status, which surfaced in their rhetorical choices. Probably most apparent in their rhetorical choices, this class status greatly influenced their views on “proper” sexual relations (D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Peiss 1983, 1986; Odem 1995). One component of the crusaders’ rhetoric—particularly the vice battlers and the Hull House women—that revealed their rigid middle-class notions of proper sexual behavior for women was the various gradations given of what was to be considered prostitution. Namely, the construction of the “clandestine” prostitute, and the “immoral” or “incorrigible” girl was very revealing of the crusaders’ middle-class beliefs regarding proper sexuality. Thus, any premarital or extramarital sexual relations engaged
in by girls/women were deemed criminal to a more or lesser degree by the crusaders. As Peiss (1983) states,

Reformers, social workers, and journalists viewed working-class women’s sexuality through middle-class lenses, invoking sexual standards that set “respectability” against “promiscuity.”... Chastity was the measure of young women’s respectability, and those who engaged in premarital intercourse, or, more importantly, dressed and acted as though they had, were classed as promiscuous women or prostitutes. (P. 75)

Thus, these definitions alone reveal the middle-class crusaders’ anxieties regarding working-class girls’ sexuality. Consequently, these classifications reflect the crusaders’ middle-class values regarding “respectable” sexual behavior.

Another aspect of the crusaders’ claims that revealed their middle-class ideals of proper sexual behavior, particularly for women, was the sometimes explicit but often-implicit assumption that most women would never freely chose to be a prostitute. The prominence of a “white slavery” discourse in the crusaders’ claims alone reveals this assumption. Similarly, the various crusaders’ use of typifying examples played upon this moral discourse: the girls/women in these tales of woe were continuously constructed as being literally or figuratively forced into prostitution, implying that they would never freely choose such a life. As has been discussed throughout my analyses, this implication that no girl/woman would freely choose to be a prostitute furthered the victim construction that permeated all aspects of the crusaders’ claims. However, this phenomenon also reveals the crusaders’ underlying beliefs regarding women’s sexuality. These constructions exposed the lingering Victorian notions that women were asexual (Connelly 1980; Russett 1989); thus, that some women might choose prostitution as a sexual outlet was essentially unfathomable to the middle-class crusaders.

Similarly, the crusaders alluded to women’s asexuality via the construction of all wives that contracted venereal disease as “innocent” victims of their husbands. Once more, the assumption was that these women could not have possibly contracted the diseases themselves. Similarly to the white slave construction, this rhetorical device constructed the women as blameless victims and thus would be more persuasive in convincing an audience that action must be taken upon their behalf. However, again it
also revealed the crusaders’ underlying anxieties regarding women’s sexuality as well as reflected the middle-class ideal of women’s chastity and purity.

Likewise, some of the crusaders’ inferences that a critical mass of prostitutes were feebleminded or had “aberrational mental traits” (Healy 1915) reiterated this notion of women’s inherent asexuality. The feebleminded prostitute, Healy’s description of which was nearly identical to the “hypersexual female” (Lunbeck 1987) of psychiatric discourse, constructed that overtly expressive sexuality among women was a sign of mental degeneracy and hereditary defectiveness. As Rafter (1992) deduced, women who did not conform to middle-class notions of women’s chastity were adjudged “sexually and morally unnatural” (p. 25). Thus, via this psychiatric discourse the Progressive reformers deployed middle-class notions of women’s proper sexual behavior.

The crusaders’ middle-class values of proper sexual behavior were also reflected in their claims that a “single standard” of sexuality was the Progressive ideal. As all the crusaders professed—and as the broader social hygiene discourse proclaimed—a “single standard” of sexuality in which both men and women were chaste was the new Progressive ideal—breaking with the “double standard” notion that men must be allowed to indulge in their volatile sexual instincts while women must be chaste and pure. Again, this “single standard” was in sharp contrast to the working-class sexuality these crusaders witnessed throughout their investigations, where sexual liberties by both men and women were abundant (D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Peiss 1983). Therefore, the crusaders’ suggested reforms regarding ideal standards of sexual behavior again reflected their middle-class values of proper sexuality for men and women.

Lastly, closely intertwined with the crusaders’ middle-class values regarding proper sexual behavior were their beliefs regarding proper gender roles for both men and women. For example, the crusaders’ continuous construction of girls as naïve, vulnerable, and need of protection supported traditional gender assumptions that women were inherently vulnerable (Odem 1995). Likewise, claims such as the following offered by the VCC reinforced the traditional and idealized gender roles of man as protector and woman as the protected:
It is a man and not a woman problem which we face today—commercialized by man—supported by man—the supply of fresh victims furnished by men—men who have lost that fine instinct of chivalry and that splendid honor for womanhood where the destruction of a woman’s soul is abhorrent, and where the defense of a woman’s purity is truly the occasion for a valiant fight. (VCC 1911:47)

Similarly, Addams offered various claims that invoked traditional gender role stereotypes. For example, when discussing department store girls’ vulnerability to procurers, she offered the following gender-stereotypical notions of girls’ primary ambition in life: marriage and children:

Because she is of the first generation of girls which has stood alone in the midst of trade, she is clinging and timid, and yet the only person, man or woman, in this commercial atmosphere who speaks to her of the care and protection which she craves, seeking to betray her. Because she is young and feminine, her mind secretly dwells upon a future lover, upon a home, adorned with the most enticing of the household goods about her, upon a child dressed in the filmy fabrics she tenderly touches, and yet the only man who approaches her there acting upon the knowledge of this inner life of hers, does it with the direct intention of playing upon it in order to despoil her. (Addams 1912a:65-67)

Addams offered claims that bemoaned immigrant women’s need to work outside the home and thus their inability to properly supervise their children, which also resonated with traditional gender notions of women’s proper place being within the domestic sphere.

Conclusively, the examined crusaders’ claims were permeated with middle-class notions of proper sexual behavior as well as traditional gender roles. As the extant literature has argued (Connelly 1980; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Odem 1995), the Progressive reformers’ furtive effort to impose middle-class values regarding sexuality and gender upon the working class was in direct response to the perceived upheaval against these middle-class values. As Connelly (1980) expounds,

[A] deep-seated and profound ambivalence toward the sweeping social and cultural changes of the progressive years shaped the perception of, and response to, prostitution. One especially anxiety-provoking manifestation of the reorientation of American society, the breakdown in nineteenth-century morality, or “civilized morality,” was particularly influential in shaping antiprostitution. Indeed, almost every expression of antiprostitution was based on a commitment to this value system and was propelled by the sense of moral crisis that its decline engendered. (P. 7-8)
Thus, in congruence with the broader anti-prostitution movement, the examined crusaders’ claims reflected their middle-class values of proper sexuality and attempted to impose social order in the perceived moral tumult of Progressive society in general and specifically in relation to the prostitution problem. Moreover, inexorable from this perceived breakdown in “civilized morality” (Connelly 1980) were broader Progressive concerns, such as anxieties regarding urbanization, women’s foray into the public sphere, social hygiene, breakdown in the family, and so on. Furthermore, this overarching concern with middle-class values of sexuality resonated with the master frame of social control that permeated the crusaders’ claims.

In addition to coloring their views on sexual relations, these middle-class reformers’ perspective on ideal family life was influenced by their middle-class values (Rosen 1982; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988), which was reflected in their claims. As forwarded by all the examined crusaders, crowded tenement housing (a predominantly working class milieu) was constructed as detrimental to the family. Likewise, other aspects that the reformers perceived as evidence of the breakdown in the family—children’s lack of supervision by their parents, general “parental inefficiency,” intemperance among parents, mothers working outside of the home and thus not able to properly raise their children, parents taking their daughters’ wages to support the family, and sentimental allusions to an ideal middle-class family life by reformers such as Roe—reflected their middle-class notions of what proper family life was to entail.

Professional Values/Interest

Related to their class status, various professional positions held by the crusaders or struggles to secure a professional niche influenced their rhetorical choices as well. As argued by Wiebe (1967), the professions that proliferated during the Progressive Era were modes through which a “new middle class” value system could be expressed. According to Wiebe and others (Bledstein 1976; Kirschner 1986; McCormick 1997), a central value to the middle-class professionals was that scientific investigation and professional expertise were necessary for informed social change. This value was continuously reflected in the vice battlers and the Hull House women’s claims. As was
discussed in-depth in Chapter Four, those battling vice presented the great pains to which they went to uphold the ideals of social scientific investigation in their study of vice in Chicago, thus illustrating the value of this Progressive ideal to them. Likewise, those battling vice offered various criticisms regarding the lack of scientific study by trained experts of the prostitution problem, again resonating with this Progressive value. Similarly, the Hull House women strove for scientifically-sound methods and emphasized the need for trained professionals to combat the prostitution problem, again demonstrating their commitment to this Progressive value.3

Likewise, historians such as Wiebe (1967) and Kirschner (1986) discuss how Progressive-Era reformers, striving to regain/retain their “slipping social status” (Weibe 1967:viii) had vested interests in creating and maintaining their professional positions. These interests as well were reflected in the examined crusaders’ claims. The VCC’s recommendation that a morals commission be established reflected their professional interest to institute a committee manned with professionals such as themselves to pursue the reform effort. Similarly, the C15’s claims that their organization had accomplished great things but that more was to be done maintained their continued necessity. Likewise, Healy’s focus on the psychological causes of prostitution attested to the need of the psychiatric profession to address this problem, thus securing his profession’s role in combating this social ill.

While many professionals were, as Wiebe (1967) deduced, attempting to regain/retain their “slipping social status,” (p. viii), women in contrast were striving to carve a professional niche for themselves in the professional sphere (Baker 1984; Sklar 1985; Deegan 1988; Fitzpatrick 1990; Flanagan 1990; McGerr 1990; Pascoe 1990; McClymer 1991; Muncy 1990, 1991; Deutsch 1992; Koven and Michel 1993; Kunzel 1993; Clapp 1994; Ladd-Taylor 1994; Odem 1995; Rynbrandt 1997; Abrams 2000; Abrams and Curran 2000; Lagler 2000; Stivers 2000; Knupfer 2001) As is discussed in further detail below, the Hull House women continuously suggested that combating the

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3 While by contemporary standards of social scientific investigation the crusaders’ methods may be methodologically questionable, as social science was in its beginnings, these methods were apparently deemed sound. Likewise, the primary concern for my research is not the credibility of the crusaders’ methodologies but rather that the crusaders’ constructing their investigations as truly scientific via their rhetoric.
prostitution problem necessitated women professionals, such as women police officers, women immigration officers to facilitate newly-arrived immigrant girls’ safe transport, and women probation officers, which reflected their interests of carving a professional niche for women. Thus, while the male reformers were scurrying to maintain their professional status, women were striving to gain this professional status.

Gendered Values/Interests

A burgeoning historical literature explores the role women played in Progressive-Era social reform efforts and the impact their gender had on their concomitant goals and strategies for achieving those goals (Baker 1984; Sklar 1985; Deegan 1988; Fitzpatrick 1990; Flanagan 1990; McGerr 1990; Pascoe 1990; McClymer 1991; Muncy 1990, 1991; Deutsch 1992; Koven and Michel 1993; Kunzel 1993; Clapp 1994; Ladd-Taylor 1994; Odem 1995; Rynbrandt 1997; Abrams 2000; Abrams and Curran 2000; Lagler 2000; Stivers 2000; Knupfer 2001). These analyses reveal that the Progressive-Era women reformers—in order to carve for themselves a professional niche in the “public” sphere—sculpted their reform efforts to fit a mold of their gendered expectations and roles. As was discussed in the previous section, the Hull House women recommended various professional positions occupied by women were necessary to effectively combat the prostitution problem. Furthermore, as was discussed in detail in Chapter Five, the Hull House women often predicated these recommendations on maternalist notions that women by nature would have a moralizing effect in the public sphere. Specifically, the Hull House women argued that women professionals in particular were needed to protect young girls and children from the various dangers that beset them. These maternalist justifications reflected gendered values of women’s innate maternal instinct to protect and nurture children and the larger society. Likewise, they reflect the women’s professional interests: as argued by Muncy (1991), when faced with few viable professional options, women created careers for themselves in the public sphere that merely extended their presumed biological roles. However, while Addams and Bowen explicitly coached their justifications for women professionals in maternalist rhetoric, Grace Abbott (1917) did not explicitly use maternalist discourse to justify women’s
professions. In fact, Abbott argued strongly against these justifications, stating that women were not innately prepared to protect girls but needed specific training to fill these professional positions.

In addition to advocating for women’s professional positions, Addams offered an extended discussion of the alliance of the anti-prostitution movement with the equal suffrage movement. Moreover, she argued that women’s enfranchisement would have a moralizing effect of the public. Again, these claims resonate with Progressive maternalist discourse and reveal the related gendered values. Likewise, Addams’s arguing for equal suffrage reflected her gendered interests to increase women’s political participation in society.

However, while the justification of women’s professions and equal suffrage may be argued as gendered, in that the Hull House women were most adamant about these issues, to argue that only women held these values and interests and subsequently employed them in their claims would be erroneous. On the contrary, several of the examined male crusaders and male-dominated crusade efforts recommended women professionals and equal suffrage as advantageous to battling the prostitution problem in Chicago. For example, Roe (1912) made specific claims that, with the vote, women would be in a more-advantaged position to fulfill their civic duty to eradicate white slavery; concurrently, he declared that women voters would not tolerate public officials’ ignoring the white slavery problem. Similarly, Sumner (1913), while admitting that he was “not so enthusiastic as some about all the reforms that are coming with woman suffrage,” still declared, “[W]hen women obtain the franchise, as I hope they will, they are going to stand up and fight successfully the present situation which allows men to exploit their sex in this most vicious commercialized business. All strength to them!” (p. 106)—again reinforcing the Progressive notion that women will have a moralizing effect in the public sphere. Likewise, the VCC, a male-dominated committee, recommended women police and probation officers, women court officials, and women federal inspectors on trains to protect young girls. Thus, various male crusaders and male-dominated crusade efforts forwarded these claims. Whether they truly held these values and interests or were merely strategically employing this rhetoric to bolster support from
women social reformers can only be speculated; similarly, their employment of this discourse quite possibly reflected the influence of the Hull House women on their claims, which I will discuss further in a subsequent section. However, the argument that women would have a moralizing effect in the public sphere—regardless of whether men or women were employing this argument—reinforced these gendered notions that women were by nature nurturing, were more moral than men, and thus would hold society to higher moral standards.

Religious Values/Interests

The influence of religion—specifically, Christianity—on the examined crusaders’ claims was most apparent in the white slave crusaders’ claims. Reverends Boynton and Bell and Moody Church missionary Dedrick, for example, specifically expounded upon the good Christian’s duty to combat the prostitution problem, rhetoric that reflected their Christian values and interests. Likewise, the typifying examples given by Rev. Bell and Dedrick often referred to good Christian upbringing of the victims of the white slave traffic, again reflecting their Christian values. Moreover, Dedrick (1910) criticized the low wages that “so-called Christians” (p. 113) were paying, her criticism revealing that true Christians would not allow such injustices. Furthermore, Rev. Bell and Dedrick’s claims-making style and motifs were comparably evangelical, employing “fire and brimstone” rhetoric that reflected their Christian values and interests. Lastly, Reverends Bell and Boynton, Dedrick, and Zimmerman all recommended various Christian efforts were necessary to combat white slavery, including “night churches” in the vice districts, pastors’ taking more responsibility in the fight, and salvation of white slaves and their patrons through the acceptance of Christianity.

Additionally, while Addams’s claims were primarily not peppered with Christian sentiment, her intended audience for the article entitled “A Challenge to the Contemporary Church, or “A Christian’s Duty Toward the Social Evil” obviously influenced her subsequent rhetorical strategies. Specifically, this entire article was saturated with appeals to Christian values. For example, Addams (1912b) criticized the “irreligious attitude” of the “so-called worldly-minded Christian” (p. 3) and advocated
the need for good Christians to “go back to the methods advocated by Jesus himself for dealing with all sinners…” (p. 6). Thus, the intended audience significantly influenced Addams’s choice of rhetoric.

Interestingly, while the VCC counted as its members several persons affiliated with religious organizations and came to fruition due to a recommendation by the Federated Protestant Churches of Chicago, religious rhetoric was ostensibly absent from the VCC report. However, while sparse, the values/interests of the religiously-affiliated members of the VCC were reflected in the following recommendations: (1) that churches have recreational centers available to the community; and (2) that “pastor sand religious workers should aid in arousing public opinion against the open and flagrant expression of the social evil in this city” (VCC 1911:64).

**Boundary Crossing and Influences on Claims**

As I stated in Chapter One, and as detailed in my synopses of the major actors in the Progressive-Era Chicago anti-prostitution crusades, several crusaders were involved in various different organizations, some of which cross the boundaries of the separate groups that I constructed for my analyses. Specifically, the VCC solicited input via conferences from the following groups: the Midnight Mission, headed by Rev. Bell; Hull House, headed by Jane Addams; the IPL, headed by Grace Abbott; and the JPA, headed by Louise de Koven Bowen. Consequently, this boundary crossing theoretically could account for some of the similarities in discourse appropriation and rhetorical choices across the examined groups.

Particularly, the influences of the Hull House women upon the VCC’s claims were most readily apparent. For example, the Hull House women, whose studies largely preceded the VCC, focused a great deal of attention on working girls’ low wages, poor working conditions, and exploitation by employment agencies, offering various recommendations to combat this aspect of the prostitution problem. In turn, the VCC offered similar discussions about this aspect of the problem, which most likely were greatly informed by the Hull House women’s investigations. Similarly, the Hull House women were greatly concerned about immigrant girls’ protection from procurers—the
IPL particularly targeted this aspect of the prostitution problem via offering various recommendations and services to ameliorate it. Again, the VCC offered similar recommendations regarding this aspect of the problem, once more reflecting the influence of the Hull House women upon their claims. Likewise, the Hull House women, as discussed previously, proposed that various professional positions specifically held by women were necessary to properly combat the prostitution problem, thus carving a niche for women professionals. In turn, the VCC offered that women professionals in key positions would greatly facilitate the protection of girls from prostitution—again reflecting the influence of the Hull House women upon their claims. Lastly, the methodologies employed by the VCC appeared to be heavily influenced by the Hull House women’s approach to investigating social problems. The extensive field investigations and interviews conducted by the VCC mirrored the techniques that the Hull House women were employing for their various studies. Obviously, the VCC placed high credibility with the Hull House women’s methods; as noted by Deegan (1988), the Hull House women’s methodologies not only influenced the VCC, but the highly-renowned Chicago School of Sociology later emulated these methodologies as well.

Perceived Audiences as Shaping Claims

Another important contextual element that can influence claims-maker’s claims is the perceived and/or intended audience to which the claims-maker is addressing their claims (Best 1987, 1993). Within the examined crusaders’ claims, while at times the intended audience was evident, other times the perceived/intended audience was reflected more by the particular rhetorical choices made by the claims-makers. For example, Addams’s (1912b) essay, “A Challenge to the Contemporary Church, or “A Christian’s Duty Toward the Social Evil” was specifically targeted at Christians and Christian religious leaders. Consequently, her rhetorical choices were shaped to appeal to Christian values and sense of duty toward combating the prostitution problem. Similarly, Rev. Boynton (1910) made specific appeals to the “pastor’s part” in ameliorating the prostitution problem, his rhetorical devices subsequently appealing to Christian values.
and duty like Addams. Correspondingly, Rev. Bell and Dedrick, both affiliated with Christian religious organizations, make similar appeals and were apparently addressing a perceived audience of Christian-minded persons. Moreover, even those not directly affiliated with a Christian organization, such as Zimmerman and Sims, made these appeals to Christian values and duty, thus implying that their perceived audiences were Christians. Therefore, whether explicitly stated and implicitly assumed, the perceived Christian-dominated audience had an impact upon the rhetorical choices of the examined crusaders. Additionally, and speculatively, some crusaders may have invoked these Christian values as an evangelical strategy: To extol the virtues of Christianity and thus possibly achieve conversion of some of their audience to Christianity.

Various other elements of the examined crusaders’ claims reflected the influence of perceived/intended audience upon their rhetorical choices. For example, the appeals of the C15 to potential donors influenced their rhetorical choices—their emphasizing the indiscriminate range of the vice problem that could ensnare the donors’ daughters and sons at any moment and thus invoking personal interest in the prostitution problem. Likewise, the C15 in their annual reports to the board of directors continuously reiterated that their reform efforts had been successful but more work was needed, thus justifying their successes and continued necessity to their board members. Similarly, the VCC as municipally-sponsored group reporting to the mayor claimed that vice was on a downswing and that police corruption was primarily a problem of the citizenship’s laxity in supporting the law versus widespread corruption of the system itself, which painted the mayor’s administration in a favorable light.

Lastly, in addition to a broader general audience of conscience-minded citizens, the examined crusaders in my interpretation saw each other as an intended audience, which influenced their rhetorical choices and strategies. This was reflected particularly by the VCC and the Hull House women’s claims by attempts to emulate sound social-scientific research methods, which would thus reassure the other reformers that their conclusions were valid and credible. Similarly, the examined crusaders’ citing of scientific studies and “official” estimates reflected their desire to appear credible to their peers as well as a general audience. Likewise, the various appeals that the examined
 crusaders made for more studies and/or better reform efforts were targeted to their peers as well.

Master Frames

To facilitate this section’s discussion, I first will briefly reiterate the theoretical relevance of Snow and Benford (1988, 1992) and Benford and Snow’s (2000) master frames analytic to my analyses. As I developed in my theoretical discussion, according to Benford and Snow (2000) argue that if a particular movement’s collective action frame is “sufficiently broad in interpretive scope, inclusivity, flexibility, and cultural resonance,” (p. 619) it may function as a master frame that is not distinct to that particular movement but may be appropriated by other SMOs to mobilize action against a perceived problem. Moreover, according to Snow and Benford (1992), if a particular social movement’s collective action frame resonates with a widely held master frame, its potentiality for mobilization increases. Drawing from my analyses, I propose that four master frames were constructed and/or drawn upon within the examined anti-prostitution crusaders’ claims: (1) an injustice frame; (2) a social duty frame; (3) a social control frame; and (4) a rights frame.

Injustice Frame

As described by Benford and Snow (2000), “injustice frames appear to be fairly ubiquitous across movements advocating some form of political and/or economic change” (p. 616). In brief, SMOs that employ injustice frames “identify the ‘victims’ of a given injustice and amplify their victimization” (Benford and Snow 2000:615). As evidenced in my analyses, an injustice frame permeated the anti-prostitution crusaders’ claims. Likewise, it surfaced in varying ways throughout the claims via victim constructions.

The various discussions of white slavery reflected the most apparent employment of this injustice frame. The crusaders examined in Chapter Three as well as the Hull House women continuously constructed prostitutes as white slaves and thus victims of various injustices. White slaves were constructed as victims of conniving white slave
traders, lurking wherever young, innocent girls congregated, be it their workplaces or commercialized recreations. Likewise, they were constructed as victims of capitalism, as their pitiful wages increased their vulnerability to succumbing to prostitution. Moreover, even if girls chose to become prostitutes of their free will, the crusaders subsequently constructed them as victims due to their being held in prison-like conditions or kept in constant debt to madams/pimps. Additionally, some constructions implied that white slaves were subjected to such abject and demoralizing treatment that their wills were broken to the point of not having the motivation let alone strength to escape the life.

When referring to vice in general, the vice crusaders and the Hull House women employed this injustice frame as well, and in very similar ways as delineated above. Again pointing to the injustices of capitalist greed, working girls were continuously constructed as victims of low wages and poor working conditions. Similarly, working girls were constructed as victims of society not providing enough vocational training to increase their marketability in the labor force. Likewise, commercialized recreations and the dearth of “wholesome” recreations were blamed for increasing girls’ vulnerability to prostitution. However, in contrast to the crusaders against white slavery, both the VCC and Addams specifically mentioned the particular injustices that “colored” people suffered by the prostitution problem, including being forced to live in or within close proximity to the vice districts due to prejudice/discrimination, poor familial foundations as residue of slavery, and unscrupulous employment agencies having no qualms about sending “colored” girls into the vice district as domestic workers.

All of the examined crusaders cited various injustices related to sexuality issues that resonated with an injustice frame. For example, the crusaders continuously constructed wives and children as innocent victims of their husbands/fathers’ sexual escapades with prostitutes. Similarly, the injustice of the double standard of sexuality was often forwarded. For one, this double standard that tolerated if not encouraged men’s sexual philandering put innocent women and children at risk for venereal infection—an injustice that was particularly abhorrent. Likewise, the double standard of sexuality was constructed as an injustice to women: the unconditional condemnation of women who strayed even once while the condoning of men’s sowing their “wild oats”
was constructed as an injustice that must cease so that these wayward women could be redeemed by society. Furthermore, children were constructed as victims of their parents, the schools, and the clergy’s “false modesty” regarding sexuality matters, which endangered children due to their concomitant ignorance of the sexual knowledge—particularly, the dangers of venereal disease and the ideal of sexual relations within the confines of marriage.

Conclusively, all of the examined crusaders employed some variation of this injustice frame. While the particular manifestation varied by what particular injustice was being addressed, the overall collective action frame was one of ending these injustices that were suffered by victims. Referring back to Benford and Snow’s (2000) claim that a collective action frame must be “sufficiently broad in interpretive scope, inclusivity, flexibility, and cultural resonance” (p. 619) to be deemed a master frame, I attest that the injustice frame used by the crusaders definitively meets the first three delineated criteria: as my present discussion illustrates, this collective action frame was broad in scope, inclusivity, and flexibility, as it was appropriated for various constructions throughout the crusaders’ claims.

Regarding cultural resonance, specific manifestations of this injustice frame possibly more readily resonated with broader cultural beliefs and values than others. For example, constructions of wives and children as innocent victims of venereal disease was most likely uncontested, as constructing children as at fault for their venereal infection would have countered an assumption that children were inherently innocent. Similarly, widely held beliefs regarding men and women’s sexuality—namely, the double standard belief that respectable women were chaste and pure, while men by nature had insatiable sexual appetites that must be placated—would resonate with the crusaders’ framing wives as innocent victims of their husbands’ philandering.

In contrast, constructions of prostitutes as victims of injustices rather than victimizers may be interpreted as an attempt to transform broader cultural beliefs. For example, as men were constructed as contracting venereal diseases from prostitutes, it follows that prostitutes were victimizers in this manifestation. However, when discussing the association of venereal disease and prostitution, the crusaders rarely focused upon
constructing the prostitutes as victimizers; rather, their attentions were devoted to the
victimization of innocent wives and children by husbands/fathers. Granted, the
prostitutes were indirectly constructed as victimizers, as they were the presumed vectors
of venereal disease. However, since constructions of men as vectors of venereal disease
to their innocent wives and children were the primary focus, the blame was more heavily
placed on these men then on the prostitutes. Similarly, the construction of most
prostitutes as victims of various social injustices that tacitly forced them into prostitution
rather than inherently immoral women aimed to transform broader cultural beliefs
regarding prostitution. Yet, the various constructions of women as victims of these
various injustices did resonate with broader beliefs that women were the weaker sex and
thus needed protection from the evils of society. Similarly, it resonated with broader
anxieties regarding women’s foray into the public sphere and thus increased vulnerability
to evils lurking about, anxious to pounce upon these unprotected women. Therefore, the
various manifestations of this injustice frame both resonated with and attempted to
transform broader cultural beliefs present during the Progressive Era.

Social Duty Frame

In congruence with an injustice frame, the crusaders offered a collective action
frame that constructed combating prostitution and its related evils as a social duty. And, in
my interpretation, this social duty frame may be deemed a master frame by Benford
and Snow’s (2000) criteria. This social duty frame was tightly intertwined with the
injustice frame, as it was argued that social duty required the populace to take action
against the various injustices that caused the prostitution problem. Additionally, similar
to the injustice frame, this appeal to the public’s duty/responsibility to confront
prostitution manifested in slightly different ways. The crusaders frequently appealed to
broader notions of a “public conscience” that, once awakened, sparked citizens into
action against the prostitution problem. Sometimes, the separate crusaders—particularly
those affiliated with Christian religious organizations and Addams when addressing the
role of the Christian church in addressing the prostitution problem—appealed to the
Christian community’s duty to combat this problem. Similarly, the examined crusaders
would often appeal to a general “moral” duty to address the prostitution problem. Addams made particular appeals to women’s duty to battle prostitution, particularly via their enfranchisement. Often times, the crusaders appealed to society’s duty to protect children from the prostitution problem. Similarly, the crusaders appealed to parents’ duty to raise their children properly as well as impart upon them proper knowledge of sexuality matters. Addressing men’s marital infidelities, some crusaders appealed to husbands’ duties to uphold their marriage vows.

Thus, similarly to the injustice frame, the crusaders invoked this collective action frame of the public’s social duty to combat the prostitution problem. Likewise, regarding Benford and Snow’s (2000) criteria, in my interpretation this collective action frame may be deemed a master frame. As demonstrated, the social duty frame is broad in scope and is inclusive and flexible. Likewise, the social duty collective action frame had cultural resonance. As the extant literature attests, a sense of duty to combat social problems was proffered as a paramount component in the Progressive reform philosophy (Grantham 1967; Kirschner 1975, 1986; McCormick 1997). Additionally, appeals to Christian duty resonated with the social gospel discourse (Gorrell 1988; Smith 1992) propagated during the Progressive Era, which in turn resonated with this master frame. Therefore, the anti-prostitution crusaders appeals to social duty to combat prostitution and its associated evils resonated with the broader Progressive reform ethos.

Social Control Frame

Lastly, a social control frame was also presented in the examined crusaders’ claims. This broader frame frequently manifested in anxieties surrounding the urban environment, which was believed to allow too much anonymity and individualism and thus lacked the communal restraints necessary to ameliorate the prostitution problem and its associated ills. Addams explicitly extolled the value of social control: upon bemoaning the unrestrained “freedom” and “opportunity for secrecy” that the city offers, Addams declared the following:
Fortunately, however, for our moral progress, the specious and illegitimate theories of freedom are constantly being challenged, and a new form of social control is slowly establishing itself on the principle, so widespread in contemporary government, that the state has a responsibility for conditions which determine the health and welfare of its own members; that it is in the interest of social progress itself that hard-won liberties must be restrained by the demonstrable needs of society. (Addams 1912a:205)

Turner (1907) similarly expounded that “civilization builds up painfully our definite, orderly rules of life—work, marriage, the constant restraint of the gross and violent impulses of appetite” (p. 576) and denounced urban environments as dens of “savagery” where the necessary constraints for social order had failed. Similarly, various other crusaders employed this collective action frame: while not explicitly using the rhetoric of social control, they too condemned the urban environment and proposed measures that would presumably restore order to the chaos it bred. Several of these measures, including increased regulation of saloons, third-party supervision over presumably corrupt police forces regulated recreations, severe and certain punishment of procurers/panderers/white slave traders, more rigid laws regarding marriage licensing, sexuality education that extolled the virtues of a single standard of sexuality for both men and women, and the like all aimed to impose a sense of order back into the chaotic urban environment.

In terms of Benford and Snow’s (2000) criteria for a collective action frame to be deemed a master frame, I believe that the social control frame propagated by the anti-prostitution crusaders meets all four criteria. As a collective action frame, it is broad in scope, inclusive, and flexible. Likewise, this collective action frame had broader cultural resonance. As discussed previously, anxieties regarding urbanization were prevalent in the Progressive Era (Wiebe 1967; Connelly 1980; Kirschner 1986; Grittner 1990). Moreover, this master frame resonated with broader cultural concerns regarding sexuality (D’Emilio and Freedman 1988).

Rights Frame

While not as explicit when compared to the injustice and social duty frames promulgated via the crusaders’ claims, some elements of some of the examined crusaders invoked a rights frame, which Benford and Snow (2000) identify as a master frame.
However, I would argue that these three collective action frames were so tightly intertwined in the crusaders’ claims that interpreting them as separate master frames is somewhat arbitrary. That said, few instances arouse in the crusaders’ claims where a rights frame was explicitly proffered. The most explicit appeal to a rights frame was offered by the Chicago Society of Social Hygiene (NL, GT, 1907), wherein it constructed the infection of innocent wives and children with venereal disease by philandering husbands/fathers as an “encroachment upon the rights” of the women and children. Within this construction, the CSSH declared “a personal liberty which is limited only by the equal liberty of others, is the cornerstone of community life,” that “the more insidious encroachments upon individual rights have often long escaped recognition and prohibition by the State,” and proceeded to describe the infection of innocent wives and children as one of these “insidious encroachments,” claiming, “Through these diseases many wives and more children are destroyed outright, and many more are robbed of their birthright to health of body and mind” (NL, GT, 1907). Similar to the CSSH, Addams (1912a) declared, “Our generation, said…to have put fresh meaning into the phrase ‘children’s rights,’ may at last have the courage to insist upon a child’s right to be well born and to start in life with its tiny body free from disease” (p. 130).

In addition to these explicit uses of rights frames, both the VCC and Addams implicitly invoked this master frame as well. Particularly, the VCC and Addams’s discussions of the injustices besetting the “colored” community implicitly invoked equal rights rhetoric and thus resonated with a broader rights frame. Likewise, Addams’s appeals to equal suffrage implicitly invoked women’s rights rhetoric, thus again resonating with a rights frame.

Again, using Benford and Snow’s (2000) criteria, this collective action frame may be deemed a master frame. As illustrated, this collective action frame has a broad scope, is inclusive, and is flexible. Regarding cultural resonance, however, I am hesitant to declare that this collective action frame had significant resonance with existing cultural beliefs of this period, as I do not recall the literature I reviewed making specific reference to rights rhetoric during the Progressive Era. That said, a more thorough review of the research literature regarding Progressive-Era social reforms might reveal that this
collective action frame was in fact pervasive and thus was a master frame according to the analytic. However, as this collective action frame was not widely used in the examined crusaders’ claims, this might be an indication of generation of a distinctive master frame during this historical period that has subsequently evolved to a pervasive master frame for contemporary SMOs.

**Conclusions**

My concluding section presents (1) a discussion of my contributions to the extant literature regarding Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades and social constructionist frameworks, and (2) a consideration of the limitations of my research and suggestions for future research in this area.

**Contributions to Literature**

My research study contributes to both the present research literature regarding the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades in Chicago as well as the social constructionist literature. Regarding the extant research on Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades, my analyses further buttress several of the findings of present research. Nonetheless, via my close rhetorical analyses, I assert that I was able to further deconstruct the various internal struggles that the crusaders faced when addressing the Progressive-Era prostitution problem, which I will discuss further presently. My close attention to the rhetorical features of the examined crusaders’ claims revealed that while the crusaders often attempted to construct the prostitution problem in a certain light, at times contradictions within their claims reflected their internal struggles with their constructions.

As I continuously reiterated throughout the analytical chapters, the examined crusaders persistently constructed prostitutes as victims. This construction largely manifested via claims that many prostitutes succumbed due to economic hardship, be it pitifully low wages, poor working conditions, or pressing family responsibilities. The various typical cases cited by the VCC, the white slave crusaders, and the Hull House women were saturated with tales of woe—how the need to support sick family members,
their miniscule pay, the long hours, and the monotony and drudgery of work drove girls to such desperation that prostitution seemed the only route. Thus, while a white slave was literally forced into prostitution, most of the other prostitutes were constructed as forced into the life out of desperation, certainly by no choice of their own.

Thus, again, the prostitute was constructed as a victim. The extant literature as well devotes some attention to these victim constructions (Lubove 1962; Connelly 1980; Rosen 1982; DuBois and Gordon 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988; Linehan 1991; Gilfoyle 1992). As I discussed in the individual analytical chapters, this victim construction was a powerful rhetorical device: By reconstructing prostitutes from evil incarnate to blameless victims needing protection, the crusaders were theoretically more likely to persuade their audience to support their cause. However, my close analyses revealed that at times contradictions in the crusaders’ claims arose that reflected their internal struggle with this blameless victim construction. For example, Addams (1912a), who staunchly argued economic hardship was the primary reason that working girls were veritably forced into prostitution, in one instance countered this argument by stating the following:

A girl always prefers to think that economic pressure is the reason for her downfall, even when the immediate causes have been her love of pleasure, her desire for finery, or the influence of evil companions. It is easy for her, as for all of us, to be deceived as to real motives. (P. 59)

Immediately following this statement, Addams returned to her construction of working girls’ that succumb to prostitution as doing so primarily due to economic hardship and discussed this phenomenon at great length. Nonetheless, by this telling statement, Addams revealed her internal struggle with the construction that prostitutes were ultimately blameless victims of their plight.

The VCC’s claims regarding police corruption likewise revealed an internal struggle with this construction. Namely, the VCC proclaimed that corruption in the police system in relation to prostitution was largely due to the citizenship’s neglect of requiring laws be upheld regarding prostitution. However, the VCC then offered the following:
No fair-minded man would say that this large body of men has been swept into this system of bribery and corruption and that they deliberately foster the Social Evil. To so affirm would be a libel not only against the Department, but against the City of Chicago.

But it *is* within reason to say that owing to the peculiar conditions which the people have allowed to exist so long, temptations have developed which *some* have not been able to resist. (VCC 1911:144-45)

Subsequently, the VCC offered various cases of police corruption in relation to the prostitution problem as well as several recommendations specifically targeted at police corruption. As I discussed previously, the VCC most likely tailored their claims that blamed police corruption on a failed citizenship to appease the mayor and his administration and thus protect their interests as a municipally-sponsored committee. However, their significant focus on rooting out police corruption within the system itself revealed their internal struggle with this construction.

The white slave crusaders’ claims regarding immigrant involvement in the white slave traffic revealed some internal struggles they held regarding anxieties regarding the massive influx of immigrants into Chicago during the Progressive Era. As I discussed in Chapter Three, the examined white slave crusaders’ claims were sometimes peppered with their xenophobic sentiment and their placing primary blame for the white slave problem on immigrant traffickers. However, crusaders such as Roe, Bell, and Sims were in turn apt to claim that “Americans” as well as various nations/groups played their part in the white slavery problem as well. Yet, the preponderance of xenophobic and derogatory connotations in many of the white slave crusaders’ claims (and the dearth of such sentiment in the vice battlers and the Hull House women’s claims) revealed their internal struggle with wholeheartedly accepting the “new immigrants” into the Chicago community.

The examined crusaders also revealed some internal struggles they held regarding the urban environment. These crusaders’ criticisms of tenement housing revealed their internal struggle between their notions of an ideal home environment and the tenement residents of immigrant and working class communities. Likewise, the various criticisms offered regarding commercialized recreations revealed their struggle with accepting these amusements as an asset to the urban community versus condemning them as
unwholesome and dangerous. Similarly, some crusaders’ appeals to the moral superiority of the country life and subsequent appeals to improving the urban environment revealed their internal anxieties about urbanization.

Lastly, the presence of both injustice frames and social control frames in the examined crusaders’ claims revealed their internal struggle between the utility of these overarching master frames and the beliefs supporting them. As Kirschner (1975) considered, progressive reformers were caught in a tug-of-war between “social justice” and “social control” ideologies. In his words,

> Even while they were moved by a tender-minded wish to liberate the downtrodden from the shackles of society, they were restrained by a tough-minded desire to protect society from the threat of the downtrodden. (Kirschner 1975:88)

Ultimately, Kirschner (1986) aligns himself with one side of the debate—deducing that the Progressive-Era reformers’ objective “was social control in the face of urban disorder more than it was humanitarian reform in the face of social justice” (p. x). However, I do not believe this deduction is so straightforward. As I discussed previously, both injustice frames and social control frames were prevalent within the examined crusaders’ claims. Likewise, I believe that the crusaders were motivated by both social justice and social control concerns. However, rather than claim on side over the other, I believe that describing this phenomenon as an internal struggle between the two is a more accurate depiction of the anti-prostitution crusade in Chicago during the Progressive Era. Perhaps with further research one frame might dominate the crusaders’ claims more than the other; however, drawing from my analyses, I believe arguing that one frame dominated and thus primarily motivated the crusaders oversimplifies the internal struggles these crusaders were experiencing regarding these competing master frames.

While my research contributes to the existing research regarding Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades, it also contributes to the social constructionist literature in various ways. One such contribution is that my study adds to the dearth of historical studies employing a social constructionist perspective to examine social problems construction. Excluding noted exceptions (Fee and Fox 1988; Rafter 1992; Donovan 1993, 1997; Loseke and Fawcett 1995; Neuman 1998; Doezema 1999), the current social
constructionist analyses primarily focus on contemporary social problems. However, as this segment of the literature indicates, the current social constructionist analyses of historical data strengthen the arguments offered by historians as well as add a new analytical dimension to the analysis.

In addition to this contribution, my analyses offer further evidence that a contextual constructionist perspective is paramount in understanding social problems work. As Best (1993) argues,

Rhetorical strategies undoubtedly reflect particular cultures, social structures, and historical circumstances. The language of claims does no exist independently of the social world; it is a product of—and influence on—that world. A strong reading that “never leaves language” is an illusion because language never leaves society. An analyst who ignores the social embeddedness of claims-makers’ rhetoric takes that embeddedness for granted; this is another form of ontological gerrymandering. (P. 121)

As my analyses illustrate, contextual elements figured significantly in the crusaders’ construction of prostitution as a social problem. Various discourses propagated during the Progressive Era shaped the contours of the crusaders’ claims. Likewise, their values and interests significantly influenced their rhetorical strategies. Additionally, perceived and intended audiences shaped the crusaders’ claims. Moreover, the broader social context shaped the available collective action frames and the concomitant resonance of collective action frames with that broader social context. In fact, I would argue that the overarching “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997) strongly influenced the rhetorical features of the examined crusaders’ claims.

While my analyses contribute to the constructionist literature by supporting the utility of the various theoretical frameworks I employed, I believe I may also contribute to this literature by critiquing the limitations of these frameworks. Specifically, I propose that elements of these frameworks are limited due to their primary focus on contemporary phenomenon. For example, as I have discussed previously, rights rhetoric was scarce within the examined crusaders’ claims. However, the constructionist frameworks as forwarded by Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) and by social movements theorists concerned with the presence of master frames in social movement organizations’ claims (Benford and Snow 2000) devote considerable attention to the preponderance of rights rhetoric in
constructing social problems and/or mobilizing social movement involvement. As I qualified earlier, that this collective action frame was not widely used in the examined crusaders’ claims may indicate the generation of a distinctive master frame during this historical period that has subsequently evolved to a pervasive master frame for contemporary SMOs. Additionally, the dearth of rights rhetoric in the examined crusaders’ claims corresponding with the pervasiveness of a social duty master frame reflects the general social and cultural context of the Progressive Era and again reveals the importance of broader context in social problems construction. Specifically, the prevalence of rights rhetoric in contemporary social problems constructions reflects the ethos of contemporary society, where individual rights are paramount. In contrast, the dearth of rights rhetoric and corresponding pervasiveness of social duty rhetoric reflects the “Progressive ethos” (McCormick 1997) wherein duty to protect one’s fellow man and to take provide “collectivist, interventionist” solutions to society’s ills versus protecting specific individual rights was of paramount concern. Thus, while constructionist and social movement frameworks provide informative insights, I would caution those employing these frameworks to question how their predominant focus on contemporary phenomenon may limit their applicability across historical and cultural contexts.

Similarly, while Best’s (1987, 1990) grounds/warrants/conclusions framework primarily guided my analyses and provided useful insights, in hindsight I believe that this framework may also be limiting. Namely, throughout my analyses I often felt I was forcing the data to fit this constructionist framework rather than questioning the frameworks themselves regarding their utility or “fit” with the examined claims. Specifically, the crusaders’ claims did not readily conform to Best’s model, wherein a seemingly linear fashion grounds are provided, warrants are implied, and conclusions are proposed. Again, and similar to my immediately previous discussion, that Best and others (de Young 1996) have employed this perspective to largely analyze contemporary social problems construction may again reflect a limitation of applying this perspective across historical and cultural contexts. However, this criticism may as well reflect my naïve assumption that the data would more readily conform to this model. Likewise, this concern may in fact reflect my own limitations in not questioning the framework more
and allowing my own categories and theoretical framework to emerge from the data. Nonetheless, future researchers that employ this theoretical perspective should consider its possible limitations relating to the issues I have proffered.

Limitations and Future Research

While my analyses offer contributions to the present research literature regarding the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades in Chicago as well as the social constructionist literature, I must acknowledge the following limitations of my research and suggestions for future research to address those limitations and/or further analyze this research topic. For example, as I discussed in the previous section, throughout my analyses I often felt I was forcing the data to fit the constructionist frameworks when I should have been questioning the frameworks themselves regarding their utility for examining the claims. Thus, future research in this area and using these constructionist frameworks should be more attuned to the constraints of these frameworks and thus take a more “grounded theory” approach as forwarded by Strauss and Corbin (1998), wherein these frameworks are used as a guideline for data analysis but the researcher is keenly attentive to not letting the frameworks constrain their gleaning of unique and/or new theoretical categories and concepts from the data as they emerge. Likewise, while I devoted much attention to the influence of various contextual aspects on the examined crusaders’ claims, future research that delved deeper into these contextual aspects may provide further insights into the relationship between context and claims. Lastly, as my research was focused on crusaders that were predominantly white, middle-class, and Christian, their rhetorical choices most likely reflected these contextual aspects. Thus, future research should devote examination to other anti-prostitution crusaders that were active during the Progressive Era, such as African-Americans and Jews, and thus elucidate the similarities/differences between the rhetorical features of these groups and those that I examined.
Concluding Thoughts

Via my social constructionist analysis, I have delved deeper into the rhetorical strategies employed by Progressive anti-prostitution crusaders to reconstruct prostitution as a “necessary” evil that must be tolerated by society to a “social” evil that required society to take action. As Connelly (1980) noted, Progressive-Era prostitution became

[A] master symbol, the code word, for a wide range of anxieties engendered by the great social and cultural changes that gave the Progressive Era its coherence as a distinct historical period. (P. 6)

As evidenced in the examined crusaders’ claims, the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution crusades were an arena where a vast range of the perceived social ills of the time was addressed. Anxieties regarding urbanization, immigration, women’s foray into the public sphere, corrupt municipal officials, alcohol use and abuse, breakdown in the family, changing norms of sexuality—all were constructed as playing key roles in the Progressive-Era prostitution problem. Moreover, by employing a contextual constructionist perspective, I have developed a deeper understanding regarding how the crusaders drew upon these broader Progressive discourses to increase the resonance of their claims with broader cultural concerns and thus boost the likelihood that their audience would take up arms in the fight against prostitution. Likewise, via employing this theoretical perspective, I further probed the impact of the individual crusaders’ values/interests upon their construction of the prostitution problem. Lastly, via the framing/master frame analytics, I have gauged the collective action frames that were constructed via the examined crusaders’ claims, which gives a deeper understanding of why the Progressive-Era anti-prostitution movement garnered significant support.

In conclusion, while often struggling with their task, the crusaders reconstructed prostitution from a problem of vicious and immoral women plying their trade to one of innocent girls/women either forced or connived into prostitution by scheming men. This victim construction, however, would be short-lived. As the United States’ involvement in World War I erupted in 1917, suddenly the prostitute was no longer a helpless victim in need of protection: she was a vector of disease that threatened to weaken the moral and physical strength of the troops (Brandt 1987; D’Emilio and Freedman 1988).
Consequently, while a social justice frame dominated the rhetoric of the crusaders’ pre-war claims, the social control frame and social hygiene concerns prevailed after U.S. entry into the war. However, while fleeting, the victim construction embodied the Progressive reformers’ optimism and activism: in the face of social injustice, society had the power, the drive, and the duty to obliterate this blight upon greater humanity.
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