

DISSERTATION

CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE  
PROFESSIONALS IN COLORADO

Submitted by

Stephanie L. Mace

School of Education

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Doctoral Committee:

Advisor: Donald L. Venneberg

James H. Banning

Maria E. Puig

William M. Timpson

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## ABSTRACT

### CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS IN COLORADO

Human trafficking, or trafficking in persons, is a form of modern-day slavery and millions of people around the world, including children are victims of this crime (DeStefano, 2007). Data concerning human trafficking, particularly child trafficking, is severely limited. In child welfare, research suggests a lack of awareness, understanding, and training about child trafficking. This deficit of a knowledge base all too frequently results in misidentification, mislabeling, and improper care of child trafficking victims. Due to the lack of awareness and misconceptions, cases of child sex trafficking are often reported under more standard classifications of child maltreatment, such as sexual abuse. This mislabeling of victims directly affects the proper identification and handling of child sex trafficking cases, potentially further endangering the welfare of the child (Smith, Vardaman, & Snow, 2009).

Using a qualitative, descriptive case study approach with semi-structured face-to-face interviews, the experiences of ten child welfare professionals in the identified geographic region of Colorado were explored. Data were collected primarily from an interview guide while demographic variables were gathered using a survey form. The study focused on determining the level of awareness of child trafficking; describing the meaning of child trafficking; and discovering the challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims from the perspective of child welfare professionals.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the constant comparative analysis was selected as the most appropriate method to analyze the data. Originally described by Glaser and Strauss

(1967), the constant comparative approach was utilized in this study to analyze the qualitative data and to determine significant themes through open, axial, and selective coding. Data collected from the interviews were analyzed for categories, emerging themes, and areas of agreement or disagreement to reflect the overarching research questions. Using a purposeful approach to the constant comparative method, Boeije (2002), comparison was conducted within one interview; across all interviews; and among demographic variables of the participants.

Findings from the study reveal a connection between the lack of awareness, understanding, identification, and training, among the ten participants. From the three research questions, the following conclusions were identified: 1) there is a lack of awareness concerning child trafficking, the laws and statistics, the meaning and what it exactly entails, and how it is significantly different from child abuse/sexual abuse, exploitation, and prostitution; 2) the lack of understanding about child trafficking and the definition directly impacts the level of awareness, meaning, and the ability to properly identify victims; and 3) the major challenges in victim identification are due to the lack of awareness, ambiguous meaning, and absence of training regarding child trafficking. All of the findings relate to the three research questions, intertwined, and correspond to the main themes identified within the data. Analysis of the conclusions elicited implications for policy and practice for child welfare and child trafficking as well as recommendations for policy and practice and future research.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Rosemary,  
who inspired me and always believed in me,  
and to my nephews, Oscar and Reef,  
who will know Rosemary through our stories and her beautiful spirit,  
and who remind me daily of the innocence of children.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”*

*Martin Luther King Jr., 1963*

### Introduction

This chapter introduces the problem and the purpose of this study. Additionally, this chapter provides evidence of the problem and the need for this study; briefly discusses research on the problem; presents the research questions and definitions of key terms that are the foundation for the study; and describes the assumptions and significance of the study. This chapter closes by detailing the researcher’s perspective.

### Background

Human trafficking, or trafficking in persons, is a form of modern-day slavery and millions of people around the world, including children are victims of this crime (DeStefano, 2007). Human trafficking is the exploitation of human beings, especially vulnerable populations, and is recognized as one of the most severe abuses of human rights today. Violations of human rights are both a cause and a consequence of human trafficking (Robinson, 2002).

Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination, and commonly, as all three. It is both a national and transnational crime that has become more prevalent with the globalization of society (DeStefano, 2007). United Nations data indicate that after Italy, the primary destination nation for human trafficking victims is the United States (Hodge, 2008).

Human trafficking is not just a problem in other countries; cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 U.S. states (DeStefano, 2007). Research denotes a wide range of statistics concerning the magnitude of the problem with estimates indicating the range varies from four to 27 million (Bales, 2005; Laczko, 2005). The number of people trafficked across



international borders every year has been placed at 800,000, 80 percent of whom are women and girls and 50 percent children (U.S. Department of State, 2007).

### The Problem and Need for Study

*"It ought to concern every person, because it is at the basement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at our social fabric..."*

*President Obama on human trafficking*

Despite increased attention and response to the topic of human trafficking, the empirical state of the literature has seen only marginal developments over time, leaving the magnitude of the problem unknown. Trafficking in children, or child trafficking, is human trafficking, but refers to persons under the age of 18. Children are trafficked globally and domestically for both labor and sex. Child sex trafficking is a particularly intolerable form of human trafficking due to the natural and inherent vulnerability of children (ILO, 2008; Vieth & Ragland, 2005) and represents a severe form of child maltreatment (Estes & Weiner, 2005). Furthermore, according to the U.S. Department of Justice (n.d.), it is illegal to lure, transport, or obtain a child for the purposes of prostitution or any other illegal sexual activity under federal law. Perpetrators of these acts are considered traffickers or pimps and benefit in some manner from the sale of a child, resulting in a profit or gain of something of value.

Research on human trafficking has not moved beyond estimating the scale of the problem; mapping routes and relationships among countries of origin, transit, and destination; and reviewing legal frameworks and policy responses. Little empirical research on the efficacy of U.S. governmental policies and organizational efforts to combat the problem has been conducted (Gozdziaik & Collett, 2005). Even less is known about trafficking in children, challenges in victim identification, and specifically the perceptions of professionals working for the welfare of children.

All too often, sex trafficking of minors in the United States is hidden from public view. There is a lack of research focusing on child trafficking, specifically, related to child welfare and the level of awareness among child welfare professionals of the phenomenon. Moreover, it is considered among the most difficult forms of child maltreatment to detect or investigate (Estes & Weiner, 2005; Williams & Frederick, 2009).

Although it is widely accepted that human trafficking is a major social problem paired with the difficulty in understanding the complexities of this phenomenon, identification within the child welfare system remains understudied. The definition of child sex trafficking is ambiguous, with numerous misconceptions in regard to this specific form of child maltreatment (Adelson, 2008; Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, & Goldblatt Grace, 2009; Laczko & Gramegna, 2003; Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2010; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006; Skilbrei & Tveit, 2008). Due to these misconceptions, cases of child sex trafficking are often reported under more standard classifications of child maltreatment, such as sexual abuse.

#### Purpose of the Study

Research has shown that misconceptions of child trafficking results in the mislabeling of victims; child trafficking is frequently labeled as child prostitution or sexual abuse. This mislabeling of victims directly affects the proper identification and handling of child sex trafficking cases, potentially further endangering the welfare of the child (Smith, Vardaman, & Snow, 2009).

In child welfare, research suggests that a lack of training and understanding of human trafficking by state child protection service agencies results in misidentification or mislabeling. This has been shown to be largely due to the fact that intake procedures were not developed to screen for trafficking. During the intake process, it is rare for agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, to ask questions of youth related to domestic minor sex trafficking. Further,

victims often do not self-identify as trafficking victims either because they are unfamiliar with the term or they do not in fact perceive themselves as victims (Mitchell et al., 2010).

Additionally, language plays a significant role in both definition and meaning of the problem. Typically, when Americans hear the term “child trafficking,” they believe it to be a problem in other countries, not in the United States (Atwell-Davis, 2010). Yet, even if they are able to concede that it does occur in the U.S., the general assumption is that the victims are foreign-born children, trafficked into the U.S., and usually in big cities. However, it has been found that child trafficking victims, trafficked for sex, are also American children, and are in all parts of the country, from small towns to large urban areas. Many of these kids leave home, initially voluntary, and fall victim to traffickers along the way (Atwell-Davis, 2010). Estimates suggest there are about 100,000 to 300,000 American children between 11 and 14 who are vulnerable to being sold for sex every year (Smith et al., 2009).

Usually, the initial point of contact for a child victim of human trafficking is law enforcement together with child welfare or child protective services (the term child welfare will be used in this dissertation). However, unfortunately, most child welfare agencies lack training as well as the procedures and/or protocol around child trafficking. This results in great difficulty in terms of proper identification and appropriate services for victims (Walts & French, 2011). Although the majority of child welfare caseworkers are not familiar with human trafficking terminology or laws, they are aware of one form of domestic minor sex trafficking, familial prostitution. The failure to identify the crime as child sex trafficking is a reflection of the lack of awareness and training on human trafficking as well as the absence of identifiers of domestic minor sex trafficking in the intake process. Misidentification has been cited as the primary barrier to the rescue and response to domestic minor sex trafficking victims (Smith et al., 2009).

This study seeks to advance the research and knowledge of child trafficking, primarily from the perspective of child welfare professionals. The information available concerning human trafficking, particularly child trafficking, is severely limited. Little empirical research on human trafficking in the U.S. has been conducted (Gozdziak & Collett, 2005). Even less is known about trafficking in children, challenges in victim identification, and specifically the perceptions of professionals working for the welfare of children.

### Research Questions

This study seeks to advance the research and knowledge of child trafficking from the perspective of child welfare professionals. Data concerning human trafficking, especially child trafficking, is severely lacking. This research will utilize the case study approach and the primary methods will be qualitative. The sample will include child welfare professionals in the identified geographic area. This case study is designed to describe the perceptions of these professionals with respect to child trafficking in the identified geographic area. Specifically, this study seeks to describe the level of awareness of child trafficking, the meaning of child trafficking, and the challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims among child welfare professionals. Explicitly, this study asks the following three overarching research questions:

- 1. What is the level of awareness of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?*
- 2. What is the meaning of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?*
- 3. What are the greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims?*

## Definition of Key Terms

According to the literature, human trafficking is synonymous with modern-day slavery, trafficking in human beings, and trafficking in persons. Under the umbrella term, human trafficking, trafficking in children, child trafficking, and domestic minor trafficking reside. The three main variables for this case study include:

- (1) *Child welfare professionals*
- (2) *Child welfare/child protective services*
- (3) *Human trafficking*
- (4) *Child trafficking*

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used:

*Child welfare professionals:* Professionals working to achieve positive outcomes for children and families in the public child welfare system/child protective services.

*Child welfare/child protective services:* Designated social services agencies that receive reports, investigate, and provide intervention and treatment to children and families in which there is a risk for child maltreatment and/or child maltreatment has occurred.

*Human trafficking (trafficking in persons):* The exploitation of human beings (persons over the age of 18) for labor, sex or other gain through threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, or abuse of power.

*Child trafficking (trafficking in children):* The exploitation of minors (under the age of 18) for labor, sex acts, or other gain through the threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, or abuse of power. However, in the case of sex trafficking of a minor, no proof of force, fraud, or coercion is required.

## Study Assumptions

This study seeks to gain new knowledge about human trafficking, specifically focusing on child trafficking in the identified geographic area. There is a need to address the existing gap in the literature related to child trafficking and child welfare. Research has found a general lack of awareness of child trafficking as well as misunderstanding around its meaning among child welfare workers. This lack of awareness and understanding often results in children and youth not being properly identified and thus not receiving adequate services. Further, traffickers are not being appropriately punished for the extent and severity of the crime.

A key assumption of this study is the premise that greater knowledge of the existing level of awareness of child trafficking, including its meaning and conceptualization, as well as the challenges associated with victim identification, will lead to greater understanding of the phenomenon. The information available concerning human trafficking is limited. Data alone will not provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem; but, gaining a better understanding of the issue in the identified geographic area will provide a platform for child trafficking identification efforts and research. It is assumed that the participants in this case study will speak honestly about their experiences and will offer their own perspectives and perceptions related to child trafficking and the child welfare system.

## Significance of Study

Consider the following three vignettes depicting different trafficking situations involving minors. Child trafficking will look differently depending on the geographic location, the nature of the trafficking, and many other variables. These three examples provide only a glimpse into the realities of child victims of this crime and serve to portray the significance of the abuses endured by minors, both domestically and globally.

Gildardo is a fifteen year old boy from Mexico who came to the United States to be reunited with a relative in Chicago. A local recruiting agency offered him a job at a Chinese restaurant in northern Wisconsin. He would have to make his own arrangements and pay for travel to the restaurant. When he arrived, Gildardo was forced to work 12 to 15-hour days, 7 days a week, washing dishes, cleaning, and cooking. His only meal was a bowl of rice once a day. If he complained about being tired or asked to be paid, he was threatened with deportation and physical violence. Hot grease from the stove burned his skin, and he began to get sores from the chemicals in the cleaning supplies. He was not provided gloves or an apron for protection. Gildardo eventually escaped through a window, [in the middle of winter with no coat or boots] and walked to a local church. Church members helped him return to Chicago via bus (Walts & French, 2011, p. 38).

Damian is a fourteen year old boy from Milwaukee. Due to an abusive situation at home, he ran away and moved in with his cousin, a twenty-four year old male, in Chicago. His cousin had substance abuse issues, and soon Damian did as well. Damian would spend a lot of time on the streets. An older man befriended him and brought him food, clothes and drugs. This man then made Damian turn “tricks” for him, to pay him back for the drugs, food, and clothes he provided (Walts & French, 2011, p. 33).

Irina is sixteen years old and from the Ukraine. She responded to an ad in the newspaper for placement as a nanny for a family in the United States. She was told she would take care of two young children, be able to attend school part-time, and would have the weekends free. Instead, she was forced to work 7 days a week. Her documents were withheld, and she also had to care for an elderly parent who was ill. She slept in the basement and was not allowed out of the house. The employers were physically and verbally abusive to her and threatened to turn her into authorities if she tried to escape (Walts & French, 2011, p. 27).

Child trafficking encompasses all minors under the age of 18 and federal law dictates that these minors all be considered the same, regardless of exact age, and that any minor involved in prostitution is a victim of human trafficking (Walts & French, 2011). Teenagers are often viewed as miniature adults, having the ability to be complicit in prostitution and/or having a choice in being a prostitute. However, the law stipulates that a 17-year-old is to be treated in the same manner as a 10-year-old in terms of trafficking situations and with protection. Difficulty arises with older minors involved in trafficking because they are often not the priority of child

protective services and/or child welfare agencies. This has various implications for protection, prosecution, and treatment (Walts & French, 2011).

Foreign-born and American children are victims of sex trafficking within the United States. Many are homeless youth, in the child welfare system, and/or runaways, but some are recruited from middleclass homes as well (Smith et al., 2009). Throwaway youth are also incredibly susceptible to trafficking situations. According to Estes and Weiner (2001), throwaway youth refers to “youth under the age of 18 years who either are abandoned or are forced to leave their homes by parents or guardians, and are not permitted to return and who, because of their vulnerable economic status, are prone to becoming victims of sexual exploitation” (p. 67).

Victims of this crime are often either unfamiliar with human trafficking or do not perceive themselves as victims; therefore, they do not self-identify as victims of child trafficking. Lack of self-identification as well as misidentification and mislabeling frequently occurs. Commonly, victims of child trafficking are labeled as sexual abuse victims or juvenile delinquents, willingly engaging in prostitution. This mislabeling directly affects proper identification and handling of child sex trafficking cases, potentially further endangering the welfare of the child (Smith et al., 2009). The misidentification of child sex trafficking victims, within child welfare, reflects a lack of awareness/lack of training on child sex trafficking. All too commonly, the intake process does not include screening for child trafficking; consequently, victims are not being appropriately identified and are not receiving the proper care.

Child trafficking is a growing social problem paired with significant challenges in understanding the nature and complexity of this phenomenon. Particularly, the issue of child trafficking within the child welfare system remains understudied. In general, there is a lack of



awareness among child welfare professionals about child trafficking coupled with vast misconceptions of what child trafficking entails (Adelson, 2008; Clawson et al., 2009; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006).

### Researcher's Perspective

The purpose of this section is to outline the researcher's involvement in the study subject and detail the researcher's biases. Acknowledging the researcher's perspective is critical when evaluating the goodness criteria in social research and a research project. In this case, the researcher has a background in social work, an interest in anti-human trafficking policy, and experience working in the field of child welfare. The researcher holds the belief that human trafficking, in all forms, is a major social issue that requires attention and action. Further, children are a vulnerable population and child trafficking is an atrocious crime against humanity, impacting children both in the United States and around the globe. These core principles form the basis of the research.

I am particularly interested in investigating child trafficking in Colorado based on recent reports of cases in the state. Specifically, I seek to explore child trafficking within the scope of the child welfare system as child welfare professionals are often 'first responders' in making contact with victims. First responders have been described as those individuals and/or agencies that first come into contact with a victim, such as law enforcement, social service providers, health care professionals, faith-based organizations, domestic violence prevention groups, homeless assistance professionals, and child protective services (Clawson et al., 2009).

It is my hope that this study will contribute new knowledge to the existing body of research on child trafficking by providing a baseline for the level of awareness of child trafficking, how the phenomenon is perceived, and what the greatest challenges in victim identification are, within the scope of child welfare in the identified geographic area.

Additionally, I hope this new insight into child trafficking will serve as a platform to guide action, increase awareness, and promote education and training for child welfare professionals in Colorado as well as the United States as a whole. Action is crucially needed in terms of awareness-raising and training and development for child welfare professionals and with respect to intake/screening procedures. As first responders, child welfare professionals hold a valuable position in their ability to build trust with children and to identify and advocate for victims of this heinous crime. From the lens of the critical paradigm, the theoretical perspective that grounds this research, I seek to advance social justice through anti-human trafficking outreach and education. I view education as power and as a means for working toward a world free of slavery.

### Summary

This chapter introduced the problem and the purpose of the study and provided evidence of the problem and need for the study. This chapter briefly presented research on the problem; the research questions and definitions of the key terms; assumptions; the significance of the study; and the researcher's perspective. The following chapter will review the literature related to child trafficking and child welfare as well as present the theoretical framework, critical theory, which informs this study.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

This chapter presents the literature and the theoretical framework which informs this study. Specifically, the review of the literature addresses: 1) the methodology of the literature review; 2) an overview of the phenomenon of human trafficking, including history, prevalence, factors supporting its existence, monetary context, and definitions; 3) the anti-human trafficking legislation; 4) child welfare and Colorado child welfare legislation; and 4) Viewpoint, detailing the voices and needs of the victims of this crime as well as case examples of convictions for both labor and sex trafficking of minors in the United States. The literature intentionally focuses on child trafficking and the child welfare system for the purpose of this study. Critical theory, the guiding theoretical framework for the study, is discussed at the close of this chapter.

### Literature Review Methodology

The process of exploring the literature included an in-depth review of the following databases and search engines: Web of Science, Psyc Info, Social Sciences Abstracts, Social Work Abstracts, PAIS International, Google Scholar, and Academic Search Premier. The key words included: Human trafficking, domestic trafficking, trafficking in persons, sex trafficking, slavery, modern day slavery, forced labor, domestic servitude, child trafficking, domestic minor sex trafficking, child labor, child exploitation, child prostitution, child welfare and child trafficking/abuse/sexual abuse, empirical studies and human trafficking, anti-human trafficking law/policy/legislation, Wilberforce Act, Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and treatment human trafficking. These key words were used in various combinations and within the multiple database searches. The methodology incorporated advanced searches and reference sourcing from extracted research and journal articles. Publications and reports from the United Nations, the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services, and anti-human trafficking non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations were also consulted.

### Overview of Human Trafficking

In 2007, Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. Secretary of State, described human trafficking as follows: “Trafficking in persons is a modern-day form of slavery, a new type of global slave trade. Perpetrators prey on the most weak among us, primarily women and children, for profit and gain” (U.S. Department of State, 2007, p.3). The major forms of human trafficking include forced labor, sex trafficking and child sex trafficking, bonded labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, and child soldiers (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

### History of Human Trafficking

Slavery is as old as human civilization. The Civil War ended slavery in the United States in 1865 and internationally the practice was banned by several agreements and treaties, beginning in 1926 with the Slavery Convention of the League of Nations. However, the practice of slavery never ended. The reality is tens of millions of human beings, including children, continue to be bought and sold in the 21st century, around the world (DeStefano, 2007).

Human trafficking has changed from an almost unknown and largely unreported phenomenon to a widespread global issue. In recent years, greater awareness, education, and outreach have improved the detection and reporting of this crime; but, human trafficking still reflects a hidden phenomenon, difficult to locate and even more difficult to prosecute.

Human trafficking is considered the third largest revenue generating and fastest growing illegal industry in the world, surpassing every other criminal enterprise except the drug and arms trades (DeStefano, 2007). Schauer and Wheaton (2006) argue that human trafficking is more

lucrative than drug trafficking, in part because it holds fewer risks and because, unlike illicit drugs, humans may be sold and re-sold, often countless times in one day.

### Scope of Human Trafficking

Estimating with any accuracy the number of victims of human trafficking is a discouraging task, so much so that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) stated, “A statistical goal may prove to be unachievable” (UNODC, 2006, p. 45). However, methodological problems have not prevented organizations and scholars from offering widely ranging estimates.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 12.3 million people in forced labor, bonded labor, forced child labor, and sexual servitude at any given time; other estimates range from four million to 27 million (Bales, 2005; Laczko, 2005). According to the ILO (2005), 2.4 million people were victims of human trafficking from 1995-2005. The number of people trafficked across international borders (transnational victims) every year has been placed at 800,000, 50 percent of whom are children and 80 percent women and girls (U.S. Department of State, 2007). Each year, about 14,500-17,500 foreign nationals are trafficked into the United States (U.S. Department of State, 2010). The prevalence of trafficking victims in the world has been reported as 1.8 per 1,000 inhabitants (U.S. Department of State, 2010).

Human trafficking estimates have largely focused on international trafficking victims (Laczko & Gozdzik, 2005) both around the world and within the U.S. Not much research has been conducted on human trafficking of U.S. citizens. However, more recently, it has been acknowledged that human trafficking is happening in the U.S., and among U.S. citizens, specifically children and youth.

Child sex trafficking is differentiated in the United States between U.S. citizens and foreign-born children. The appropriate term to describe American children, trafficked for sex within the U.S., is domestic minor sex trafficking while foreign-born children trafficked to and within the U.S. for sex are classified under the broader child sex trafficking label (Laczko & Gramegna, 2003). However, numerous words have been associated with minors used for prostitution in the illegal commercial sex industry, including child/juvenile/teen prostitute or sex worker to child sex trafficking victim (Grant, 2005). Conflicting terminology hinders the identification of victims, hampers efforts to recover victims from traffickers, impedes criminal investigations and the prosecution of traffickers, and delays the necessary services for victims (Grant, 2005; Shared Hope International, 2008).

In the case of domestic minors, estimations on exploitation through prostitution range from 100,000 to three million (Fong & Cardoso, 2009; Friedman, 2007; Vieth & Ragland, 2005). According to Estes and Wiener (2005), the number of international child sex trafficking victims in the United States is around 17,000. Further, it has been suggested that between 244,000 and 325,000 American youth are considered at risk for sexual exploitation and about 199,000 incidents occur every year in the U.S. (Estes & Weiner, 2001). Estimates suggest that 25% of child sex trafficking victims are exploited by family members and never actually leave home (Estes & Weiner, 2005).

Children comprise an extremely vulnerable population. Annually, about 1.8 million children are presumed to be exploited globally in the commercial sex industry (ILO, 2008). More specifically, experiencing a history of abuse is a frequently cited vulnerability that places youth at greater risk for exploitation (Smith et al., 2009). Both law enforcement and social services have found this commonality among victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. However, any

child can fall victim to being trafficked and domestically trafficked minors are diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and gender (Zhang, 2009). Still, traffickers recognize certain life characteristics and attributes that make some children easier targets than others. The literature highlights the parallels among children lacking social and emotional security, children from dysfunctional families involving trauma, abused kids, children of drug users, and runaways as particularly at risk for traffickers' recruitment and control. The single vulnerability factor making domestic youth targets for sex trafficking is their age (Smith et al., 2009).

### Monetary Context

Financial data on human trafficking are similarly challenging to calculate, with various monetary values offered. Worldwide, the United Nations estimate human trafficking to be a five to nine billion dollars a year industry (United Nations Economic Commission, 2004) while another estimate places the global profits at approximately 32 billion dollars annually (Feingold, 2005). Human trafficking continues to thrive because it is extremely lucrative. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006), it is the second largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world. The money generated by sex trafficking alone is conservatively estimated at seven billion dollars per year, although higher estimates of 19 billion dollars annually exist (Laczko, 2005). In 2005, the ILO issued a report estimating profits from sex trafficking at 217.8 billion dollars a year or 23,000 dollars per victim (ILO, 2005).

In the United States, "The Internet has created the golden age of the sex industry. It's an \$87 million a day business and it is growing" (3 Generations, 2012, para 1). Additionally, "Thousands of new sex workers enter the trade each month...Unsuspecting victims fall prey to the elaborate schemes of predators, who are charming, street smart, unscrupulous, and often

violent. They know that a girl can generate upwards of \$300,000 a year” (3 Generations, 2012, para 2). Common earnings by one child have been estimated at \$1,200 for one weekend night. Child sex trafficking is increasing in the United States in part because it is so highly profitable; the risk/reward ratio denotes pimping is more lucrative than drug dealing. Typically, traffickers impose minimum nightly quotas and earnings for the children under their control (3 Generations, 2009).

The direct cost to society from the crime of human trafficking remains difficult to quantify. The damage caused by human trafficking impacts multiple levels of society, from health and human services, safety and security, and legal and justice systems, with implications for individuals, families, communities, and countries.

#### Factors Supporting Human Trafficking

A variety of factors have been recognized as contributing to the problem and for making individuals vulnerable to human trafficking. These include poverty and armed conflict; lack of economic opportunity and education; discriminatory practices including gender discrimination; abusive family environments; restrictive migration policies; and poorly regulated industrial sectors (Shigekane, 2007). Moreover, human trafficking depends on there being source countries with people demanding better economic living conditions, and destination countries with people, or industries, demanding cheap labor or cheap prostitution to enlarge their profits. Research on human trafficking indicates that the crime has been fueled largely by demand for victims’ work as well as the increasing ease of global travel and immigration (Farr, 2005).

Extreme poverty remains the single most important factor in becoming a target of human trafficking (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009). Human trafficking thrives due to source countries with a supply of persons seeking better economic opportunities and destination countries with



the demand for cheap labor and/or cheap prostitution. The literature suggests that as long as a lucrative market for trafficked persons exists, alongside poverty and weak political institutions, human trafficking will continue to flourish (Kapur, 2005). It has become evident that typically the victim movement shifts from less developed to more developed countries (U.S. Department of State, 2010), but that all countries are affected by human trafficking, either as a source, transit, or destination nation.

### Human Trafficking Definitions

Human trafficking is inherently discriminatory, and because the vast majority of trafficked individuals are women, it is usually considered a gender issue and the result of discrimination on the basis of sex (Shigekane, 2007). According to the literature, human trafficking is synonymous with modern-day slavery, trafficking in human beings, and trafficking in persons.

The United Nations General Assembly (2000) provides an internationally accepted definition of human trafficking:

Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (p. 32).

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines severe forms of trafficking in persons as:

- a. sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or,

- b. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (U.S. Department of State, 2011, p. 8).

It is further noted that physical movement or transport from one location to another is not required for a victim to be considered trafficked according to these definitions (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

### Human Trafficking Versus Human Smuggling

It is important to differentiate between human trafficking and human smuggling, two crimes which are often confused and referred to as the same or similar. Human trafficking is a crime against a person whereas human smuggling is a crime against a border, commonly unauthorized border crossing and/or facilitation of illegal entry. With human trafficking, the relationship with the trafficker typically continues as opposed to human smuggling wherein the relationship is terminated. There is also a distinction in terms of how the crime is perceived by law enforcement; trafficked individuals are seen as victims whereas smuggled persons are viewed as violators of the law (Walts & French, 2011, p. 28).

### Anti-human Trafficking Legislation

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) and its 2003, 2005, and 2008 reauthorizations are the first comprehensive federal legislation in the United States to guide anti-human trafficking efforts and to assist victims of human trafficking (U.S. Department of State, 2008). The 2003 and 2005 reauthorizations of the TVPA added additional requirements, responsibilities, funding, and protections for victims.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2003 allocated a budget of more than 200 million dollars to combat human trafficking, called for increased cooperation among foreign governments, provided assistance for family members of victims, and

enhanced the prosecution of human traffickers. It also created a federal civil clause of action for victims to sue their traffickers in criminal court and for the government to terminate international contracts with companies or individuals found to be involved in human trafficking activities (Polaris Project, 2008).

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2005 approved a total of 361 million dollars, including increased funding for state and local authorities, and strengthened the support system for minor victims. Internationally, it provided extraterritorial jurisdiction to U.S. courts in cases involving federal employees and contractors engaged in trafficking offenses abroad (Jones et al., 2007).

#### William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008

The most recent amendment to the policy resulted in the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (The Wilberforce Act). The Wilberforce Act contains four titles: Title I: Combating international trafficking in persons; Title II: Combating trafficking in persons in the United States; Title III: Authorizations and appropriations; and Title IV: Child soldiers prevention. The Wilberforce Act continues to support federal efforts to combat both international and domestic trafficking of human beings. Title IV, child soldiers prevention did not appear in the former versions of the law. This provision eliminates funding to governments that recruit or use child soldiers and makes it a federal crime in the United States. Additionally, the Wilberforce Act strongly contests forced labor and child labor in foreign countries, promotes the investigation of the link between HIV/AIDS and human trafficking, and denounces corruption that obstructs anti-human trafficking efforts (Doyle, 2009).

The primary difference between the Wilberforce Act and previous legislation is its focus on criminal provisions. Among other initiatives, it expands pre-existing law enforcement

authority and further outlaws obstructing anti-human trafficking enforcement efforts, conspiring to human traffic, as well as deriving any benefit from human trafficking. Further, it increases the penalty for violations of the federal Mann Act that criminalizes anyone who transports a person across state lines for purposes of prostitution (Doyle, 2009).

The Wilberforce Act improves the T-visa provision to better protect victims and their family members. The T-visa signifies a shift in immigration law policy which previously resulted in many victims of human trafficking being deported as illegal aliens. However, the T visa allows victims of severe forms of human trafficking to become temporary residents of the United States and grants eligibility for benefits and services under federal or state programs once they are certified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Department of State, 2008). Another significant change resulted in new standards for how minor children are to be treated in custody, the kind of mental health and other services they shall receive, and the conditions under which they can be sent to their home country or home of residence. For the first time, federal officials will be required to follow child welfare principles, including the ‘best interest of the child’ standard, upon making decisions about their care (Doyle, 2009).

#### Policy Framework

The ultimate goal of the U.S. government’s anti-human trafficking policy is to free those trapped in slave-like conditions, both domestically and internationally (U.S. Department of State, 2008). Originally, the TVPA adopted a three-pronged “Three P Approach” to *protect* victims, to *prosecute* human traffickers, and to *prevent* human trafficking worldwide. In 2010, a fourth P was added to the approach: *partnership*. Governments and international organizations have declared that an effective response to human trafficking must include these four key elements. Specifically, the Four Ps are detailed accordingly:

- Prevention – to decrease the number of people trafficked;
- Protection – to increase protection, support to victims and survivors;
- Prosecution – to investigate and prosecute traffickers, strengthen laws and legal responses; and
- Partnership – to bring together diverse experiences, amplify messages, and leverage resources of law enforcement, service providers, community members, and survivors (Laboratory to Combat Human trafficking, n.d.).

### Child Welfare

With the introduction of child welfare and child protective services, the government assumed a role in protecting children. The twin goals of child welfare policy stipulate the protection of children from harm by their families as well as the provision of safe havens for children who are maltreated in their home (Jimenez, 2010). The following terms are commonly associated with child welfare and child trafficking and serve to further clarify the language.

*Child abuse and neglect:* Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm. This definition may vary state by state.

*Child protection:* State agency that offers protective services in order to prevent any further harm to the child and to other children in the family, stabilizing the home environment and preserving family life whenever possible. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is one of the key pieces of legislation that guides child protection in the United States. CAPTA, at its inception, was signed into law in 1974 (P.L. 93-247), and is reauthorized every eight years.

*Child welfare:* The child welfare system is a group of services designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families to enable them to successfully care for their children. While the primary responsibility for child welfare services rests with the states, the federal government plays a major role in supporting states in the delivery of services through funding of programs and legislative initiatives.

*Coercion:* Threats of serious harm to, or physical restraint of, any person; any scheme, plan or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to, or physical restraint against, any person; or the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process.

*Commercial sex act:* Any sex act where anything of value is given to or received by any person.

*Commercial sexual exploitation of a child:* The use of any person under the age of 18 for sexual purposes in exchange for cash or in-kind favors; it can occur between a child and a customer, the pimp/trafficker, or others (including family members) who profit from children for these purposes.

*Force:* The use of any form of physical force, including rape, beatings, and confinement, to control victims.

*Fraud:* False offers that induce people into trafficking situations. For example, women and children reply to advertisements promising jobs as waitresses, maids, and dancers in other countries and are then trafficked for purposes of prostitution, pornography, or forced labor or services once they arrive at their destinations.

*Harboring:* To receive or hold a person in a place without legal authority (Walts & French, 2011, pp. 23-24).

## Colorado Child Welfare Legislation

Child abuse is a broad category, defined federally and state by state. Child trafficking falls within the bounds of child abuse, which merits review of the state of Colorado legislation.

The Colorado Revised Statutes define four different forms of child abuse as follows:

1. Physical abuse: C.R.S. 19-1-103 states “Any case in which a child exhibits evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, failure to thrive, burns, fracture of any bone, subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling, or death and either: Such condition or death is not justifiably explained; the history given concerning such condition is at variance with the degree or type of such condition or death; or the circumstances indicate that such condition may not be the product of an accidental occurrence;” When someone hurts a child badly enough to cause an injury, break a bone, leave a bruise, a cut, or some other mark. For example, shaking a baby or using an object to spank a child that leaves a mark.

2. Emotional abuse: C.R.S. 19-1-103 states “an identifiable and substantial impairment of the child’s intellectual or psychological functioning or development or a substantial risk of impairment of the child’s intellectual or psychological functioning or development.” Treatment which makes children feel that they are not loved or wanted. An adult’s words

or actions lead a child to be harmful to themselves or others. For example, repeatedly calling a child names or exposing them to violent situations.

3. Physical neglect: C.R.S. 19-1-103 states “Any case in which a child is a child in need of services because the child’s parents, legal guardian, or custodian fails to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision that a prudent parent would take.” Not providing a safe place to live, food, clothing, or medical care; leaving young children alone or with someone whom is not appropriate to care for them.

4. Sexual abuse: C.R.S. 19-1-103 states “Any case in which a child is subjected to sexual assault or molestation, sexual exploitation, or prostitution;” Child sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of another. Sexual abuse also includes taking pornographic pictures or making a child available for prostitution (Larimer County Child Advocacy Center, 2000, pp. 2-3).

These four types of child abuse may all be found in child trafficking situations, depending on the exact case. In terms of official statistics regarding child abuse in Colorado, for the year 2010, there were 72,818 referrals for child abuse and neglect, and of these referrals, there were 32,969 reports for investigation (Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, 2011). The number of child victims of abuse and neglect was 11,720, representing a rate of 9.5 per 1,000 children. Of these 11,720 children, 82.6% were neglected, 13.0% were physically abused, and 9.7% were sexually abused (Child Welfare League of America, 2012).

For the identified geographic region in Colorado, the child welfare data reported for the calendar years 2009 – 2011 include physical abuse, sexual abuse, and third party abuse. Table 1 displays the overall totals by type of report.

Table 1

*Child Abuse Overall Totals in the Identified Geographic Region: 2009 – 2011*

Type	Number		
	2009	2010	2011
Total Referrals	5, 519	5,848	5,732
Investigated	2, 544	2,580	1,971
Substantiated	436	389	389
Unsubstantiated	1,993	1,980	1,456
Inconclusive	543	464	40

The total referrals represent the number of reports made to the agency, investigated refers to the number of the total referrals that were investigated by child welfare professionals, substantiated indicates the total founded cases of abuse (including neglect, incest, physical, sexual, and third party abuse), unsubstantiated indicates cases where there was not a significant finding, and inclusive denotes the case did not merit either substantiated or unsubstantiated abuse. Third party abuse is defined, in the identified region, as abuse committed by someone unrelated to the child.

State of Colorado Anti-human Trafficking Legislation

At the state level, by the end of 2007, 33 states had passed criminal anti-human trafficking legislation making it a state felony offense, including Colorado. Until states enact comprehensive anti-human trafficking laws, prosecutors use existing criminal statutes to charge and try human traffickers for crimes such as false imprisonment, promotion of prostitution, kidnapping, rape, and aggravated assault. However, these laws are insufficient as they do not criminalize all manifestations of exploitative human trafficking in the U.S. and into the U.S. nor do they offer protection from prosecution for trafficked women (U.S. Department of State, 2008).



### Colorado House Bill 1143

In 2005, Colorado House Bill 1143 passed and resulted in the creation of an interagency task force on trafficking in persons. This task force is comprised of the Governor, Attorney General, president of the Colorado district attorneys council, state public defender, executive director of the department of public safety, executive director of the department of labor and employment, executive director of the department of human services, municipal police chief and sheriff, a representative from a statewide organization representing victims, a representative from a statewide coalition representing victims of domestic violence, and a representative from a statewide coalition supporting victims of sexual assault (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2006). Specifically, the task force seeks to gather and classify data on the nature and degree of trafficking in the state; to investigate collaborative models for caring for victims; to measure and evaluate the progress of preventing trafficking, protecting victims, and prosecuting traffickers; to recognize accessible federal, state, and local programs that deliver services to victims; to assess approaches to augment public awareness of trafficking; and to appraise existing criminal statutes in terms of addressing the problem of trafficking and building recommendations (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2006). The task force works collaboratively to gather and report information concerning human trafficking in the state.

### Colorado Senate Bill 207

In 2006, Colorado enacted Senate Bill 207, making trafficking in adults a class 2 felony and trafficking in children a class 3 felony (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2006). Colorado continues to fight human trafficking, and in 2009, introduced House Bill 1123, which increases the punishment for trafficking in children from a class 3 felony to a class 2 felony. It also amends the age definition of “child” from less than 16 years of age to less than 18 years of age and

expands the definition of coercion of involuntary servitude to comprise threat of physical harm, threat of abuse of the legal system, and deception leading the person to believe they would suffer physical harm (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2009). Criminalizing human trafficking brings Colorado state law in accord with federal policies, thus enabling the prosecution of these crimes in connection with federal law enforcement.

### Colorado Human Trafficking

Colorado is a source, destination, and key transit state for human trafficking. Specifically, the city of Denver is a high human trafficking area because of Denver International Airport and the Interstate 25 and Interstate 70 interconnect, making this an easy access point used by traffickers to cross state lines, from north to south and east to west (Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking, n.d.). Trafficking cases have been reported in various forms, both labor and sex. The state has been cited as having many industries in which persons are trafficked, including agriculture, construction, hospitality (ski resorts, etc.), domestic service, magazine crews, restaurants, massage parlors, pimp control situations, and others (Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking, n.d.).

According to the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking (n.d.), from 2008 to 2012, the organization provided services to more than 300 potential and confirmed labor and sex trafficking victims in Colorado. These victims were both domestic and foreign-national, comprising 14 countries of origin, including the United States. There have been over 150 sex trafficking investigations over the past few years in the Denver area, as estimated by law enforcement. Moreover, the rate of adolescence homelessness in Denver is among the highest in the county and therefore many Colorado youth are at-risk of being trafficked (Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking, n.d.).

## Colorado Child Trafficking Legislation

According to 3 Generations (2009), laws certainly exist to protect children and prosecute traffickers; however, they are not very well understood and are rarely enacted. The state of Colorado legally defines trafficking in children in accordance with statute 18-3-502 [Formerly 18-6-402]:

(1) A person commits trafficking in children if he or she:

(a) Sells, exchanges, barter, or leases a child and receives any money or other consideration or thing of value for the child as a result of such transaction; or

(b) Receives a child as a result of a transaction described in paragraph (a) of subsection (1).

(2) As used in this section, "child" means a person less than eighteen years of age.

(3) Trafficking in children is a class 2 felony (Colorado Revised Statutes, 2010).

The term trafficking typically infers movement; however, this is a misconception and a hindrance to the proper identification of victims. In actuality, with trafficking, the victim does not have to cross international or state borders; the child or person can be trafficked in the same location, with no movement whatsoever (Walts & French, 2011).

### Viewpoint

The research denotes a critical need for increased knowledge of survivor needs and greater awareness of the plight of victims. The literature suggests that this may be due in part to the low profile nature of the crime and because human trafficking victims are considered a hidden population. The following child trafficking vignettes are presented to illustrate ways in which children become victims of human trafficking. All names and identifying details in these vignettes have been altered to preserve confidentiality.

### Vignette One

Grant is a 13-year-old U.S. citizen and was living with his stepfather Mike since his mother died three years ago. Grant revealed to his school guidance counselor that his stepfather was sexually abusing him. At first, the abuse was only from Mike, but then Mike recruited Grant to come to a party his friends were having, and Mike's friends abused Grant as well. Mike convinced Grant that if he didn't have sex with Mike's friends when they came over, Grant would be kicked out of the house and forced to live on the streets. Upon asking some additional questions, you determine that Mike's friends were buying him alcohol, cigarettes, and concert tickets in exchange for abusing Grant at the parties. Because his stepfather was paid in goods of value, Grant is a victim of child sexual abuse and child trafficking (Klain & Kloer, 2009, p. 11).

### Vignette Two

Trina was excited to meet Damien on the first day of high school. He was a senior, and she was flattered he paid so much attention to her. Trina had drunk a little alcohol previously, but her brother told her cocaine was the best drug, and she revealed to Damien that she was curious. Damien invited Trina to a party where he convinced her to try cocaine for the first time. Damien and Trina used cocaine together regularly until Trina was addicted. One day, Damien told Trina they had run out of money for cocaine, and that she would need to prostitute herself to earn more money. Damien kept all the money Trina earned and provided her with enough cocaine to keep her addicted. Trina didn't know how to stop or get help for her addiction. Damien used Trina's curiosity about drugs to coerce her into a trafficking situation (Klain & Kloer, 2009, p. 14).

Based on research conducted by Estes and Weiner (2001), the following examples

illustrate the complexity of trafficking, the serious life-threatening nature of the crime, poverty and substance abuse, and the reality of parental involvement.

### Vignette Three

Jenny was born and raised in Hawaii to a working class family. She is of Portuguese decent and was raised in a single parent home by her father. History of assault is unknown although by the age of 12 she had run away about a dozen times. After running away again she went to her friend "Mary's" house in Waimanalo (on the island of Oahu). There, Mary's mother pimped both Jenny and her own daughter. At the age of 12 Jenny's virginity was sold to an off duty police officer for \$600. Mary's mother put ads in the Penny Saver advertising the girls. Mary's mother introduced both girls to ice; by age 13, Jenny was a complete addict. Between the ages of 12-14 Jenny worked at four different hostess bars including the Magazine Girl. Jenny reported that the owners always knew before hand when the Liquor Commission or Vice were coming and would make her put on her clothes and leave during those visits. The Life Foundation met Jenny through a local youth outreach project. A trick she had been staying with brought her to the

project's medical clinic because she had severe abdominal pain. Jenny was diagnosed with an advanced case of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and was told she needed to be hospitalized. Jenny begged the nurse practitioner not to contact her father, whose permission was needed for the hospitalization. Not knowing what to do the nurse practitioner contacted one of the Foundation's senior staff members who took Jenny in and later became her foster mother. Jenny subsequently was accepted into a local high school and did well for about 4 months. Eventually she ran away again and got back into drugs. Today her whereabouts are unknown (Estes & Weiner, 2001, p. 53).

#### Vignette Four

Carrie and Amy's mother was from Scotland; she married a U.S. GI and came to Hawaii. Their parents divorced when they were 10 and 11 years old. Their mother starting drinking heavily after the divorce, became homeless and lived on the beach in Waianae. Carrie and Amy were sent to a group home at ages 13 and 14 but would run away on the weekends to be with their mother on the beach. Carrie started working at Wendy's when she was 16. A pimp would come to the restaurant and flirt with her. Eventually the pimp found their mother and asked if he could have her daughters. In exchange he would give the mother food and shelter. She accepted. The pimp trafficked the girls between San Francisco and Hawaii. By the time Carrie was 19 she had had 6 abortions and one child. Both she and Amy, age 18, were alcoholics. Today the sisters are in their early 20's. Carrie has two kids. Amy has had 5 abortions and PID. Both are drug addicts and homeless (Estes & Weiner, 2001, pp. 53-54).

#### Trafficking in Children Context

These vignettes represent different child trafficking scenarios. It is important to recognize the various forms of child trafficking that occur and the ways in which children become vulnerable to human trafficking. One of the main issues related to the lack of awareness of child trafficking is with the way in which the case is handled. Undocumented children tend to be reported to immigration and subsequently deported. Estes and Weiner (2001) concluded that there are numerous foreign children trafficked in the U.S., working as domestic servants in private homes, cleaning in restaurants, and doing laundry in cheap hotels, while others are victims of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution. With U.S. citizen children and youth, they are often mislabeled as prostitutes and/or criminals, and they wind up in the juvenile justice system. When no identification occurs, these children do not receive the help they crucially need

and frequently are further abused, exploited, and susceptible to continued trafficking situations (Walts & French, 2011).

Child trafficking recruitment. The recruitment of children into trafficking situations varies. With respect to child sex trafficking, ‘boyfriending’ – wherein the pimp/trafficker acts as boyfriend to the girls – is the most frequent used technique to lure girls into slavery. However, ‘friends’ – forcing girls already under the control of a trafficker/pimp to entice other girls – is also widely used as a means for recruitment for the traffickers (3 Generations, 2009).

In a study conducted in the state of Illinois, victims identified as child trafficking victims included young women from India, Bangladesh, and West Africa who were trafficked to the Chicago suburbs forced to work as domestic servants; young boys from Central America trafficked to Chicago for sexual exploitation; students and young girls trafficked from Eastern Europe forced to dance in strip clubs throughout Chicago and the Midwest as well as teenagers taken from China and sold into debt bondage in restaurants in Chicago and Midwest; and thousands of U.S. citizen runaway youth involved in the sex trade (Walts & French, 2011, p. 72). Children are especially susceptible to trafficking situations due to their naivety as well as their physical, emotional, and financial dependence on adults (Klain & Kloer, 2009). Further, the vignettes provide a glimpse into the human trafficking experience, including the variety of circumstances that contribute to the need for an integrated system of care of victims.

#### Child Trafficking Language

Although commercial sexual exploitation of children is often used interchangeably with child trafficking, it represents only one form of child trafficking. However, commercial sexual exploitation of children can be used appropriately as a synonym for child sex trafficking because all minors less than 18 years of age are considered sex trafficking victims if they are involved in

commercial sexual activity of any nature. Commercial sexual activity takes place whenever there is an exchange of something of value for a sexual act (Klain & Kloer, 2009). The buying of sexual services from a minor represents trafficking, even if there is not a third party or trafficker profiting from the sex act (Adelson, 2008; U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.).

Language associated with commercial sexual activity, like survival sex or trading sex for money, shelter, food, or goods, is in fact sex trafficking, and the buyer is a sex trafficker, if the person being paid for the sex act is less than 18 years of age (Adelson, 2008). The prostitution of minors is recognized as the most understudied form of child sex trafficking. The deficit of research has been attributed to several factors: 1) the hidden nature of the crime; 2) the intimidation and fear strategies used by sex traffickers to ensure the silence of the prostituted minors; and 3) the frequent entrapment in prostitution of marginalized youth who have not yet gained significant public concern (Williams & Frederick, 2009). The persistent misunderstanding and mislabeling of human trafficking involving domestic minor sex trafficking victims entails numerous consequences, namely the failure to deliver specialized services for the victims and the failure to appropriately prosecute the trafficker. Moreover, labeling or categorizing victims of domestic minor sex trafficking as child prostitutes results in placing blame on the child while assuming choice by the child victim.

#### Human Trafficking Victim Services

Using a victim-centered approach to better determine the needs of human trafficking victims and to address the voices of the affected populations, the Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights conducted interviews with 11 female survivors of human trafficking. Subjects included victims of sex trafficking and domestic servitude. The qualitative results indicated that physical security, followed by provision of basic needs, were of greatest

priority as reported by the survivors (Coonan, 2004). The main characteristic shared by all of the study participants was the lack of economic opportunity in their native countries as well as the tremendous human rights violations experienced and the clear psychological scars from their victimization. While their captivity was induced by severe physical abuse, it was isolation and fear that limited their freedom of movement and ability to escape. This finding coincides with the provision in the TVPA which recognizes that psychological forms of coercion may at times be more constraining than physical ones.

Human trafficking victims experience multiple layers of trauma, including terrorizing physical and sexual violence, psychological damage from captivity, and fear of reprisals if escape is contemplated. Brainwashing and severe threats to victims and victims' families are common practice and contribute to the psychological damage resulting from trafficking situations. The emotional effects of trauma can be persistent and devastating. Victims of human trafficking may suffer from anxiety, panic disorder, major depression, substance abuse, and eating disorders as well as a combination of these (Clawson, Salomon, & Goldblatt Grace, 2008).

Due to the physical and psychological abuse endured by victims, support and services are critically necessary. For adult human trafficking victims, immediate resources should include telephone help-lines, crisis intervention, language services, temporary and safe shelter, and physical, medical, and mental health care. Long term services should incorporate housing, public benefits, legal assistance, drug and alcohol counseling, job training or assistance in obtaining employment, educational assistance, basic English language training, trauma-informed therapy, and assistance if the victim wishes to relocate or return to his/her home country (Hodge, 2008; Logan et al., 2009).



## Child Trafficking Victim Services

Cases involving child trafficking are often very labor intensive and complex, especially in the case of a foreign-born child or a child without evidence of a parent or legal guardian. The result, these children do not receive appropriate care, including trafficking specific, victim-centered services (Walts & French, 2011). For child trafficking victims, services must be designed to meet their specific needs and tailored to their age, incorporating multiple systems of care. Critical services include protection; safety planning; housing placements; medical and dental care; mental health services and crisis intervention; education and life skills; court orientation; and when applicable, substance abuse treatment, immigration services, and translation services and/or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes (Klain & Kloer, 2009).

## Convictions of Sex Trafficking of a Minor

According to Walts and French (2011), the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division has successfully prosecuted numerous sex trafficking cases involving minors. The following cases present a few examples, but are not representative of all instances of sex trafficking concerning minors.

1. U.S. v. Pipkins, 412 F.3d 1251 (11th Cir. 2005). Between 1997 and 2001, defendants held numerous girls as young as 12 against their will and forced them to perform repeated commercial sex acts. Children were trafficked from Atlanta, Georgia to Alabama, Tennessee, Nevada, California, New York and Florida. The ringleaders were convicted under federal racketeering, human trafficking, and slavery criminal statutes.

2. U.S. v. Wild and Gutierrez. Defendants transported three young girls between the ages of 14 and 17 from Central America and Mexico across state lines to Dallas, Texas, to prostitute them and use the proceeds to finance the defendants' drug habits and pay the rent. On May 5, 2004, defendant Shannon Marie Wild was convicted of violating four counts of 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a) (transportation of a minor for illegal sexual activity) and one count of 18 U.S.C. 1591(a)(2) (sex trafficking of a minor) and sentenced to 121 months in prison to

be followed by three years supervised release. Defendant Gutierrez was charged with violating one count of § 1591(a)(2).

3. *United States v. Love*. Defendant recruited and provided 13-year-old victim with a fake ID saying she was 18 before sending her on to the street for prostitution. On September 14, 2004, defendant admitted to the commercial sexual exploitation of the victim and was sentenced to 87 months in prison for sex trafficking of children.

4. *United States v. Lakireddy*, 4:00-cr-40028 (N.D. California). Defendants brought numerous young girls from India into the United States and placed them in sexual bondage. On June 19, 2001, defendant Lakireddy Bali Reddy pleaded guilty to trafficking women and girls into the United States to place them in sexual servitude and was sentenced to 97 months in prison and ordered to pay \$2,000,000 restitution to the victims.

5. *United States v. Rojas, et al*, No. 1:03-cr-00542 (N.D. Georgia). Defendants lured a 16-year-old girl and another Mexican teenager into coming to the United States with promises of legitimate employment and long-term romance. Victims were then transported to Atlanta and forced into commercial sexual exploitation. Victims were forced to perform commercial sex with between 10 and 25 men per day. On August 27, 2004, defendant Jose Reyes Rojas pleaded guilty to a sex trafficking charge for his role in promoting and profiting from the commercial sexual exploitation of a Mexican juvenile (Walts & French, 2011, p. 76).

#### Convictions of Labor Trafficking of a Minor

The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division has successfully prosecuted numerous labor trafficking cases involving minors. The following cases present a few examples, but are not representative of all instances of labor trafficking concerning minors.

1. *United States v. Mubang*, 8:03-cr-00539 (D. Maryland). Defendant brought an 11-year-old Cameroonian national to her home in Maryland and subjected her to involuntary servitude. The victim was isolated from family and friends and required to cook, clean, and act as 24-hour nanny for defendant's children over the course of a two-year period. The victim was not permitted to go to school, nor was she allowed to become friends with other children her age. Defendant verbally abused victim and beat her with fists, a broom handle, a cable, and a high-heeled shoe. The defendant was sentenced to 17½ years of imprisonment.

2. *United States v. Zavala, et al*, No. 2:04-cr-00962 (E.D. New York). Between June 1, 1999 and June 21, 2004, defendants illegally obtained visas for Peruvian aliens seeking to come into the United States (New York) then charged the aliens a smuggling fee ranging from \$6,000 to \$13,000. Defendants compelled more than 69 Peruvian illegal

aliens, including 13 children under the age of 18, to perform work by confiscating their passports and threatening to turn them over to authorities. Defendants kept most of victims' paychecks and left them only \$50 or less per week on which to live and support their families. On April 6, 2006, defendant Ibanez was sentenced to 135 months in prison. In November 2005, defendant Zavala was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

3. *United States v. Rosales-Martinez, et al*, No 3:05-cr-00148 (D. New Jersey). Victims (minors and adults) were charged smuggling fees between \$10,000 and \$25,000 by their traffickers, lived in apartments in Union City and Guttenberg, New Jersey, and were forced to work at bars in those towns to repay the smuggling fees. The girls were required to work at least six nights a week at a bar owned by Rosales-Martinez. The young women were required to wear provocative clothing and to act seductively around the male patrons to entice the men to buy beers. Rosales-Martinez had instructed the underage Honduran women to obtain false identification documents to show that they were at least 21 years old. The girls were verbally abused, and one underwent a forced abortion. The young women's tips were based upon the total number of beers the men purchased. To ensure that the Honduran girls paid their smuggling fees, the girls had to join a "Society" or "Sociedad" – a system by which the young women were forced to contribute a sum of money each week into a pool to pay off their smuggling debt.

4. *United States v. Djoumessi*. 538 F. 3d 547 (6th Cir. 2008). Between October 1996 and February 2000 the defendants forced a Cameroonian girl, whom they had brought to the United States illegally, to work against her will as a domestic servant in their home. The jury found that Evelyn Djoumessi forced the girl to take care of the defendants' children and perform household chores without pay, and beat her with a belt, a spoon, and a shoe in order to force her to comply with these demands. The judge found that in addition to forcing her to work as a domestic servant, Joseph Djoumessi sexually abused the victim. The defendants, prior to enactment of the federal Trafficking Victim Protection Act, had been charged in state court with child abuse and criminal sexual conduct, and were sentenced to serve 9 - 15 years in prison (Joseph) and placed on three years probation and ordered to do housework for three years (Evelyn). The victim, who had been denied a chance to attend school, has recently graduated from college (Walts & French, 2011, pp. 80-81).

#### Child Trafficking and Child Welfare

In general, the current system of child protection tends to favor family reunification and the notification to family upon a child entering the system. While this is good practice under many circumstances, it is not for trafficking situations because of the risks to the child from the trafficker if family members are involved either directly or indirectly (Klain & Kloer, 2009).

Child advocacy groups estimate that as many as one-third of teen runaways and throwaways (those who are unwanted or rejected by their families) become involved in prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home. Many of these children are in the child welfare system, in the care of the states, and many of them are not reported to law enforcement (Atwell-Davis, 2010). Human trafficking impacts the child protection system in a variety of ways. The lack of awareness of and training about the crime are particularly significant because this lack in awareness and training affects the proper identification and response to child trafficking victims. The International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA) has trained child welfare professionals and findings indicate the majority of state child welfare service providers and advocates were not aware of federal and/or state anti-human-trafficking laws. Moreover, these professionals reported that earlier in their work they had encountered trafficked children; however, due to their lack of awareness of the issue, these children and youth were never identified as victims (Walts & French, 2011).

Data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) expose the victim offender relationship with respect to cases of confirmed child sexual abuse:

49% of all confirmed cases of child sexual abuse were committed by acquaintances known either to the child or the child's family; 47% of all confirmed cases of child sexual abuse were committed by family members; and only 4% of sexual assaults against children were committed by strangers or by other persons unknown to either the child or the child's family (Estes & Weiner, 2001, p. 48).

Moreover, findings from the Department of Justice reveal that 84% of all confirmed cases of child sexual abuse take place in the child's own home; this statistic suggests that a child's home is one of the most dangerous places for children to experience sexual abuse (Estes & Weiner, 2001).

The child trafficking lens. Victims of child trafficking are frequently victims of related or concurrent crimes, or often seem to be a victim of a different crime, not human trafficking. Related or concurrent crimes that commonly present as child trafficking, or that child trafficking initially is mistaken for are domestic violence; child labor violations; child abuse or neglect; child sexual abuse; and child pornography (Klain & Kloer, 2009). It is important to screen for trafficking among children because it is an entirely different crime, carrying different and often greater provisions and services for victims as well as harsher penalties for traffickers. To most effectively identify victims, child welfare workers, service providers, and law enforcement officials need to apply the human trafficking lens to accurately assess the entirety of the situation.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the conceptual foundation of the study. Over the course of human history, and specifically in the United States, the concept of childhood has evolved. The removal of children from the labor force, the promotion of children's rights, and the changing value of children from economical to emotional, connotes the recognition that children represent a vulnerable population and are different from adults (Jimenez, 2010). The critical paradigm guides this research study. Through the critical lens, the plight of potential and actual victims of child trafficking will be viewed. Children are a vulnerable population and child trafficking is an exploitive crime.

The theoretical framework will review the tenets of the critical theory paradigm, particularly with a focus on the concept of power. The dimension of language will be discussed, given that language and meaning are crucial constructs in this study. Implications for problem identification and definition within the child welfare context are also explored.

## Critical Theory

While the framework and terminology of the critical paradigm is complex and not widely known, advocates of critical research include a loose collection of practitioners and academics (Willis, 2007). Similarly, Nichols and Allen-Brown (1997) state, “The language of critical theory is at times difficult to understand” (p. 227). In a parallel vein, Smith (1993) comments, “Of the three major philosophical tendencies now competing for the attention of social and educational researchers, critical theory is probably the most difficult to understand and, as a result, the most difficult to coherently summarize” (p. 91). Nonetheless, the tenets of the critical framework guide this study in an attempt to unveil the inequalities and exploitation endured by a vulnerable population, children, marginalized and without power. This vulnerability is evident by age alone. The average age of entry for girls in the United States, sold into sex slavery, is 12 to 14, and children as young as five are found to be under the control of pimps and forced to perform sex acts (3 Generations, 2009).

Researchers in critical theory focus on the impact of power relationships within culture. The emphasis is on relationships that contain power and inequalities. One of the main goals of the critical paradigm includes aiding those without power in order to attain it (Willis, 2007).

Kilgore (as cited in Willis, 2007) states:

Critical research assumes the necessity of critique of the current ideology, seeking to expose dominating or oppressive relationships in society. It illuminates power relationships between individuals and groups of individuals, enabling the researcher and participants to critique commonly held values and assumptions. It requires the researcher and participants to be willing to become aware of how a false understanding contributes to oppression and resistance.

Critical theory is also concerned with human action and interaction. When action takes place, the historical context changes and we must critique our assumptions again. Critical theory is a continuous process. Its goal is Utopia and its reality is that although Utopia

may not be possible, our struggle to achieve it will at least create something better than our current existence (pp. 81-82).

Critical theory is a response to inequities in society and works toward abolishing social injustice by addressing issues of oppression and marginalization based on factors including gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, and work (Willis, 2007). The roots of critical theory come from the Institute for Social Research (the Frankfurt School) and the principle that knowledge is not objective; it is influenced by personal interests and power structure. The framework of the Frankfurt School, particularly the ideas of Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, and Jurgen Habermas, was centrally concerned with the problem of bureaucracy and the bureaucratization of state and society (Carr, 2000).

The primary interest underlying critical theory is the emancipation of individuals and groups and the creation of new institutions, norms, values, and goals through moral discourse and ethical reflection (Feldman, 1999). The objective of the critical theorist is to think in the service of exploited and oppressed humanity and to work for the eradication of social injustice. The critical paradigm enables the exploration of child trafficking through the perceptions of child welfare professionals to better understand the phenomenon. As first responders, these professionals are in a unique position to come into contact with child trafficking and have the capacity to identify vulnerable child victims.

Critical theory was selected as the most appropriate guiding theoretical framework for this study because it exposes historical and social injustices (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2002). A critical approach seeks to bring attention to oppressed and exploited populations. This study focuses on the violations of human rights, a major form of social injustice, resulting from child trafficking.

## Critical Theory and Child Trafficking

This study builds on the work of earlier social justice and critical theorists by providing scholars, practitioners, and child welfare agencies with a better understanding of how child trafficking is perceived, among the selected participants, in the identified geographic region, with the goal of providing another step forward, "toward forms of political action that can redress injustice" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 140).

This philosophy, concerned with critical inquiry, serves as the platform for the research study and the uncovering of commonly-held misconceptions about child trafficking within human services and child welfare. A crucial component of child sex trafficking and relevant to the theoretical framework of this study is that there is "No such thing as child prostitution" (3 Generations, 2009, para, 2) and that "Minors cannot chose to be sex workers, they are enslaved. Most are involved in pimp-controlled coercive situations. All are victims" (3 Generations, 2009, para, 3). This reality, and extreme injustice, must be made clear among child welfare professionals and the community in general. The improper identification/language and mislabeling associated with child trafficking contributes to the problem as well as to the lack of understanding about what child trafficking is.

It is necessary to challenge the assumptions and recognize how misunderstanding and lack of awareness lend to oppression and the continual risk to the well-being of children. Although trafficking is a vast problem, requiring multiple realities to be met in order to even begin to address it and move forward with a solution, the struggle and fight to free those in slave-like conditions is the drive towards freedom and the restoration of children's innocence. Action is a crucial component and fundamental to promoting action and communication about the problem is the recognition of the problem in its entirety.



This study aims to describe the child trafficking phenomenon, in the identified geographic area of Colorado, from the perspective of child welfare professionals. In congruence with critical theorists, this research aspires to bring about change to improve the welfare of potential and actual child trafficking victims. It is not enough to merely produce increased knowledge; rather, this study seeks to generate action. This research has the potential to assist in children's struggle for their human rights, through critical inquiry, to confront the injustice of a particular sphere within society. This quest to create action is predicated on the need for increased awareness of child trafficking and the implementation of training and development for child welfare professionals. Critical researchers often pronounce their devotion in the struggle to build a better world (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). This philosophy forms the basis of the current study.

### Summary

This chapter presented the literature related to child welfare and child trafficking, with an emphasis on the child trafficking lens. Anti-trafficking legislation in the United States and Colorado were reviewed. Critical theory, the guiding theoretical framework for this study was discussed, specifically with the need to generate action to improve the welfare of potential and actual child trafficking victims within the child welfare system. The following chapter will present the methodology for this study.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

Chapters One and Two established the study's problem statement, reviewed the related empirical and theoretical literature, and identified the study's three overarching research questions:

- 1. What is the level of awareness of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?*
- 2. What is the meaning of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?*
- 3. What are the greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims?*

These questions relate to the three main goals of the research: 1) to describe the level of awareness of child trafficking; 2) to describe the meaning of child trafficking; and 3) to describe the challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims. This chapter describes the methodology for the study and includes a discussion of the 1) research design; 2) participant selection and sample; 3) instrumentation; 4) data collection; 5) data analysis; and 6) procedures used to establish trustworthiness. This chapter closes with a discussion of the study limitations.

### Research Design

The research paradigm for this study is qualitative and the specific strategy is the case study approach. Qualitative research is used to help reveal the complexities of lived experiences and social phenomena that are not amenable to statistical analysis, manipulation, and simplification (Creswell, 2007). This study emulates the tradition of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative methods maintain the context of experiences, actions, interactions, and behaviors. In this regard, the opportunity to explore and clarify phenomenon that otherwise cannot be fully explained by numerical data is achievable (Ritchie, 2001).

The case study research strategy is ideal if the researcher is interested in asking questions that begin with “how,” “what,” or “why”, when the researcher has little control over what is being studied, and when the focus of study is on a contemporary phenomenon with some form of real life context (Yin, 2003). Case-oriented research provides a comprehensive understanding of the context in which the phenomenon occurs (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2002). A case can represent a single person, a group of people, a community, a state, a nation, a program, a process, an event, an activity, an institution, or a multitude of other social phenomena (Creswell, 2007). Case study methodology is favorable and applicable for understanding or illuminating a complex social phenomenon while retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of the real life event (Creswell, 2003).

A case study, as described by Merriam (2001) "is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 34). The case study methodology allows for specific focus on understanding the child trafficking phenomenon in Colorado from the analysis of individual and agency roles in the process. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “the case study represents an unparalleled means for communicating contextual information that is grounded in the particular setting that was studied” (p. 360). With the focus on the research on a contemporary social phenomenon, and given the research questions as well as the researcher having little control over child trafficking and how it is perceived within the child welfare system, this study employs the case study approach. Specifically, the approach utilizes the descriptive case study design type, with a single case construct.

The descriptive case study approach was selected based on the stated purpose of descriptive research, to provide rich, descriptive text with the goal of engaging the reader and helping with understanding of the phenomenon under study. This research, from the perspective

of child welfare professionals, on the level of awareness and meaning of child trafficking, seeks to discover what themes and perceptions may emerge from data collection. Further, this study aims to describe the challenges associated with victim identification within child welfare.

This case study is bound by subject, region, and sample sectors. The precise subject is child trafficking, the region selected lies within the state of Colorado, and the sample sector includes accessible participants who have been identified as child welfare professionals. The objectives are as follows:

- (1) To determine the existing level of awareness of child trafficking*
- (2) To describe the meaning of child trafficking*
- (3) To discover the challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims*

#### Participant Selection

Potential participants for a research study represent the target population of interest, with the sampling frame containing the participants from which the sample is selected (Neuman, 2010). The population is based upon potential to provide valuable information on the concept of child trafficking due to professional role and experience of the participants. The target population for this study is child welfare professionals in the selected region of Colorado. The accessible sample is comprised of the child welfare professionals in the region of Colorado who responded to the recruitment email and/or flyer and who were willing to participate in the study. The actual sample is represented by those participants who completed the interview process.

#### Purposeful Sample

Creswell (2003) states, “the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher to understand the research question” (p. 185).

Merriam (2002) offers the following advice for qualitative research:

To begin with, since you are not interested in ‘how much’ or ‘how often,’ random sampling makes little sense. Instead, since qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants, it is important to select a sample from which most can be learned. This is called a purposive or purposeful sample (p. 12).

Purposeful sampling, seeking information-rich cases for in depth study (Patton, 1990), was the sampling technique used in this study.

The representative population was compiled based on the researcher’s inquiry into child welfare agencies and child welfare professionals, bounded by the geographic region, and with the purpose of the study to gain knowledge about the level of awareness, meaning of, and challenges associated with child trafficking in Colorado. The sample for this study consisted of ten individuals who: 1) were 18 years old or older; 2) were employees at the selected agency; and 3) work within the division of children, youth and families.

Inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria for data collection, to ensure breadth and depth, entailed a range of employment duration and professional appointment at the identified child welfare agency, with the specified requirement of direct service with children and families. Participant selection was limited to employees, caseworkers and supervisors, within the division of children, youth and families, who responded to the recruitment email and/or flyer. Employees at the identified agency, both men and women, were recruited for participation in this study, but had to be at least 18 years of age in order to qualify.

Exclusion criteria. Exclusion criteria were related to age; employees less than 18 years of age were not recruited for this study nor were employees who did not work directly with children and families. All participants received \$25 compensation at the beginning of the interview for participation in this research study. The study protocol stipulated full compensation to be

provided even if the participant chose to withdraw consent prior to completion of the interview. No participant withdrew consent during any stage of the research process.

### Data Collection

Three of the most common data gathering techniques used in qualitative research involve interviewing, observing, and reviewing documents/reports. Interviewing and reviewing existing data were the two main techniques used in this study, with interviews being the primary method of the data collection. Data were collected primarily by use of the interview guide while demographic data were gathered using the survey form. The review of documents included child welfare data and statistics related to the number of referrals and founded cases of child abuse in the identified geographic region as well as child trafficking data. The study utilizes a four-pronged research approach:

- Stage One – Conduct email recruitment screening/post flyer to schedule interviews
- Stage Two – Based on a review of recruitment, select participants to interview
- Stage Three – Conduct face-to-face interviews with selected participants
- Stage Four – Return transcribed interview to participant for review

### The Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

I received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Colorado State University (CSU) for my study's protocol and consent form prior to collecting data. Samples of all documents used with participants and approved by the CSU IRB and can be found in Appendixes A – H. The researcher developed this study's questioning route for the explicit purpose of answering the three main research questions. The protocol utilized in my study was informed by the existing literature related to child welfare and child trafficking. Appendix G, Research Protocol (4.26.12) is the original protocol, and Appendix H, Research Protocol 7.28.12,

is the slightly amended version of this protocol. The demographic survey was amended, with IRB approval, to include an additional question, level of education

#### Instrumentation

This study utilizes an interview guide developed by the researcher (Appendix D). The interview guide was created specifically for this study and therefore has not been administered in previous research. The interview guide consists of 28 questions, mostly open-ended, exploratory, and interpretive in nature. The interview guide is based on a semi-structured format to enable flexibility in the interview process and in collecting diverse data. The semi-structured interview protocol is well-suited for case study research because the design enables participants to express their perspectives candidly while permitting the researcher to clarify issues, probe areas of particular interest, and to ask follow-up questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

The interview guide contains three types of questions: Awareness; Meaning; and Identification. Questions were informed by existing literature on child trafficking and child welfare. In addition, a demographic survey (Appendix C) containing five questions accompanies the interview guide to attain basic demographic data from participants. The interview process has been estimated at 45-60 minutes in total length and participants were given the choice of the interview location, the identified agency or the office of the researcher, depending on the preference of each participant.

The pilot test. According to van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), some benefits of administering a pilot test include providing advance warning related to potential failures of the research protocol as well as whether the proposed instrument and/or methods are inappropriate or too complex. Pilot studies may also serve to identify possible practical issues in following the research procedure (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

The interview guide was piloted with professionals who have a background in child welfare in Colorado and within the identified study region in February of 2012. The main objectives for the pre-test were to determine the practicality of the instrument, the approximate length of the interviews and time commitment for participants, if the questions would elicit conversation, and to identify any questions that were not easily understood. The professionals were selected due to their similarities related to the identified sample based upon their background, familiarity with the child welfare system, and their willingness and availability to participate in the interview process. These pilot testing individuals were recruited personally through nomination and were individuals whom I knew through informal, personal connections in Colorado. However, these individuals would not have been appropriate subjects for the research study because they do not work for the child welfare agency in the identified geographic region.

#### Procedures

The recruitment protocol went out immediately after IRB approval. The recruitment email (see Appendix A) served to introduce the study to the perspective participants and describe the purpose of the study, its importance, the subjects' valuable role in it, and the interview process. The ten interview sessions were conducted between June and July of 2012.

Audio recording was used during the interview process to ensure thoroughness and accuracy of the information collected; however, this did not increase potential risk to the subject's confidentiality as the audio tapes were stored under lock and key in the researcher's office and only accessible by the researcher. Audiotapes were destroyed after transcription. Names and/or identifying data about the subjects were not recorded. The total



participation time commitment for participants was estimated at 75 minutes, 45-60 minutes for the face-to-face interview and 15 minutes to read and review the transcribed interview.

Each of the four research stages is discussed separately to provide an overview of the research process: 1) Conduct email recruitment screening to schedule interviews; 2) Based on a review of recruitment, select participants to interview; 3) Conduct face-to-face interviews with selected participants; and 4) Return transcribed interview to participant for review. Stage One involved emailing the recruitment script to employees at the identified agency. This was accomplished with the assistance of the director's administrative assistant at the agency. She emailed the study information to all employees at the agency and indicated the director's approval of the study. This email script was sent out a total of two times in an attempt to recruit participants.

Stage Two involved selecting participants based on recruitment for the study using purposeful sampling, as described previously. Participants were selected on a first come, first serve basis, providing they met the inclusion criteria. A total of ten individuals elected to participate in the study. During Stage Three, ten face-to-face interview sessions were conducted at two locations; eight of the interviews took place in a private room at the identified agency while two were held in the office of the researcher. Participants were interviewed one time for approximately 45-60 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, I introduced myself, briefly described the study and the research process, explained the interview format, and asked if the participant had any questions. Special care was taken when introducing the topic due to the sensitive nature of child abuse and trafficking. Each participant was given two copies of the consent form, one to sign and return to me and the other to keep for their records (see Appendix E). In addition, participants were provided with a written copy of the interview guide. Each

participant was also given \$25 cash for his or her time. Once participants were ready to begin, the audio recorder was powered on and the interview commenced using the interview guide (see Appendix D). The interview sessions ended with participants responding to the demographic survey (see Appendix C). Additionally, I kept a journal following each interview session to record significant reflections about what participants had shared and themes that I heard emerging.

By the tenth interview, it was clear to the researcher that saturation had occurred; I was not hearing any new information, and for the most part, the respondents were reporting similar definitions, meaning, trends, challenges and needs. Qualitative data analysis ideally takes place concurrently with data collection to fully immerse the researcher in the process and to enable the researcher to better able understand the research questions. This iterative method of data collection and analysis ultimately results in saturation, when no new categories or themes emerge, indicating that data collection is complete (Kuzel, 1999). The total number of participants in the study was determined when dominant themes among the participants emerged and saturation was reached, with no new themes being identified.

Stage Four of the research occurred after transcription. Participants were given the choice to have the interview transcript mailed or emailed for their review, referred to as member checking. All ten participants chose to have a copy of the interview transcript emailed for their assessment to ensure the accuracy of the recorded data. This portion was estimated at approximately 15 minutes in order to read through the transcript of the interview for review and to help build the trustworthiness of the data. All ten participants notified the researcher by email and confirmed agreement with the accuracy of the interview transcript, with only a few minor spelling/clarification edits.

## Data Sources

The multiple sources of data most often used for case studies include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, surveys, and physical artifacts (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2003). Data sources for this study include:

- (1) Face-to-face interviews
- (2) Demographic questionnaires
- (3) Secondary analysis of child trafficking statistics and Colorado child welfare data

According to Weiss (1994), qualitative interviewing can help to develop a comprehensive understanding of the system in which the phenomenon emerges. The use of individual face-to-face interviews permitted each participant to share perceptions, understandings, and experiences from working in the field of child welfare.

In addition to semi-structured interview, which was my study's primary measure, the protocol also included some participant demographic questions. I asked participants five questions related to gender, race/ethnicity, age, the number of years employed with the agency, and their highest completed level of education. These data were sought as a means of comparing and contrasting participants on demographic variables.

The secondary analysis of Colorado child welfare data and human trafficking statistics serves to provide a greater understanding of the context of child welfare in Colorado, the degree of child abuse and sexual abuse, and specific data related to the identified geographic region in Colorado. In the interview guide, questions asked participants about the referral system, intake forms, and existing screening protocol at the identified agency.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis for case study research involves a thorough description of the case and a detailed view of the case aspects as well as the identification of patterns and categorical aggregation (Creswell, 2007). Merriam (2001) describes data analysis as "the process of making sense out of data" (p. 192). The interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. Once each interview was completed, I uploaded the file and began the transcription process, word for word. After this was accomplished, the transcriptions were returned to participants to ensure credibility in the report. Once participants conferred agreement with the transcriptions, they were uploaded to the qualitative data analysis software, QSR International, NVivo 10.

The goal of data analysis in my study was to describe the level of awareness of child trafficking and related phenomena, to examine and detail the meaning and definitions offered for child trafficking, and to report the challenges associated with child trafficking victim identification. In order to accomplish these objectives, the constant comparative analysis was selected as the most appropriate method of analysis.

Constant comparative analysis was originally described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a method to derive grounded theory. However, for this study, the method has been applied more broadly as a means to process and analyze data. The constant comparative approach was utilized to analyze the qualitative data to determine significant themes through open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Coding is a systematic method to organize data and to reveal patterns and relationships within the data set (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The process of coding entails assigning words, phrases and/or labels to chunks of the data to record key concepts. Codes and segments of text are then compared with previously assigned codes to ensure the appropriate labeling of the text (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Open coding refers to "the analytic

process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101). Axial coding is “the process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed ‘axial’ because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). In the final stage of coding, called selective, categories are integrated and refined (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), enabling themes to evolve.

In order to identify the underlying themes within an entire data set, a constant comparison analysis is useful (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Constant comparison is a constructive technique to analyze and summarize data. As described by Tesch (1990):

The main intellectual tool is comparison. The method of comparing and contrasting is used for practically all intellectual tasks during analysis: forming categories, assigning the segments to the categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to the categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns (p. 96).

Based on this premise, I began the data analysis by reading and rereading all of the transcriptions, line by line, and taking notes as I engaged in this process, highlighting meaningful quotes that captured a profound thought. As I read through the data, I searched for categories, emerging themes, and areas of agreement or disagreement.

For this study, the constant comparative method was utilized with an inductive coding process. The inductive coding process was applied to the data to enable codes to emerge. For some of the questions, that were more quantitative in nature (i.e., using scales, more close-ended questions), or related to a specific section targeting awareness and identification challenges, deductive coding was used. With the deductive coding process, codes are identified prior to analysis. For these types of circumstances, wherein I was interested in viewing the responses to questions in isolation throughout the whole data set, the question-based coding method was

implemented. This strategy is based upon participants' answers to questions and is helpful in proving insight and with analyzing specific questions and the responses (Lewins & Silver, 2007).

Using a purposeful approach to the constant comparative method as described by Boeije (2002), the following broad steps were taken to analyze the dataset. First, comparison was conducted within one interview. Second, comparison was made across all interviews. Third, comparisons were made among demographic variables of the participants. Specifically, the constant comparison method, illustrated by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), was implemented for this study in accordance with five basic steps: 1) Read through the entire set of data, interview by interview; 2) Chunk the data into smaller meaningful parts and label each chunk with a code; 3) Compare each new chunk of data with previous codes to ensure similar chunks are characterized with the same code; 4) Group the codes by similarity; and 5) Identify themes based on each grouping.

Data collected from the interviews were analyzed for categories and themes to reflect the overarching research questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme is something that captures an important aspect of the data in relation to the research question. Descriptive texts, utilizing thick, rich description as well as specific quotes, including interpretation and meaning-making, were also included. Analysis concludes with the synthesizing and reporting of key findings.

#### Validity and Trustworthiness

Reliability and validity are essential components in establishing credibility in a research study. In qualitative research, reliability and generalizability play a minor role while validity is known as a key strength. Validity is important in determining if the findings are accurate from the perspective of the researcher, participants, or consumers of the research (Creswell, 2003).

The precise manner in which data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as how findings are presented contribute to improve the validity, also referred to as trustworthiness or credibility, of a study (Merriam, 2001). Merriam (2001) asserts six basic strategies to enhance trustworthiness. These include triangulation; member checks; long-term observation; peer examination; participatory or collaborative modes of research; and researcher's bias.

In this study, all six of the strategies, except for long-term observation, were utilized to strengthen the validity of the data collected. Long-term observation was not incorporated in this study due to limitations in access to the agency. Because I am not affiliated with the agency, engaging in long-term observations was not feasible. However, rich, thick description of the data to enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 359) was provided. Using thick, rich descriptions contributes to the transferability of the study; it is deemed necessary for the researcher to provide enough detail and description such that judgments of transferability can be made by those concerned with applying the data to a new setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 359-360).

Utilizing various data sources of information and examining evidence to justify the development of themes handled triangulation. Member checking was also used to advance the trustworthiness and rigor of this study and was accomplished by having participants read through the recorded transcripts to ensure agreement. Each participant received a copy of the transcript via email from the face-to-face interview. After participants had a chance to review the transcript they replied to the email to ensure agreement with the researcher. This enabled participants to validate the accuracy of the content of their narratives and the meaning of what they intended to convey. All ten participants confirmed agreement with the accuracy of the interview transcript, with only minor spelling/clarification edits.

Having two peers examine the data collected, coding schema, and analysis incorporated peer examination. These two peer examiners yielded conclusions consistent with mine in terms of the integrity of the data and analysis. The adoption of a confirmatory audit was also included. The confirmatory audit is an important technique often used in qualitative analysis to establish the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In using this technique, I enlisted an independent volunteer auditor to assist in the establishing the trustworthiness of the data. The volunteer auditor was an individual I knew personally and she read through all ten of the transcripts, conducted a thematic analysis, and identified the main categories and themes within the data. These themes were recorded and then checked with my analysis to compare the findings.

The volunteer auditor's findings, in general, were consistent with mine; however, the analysis was done in a more informal manner. The volunteer auditor identified all of the major themes found by the researcher, but was missing a few of the more specific themes. It is clear from the confirmatory audit that the volunteer auditor grasped the overall comprehensive picture of the data, including the larger themes, but did not go into more in-depth analysis that fine-tuned the existing themes.

The interview process represented a participatory mode of research because the format was semi-structured, enabling participants to actively engage and contribute additional insight. Researcher's bias was acknowledged in the section detailing the researcher's perspective. I made every effort to minimize any biases during data collection and analysis through the use of several trustworthiness strategies and honest self-reflection.



## Limitations

In case study research, limitations elucidate the nature of a particular case study and refer to limiting conditions or restrictive weaknesses (Yin, 2003). Care must be exercised not to generalize the findings and conclusions derived from this study. The findings from this study are limited to the population from which this sample was taken. The interviews were limited in scope and focused on a single case construct, one agency, in one geographic region of Colorado. In this way, the research does not analyze applicability to other contexts and is viewed as a limitation (Creswell, 2003). However, this study sought to understand the level of awareness, meaning, and victim identification challenges of child trafficking by the participants of the study and was not concerned with theory generation or generalization to broader populations (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

## Transferability

An advantage of the case study approach is the opportunity for naturalistic generalization. According to Stake (2010), qualitative research is grounded in personal experience, and provides as a natural foundation, naturalistic generalization. This form of generalization is in part intuitive and empirical, allowing for the recognition of similarities within the case and context. Since naturalistic generalization relies upon positioned context, it is critical to present a thorough account of the study, with sufficient detail such that the consumers of the research may formulate a generalization, or 'working hypothesis' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), for application to their own context. Stake (1995) asserts,

To assist the reader in making naturalistic generalisations, case researchers need to provide opportunity for vicarious experience. Our accounts need to be personal, describing the things of our sensory experiences, not failing to attend to the matters that personal curiosity dictates. A narrative account, a story, a chronological presentation, personalistic description, emphasis on time and place provide rich ingredients for vicarious experience (p. 87).

This case study thoroughly described the case, including the boundaries and the precise setting, with thick, rich description of the participants and the findings. Therefore, it is possible for others in similar settings to decide if they wish to generalize from this study and use the results to further additional research.

### Sample and Subject

There were a limited number of participants in the study, based on those individuals willing to participate. Not all child welfare professionals at the agency were interviewed for this study. Therefore, the sample size was small and the results may not reflect the perspectives of all child welfare professionals at the selected agency, or in similar agencies in Colorado, or the broader United States. Additionally, it is possible that the level of awareness and meaning of child trafficking as well as the challenges in victim identification, are impacted by diverse factors in different regions and at different agencies.

Another potential limitation relates to the research subject. The knowledge of the topic, paired with the nature of child trafficking, may have made data collection more challenging. Statistics are hard to obtain due to the hidden nature of trafficking as well as the misunderstandings and/or undocumented cases. Literature on child trafficking has only recently begun to emerge, but the difficulty and complexity in understanding the phenomenon is well-documented. Moreover, statistics and data in the state of Colorado regarding the prevalence of child trafficking are scarce and do not account for its presence within the child welfare realm. In the identified geographic region, intake materials and screening do not identify child trafficking, making it impossible to truly know the extent of its presence in the area or to fully understand the issue.

## Summary

This chapter described the methodology for the study, including the research design; participant selection and sample; instrumentation; data collection; data analysis and trustworthiness; and limitations. The following chapter will present the findings from the three research questions as well as conclusions gathered from the ten study participants.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study in terms of its three research questions and the major categories and themes identified. This chapter first describes the participant demographics and then discusses the findings and conclusions related to each research question.

#### Demographics

Table 2 displays the demographic data collected about the study's ten participants. As demonstrated by the table, nine of the ten participants were female, eight of the participants identified as Caucasian, one as Hispanic/Latino, and one as 'Other.' For the age range, three of the participants were in the 29 or less category, three were 30 – 39, three were 40 – 49, and one was 60 – 69 years of age. For years of experience, the mode was 2 – 5 years, with four of the ten participants. One participant had 0 – 1 years of experience, two had 6 – 10 years, two had 11 – 20 years, and one participant had been at the agency for 21 – 30 years. All ten of the participants hold bachelor degrees and five of the ten also have a master degree.

*Table 2*

*Participant Demographic Profiles*

Participant Number	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Age Range	Years of Experience	Educational Attainment
One	Female	Caucasian	29 or less	2 – 5	Bachelor
Two	Female	Caucasian	40 – 49	21 – 30	Bachelor
Three	Female	Other*	30 – 39	6 – 10	Master
Four	Female	Hispanic/Latino	30 – 39	6 – 10	Master
Five	Female	Caucasian	40 – 49	11 – 20	Master
Six	Male	Caucasian	29 or less	0 – 1	Bachelor
Seven	Female	Caucasian	30 – 39	2 – 5	Bachelor
Eight	Female	Caucasian	60 – 69	11 – 20	Master
Nine	Female	Caucasian	29 or less	2 – 5	Master
Ten	Female	Caucasian	40 – 49	2 – 5	Bachelor

\* Participant responded 'other' and indicated Welsh, Irish and Native American

## The Three Research Questions

Ten face-to-face interviews were conducted using an interview guide that corresponded with the study's three main research questions.

- 1. What is the level of awareness of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?*
- 2. What is the meaning of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?*
- 3. What are the greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims?*

The semi-structured interview process was estimated at 45 – 60 minutes in duration. The ten interviews ranged in length from 39 minutes to 71 minutes with the average interview lasting approximately 50 minutes. This section discusses the findings from each of these questions in detail, providing excerpts from the ten participants' responses, based on the contextual nature of qualitative research.

### Research Question One

Research question one asked – What is the level of awareness of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?

This research question corresponds to questions one through eleven from the interview guide. The questions ask about the participants' level of knowledge about child trafficking; the organization's level of knowledge about child trafficking, as perceived by the participant; the participants' beliefs and perceptions about child trafficking in the world, the United States, and the identified geographic area; how the participant first heard about child trafficking; the participants' awareness of statistics, laws, and cases of child trafficking in the state; whether or not the participant, or anyone to the participant's knowledge has received formal training regarding child trafficking at the agency; and if resources related to child trafficking exist at the agency.

Table 3 displays the results related to the question concerning where participants first heard about child trafficking and if they were aware of it before their current position. The table also denotes the years of experience by each participant as it pertains to awareness before current position at the agency. For eight of the ten participants, media was cited as the source for which the participant first learned about child trafficking.

*Table 3*

*First Heard about Trafficking by Source and if Aware of Before Current Position*

Participant Number	Source	Aware Before Current Position	Years of Experience
One	Media	Yes	2 – 5
Two	Media	No	21 – 30
Three	College	Yes	6 – 10
Four	Book	Yes	6 – 10
Five	Media	No	11 – 20
Six	Media	Yes	0 – 1
Seven	Media/School	Yes	2 – 5
Eight	Media	No	11 – 20
Nine	Media	Yes	2 – 5
Ten	Media	Yes	2 – 5

Participant Two shared, “I don’t feel like this position exposes me much to it either or educates me around it.” As stated by Participant One,

I have heard about it in shows, like in investigation discovery types of shows, like True Crime situations and they feature other countries and things like that and then let’s see when I started paying attention to it, I would hear about it in so many different places, like I would hear about it at church or something like that or in the newspaper something would stick out to me.

Participant Five shared,

It’s interesting to me because I think it is such a huge problem and I think that the population that we work with is such a high risk, it surprises me that in the child welfare training academy that they don’t even cover this at all, and the two, the webinar that I did last year and this training that I went to last Friday, I honestly just signed up for it as a personal interest, it wasn’t like anybody in the agency saying we need to have so many people knowledgeable about trafficking or we need to have these many people on our teams know the warning signs and come back and educate us, it was just kind of like if

you go to a conference and you do the little break out sections and you just pick what sounds interesting, but it has never been a mandated topic which really surprises me.

Table 4 displays participant level of awareness, as self-reported by each participant.

Participant level of awareness ranged from one (very low) to four (high), on a five-point Likert scale, with one being very low and five being very high. The modal response was one, very low, as reported by four of the ten participants. Two of the participants responded low, three said moderate, and one participant reported her level of awareness as high. Participant Three stated, “I would probably, I don’t know maybe moderate, a three, just because I don’t really know much about it, I would like to be a five.” Participant Ten added, “I have never heard the term trafficking here.”

*Table 4*

*Participant Level of Awareness*

Participant Number	Response
One	Moderate
Two	Very low
Three	Low
Four	Very low
Five	High
Six	Very low
Seven	Low
Eight	Moderate
Nine	Very low
Ten	Moderate

\*Note – Based on five-point Likert scale: 1=very low; 2=low; 3=moderate; 4=high; 5=very high

Table 5 displays the organization’s level of awareness of child trafficking, as reported by the participants. Responses ranged from one (very low) to three (moderate), on a five-point Likert scale, with one being very low and five being very high. The modal response was one, very low, as reported by three of the ten participants. Two of the participants responded very low to low, two said low, two stated low to moderate, and one participant reported moderate.

Participant Six, who responded moderate, had worked for the shortest duration at the organization, with zero to one year of experience.

*Table 5*

*Organization Level of Awareness as Reported by Participant*

Participant Number	Response
One	Very low to low
Two	Low to moderate
Three	Low
Four	Very low
Five	Very low
Six	Moderate
Seven	Low to moderate
Eight	Very low
Nine	Very low to low
Ten	Low

\*Note – Based on five-point Likert scale: 1=very low; 2=low; 3=moderate; 4=high; 5=very high

As stated by Participant Five, “I’d probably say very low, which is sad, a one.”

Participant Eight shared, “I haven’t heard anybody say, oh he was trafficking the child.”

Participant Four commented,

I would guess that nobody knows anything about it, I know that sounds extreme but if of 100% informed people, I would guess that people here are maybe 2% informed like I would believe that nobody has this information, it’s just not talked about. We have trainings on *everything*, I have been here for seven years, I have heard about the most offensive things that are done against children when it comes to abuse, neglect, death, sex and *never* is the word child trafficking has it ever been used in the 7 years that I’ve been here and I go to an awful lot of trainings and I did 6 years before that at (name of county) the mental health center working as a therapist and as a therapist that place did a lot of trainings and never in those years did I have anything on child trafficking, never through my bachelors or my masters did I have anything on child trafficking, so that’s a long time.

Table 6 displays participants’ awareness of laws and statistics concerning child trafficking. Responses ranged from, “No” to “Guess yes” to “Assume so” to “Hope so”, but not a single participant was aware of what the laws actually were. Five of the ten participants responded, “No”, indicating that they were not aware of child trafficking laws in Colorado. All



ten of the participants reported that they were not aware of official statistics related to child trafficking in the state.

*Table 6*

*Participant Awareness of Laws and Statistics*

Participant	Laws	Statistics
One	No	No
Two	No	No
Three	No	No
Four	Guess yes	No
Five	Guess yes	No
Six	No	No
Seven	Assume so	No
Eight	Hope so	No
Nine	No	No
Ten	Hope so	No

Participant Four stated, “I would guess that Colorado and the federal level would both have laws, I’m, I have no clue what they would be, that it’s illegal would be my guess, I would hope.” Participant Seven agreed, “I’d assume that they do, oh I don’t know what they would be, I don’t know if there are statutes and specific laws though.”

Participant Ten added, “I would hope so, I don’t know for sure, but I would hope so. Like I said, the word trafficking does not come up, we never, rarely hear it ever.” Participant Nine shared,

I don’t and I should that was one of the things I was thinking when I was thinking about this like I don’t even know if there is something in Volume 7 [Children’s Code] which guides our practice to like work within and so if we had something like that come through our agency it would be like a brand new thing for many of us, if not all of us.

Table 7 displays the findings related to participants’ beliefs about the accuracy of the reporting of statistics in Colorado related to child trafficking cases. As denoted in the table, all ten participants believed that the statistics are not accurate and that they are likely underreported as opposed to over-reported. Participants cited similarities with the underreporting of domestic

violence, drug abuse, and child abuse and neglect, issues with governmental tracking, and society not being comfortable talking about it or being able to identify child trafficking.

*Table 7*

*Accuracy of Reporting by Participant Belief*

Participant	Accurate	Over-reported	Underreported
One	No		X
Two	No		X
Three	No		X
Four	No		X
Five	No		X
Six	No		X
Seven	No		X
Eight	No		X
Nine	No		X
Ten	No		X

Participant Eight stated, “I would think it’s a higher amount, there’s always a higher amount of stuff than what they know, and I mean, sexual abuse and that kind of thing.”

Participant Nine shared,

My guess would be not, yeah, I, I mean even just knowing what I do about abuse and neglect and how little is reported compared to what happens, I think probably it would be a similar instance and I think ya know in the way that sometimes society or the general public isn’t comfortable talking about those things, I think that it’s probably very similar in that they’re not comfortable talking about the fact that it could be happening here in Colorado.

Participant Two replied,

I just don’t think that in general governments necessarily track accurately. I don’t think they really know what’s really going on and I don’t know that it’s an intentional mis-tracking but that’s a deceptive kind of behavior. It’s not something that people are going to go out and report on their taxes or something so yeah I would say that it has to be underrepresented in whatever numbers they come up with.

Participant Four shared,

No I mean if you look at any other offensive thing that happens in the United States it is usually underreported by, I mean the percentage is very significantly, so when you look

at domestic violence, those numbers are *dramatically* underreported, by tenths of what the actual percentage is, and so I would just guess, I mean, drug abuse is the same way, I would guess that it's as much of an issue as anything else and it's dramatically underreported.

Participant Five added,

No, because I bet they probably match those statistics based on maybe police busts or when kids are forensically interviewed or um based on survivors who report it and there's that whole complicated area that I was talking about with the brainwashing so I think that there's some youth that are involved in this that don't even know or think it's a problem so it so I bet it is like through the roof so much more of a problem than what has been actually reported, I bet that it is very underreported, that would be my guess.

Participant Three commented,

I would say probably not just based on a couple educated guesses, one is I am guessing it is higher than I think it is because you are doing a study on it and then when I look at, I work at child protection and I have been here a long time and I don't really have any I mean it has never been a training that has come up, it's never been a big topic, it's sort of like I said there's sort of these random instances that may or may not even fit in the criteria and if anybody was going to know about it, it would be us because we are child protection so I'm going to say probably not.

Participant Ten mentioned the issue with mislabeling and child abuse when she shared, "No, because I think it's ignored, I think it's something that they don't want to admit and they will push it off to child abuse, but they won't actually say trafficking."

Table 8 displays the findings from the questions regarding whether or not participants, or colleagues of participants, have received formal training related to child trafficking and if they are aware of any resources concerning child trafficking at the agency, as reported by participants. Nine of the ten participants reported that they have not received formal training at the agency related to child trafficking. Participant Two stated, "I have not. I don't know what other people have done but it hasn't been anything I have seen presented as an opportunity for training." Participant Ten added, "No, not formal training, no. We have a lot of training yes, a lot of training, but the word, that word does not come up." The one participant that had attended

trainings, Participant Five, mentioned that the trainings were things that she sought out due to her own personal interest and were not sponsored by the agency. She (Participant Five) commented,

Just the webinar and the training that was put on by Praxus [an organization in Denver working with homeless youth and human trafficking]. These two trainings that I have done related to my job, but it's interesting to me because I think it is such a huge problem and I think that the population that we work with is such a high risk, like it surprises me that in the child welfare training academy that they don't even cover this at all and the two, the webinar that I did last year and this training that I went to last Friday, I honestly just signed up for it as a personal interest, it wasn't like anybody in the agency saying we need to have so many people knowledgeable about trafficking or we need to have this many people on our teams know the warning signs and come back and educate us, like it was just kind of I thought of like if you go to a conference and you do the little break out sections and you just pick what sounds interesting, but it has never been a mandated topic.

With regard to whether or not colleagues have received training, as perceived by the participants, five participants responded "No", two reported, "Not sure", two said "A few", and one participant replied, "Maybe one." Participant Four stated,

I would guess zero percent. I would guess that nobody knows anything about it, I know that sounds extreme, but if of 100% informed people, I would guess that people here are maybe 2% informed, I would believe that nobody has this information, it's just not talked about. We have trainings on *everything*, I have been here for seven years, I have heard about the most offensive things that are done against children when it comes to abuse, neglect, death, sex and *never* is the word child trafficking, has it ever been used in the seven years that I've been here and I go to an awful lot of trainings.

Participant Nine shared,

There was actually a training in Denver on in last week or two weeks ago and so much interest like a lot of people really, really wanted to go, but it was an hour away and just one of those things when you think of all the different things we want our caseworkers to be experts in, maybe not as high on some of the supervisors' priority list, and so a couple went, but not many, and that was the first time I had heard of a formal training in any way. I don't think a lot of people actually got to go that wanted to, but it was something that I heard a lot of people say like oh we don't really know anything about that and we should and so I think there's, kind of between that and your study, I think there's like some chatter about it that hasn't been there before.

All ten participant reported that resources are not available related to child trafficking.

With respect to resources, Participant Five shared,

I'm not, which really surprises me because I know there's the whole secret component but I also know like there's a case that we're working with currently where there was a child who was adopted, specifically for kind of this purpose so that this child could be kind of a sex slave to their adopted parent and there was I believe internet porn pictures and things like that and that was the specific reason that this person adopted this child and so I know we have cases like that um but I wonder like in that particular case, I wonder how much we don't even know in terms of like how it started and like when we got involved and we investigated and we would of, with that level of abuse, we would have co-investigated with law enforcement and I'm just wondering like I wonder if there's so much that we don't even know and that there are cases from the past that I know of parents prostituting their children for different reasons but I wonder like, we know that's the presenting reason that they came to us, but I wonder how much there's like additional information that we don't even know.

Echoing the lack of resources available at the agency, Participant Seven stated, "No, I mean the Internet, I go on the Internet a lot if I need a resource and I don't have another one so, that would be where I'd start."

*Table 8*

*Received Training and Resources Available Related to Child Trafficking*

Participant Number	Participant Training	Colleagues Training	Resources Available
One	No	No	No
Two	No	Not sure	No
Three	No	Maybe one	No
Four	No	No	No
Five	Yes	A few	No
Six	No	Not sure	No
Seven	No	No	No
Eight	No	No	No
Nine	No	A few	No
Ten	No	No	No

## Beliefs and Perceptions of Child Trafficking in the World

With respect to participants' beliefs and perceptions about child trafficking in the world, the predominant theme reflected the consensus that child welfare professionals perceived it to be more common in the world than in the United States, that it is more prevalent in developing nations (i.e., "the third world"), and among conditions of poverty. Additionally, the theme of sex trafficking and labor trafficking was present. Participant Two shared,

Well I guess 'cause I am not sure if I know exactly what child trafficking is, but um I know there's a certain amount of and I don't know if this means sort of sexual, or if it's about work, labor, so I guess my perception is that it is happening in more of the third world countries. I am not aware of it happening as much in the U.S., but ya know kids being sold for profit maybe from poor families or whatever to be used in whether it's a sexual way or for labor.

Participant Four added,

My perceptions and beliefs are that child trafficking probably happens at a higher rate in third world countries or other places where people are taking kids to make a profit off of them and my understanding of it is that it is sexually based is the general understanding of that and I could be so far off track it would be shaming.

Participant Seven echoed, "I think it's probably a higher rate in developing countries, third world countries" and Participant Eight also held similar perceptions,

Well I know it's happening, I mean it's on the news quite a bit, from time to time, I think it's one of those hidden things that happens a lot, we're probably not aware of, globally, unfortunately, there's so many countries that have no shame about ya know children and caring for children and that kind of stuff so I know, I'm sure it happens a lot, in India, and a lot of the poor countries, and where women, especially are disrespected.

Participant Six said,

When I think of it as a big picture like a worldwide thing, I don't think of it so much in the United States and I think that's a kind of naïve view, I am sure it happens here and I am sure that there are problems with it here, but it's hard for me to say that I can see it or that I have seen it, I haven't had any experience with it and I don't think it's something that pops up in the news or anything like that, you might see stuff globally, or they'll write articles about genocide in Africa or something like that with child soldiers or sex tourism in Thailand or Brazil or things like that, but I always think of that as a very

distance thing but I know that's not true, that it happens in our back yard too, but I think for the most part I don't really think about it here.

Participant Nine mentioned her lack of knowledge, but desire to learn more about child trafficking as it relates to her role as a child welfare professional. She replied,

Gosh I don't even know, um, in terms of in the world, I know that it exists in the world and that there are maybe different regions or populations that are more highly targeted and often times it's related to like sexual slavery and things like that, or at least that's my understanding, but in terms of being able to go into a lot more specifics about that globally or even really in the United States, I don't know much else so I'm not super helpful, but, part of why I wanted to do this study was because I think it's something that, I think it's important for child welfare workers to know and so I think it's important to show that we don't know about something sometimes too so in terms of that I guess I have an understanding that it's an issue globally and here in the United States as well, but that there's not much else I know about it.

Participant Ten believed it happens in the world and in the identified geographic area and added her perspective regarding the terrible nature of child trafficking. She stated,

It's a wrong, I think it's the most horrifying thing in the world and the children have to suffer but who's really, it's the people that are doing it to them for what it may be for drugs for money for prostitution for anything, whether it go to sweatshops, whether it go to trading them out, I mean even local truck stops, it happens there, mom needs money for meth, mom needs money for something, here's my kid, do what you want and they don't know any better. I just think it's not, it's so different in another world because it's, I can't explain it, it's known and it's known and there's things in the paper and there's things you can look up but when it's right here in your own home, nobody wants to know.

### Beliefs and Perceptions of Child Trafficking in the United States

In the United States, participants believed it was happening, but to a lesser degree. The general sentiment was that children were being brought to the United States for trafficking, but not that U.S. citizens, American children, were the primary victims or that it is just not as well publicized. Additionally, the themes of it being a growing problem and of victim movement were prevalent among participants. Participant Ten stated, "It's a problem here also, people don't know about it here but I think it's just as bad, yes, absolutely." Participant Four shared,

I believe that it still happens in the United States, probably at a much lesser rate than maybe some of the third world countries, and by third world I guess I'm meaning that the kids were taken from the third world and I'm not sure that they're necessarily kept there but that's kind of my belief is that they're moved from region to region into more um into countries that pay more I guess, more first world nations, I know that sounds horrible but I do believe it is a money-driven business.

Participant Two added, "I haven't heard of it here. If it's happening here I wouldn't be surprised I guess but I don't think it's very well publicized." Participant Three stated,

So I would say probably until the last couple years I definitely thought of it as not something happening a lot in the United States, um granted I know we have lots of sketchy areas of our country, but probably really until I watched this most recent one [documentary] did I kind of realize oh my goodness it is really growing. I guess my understanding as far as the United States is that it is growing not declining.

Participant One shared,

So I think in the United States, I wouldn't maybe be able to guess how long it's been going on, but I think in some manner it's always been an issue, I think now it's just maybe getting organized and is kind of becoming more of a big deal with international airports.

#### Beliefs and Perceptions of Child Trafficking in the Identified Geographic Area

With respect to the identified geographic area, child welfare professionals were much less convinced of its prevalence or were just not aware of it being an issue. Several participants shared that they believed child trafficking was occurring, as evidenced by the fact that I was doing a study about it, but it was difficult to imagine in our community and among American children; however, they perceived a lack of awareness on their behalf as well as the general public. The majority of participants perceived it to be a possibility in the identified geographic area, with a few participants definitely believing it to be happening. Participant Eight stated,

Locally, I'm sure it might be happening, I'm just not aware of it, and it's one of those things that I'm thinking you're going to suddenly tell me something and I'm going to go, wholly cow, I had no idea ya know, so yeah, it would upset me a great deal, I mean not appalling, but just it would really be devastating to know that and I'm actually looking for something for when I retire in a couple years to really advocate for and so that might be something, depending upon what's going on, I can't go in and start shooting or



anything, even though I have a license to carry, I wouldn't do that anyway, but oh yeah, you're recoding this, anyway I really want to know more about it.

Participant Eight shared, "I think it's one of those, you putting out the email has probably been the first of hitting home, going, whoa, there's something going on here I bet that we're just not aware of." Participant Ten added, "Absolutely, it's a problem in the local area too, it's just people are not aware of it and they don't think they're doing it what they're doing, they think it's just child abuse."

Participant Five commented,

I don't really know locally how much of a problem it is, but it really got me to thinking because they have this kind of continuum of the problem and it kind of shows how kids that are sexually abused within their family system, it kind of almost sets the path for them to be such a huge risk factor for later entering child trafficking, sex trafficking, because often times a family member will like get them into that, like mom will prostitute her daughter or stepdad or mom's boyfriend will then get them involved which I thought was really, really scary that that's such a huge risk factor is the child sexual abuse.

Participant Five also added,

It's just kind of an interest area of mine, and now more than ever, I believe that as child protection workers, that's something we need to kind of screen better for because it could be happening like right under our nose and we may not know it, or maybe kids coming to us maybe like that's what's been going on in the home and we didn't even really recognize that that was happening cause I think it's such a hidden thing.

Participant Nine shared,

I mean I believe that it is happening here, I think one of the things, there was an article in the Denver Post recently about like a child sex trafficking ring that was found out about and I think that was one of the first times I had heard about it here in Colorado but just brought to light that it exists here but that maybe we don't know as much about it and especially I guess kind of in our region a little bit farther from the metro areas I feel like there's not an understanding that it exists here maybe to the level that it does.

Participant Ten reflected upon what she used to think and what she now believes from working at the agency and her perceptions regarding the connection between child sexual abuse and child trafficking. She commented,

I used to think, those commercials on TV where the children are in poverty, they may be from Africa or somewhere, that don't have any clothes on, that are very thin, I used to think that until maybe I started working and seeing more, it's weird because I don't picture that anymore, I used to.

Participant Nine shared,

I think of it as obviously like an extreme injustice and something that I would hope would never happen and needs to be addressed and stopped, but I think then on top of that, I think one of the injustices more locally is that we aren't maybe as educated on it as we should be and so then I guess for me it feels like this giant hole in what we do and that for me feels really, really uncomfortable so I think we need to look at that more closely and make sure that we're really meeting those needs if they are existing here.

### Research Question One Conclusions

Findings from research question one, the level of awareness of child trafficking among child welfare professionals, denotes that awareness is relatively low. Overall, participants hold a low level of awareness of the phenomenon of child trafficking and are not familiar with laws or statistics related to child trafficking. All ten of the participants reported that they were not aware of official statistics related to child trafficking in the state, but believed that the statistics are not accurate and are likely underreported as opposed to over-reported. As self-reported by participants, for the level of awareness of child trafficking, the modal response was one, very low, according to four of the ten participants. Two of the participants responded low, three said moderate, and one participant reported her level of awareness as high, based on a five-point Likert scale, with one being very low and five being very high. For the organization's level of awareness of child trafficking, as reported by the participants, responses ranged from one (very low) to three (moderate), on the same five-point Likert scale. The modal response was one, very low, as reported by three of the ten participants. Two of the participants responded very low to low, two said low, two stated low to moderate, and one participant reported moderate. For eight

of the ten participants, media was cited as the source for which the participant first learned about child trafficking.

Participants believed child trafficking to be more common in the world than in the United States; more prevalent in developing nations (i.e., “the third world”) and among impoverished countries and communities; and not as noticeable/familiar in the identified geographic area. Additionally, child welfare professionals were aware of sex and labor trafficking and the selling and/or prostitution of children as forms of child trafficking. The majority of participants, nine of the ten, had not received formal training related to child trafficking, most were not aware if colleagues or others in the agency had received training, and all ten reported that they were not aware of any resources at the agency concerning child trafficking.

#### Research Question Two

Research question two asked – What is the meaning of child trafficking among child welfare professionals?

This research question corresponds to questions twelve through seventeen from the interview guide. The questions ask about who and what is involved in child trafficking; what words and images come to mind when they hear the term child trafficking; how they would describe and define child trafficking; what child trafficking means to them personally; how child trafficking relates to child abuse; and how child trafficking is similar and/or different to child abuse, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and child prostitution/familial prostitution. Additionally, participants were asked about what sources of information they base their responses upon.

Research question two elicited the most ambiguity in terms of the meaning the child welfare professionals associate with the phenomenon of child trafficking. Table 9 displays the themes representing the meaning of child trafficking from the perspective of child welfare

professionals. The main themes identified were the belief that victim movement was a part of child trafficking; children are kidnapped or being taken away, typically occurring outside the family of origin; forced adoption; children are being bought and sold; made to perform acts, labor, but mostly sexual, against their will; an abuse of power and control; for illegal means; for money, gain or profit; involving pornography and prostitution; injustice, exploitation, and slavery; harming, horrifying, demeaning, and loss of innocence for the children; among populations of poverty and/or ethnic minorities; a form of child abuse/child sexual abuse; part of organized crime rings and a hidden phenomenon; and that drugs, arms and violence are frequently involved.

*Table 9*

*Meaning as Reported by Participants*

Category	Theme
Meaning	Movement Kidnapping/Taken Away Outside Family of Origin Forced Adoption Buying and Selling Labor and Sex Acts Against Child's Will Abuse of Power/Control Illegal Means Money/Gain/Profit Pornography/Prostitution Harm/Horrifying/Demeaning Loss of innocence Injustice/Exploitation Slavery Poverty Ethnic Minorities Child Abuse/Sexual Abuse Organized Crime/Hidden phenomenon Drugs/Arms and Violence

Participant Nine shared, “I think of it as obviously like an extreme injustice and something that I would hope would never happen and needs to be addressed and stopped.”

Participant Six stated,

Forcing children to do something basically against their will whether that be sex trade or working or I mean even just transporting them from one place to another so someone can have a child whether that be like a forced adoption or something like that, just kind of the movement of children like kind of against their will for someone else’s gain.

Participant Three remarked,

My definition would mean would be kidnapping children um or luring them so maybe they don’t even think that they were necessarily kidnapped ‘til they’re already stuck with them and then using them as for prostitution, is my I mean I don’t know for sure if that has to be related, I mean maybe there’s other things but my broad understanding would be that it’s luring them and kidnapping them and using them for prostitution and then they’re kind of stuck so that’s my understanding.

Participant Six replied, “Someone removing the child somehow, whether that be a parent, a third party, who knows, that’s probably gaining some sort of financial profit or something like that to get the child to another place where they’re doing what they’re doing.” Participant Six also added,

Exploitation of children and moving them to a place where they can be exploited whether that be three miles from their home, across state lines, from one country to another, into a forced labor situation and forced prostitution situation I think it’s just kind of the removal of a child to do some sort of work kind but kind of against their will.

Participant Five shared, “I think of it as like a modern day slavery, and ya know we abolished slavery like a really, really long time ago, but it’s still happening in present day.” Participant

Four stated,

When a child aged zero to 18 is used for the sale or barter of something, be it child services or child sexual services in exchange for the money or some other service, but, whether the child is willing and voluntary or whether somebody has taken and used that child against their rights or the family has taken and used the child and abused them, put them in that situation.

Participant Eight commented, “I would say child trafficking is where they are, a person, is taking a child and using them for illegal means, could be in the country, could be going out of the country, when I think of child trafficking, I think it’s very connected to pornography.”

Participant Seven added, “I mean you think trafficking and you think movement, but it’s just plain old brainwashing.” Participant Two shared,

Probably something around the use of like selling children for a purpose, whether it is for sexual favors or labor...Maybe there’s a certain piece of that for adoption and stuff like that for just people that want a baby or I think there’s a piece of that but to me the meaning has more to do with just sort of abuse of power and somebody taking advantage of the weakness of a child...An abuse of children, an abuse of power, a decline of our society.

Participant Four commented,

Okay so I guess with my limited knowledge, I would describe it as a person who uses a child to make a profit, who sells that child, their services to another person, either permanently or temporarily and I would guess that it could be sexual or nonsexual in nature I think that the majority of the time, I hate to say it, I’m guessing it’s sexual and so that would be how I would describe it.

Participant Seven stated,

The unfair or inappropriate treatment of children by their, I mean after they’ve been taken away from their family or their place of origin, um it’s so hard to describe such a concept. Well unfair is not a good word, but it’s yeah the exploitation, the abuse of children in order to make money or in order to, for someone else’s benefit and having to do with power and control...I would say it’s illegal and children I mean, taking of identity and being forced to do things they don’t want to do, whether that’s work or sex trade or sold ya know for housekeeping or other sorts of jobs and I would say it happens probably with more with impoverished people who need the money and sell their own children or sell their children to some sort of trade.

Participant Nine responded,

I guess I think of it as almost like slavery is like the first word that kind of comes to mind if I had to choose one, kind of correlation, I would say I think of it as children being taken, involuntarily, whether it is by people who care for them or by other people, and taking them out of their homes and put into situations where they’re made to do things that maybe aren’t safe or appropriate for children to be doing.

Participant Ten replied,

Well besides horrifying, I would definitely say abuse of course, demeaning, horrifying like I said, I think just the loss of innocence too for the children, it's really hard to explain, like the what people will do to their children, if say somebody, I'm going to use that mom and step-dad thing, needs money or they need their drugs they will pretty much pimp a child out, I hate to use that word but that's really what it is, trade them for things, have them do things they don't want to do, just very demeaning, just very degrading.

Participant Ten went on to say,

It means, it's taking, it's just like taking somebody's soul away, it's taking, there's no child left, they're just, and it's sad that because it's mostly with child, I mean I think it happens with adults, but the child ones are, it just takes their innocence, there's no, there's just like an empty, like I see in that girl, an empty, in her eyes, it's empty, there's nothing left, it's just demeaning.

Participant One stated,

I think on an issue like child trafficking or if I'm watching a show and I think on it in my own time, my little heart goes like sinks to my feet and I guess like I wonder after those children are used and not worth anything to their trafficker anymore um what happens to them...are they like discarded like trash to go make a life for themselves and what resources do they have to do that or are they killed so I just kind of wonder what happens to them next. And then I can only imagine what sorts of acts they've been made to do and then piece together horrible things that I have either seen or heard.

I wish I knew more about it because I feel like I stutter through it when I try to wrap my head around what I think I know about it. But, I guess I would describe it as children held against their will in somebody's care and made to perform sexual acts or any other thing that they wouldn't want to do besides sexual acts, just anything that they are made to do either by threat of harm or something bigger.

Participant One went on to say, "I think something like child trafficking is evidence of just like a fractured people in general, like any other sin or folly that maybe takes over a culture or a population of people...it's just one more way to cause hurt and harm." Participant Four's perspective demonstrates the lack of awareness among the community and general sentiment that it does not happen in the identified geographic area. She commented,

I mean so part of me reacts from a child protection concern which is clearly what I do now, the other part of me reacts from me being a parent, which you heard, and then the last part is what does it mean to me, well kind of nothing because you don't hear about it, it's this shadowy not talked about unknown thing where it's really easy to just miss those

things that you don't hear about when there's no public awareness it is really easy to say oh that doesn't happen, I've never had this subject, I've never had this talked about in a gathering, any group of friends, nowhere, so that's what it means to me.

With respect to who and what is involved in child trafficking, most participants reported children as the product, correlated with poverty, neglect, and danger; foreign populations and ethnic minorities; drugs, weapons, violence, force, power and control as the means; and traffickers or pimps, either strangers, persons known by the children, or parents as the individuals organizing the abuse; and involving prostitution and pornography. Participant Three commented,

Well, that's a really great question, obviously the children who are taken and their families but I think the people who are running it my understanding is that there's kind of some really big like crime rings that do it and that they're pretty organized um in some ways it's like the new mafia or something that is sort of what I learned from my TV show information.

Participant Two stated,

Slimy individuals and drugs I'm sure is involved, um money, probably I would think something to do with gangs or maybe mafia or those kinds of organizations, I don't know if that's a who or what but I would guess and maybe this is just a bias or something but that a lot of it may have to do with people in ethnic minorities and poverty. Pornography um bondage like unhealthy conditions ya know I can't think of a word to describe that like a ya know prison type or cages or trucks um, images, guns.

Participant Seven responded,

Weapons, guns, money, gangs, I mean I figure kids not being fed and being housed in really bad conditions, it's real secretive so I think there's a lot of violence and a lot of manipulation, I think there's probably a lot of death, kids are probably starved to death and not fed and not cared for properly so and I think there's a lot of power and control. I think there's a lot of manipulation around the whole issue and even I mean to make them do these things there's probably drugs involved, there's probably a lot of weapons, there's probably, it's probably just real dangerous.

Participant Five, added, "The person who is kind of the power person who's kind of running all this to make it happen in terms of the pimp or the crew leader so it's this person in the position of power over the victim and so there's that component of power and control."



Participant Nine shared,

I think, I think and maybe these are just my misconceptions but I think primarily of it as like organized groups of adults taking children from their families so whether that's and ya know this is actually something that I hadn't really considered before, I think of it only as, and it's just funny to stop and think about stuff, I think of it primarily as foreign children being taken into other countries, like into the United States for from their country into another country, kind of an international thing, I don't really think of it as kids being taken from Oklahoma or Wyoming or something and essentially making them do things whether, ya know I think a lot about sexual slavery and things like that, being forced to work I think of when I think of like what is involved, those are kind of the two things that I think of. I don't think a lot, I tend to think of it as non-kin people, adults taking children from their families as opposed to families making their children do things like that.

Participant Nine also commented,

I think a lot about certain like races or ethnicities, like I think a lot about Mexican children being bought probably because that's maybe what has happened in Colorado and so that's one piece, I think also of Russian children for some reason, like I think young Russian girls, the whole sex slave thing is something that comes to mind so those are some, I think of a lot of children in a room sleeping on mattresses on the floor, kind of that poverty/neglect thing.

Participant Ten reflected upon an experience she had during a training with the police department,

You know what, every time I hear that I think of that girl in the backseat of the car, believe it or not, and then I think of, a young, I don't know why I always think of girls and it's not always girls, there's males too, unfortunately there's a high rate of male child trafficking I guess. I just think of that girl, I think of her face, I think of what she looked like, how scared she was, just very disheveled but scared, very scared, she was white and she was a very cute 11 year-old girl who will probably never have a childhood, never know what it's like to be a child.

Participant One stated,

I would imagine that it would have to be pretty organized here in the United States for people to get away with it like I perceive them to be, like I think they are getting away with it all the time...so I would imagine that the who's would be um bad people, like savvy criminal minded people who either themselves are in a position of power or can influence people in a position of power.

Participant Eight commented,

Well of course there's always strangers, but I think there's also probably, well some very sick people, it could be even including people that take a child that is theirs, but they do not have custody for some reason, I mean that to me could be child trafficking, I always think, unfortunately because of the job I'm in, I always think the worst...I think of child trafficking as, of course again in this job, you tend to think the worst, so I would say child trafficking to me is when they are actually taking a child to use either for pornography or for their own sexual pleasure, maybe selling to others for that type of warped thinking...The trafficker's a slime ball.

Participant Four mentioned a perspective, very unique, that was not shared by the other participants. She discussed the reality of what a child trafficking victim could look like, how there is not a classic profile, and how it could look like one's own child. She stated,

I would assume at the end that the children are sold or bartered, I would assume that there's going to be either parent's who are involved in selling their children as offensive as that sounds I believe that is the truth. The child is the product. I think slave, I think sexual offenders, I think pornography, I think there's a lot of child pornography that could result from this...with the reading that I do they paint some really graphic images but they are not always of a child that is beaten down or wearing rags or obviously disenfranchised, the child could look any number of ways, like a person's own child, like somebody walking down the street, like I don't believe that it is one look, I think like everything else it could be disguised very well.

The main theme identified in terms of the similarities and differences between child trafficking and child abuse, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and child prostitution/familial prostitution, as perceived by child welfare professionals was the indistinguishable nature of child trafficking to child abuse, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and child prostitution/familial prostitution. Most participants believed all of these terms were one in the same; the only notable difference reported was the notion that child abuse and sexual abuse could exist without child trafficking, but that child prostitution/familial prostitution could denote child trafficking. Some participants were unfamiliar with the language of child exploitation. Identifying the precise difference or qualifiers for a case to be considered child trafficking was challenging for all participants. Participant Three responded, "I mean it

sounds like an extreme level of child abuse.” Participant Six stated, “I think pretty much all trafficking would be child abuse but not all child abuse is trafficking.” Participant Six also added, “I think like everything that falls under the category of trafficking kind of also falls under child abuse... If you’re prostituting your child, I suppose you could consider that trafficking too.”

Participant One commented,

I had a child that is currently in our system and has been for a long time say that his parents’ prostituted him when he was younger so they could get money for drugs. Child abuse and child sexual abuse gets talked about in training at the agency but not the other terms so much. I have never heard of child sexual exploitation.

Participant Eight replied, “Child sex abuse I think of as one in the same, as ya know trafficking they are taking them for, for the wrong means, usually, personally to me, trafficking and sexual abuse are the same thing.”

Participant Two responded, “There are definitely similarities because I think that child trafficking would be a form of child abuse; however, I think that child abuse exists outside of child trafficking, they are not the same in the sense that lots of abuse happens without child trafficking.” Participant Eight commented,

Child prostitution I think is definitely a part of that, they’re kind of all rolled into one, if it’s a child that they are using them for prostitution, that’s child abuse, sexual abuse and they’re exploiting them and I mean they’re all kind of wrapped into one so child prostitution/familial prostitution of course to me is really the sickest because you’ve got your family that doesn’t have any better morals than an alley cat and you see that with a lot of the poor especially, especially a lot of the poor Mexicans that come up here and stuff like that and they’ll talk about how, oh yeah my uncle raped me many times, did your mom know, yeah I told her and she just said stay away from him.

Participant Ten shared,

I think it’s almost, it is child abuse of course, I think it is the exact same thing. And like we talked about earlier, why don’t they use that word, a lot of the stuff that we will put in as sexual abuse, it’s not, I mean it is sexual abuse but it’s also, if you really listen to the person and see what’s going on, it’s sex trafficking.

Participant Four stated, “I think it is the definition of child abuse, these children shouldn’t be put into a position to have to do these things, to have to barter or trade themselves whether they’re willing or voluntary or involuntary.”

Participant Ten discussed the difficulty in distinguishing prostitution and about a couple of experience at the agency,

Familial prostitution, I think that’s the same, just about, whether child prostitution, that’s oh well, gosh, it’s so hard to distinguish, I don’t know. I’m following a girl that I have been following, she has been with us since I started and she was young then, but she’s still, she’s a runaway, she has run away over 50 times, but no matter what foster home we put her in, she runs and she always goes back to this man, who’s older, quite older, quite, quite older, she’s had sex with I don’t know how many men, she just turned 15 so since she was 11...Her bio mom gave her up when she was a baby so she’s been to foster home to foster home and she’s had so many STDs and just LSD and meth and heroine and whatever, I mean maybe she does it to numb herself, but she always, always goes back to him, whatever he is.

I’ve even heard of people using their food stamps to, yes, to trade sexual favors with their teenager.

Participant Seven also shared her confusion regarding the term trafficking,

Child prostitution and familial prostitution I could see as a way of making money that families may prostitute out their children to make money, I mean that probably happens, I don’t know if that would be considered within child trafficking though or not, I just don’t know.

Participant One added,

Child sexual abuse is, in our world it is when a child is made to do sexual things or sexual things are done to that child. I guess it would be familial prostitution if other family was aware of it and either created an atmosphere where that could happen or turned their head when they knew that was going on kind of thing and I would think that prostitution would have to be for somebody’s gain like that person that turned their head or created the atmosphere where that would be going on that person would have to gain something for that to be considered prostitution but even if it ya know even if it’s just to...um let me see I’m thinking of a particular case, cause that’s what’s kind of happening a lot.

There’s a homeschooled, um, she’s like maybe like 6 or 7 and mom and dad and that’s all that lives in this house. I don’t even know how we got the referral, I think it was from an aunt or something like that because these people were hermits, they were the only people who had contact for the most part with this kid except for every other week an aunt would be in the picture, but the little girl said in her CAC interview [Child Advocacy

Center] that she gives dad blow jobs that mom taught her how and instructs her on how to do it and other sexual things to dad and that mom is there when it happens so my thoughts in that I kind of feel like she's being, that little girl is being exploited, but I also maybe would even say prostituted because I wonder if what mom is gaining is her own relationship with something from her own relationship with the dad or her husband kind of thing if she has something to gain from that is why she does is but definitely exploiting her child.

Participant Nine, also struggled with the terminology and offered her perspective on what the difference may entail,

I guess and maybe this is because my perception of child trafficking is that children are moved and so I guess that for me would be the difference, like a child can be prostituted in their family of origin and I would call that interfamilial child sexual abuse and then more specifically it would be prostitution and so that to me would feel different than child trafficking in which a child was maybe taken from their family of origin and forced to prostitute outside of an understanding of their parents.

#### Sources

The main themes corresponding to the sources upon which participants formed their perceptions, beliefs, and descriptions from include experience, media, trainings related to child abuse and child sexual abuse, general knowledge and assumptions, and from what they have witnessed over the years with different cases. Participant Two replied, "Experience and assumptions." Participant Nine responded, "My very limited knowledge." Participant Three shared, "Media, documentaries, and my general knowledge." Participant Five commented, "Just based on the definitions of ya know in terms of the Children's Code, how they would define child abuse, child sexual abuse." Participant Seven added, "Just from my work and knowing what child abuse is." Participant Eight stated, "Probably experience is the biggest one, just different things you learn from each case that I've worked with especially you learn a lot from the different cases and you're going, you're still always amazed and appalled at what people do."

## Research Question Two Conclusions

The meaning of child trafficking and the precise descriptions and definitions offered varied from participant to participant; however, there were several predominant themes revealed by the majority of child welfare professionals. The main themes associated with participants' perceptions of child trafficking included movement; kidnapping; forced adoption; the buying and selling of children; harm, forced labor, prostitution, or sexual acts; an abuse of power and control; for illegal means, money, gain or profit; injustice, exploitation, and slavery; horrifying, demeaning, and loss of innocence for the children; a form of child abuse/child sexual abuse; among conditions of poverty; ethnic minorities and/or foreign populations; involving drugs, weapons, violence, and force; organized crime; hidden phenomenon; and prostitution and pornography.

The lack of awareness of what exactly child trafficking entails, how it is defined by law, and the specific criteria necessary contributed to the ambiguity expressed by participants. Most child welfare professionals based their beliefs and perspectives on limited, general knowledge, experience with child welfare and child abuse, media, and assumptions. Participants' recognized the barrier of the absence of training around child trafficking at the agency and the need to know more in order to properly identify victims and to fulfill their role of protecting children.

## Research Question Three

Research question three asked – What are the greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims?

This research question corresponds to questions eighteen through twenty-six from the interview guide. The questions ask about how the participants' definition of child trafficking influences how they identify victims; if they screen for child trafficking during intake; if other procedures exist for victim identification at the agency; if, to their knowledge, they have ever

worked with a victim of child trafficking, and if so, how they come into contact with the agency; whether or not specific criteria are necessary for children/youth to be identified as victims of child trafficking; if the identification of victims is difficult in their current position and what participants' perceive to be the greatest challenges associated with child trafficking victim identification; if they believe victim identification could be improved; how the phenomenon of child trafficking relates to their role as child welfare professionals; if they think training and development is needed about child trafficking at the agency, and if so, what is needed; and if they believe local service providers and key stakeholders could work collaboratively to better address child trafficking in the community, and if so, how they think this could be best accomplished.

Table 10 displays the findings for the questions related to screening protocol at intake, other victim identification procedures, and whether or not there are specific criteria to be identified as a victim of child trafficking at the agency. For the question regarding screening at intake, responses ranged from "No" to "Not sure" to "In a sense" but not a single participant indicated that the agency does screen for child trafficking. The modal response was "No" as reported by six participants, three participants stated, "Not sure" and one participant replied, "In a sense." For the question concerning whether or not there were other procedures for child trafficking victim identification, seven of the participants reported "No" while three participants stated, "Not sure." With respect to if specific criteria are necessary for a child to be identified as a victim of child trafficking, six participants responded "No" and four stated that they were "Not aware" of any criteria or protocol.

Table 10

*Screen for Child Trafficking, Other Procedures, and Criteria to be Identified as Victim*

Participant Number	Screen	Other Procedures	Criteria
One	No	Not sure	Not aware
Two	Not sure	Not sure	Not aware
Three	No	No	Not aware
Four	No	No	No
Five	No	No	No
Six	Not sure	No	Not sure
Seven	In a sense	Not sure	No
Eight	Not sure	No	No
Nine	No	No	No
Ten	No	No	No

Participant One explained, “If there are, professionally I don’t know about them, and I would like to.” Participant Four stated, “No, because we have no criteria.” The one participant that reported, “In a sense”, Participant Seven, commented,

I mean we in a sense do, we have to confirm dates of birth and social security numbers and the parents are the parents and if we don’t know a parent is a parent we do a paternity test and we help pay for that and we I mean so there’s a way of identifying if that child belongs where they are and I currently have a case where a child is with a family and the parents are gone and they never gave guardianship and so we’ve got this kid sitting here and no one’s making any money off of anybody but if the mom had been paying this person to keep or this person said I want your child and I mean there could have been a real fuzzy thing so just making sure we know kids are where they’re supposed to be and parents are who they say they are and when we have a case that someone says oh they gave up their kid here and I mean it’s not child trafficking because it’s not about the money but it’s, sometimes we have to get real clear about who belongs to who and where they belong so I think in a way we do, but intentionally I don’t know.

Participant Five shared,

I think it’s necessary, I just don’t think that it’s happening like I think having all of our staff trained on risk factors, like what contributes to it, how to identify, how to interview specific cause in my opinion, I think, especially on all the child sexual abuse cases there should be some protocol interwoven for either in child protection or law enforcement related to the trafficking piece that I don’t I’m not aware that that’s happening and I find myself, like I would classify myself as a person in the agency who knows a crap ton about child welfare, like I know a lot about child welfare because I’ve been here a long



time, I've done a lot of research on it and I'm not aware of any specific protocols to assess for child trafficking.

Participant Four added,

No, having a definition and understanding it would be the first step even before learning how to identify it, if we don't know what it is how the hell are we supposed to identify it and I would guess, I could be wrong but, I'd be so curious to see what your study proves, I would guess that I know probably just a little bit more than some of my colleagues and I am not saying that to make me sound better but I read so much and knowing that it's not talked about among my peers, knowing that I haven't seen it on TV, although I don't watch as much TV, like for me I just think at least I'm reading, at least I'm finding something somewhere, so if I don't know, so where were we, are there procedures for identifying child trafficking victims, no, we do not have any procedures.

Table 11 displays the findings from the questions asking if child trafficking victim identification is difficult and if they believe it could be improved. All ten of the participants reported that child trafficking identification is difficult in their current position and that victim identification could be improved.

*Table 11*

*Victim Identification Difficult and Room for Identification Improvement*

Participant Number	Difficult	Improve
One	Yes	Yes
Two	Yes	Yes
Three	Yes	Yes
Four	Yes	Yes
Five	Yes	Yes
Six	Yes	Yes
Seven	Yes	Yes
Eight	Yes	Yes
Nine	Yes	Yes
Ten	Yes	Yes

Participant Three stated, "Absolutely, obviously, because it's not something that's talked about a lot here so I'm sure it could, I mean, right now, if you're starting at the bottom, yes there's definitely room for improvement." Participant One replied, "Yes, I would say it would be

difficult because I have not had formal training on trafficking specifically or exploitation of child for tangible gain kind of thing.” Participant Nine commented, “I would say yes and I think it goes back to the knowledge and understanding and I mean if we don’t have the tools to identify them then of course it’s going to be difficult, it’s actually not going to happen.” Participant Seven shared,

I think anything related to children that is a concern to someone in the community could get reported so very likely child trafficking issues are reported but I don’t know if they are identified as child trafficking, so anything I mean, if we were more aware of it, I think, our role and what to do, it would be more helpful if we were aware.

Participant Nine commented,

Well I think that having the Colorado definition in front of me it absolutely changes how I think you look at a situation, like I think we would look at maybe say like a mother who was allowing men to come into her home and abuse her child, sexually abuse her daughter for whatever benefit, because there are many, that very much changes how I would identify her level of abuse so I think just having the definition really changes that for me.

Participant Five added,

The Children’s Code is Title 19 and to my knowledge there’s definitions for physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, but there’s no definitions related to child trafficking and then same thing like in the Child Welfare Training Academy they don’t really touch on it so like I think if there’s not policies in place, if there’s not training in place specifically to train all workers and then if there aren’t protocols with law enforcement about identifying like child trafficking like I think that that’s it’s kind of hard to look for it if it’s not required to look for it.

Participant Two responded,

Yes, I think huge um yeah because if I’m hardly ever seeing it or hearing it called that, if you don’t call it something, it gets watered down. Sexual abuse is bad enough, or child sexual abuse, um but I don’t, I think there is a certain amount of complacency or numbness or expectation around that word for caseworkers because they see it so often and um I think that there’s definitely some education to be done.

Participant Five shared, “I don’t feel like we’re prepared to do that” and Participant Three

replied, “Well I guess if I don’t have the correct definition then I’m probably missing the boat as

far as identifying victims.” Participant Ten added, “The value word is key. My old definition would have made it difficult to identify victims...when I go to work again, yeah, just because of those little two, three sentences that I just read, I mean that’s what I’m going to be looking for.”

With regard to child victim identification improvement, Participant One stated, “Yes, just with education, just with knowing more about it and people maybe being a little bit more aware of it, what to look for, and maybe once you think you’ve found it, what to do next, what a process looks like.” Participant Four shared,

Yeah I mean really our agency is really good about stuff like this so I think it would be a very simple thing for the head of our agency to go ahead and just put together a training I mean we bring trainers in from all over the world for crying out loud, we have somebody that comes from Australia to train us and so really for somebody to come in, even somebody from our state who has more knowledge and expertise to come in and do a one day training I think would be a good starting point and from that point it would be very easy they’ve done it with other things that we’ve taken on or we just put together a subcommittee to come up with what we think the criteria are for identifying and then putting those things into place on an intake form.

Participant Seven agrees that identification could be improved by adding, “I do, I think if we have a criteria and we’re aware, I think awareness just brings more ability to identify which would help victims if they are a victim.”

Table 12 displays the findings regarding if participants believe child welfare professionals need training and development about child trafficking and if they believe local service providers and key stakeholders may work collaboratively to better address child trafficking in the community. All ten of the participants reported that child welfare professionals do need training and development around child trafficking and that child welfare could work collaboratively with local service providers and key stakeholders to better address child trafficking in the community. The main themes revealed in terms of how they think this could be best accomplished centered on the strong existing network of support and collaboration in the

community. Participants reported that the identified geographic area has a solid reputation and history of building effective partnerships and collaborating to address needs within the community.

*Table 12*

*Need for Training and Ability to Collaborate*

Participant Number	Need Training	Collaborate
One	Yes	Yes
Two	Yes	Yes
Three	Yes	Yes
Four	Yes	Yes
Five	Yes	Yes
Six	Yes	Yes
Seven	Yes	Yes
Eight	Yes	Yes
Nine	Yes	Yes
Ten	Yes	Yes

With regard to the need for training and development, Participant Nine stated, “That’s hilarious, yes.” Participant Nine also commented,

So if we’re mandated to address child abuse, which I believe that we are, and this is one part of that that we’ve totally neglected, that for me is an issue and something that needs to change and be addressed, and I think that for us to do that, we need to at least even recognize that we don’t know anything about it.

Participant Three replied,

Yes, clearly after doing this whole interview, yes we do, because I don’t know what we’re talking about, and honestly, I will be curious what other people have to say, but I happen to like documentaries and I seek them out and watch them so I mean that might be even more knowledge than some people have and if we were to scale my knowledge, it’s really low, oh we already did at the beginning but, so yes I definitely think we need some [training].

Participant One remarked,

Yes, absolutely. If we knew a little bit more about it or knew how to spot it, whatever information, because I imagine it would be a really tricky thing to study and pass on that

information, like these are things to look for if you're in a situation and children might be being trafficked, look for these things, and, we might, we might be able to, as first responders kind of thing, maybe crack this egg open a little further.

Participant Five responded,

Tremendously. Well it was interesting because as I was talking to my supervisor last week about going to the training, she looked kind of confused, like well how does that even relate to our job so I was saying well the whole sexual abuse piece and then learning at the training like how 80-90% of the victims of the child trafficking were sexually abused like we deal with those...I think that that should just definitely be I think it's a training issue, I think it's a policy issue, um I think it's like ya know our protocol, it's our agreement with law enforcement on how to interview, there's a very specific protocol for interviewing for child sexual abuse but I'm not thinking that any of this is interwoven.

In terms of what kind of training and development is needed, the main theme corresponded to the necessity of a mandatory training, that was brief enough, due to limited time and workload constraints, but that would cover basic awareness and education, case reviews, generate screening protocol, including what to look for and profiles of child trafficking cases.

Participant Two stated,

I think there has to be a mandatory element to it just based on what I know of caseworkers' behaviors, and it's not necessarily like they're slackers, but they're busy, it's the last, I mean when you have mandates of things you have to get done then finding the time to do training is always the last thing on your list; however, the state of Colorado last year or two years ago, requires that we have like ongoing credits of 40 hours a year of training.

Participant Three echoed,

I'd say what works well for our office is if it's a required training, if it's not required, not many people go, full day trainings we kind of lose our heads, so I would say like a four hour required training would be a good start just to get some knowledge out there and then going from there, but I think that is a good base point. The key is it has to be required.

Participant Four added, "I think that people are starting out at different positions in their knowledge and I think expanding their thinking to include case examples of how they might see it and challenging them to see it." Participant Eight responded,

No doubt, yes they do, big time. I think information as to what the definition is because I think the majority, I'm assuming, I would think the majority of people don't think of child trafficking... so it's education.

Participant Nine commented,

Education, policies, awareness, ability to identify, I mean all of those things. Definitely, I think, and pretty simply, but yes is the short answer and then the long is I think education, I think a policy, I think screening, I think, we have something here called Research Champions where we read articles and stuff, that whole thing and I wonder if this would be something that we should look at just in terms of understanding what has worked for other agencies in identifying and then see if we could implement some of that here cause I feel like it wouldn't I mean we're pretty darn good at identifying abuse and neglect and so if this is another type of that in so many ways then it wouldn't be that difficult to add this to our radar and to be looking for that as well.

Participant Nine also shared,

So I guess my role specifically I think I am in a position in this organization where I'm able to kind of create change in a different way only because I get to bring in new information or impact the way that new workers do their work or veteran workers might change their work and so I mean my thought is how can we get some stakeholders excited about this and recognize what an issue it is and do some of those things I talked about earlier, I think we do need more education, I think we do need some sort of identification system, we do need to at least have a list of resources that people can call if they even begin to think that this might be an issue once they've learned how to identify it. Like keeping kids safe, this is part of it, there's the criminal piece, but making sure the child is removed from that situation and I mean we have the authority to do that and I think a mandate to do that.

Participant One stated,

Absolutely. I would think that if there are safe houses and shelters and things like that um I wonder if they would be some of actually the best sources of information...I mean I am sure that we already have some kind of a profile of what a trafficker and what a client looks like, but I think working collaboratively with those people and maybe build that profile.

Participant Ten added,

I think identifying if it really is or not, not having the awareness, or maybe they don't want to admit it, like I said, it doesn't happen here, ya know. I think why don't you come over and teach something for us, I mean we have so many training programs and trainings we go to and we need to have this.

All ten of the participants reported that child welfare professionals could work collaboratively with local service providers and key stakeholders to better address child trafficking in the community. Participant Three stated, “Yes I do, I think that’s a positive of our area; I feel like we do in lots of situations, have good collaborating partnerships.” Participant Four shared,

Absolutely in this community we have collaborations on everything, we have so many collaborative efforts in this community, I don’t think it would take but a little bit of push or even if we organized one of those trainings to invite some of those partners into those trainings and then to say okay on this committee that we’re going to form to do identification stuff, lets form a secondary committee to see how we can implement it in our community, I mean I think it would be that easy, we have the basic stuff set in place for the partnerships.

Participant Two added,

Yeah I totally think they could. This county has a better network than a lot of counties I think do as far as that goes, but it’s not perfect ya know, it still has room to grow but yeah I think that having networks and communities and consortiums and stuff like that that include a broad cross section of schools and other elements too.

Participant Five shared,

I would like to see that it be more of an issue that would be trained and that it would be more written into policy through child welfare organizations but I think kind of like cross-training, like right now for example we do training kind of across systems for um we do training for serious bodily injury child fatality where we train caseworkers and we train the coroner’s office so we train law enforcement together and then it also impacts like hospital staff so like there’s cross collaboration in those types of investigations it seems like this would be very similar that we would want everybody trained up on how to work together to most beneficially address the issue.

With respect to exactly how participants believe collaboration could be best accomplished, the main theme was raising awareness through education. Participant Seven commented, “Yes, yes, I think that if everyone is aware of everyone else’s sort of policy, we could work better together, and also, I think everyone needs to be aware of how prevalent it is, although it’s once again hard to identify.” Participant Seven shared,

Well trainings, I think we've had trainings for serious bodily injuries, we've had trainings together with law enforcement, with the hospitals, with the caseworkers, and then, I think that's, I mean just that building of awareness of how everyone does it and how everyone can work together is really important and also seeing the research and seeing ya know what is done about it, just being aware of how law enforcement and how involved they are in those kinds of cases would be really interesting, make me more aware.

Participant Nine added,

I think awareness is the first piece but I think from there like, I mean we have task force for every single different kind of potential abuse or neglect or issue in this community and so I don't know why there couldn't be a group that focused on this and helped to ensure that we were working together kind of a multidisciplinary team, I'm thinking we could do like case reviews and look back on what's worked and what hasn't and we have all sorts of different kinds of consultation processes that we could use and I think there's a lot that we could do without really changing a lot, like I think we could do a lot to improve our work in this area without working too hard to do it.

With respect to the question asking participants if they have ever worked with a victim of child trafficking, it was interesting to witness the participants' reflecting upon past cases and to hear their responses. The main theme that developed was the realization that the majority of participants had worked with a victim of child trafficking, or potentially had, in the past, but they did not know at the time because they were not aware of the criteria. Six of the ten participants reported that with this new definition, they had in fact worked with a victim of child trafficking at the agency, but it was not documented as such. Participant Four commented, "Trafficking isn't used, you don't hear that ever, I've never heard that." Most participants reported that it was either categorized as sexual abuse or third party abuse. Three of the participants stated that it was a possibility that they had come into contact with a victim in the past, but they were not entirely sure. One participant, Participant Three, responded, "Not to my knowledge." Participant Seven shared,

I mean I have a case where a child identified horrible, horrible things, sex, physical, emotional, everything, drugs were used, weapons were used, video-taping and photographing and other people were present and mom would be drugged and fall asleep but she would get drugs from this guy and so I mean that borderline could have been



because the mother was not protective and she allowed it and she received service and then like drugs... so there's so many different facets but potentially that was a child trafficking issue and was it identified as one, no...I would consider that potentially after knowing the description or the definition so that was probably a case of child trafficking.

Participant Four added,

So in the case I alluded to earlier where this mom was getting a benefit from having this stepdad not ya know not provide a roof over her head and not be so controlling and abusive of her but instead having that sexual relationship with the kids, in my mind, she had started to be labeled as a victim, watching her actions and seeing what choices she made, she was then asked to go to the assessment to decide if she had any sexual perpetration concerns herself, so that's a great step; however, had it been identified as sexual trafficking of those children, I think that would have been really helpful for her to hear and see and for her to learn about and understand because he was, in this instance of sexual abuse, he got the consequences, she got very few, but she was the one trafficking, and so in this instance I don't know that it was egregious enough for this mom to not have her kids I mean eventually she went through things and did well and got her kids but I think in the process of her recovery, her knowing and understanding what child trafficking was and her role in it, might have been even more helpful because it was very easy for her to say I'm not a sexual perpetrator, it was very easy for her to say, and the person who assessed her, it was very easy for that person to say, no she doesn't have perpetrator behaviors, well you are right, she wasn't a perpetrator, but she was a trafficker.

Participant Eight responded,

Yes, but I didn't think of it as trafficking at the time. Again, now with this definition, there's been numerous cases where, I have one teenager now who when she and her siblings were younger, they lived, they were dumped with the grandparents and the grandparents were sexually abusing them and selling them out for I want to say pornography, that's not the word I want, for sex, to people they knew and stuff like that and so then ya know these kids are screwed up, big time.

Participant Four stated, "Well yes now that I understand what it is, I could say several." She went on to add,

I can name two cases right now that would fall within this definition, active cases. I think it happens all the time, I mean, there's a parent, so this mom is in this relationship with her husband, they were married, but it's a stepdad to her children and she was aware of the uh sexual acts that were happening between her husband and her children and um I think if I were to go into details on those that might be identifying information, but there were many various acts that happened and some she was more aware of and some she was less aware of, but there was an awareness, and for her, she was receiving the home, his home that they lived in, the stability, his emotional support and he was very intimidating to her and controlling to her and so it allowed her relief when she didn't

have to deal with his behaviors and the kids took care of him, and to me that really seems to fit and it would be hard to come down, I mean, ya know these are all little things and you could just as easily say she that she was a victim of abuse, but the reality is, is as this case started to roll, she, the department did a great job of sending her to be evaluated as a sexual offender because they were concerned about her colluding with the stepdad which I thought was a good piece, I think that was a good step in the right direction to actually assess what her motives were and whether she had an awareness of the fact that she was trafficking her kids for her own piece of mind and a place to live.

Participant Four shared,

I think that they're probably the sexual abuse is probably the most regular thing we see coming in, the sexual abuse of a child is identified and it is some person in that child's life and so If I had to guess how many cases I, in looking back over this past year and the cases that I've seen I would guess that I've probably handled, gosh with this definition, five cases that I've handled that would probably meet this definition but if I had to guess percentage wise in the agency I would probably be guessing, with knowing what I know now, I would have said probably one or two percent before, knowing what I know now we could probably apply child trafficking to 10 percent of our sexual abuses cases.

Participant Four also added,

As you were giving me the definition and my light bulb goes on I'm like gosh okay so I have these cases that I've seen in these rooms that really would qualify for these definitions so um so how does my definition of child trafficking influence my identification of victims, well I think that I will be more apt to see when there's a parent who's letting, I mean we always, most of the time, I shouldn't say always, we always work with the child and their families and so it's not like we're having ya know and if not the child's in a foster home or whatever but, I mean I think it will help in those instances where we see the family that is bartering or trading off their child for something I mean I think that just now that light bulb, I think I will regularly be able to see that as it's happening.

Participant Eight reported,

Yes, but I didn't think of it as trafficking at the time. Again, now with this definition, there's been numerous cases where, I have one teenager now who when she and her siblings were younger, they lived, they were dumped with the grandparents and the grandparents were sexually abusing them and selling them out for I want to say pornography, that's not the word I want, for sex, to people they knew and stuff like that and so then ya know these kids are screwed up, big time.

Participant Five shared,

I'm aware of cases that I've heard of where's there like that one that I was talking about the adoptive parent and cases where we've heard like mom was prostituting out but it was

more looked under the auspice for both of those case examples of that's child sexual abuse like they didn't really address the trafficking component it was more like when you asked me like is child sexual abuse synonymous with trafficking like we weren't even thinking about the trafficking piece we were more like thinking about the child sexual abuse.

Participant Five also added,

I wouldn't even have a clue cause I'm not even sure that we're identifying them so I think that there's probably a lot of and I don't have a number to even ball park it but I'm sure that there are victims that we have worked with or currently work with or will work with in the future that we don't even have it on our radar about the child trafficking piece.

Participant Nine reported,

I would say yes based on the new definition that I have, absolutely there have been times in which, yes is the answer. I'm realizing I have worked with children that have technically, by that definition, been trafficked and had no idea, in my mind they were abused when it fact it also meets this definition.

Participant Nine went on to say,

I'm in kind of a unique perspective because I see the work of 18 workers so I have like a much larger pool to draw from, but I think if we were looking at it this way, in our team alone I would think, gosh like maybe 12 cases a year, like maybe about one a month where I think you, if you really looked at it could probably qualify it as some ya know that the child was being exploited sexually and that a parent or a third party was benefiting from it in some way, so I guess if you divided that by three, the three teams that would be 36 cases a year would be my estimate, I don't know.

Participant Ten commented, "Yes, oh yeah, I mean there's so many, we do, we do sometimes between 300 and 500 a month of child protection calls." Participant Eight added, "I mean I've seen a lot of cases over the years where one of the parents would sell their children out to make money so they'd have food."

With respect to the question concerning how child trafficking relates to participants' role as a child welfare professional, all participants reported that there was a direct correlation between their job as child protection workers and child trafficking being a form of child abuse.

As stated by Participant Two,

I think it relates huge. I think that we're the first line defenders really for kids and um could be ya know if child welfare workers like me are not educated and are not looking for it then who is? And who's championing those kids' rights and behaviors so yeah I think it is a direct correlation.

Participant Ten added, "Try to be their voice, somebody has to do that." Participant Three shared,

I think that I mean given that we are talking about child abuse I mean it's definitely part of my role to become more educated about it and be able to identify that so that we can be prosecuting people in the correct way so they don't continue to do this cause that's obviously not okay, so yeah I would say on a broad scale that's definitely our role to have the knowledge about it so we can do something.

### Research Question Three Conclusions

The greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims as reported by the child welfare professionals are the lack of awareness, the lack of screening protocol and criteria to properly identify victims, the absence of any training or resources related to child trafficking, the lack of a formal definition of child trafficking and the factors involved, and the ambiguous meaning of the term child trafficking. All of these variables contribute to the difficulty expressed by participants with respect to their ability to identify victims and accurately delineate between child abuse, child sexual abuse, and child trafficking. Six of the ten participants reported that with the new definition of child trafficking, they had in fact worked with victims, but it was never identified as child trafficking. The main theme was this realization that participants had worked with a victim of child trafficking, or potentially had, in the past, but they were not aware of it at the time.

Participants shared their desire to learn more about child trafficking to better recognize it and accurately identify children. Among all participants, it was widely acknowledged that training and development are greatly needed and wanted, and that as child welfare professionals, it is their role to protect and provide proper care for children. All of the study participants also

reported that child welfare professionals could work collaboratively with local service providers and key stakeholders to better address child trafficking in the community and that the identified geographic area has strong partnerships to do so.

### Final Interview Guide Questions

Questions twenty-seven and twenty-eight from the interview guide ask participants if there is any additional information they would like to share and if they have any questions for me related to the interview or subject matter. The major theme that evolved from these questions was participants' interest in more information. All ten participants did not have any additional information to share, other than their interest in learning more about my study and the extent of the problem in Colorado and the identified geographic area. All of the participants asked questions related to the statistics of child trafficking and what I knew specifically about it in Colorado as well as what I planned to do with the results. With respect to the question asking if participants had any additional information to share, Participant Ten replied, "No I just think that you should come and give us a training, no I'm serious, this was just really, wow, you're doing amazing stuff, I'm grateful to have you around." Participant Two stated, "I think it's definitely an area that needs to be better informed."

### Overall Conclusions

This chapter presented the findings and conclusions from the study's three research questions and identified the major themes within the data. There were no significant findings related to the demographic data collected from the ten participants. In terms of gender and ethnicity, nine of the ten participants were female and eight of the participants identified as Caucasian. There were no significant differences among responses based on the various age ranges, years of years of experience, or educational attainment. The only notable finding based

on the demographic variables was from Participant Six, the one male child welfare professional who participated in the study, also in the youngest participant age range, with the least amount of experience. From the ten participants, he perceived the organization to have the highest level of awareness (moderate). Interestingly, those participants with greater tenure at the agency shared the perspective that the organization had a lower level of awareness.

From the three research questions, the following conclusions were identified: 1) there is a lack of awareness concerning child trafficking, the laws and statistics, the meaning and what it exactly entails, and how it is significantly different from child abuse/sexual abuse, exploitation, and prostitution; 2) the lack of understanding about child trafficking and the definition directly impacts the level of awareness, meaning, and ability to properly identify victims; and 3) the major challenges in victim identification are due to the lack of awareness, ambiguous meaning, and absence of training regarding child trafficking. All of the findings relate to the three research questions, intertwined, and correspond to the main themes within the data.

Participant Five's response reflects the connection between the lack of awareness, understanding, identification, and training among child welfare professionals as well as the public. She is the one participant who attended a training session on child trafficking.

I think it's a fairly hidden problem, that there's probably this whole like deep dark world that most of society doesn't even acknowledge is happening which I also equate to a lot of people don't really believe child abuse happens or believe domestic violence happens because it's not affecting me so I just go through my life and I look in this little tunnel and I don't pay attention to what's around me because I think that's just kind of the society that we live in...I think it definitely impacts us as child welfare workers and I think that we should have way more training on understanding it and knowing the risk factors and kind of how big of a deal it is and how in depth of a deal it is so I don't know I just think a lot of people in society wouldn't even have a clue so I think even just to sit down and like if I were to sit down with a family member or a friend that I have and just like I've been talking to you with them about what I learned on Friday, I think people would be blown away. I think it's horrible and I was blown away at the prevalence but I'm also kind of I don't know you get kind of hardened being a child protection worker so I was blown away but I wasn't like, I don't how to say this, I wasn't like shocked and

disgusted as I call regular people would be because child sexual abuse is something I come into contact with on a regular basis, whereas other people, who don't believe these things happen, would be blown away so it would be interesting to have a conversation because I think the general public probably has no clue.

### Summary

This chapter presented the findings and conclusions from the study. The following chapter will discuss the findings and conclusions gathered from the ten study participants, provide implications for policy and practice on child welfare and child trafficking, and will offer recommendations for policy and practice and future research.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to address the gap in the research related to child trafficking from the perspective of child welfare professionals. The three research questions seek to discern the level of awareness of child trafficking among child welfare professionals; the meaning of child trafficking among child welfare professionals; and the greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims. This chapter discusses the findings gathered from the ten study participants, related to the three research questions, and in parallel to the literature. Implications of the study for policy and practice on child welfare and child trafficking as well as recommendations for policy and practice and future research are also presented. This chapter concludes with final reflections from the researcher.

This case study utilized the descriptive approach and focused on describing the level of awareness of child trafficking and the meaning of child trafficking as well as the greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims from the perspective of child welfare professionals. Information regarding child maltreatment is widely available from the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; however, lacking is specific data related to child victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. It is critical that public child welfare administrators modify their practices and implement assessment forms related to intake and investigation (Fong & Cardoso, 2009). Additionally, greater detail is needed regarding sexual abuse cases and the variety of circumstances involved.

### Discussion of Research Question One

The self-reported level of awareness among participants as well as the organizational awareness as perceived by participants was relatively low. Most participants were not aware of the laws related to child trafficking and all ten participants were not aware of child trafficking



statistics, but perceived them to likely be underreported. This sentiment corresponds to their beliefs about child welfare data and child abuse statistics, which typically are underreported as well. This finding also mirrors the literature which denotes trafficking numbers to be highly volatile, with broad ranges in terms of the magnitude, and only rough estimates of its prevalence.

Another finding analogous to the literature was related to the varying beliefs about child trafficking in the world, United States, and the identified geographic (local) area. Participants believed child trafficking to be more common in the world than in the United States; more prevalent in developing nations (i.e., “the third world”) and among impoverished countries and communities; and not as noticeable/familiar in the identified geographic area. These beliefs are very similar to the public in terms of the widely-held views of human trafficking. According to Walts and French (2011), the general public, law enforcement, and even child trafficking victims often do not know what human trafficking is. This reality poses a considerable barrier to the understanding of the phenomenon and to proper identification.

With respect to training, the majority of participants, nine of the ten, had not received formal training related to child trafficking, most were not aware if colleagues or others in the agency had received training, and all ten stated that they were not aware of any resources at the agency concerning child trafficking. This finding parallels the literature and is significant in terms of the lack of training and development concerning child trafficking within child welfare in the United States. A few states, namely Illinois, New York, and Connecticut have been pioneers in this area and have emerging legislation and legal decisions that equate any sexual exploitation of a child with trafficking. These states have begun the process of implementing child trafficking resources for child welfare workers; but, in general, the majority of states do not have designated protocol for identification (Walts & French, 2011).

## Discussion of Research Question Two

The meaning of child trafficking was challenging for participants to grasp. There were a lot of unknowns in terms of what is trafficking and what is not trafficking. They viewed it as a form of child abuse, often very similar to sexual abuse and synonymous with child exploitation and prostitution/interfamilial prostitution. The predominant themes identified related to participants' perceptions of child trafficking included movement; kidnapping; forced adoption; the buying and selling of children; harm, forced labor, prostitution, or sexual acts; an abuse of power and control; for illegal means, money, gain or profit; injustice, exploitation, and slavery; horrifying, demeaning, and loss of innocence for the children; a form of child abuse/child sexual abuse; among conditions of poverty; ethnic minorities and/or foreign populations; involving drugs, weapons, violence, and force; organized crime; hidden phenomenon; and prostitution and pornography.

These themes are closely correlated to child trafficking and the common perceptions held about the phenomenon. In general, there is a lot of ambiguity with the term trafficking and what the qualifiers are. Many of the misconceptions held by participants emulate the literature with respect to what typically people think of when they hear the term trafficking. Movement is a very commonly cited misunderstanding about human trafficking and anti-trafficking organizations and governments are now explicitly stating that movement is not a requirement for trafficking to occur (U.S. Department of State, 2011). The idea that children have to be moved to be considered victims of trafficking was also a prevalent theme found in this study. According to Walts and French (2011), general misperceptions about child trafficking victims among service providers include: minors can choose to work in the sex trade and should be punished for the crime; an international border must be crossed; a person who crosses the border illegally and

voluntarily cannot be a victim; victims are only from other countries, not the United States; only sex trade and prostitution are involved; trafficking only includes the sex trade and prostitution. These misunderstandings hold severe consequences for children victims to receive proper identification and care. There is a critical need to inform service providers and child welfare professionals of the facts about child trafficking, the laws and legislation, the various forms of child trafficking, and the faces of victims and traffickers.

The difficulty participants had in delineating between child trafficking and the various terms (child abuse/sexual abuse, child exploitation and child prostitution/interfamilial prostitution) parallels the literature. According the U.S. Department of Justice (n.d.), the word prostitution can mislead a person's understanding of this type of child sexual exploitation when it is in fact sex trafficking. There was a lot of uncertainty expressed with respect to what would have to happen/what would be different to constitute trafficking as opposed to the other terms frequently used in child protection. A significant opportunity for education and training exists in order to facilitate greater knowledge and understanding of what child trafficking is, how it may present, and the aspects that distinguish it from other forms of child abuse. It is also critical to stress that children involved in this activity are victims and are manipulated by traffickers and pimps by use of physical, emotional, and psychological harm, often including rape, torture, and beatings to keep them entrenched in a life of prostitution. Frequently, alcohol and drugs are also utilized as a means of control (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d).

### Discussion of Research Question Three

The most significant challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims are the lack of awareness, the lack of screening protocol and criteria to properly identify victims, the absence of any training or resources related to child trafficking, the lack of a formal

definition of child trafficking and the variables involved, and the ambiguous meaning of child trafficking. All of these factors were cited as contributing to the difficulty noted by participants and their ability to properly identify victims and correctly demarcate among child abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, prostitution/interfamilial prostitution, and trafficking.

Participants shared that the overall lack of awareness about the subject matter, the definition and what to look for, and the various ways child trafficking may appear were all challenges in the identification process. Participants mentioned the need for education about child trafficking and how to recognize victims, provide services, and work with law enforcement. All, except for one participant, had not received any formal training about child trafficking and all ten participants reported that no resources are available at the agency specific to child trafficking. Participants shared that current resources and screening mechanisms at the identified agency do not ask precise questions about trafficking and do not reflect any child trafficking identifiers. The need for training is illustrated by Participant Three,

Yes, clearly after doing this whole interview, yes we do, because I don't know what we're talking about, and honestly, I will be curious what other people have to say, but I happen to like documentaries and I seek them out and watch them so I mean that might be even more knowledge than some people have and if we were to scale my knowledge, it's really low.

In terms of ideas about what kind of training is needed, participants noted the abundance of training at the agency and spoke to the need for a brief, mandatory training, seminar style, with a profile of trafficker and victim, and a screening guide with questions to ask and things to be looking for. The brief and mandated nature of the training was shared by many of the participants due to time constraints and busy schedules. Participant Three stated,

As far as what do I think is needed, I'm guessing it is a huge subject, I'd say what works well for our office is if it's a required training, if it's not required, not many people go, full day trainings we kind of lose our heads, so I would say like a four hour required training would be a good start just to get some knowledge out there and

then going from there, but I think that is a good base point. The key is it has to be required.

Participant One added, “I do like the idea of sort of a seminar type of thing [training] because we have so many of them.” Speaking to the time constraints at the agency,

Participant Four mentioned the idea of a basic training for all, and perhaps an in-depth training for a few,

I think that really if we’re saying okay well we can’t afford a full day then okay we have consultation teams and facilitators, people who are exposed to all of the cases so why not train a handful of people from each of those teams so that when we get those cases in consultation, there is that person on that team who has that knowledge to help ask those questions and identify. Everybody should get the basic information but there should be one person who has more information to ask the questions.

All participants acknowledged the need, and expressed desire, for training and development, and that as child welfare professionals, it is their role to protect and provide proper care for the children they come into contact with. In order to fulfill this role, participants shared that they need education and training to better recognize child trafficking, accurately identify victims, and provide the necessary services and care.

All of the study participants reported that child welfare professionals could work collaboratively with local service providers and key stakeholders to better address child trafficking in the community. Additionally, it was noted that the identified geographic area has strong existing partnerships and has worked collaboratively in the past. The following participants illustrate these two significant findings. As evidenced by Participant Nine,

We have task force for every single different kind of potential abuse or neglect or issue in this community and so I don’t know why there couldn’t be a group that focused on this and helped to ensure that we were working together kind of a multidisciplinary team, I’m thinking we could do like case reviews and look back on what’s worked and what hasn’t and we have all sorts of different kinds of consultation processes that we could use and I think there’s a lot that we could do without really changing a lot, like I think we could do a lot to improve our work in this area without working too hard to do it.

Participant Five shared,

I would like to see that it be more of an issue that would be trained and that it would be more written into policy through child welfare organizations but I think kind of like cross-training, like right now for example we do training kind of across systems for um we do training for serious bodily injury child fatality where we train caseworkers and we train the coroner's office so we train law enforcement together and then it also impacts like hospital staff so like there's cross collaboration in those types of investigations it seems like this would be very similar that we would want everybody trained up on how to work together to most beneficially address the issue.

Participants expressed their concern with learning the actual definition of child trafficking in Colorado while thinking about cases they have worked with. As noted by the U.S. Department of Justice (n.d.), it is illegal to lure, transport, or obtain a child for the purposes of prostitution or any other illegal sexual activity under federal law. Perpetrators of these acts are considered traffickers or pimps and benefit in some manner from the sale of a child, resulting in a profit or gain of something of value. This issue of value, also cited under Colorado law, can be difficult to identify and/or define. In Colorado, a person commits trafficking in children if he or she:

Sells, exchanges, barter, or leases a child and receives any money or other consideration or thing of value for the child as a result of such transaction; or

Receives a child as a result of a transaction described above (Colorado Revised Statutes, 2010).

Participant Ten echoed the significance of the definition stating, "The value word is key." Upon reflection of past and active cases, several participants stated that with the new Colorado definition provided, they could name multiple cases that would meet the criteria. As illustrated by Participant Seven,

There's so many different facets but potentially that was a child trafficking issue and was it identified as one, no...I would consider that potentially after knowing the description or the definition so that was probably a case of child trafficking.

Participant Four noted, “As you were giving me the definition and my light bulb goes on I’m like gosh okay so I have these cases that I’ve seen in these rooms that really would qualify.”

Participant Eight added, “Yes, but I didn’t think of it as trafficking at the time. Again, now with this definition, there’s been numerous cases.”

Since the agency does not actively delineate child trafficking as a potential form of abuse, it routinely is classified as sexual abuse and/or third party abuse. The misunderstanding and mislabeling of child victims as well as the general lack of awareness of child trafficking pose serious limitations to the care victims receive as well as the legal consequences for the perpetrators.

#### Discussion of Questions and Additional Information

Based on the questions asked by participants and the question relating to any additional information they wished to share, it is evident that the child welfare professionals want to know more about child trafficking, in general, as well as in the state and the identified geographic area. The major theme that evolved from these questions was participants’ desire for more information. Participants were interested in learning more about the magnitude of the problem, the statistics and data available, and additional research and resources. As demonstrated by Participant Nine,

So you’re basically going to be just writing about like overall what child welfare professionals’ perspective and understanding and meaning and those kinds of things are which is kind of like really like a first step for Colorado, in a lot of ways right, I mean even just hearing you talk about the legislation, like it’s all so new, so it’s just really interesting.

Participants also shared their eagerness to read the results of my study and genuinely appeared concerned about the lack of awareness, training, and screening for child trafficking at the identified agency.

The importance of this study is evidenced by the enthusiasm displayed by the participants in terms of learning more about the phenomenon. Six of the ten participants stated upfront that they did not know too much about human trafficking or child trafficking, but when they saw the recruitment email and/or flyer, it dawned on them that this was definitely related to the work they do, and that if there is a study about it in the identified geographic area, it is probably happening. Additionally, participants were very shocked to learn the formal definition of child trafficking in Colorado. This made them think differently about the cases they have worked with over the years and what exactly constitutes child trafficking. Several participants reflected upon cases that now, with the formal definition, would meet the criteria, but at the time they did not even think of it. As illustrated by Participant Nine,

I'm definitely distracted because in my mind I'm going through a number of past cases where I'm like I don't know it just makes me wonder what we could have done differently and so but I think that that's a really a good thing and I think being challenged like that to really reflect is important because that's the only way we move forward and make progress in the process and so I think it's a good thing.

The child welfare participants are eager to learn more, to be better informed, and to receive training and development around the issue. These three points were referenced throughout out the interview and demonstrate the desire of the child welfare professionals to gain additional education and awareness about child trafficking to fulfill their role in child protection and better serve the community and wellbeing of the children.

### Implications for Policy

Human service agencies, specifically the division of children, youth and families, critically need policies to address child trafficking. The perspectives shared in this study from child welfare professionals mirror the literature regarding the need for agency policies, including screening protocol at intake. The state of Colorado has laws targeting both human trafficking and



child trafficking, but the awareness of these laws among the general public as well as child welfare organizations is lacking. As illustrated by Participant Six,

No, I'm sure, like I think we would have to, but I don't, I couldn't cite them or know anything about them. I'm sure there's, I'm sure we could apply the Children's Code and Volume 7 to it just in the treatment and maltreatment of children but I'm not sure if, I don't know any specific things about child trafficking.

In a study by Estes and Weiner (2001), laxity in some communities concerning law enforcement and human service agencies with regard to the commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children was observed. It was also determined that there is inadequate enforcement of laws and policies related to the CSE of children, a lack of awareness, and inaccurate data about the magnitude and gravity of the problem. Additionally, findings revealed negative attitudes concerning children implicated in prostitution by both human service professionals and law enforcement. Furthermore, law enforcement, human services, education, and health systems had insufficient structures to respond to the needs of sexually exploited children as well as poor database management of tracking systems. The outcome of these findings suggests a vast underestimation of the extent of sexually exploited children among human services and law enforcement (Estes & Weiner, 2001).

When a private matter becomes a social problem, a policy window typically affects it. According to Jimenez (2010), "When a social problem reaches critical mass in terms of public attention, there is only a brief period of time during which a public policy can be enacted, since public attentions waxes and wanes about social issues" (p. 14). There is greater awareness of the issue among organizations, professionals, and the general public (Walts & French, 2011), which means there is opportunity for policy and practice change. It is critical that policymakers are aware of the gaps related to awareness and training as well as the misperceptions about

trafficking and identification challenges among child welfare professionals in order to realize any change on a legislative level.

Within this area of policy, the lack of a direct mandate for child welfare agencies to work with victims of child trafficking presents a challenge. It has been noted that many state child welfare agencies do not consider it within their purview as the focus is mostly with families and reunification, if possible. Due to the greater degree of public awareness, the assumption is that state child welfare agencies will begin to include child trafficking as part of their mandate (Walts & French, 2011). However, state child welfare agencies have been and will continue to be the main party to respond to the most severe cases of neglect, abuse, and exploitation. Since child trafficking meets these criteria, this form of abuse should be included in the mandate of any agency accountable for the protection of children and youth (Walts & French, 2011). Participant Nine echoes this mandate when she shared,

I think we do need more education, I think we do need some sort of identification system, we do need to at least have a list of resources that people can call if they even begin to think that this might be an issue once they've learned how to identify it. Like keeping kids safe, this is part of it, there's the criminal piece, but making sure the child is removed from that situation and I mean we have the authority to do that and I think a mandate to do that.

Another implication for policy concerns the accuracy of reporting systems. If cases are not actively identified as trafficking, the needed care and requisite punishment will not occur. Moreover, the challenges with data collection and determining the extent of trafficking will continue and the magnitude of the problem will remain unknown. This point was also identified in the current study as evidenced by Participant Seven,

I think that's a good idea, I also don't know what the stats are in Colorado or in our area and I think because it's a hidden phenomenon, I don't know how aware we really are and how prevalent it really is, so I think that would be, based on the need, I think we would need the education and the training and the criteria.

## Implications for Practice

Child welfare workers have a fundamental role in their ability to identify potential child trafficking victims. A lot of victims of trafficking have previously interacted with child protection at some level, as wards of the state, foster care or group homes at the time of their recruitment, and/or through prostitution/pornography. Caseworkers are in a position to speak with vulnerable children and youth about the risks and dangers of traffickers (Walts & French, 2011). It is paramount that child welfare professionals build trust, create a safe environment, develop effective interviewing skills, and ask open-ended questions to enable potential victims the space to disclose, safely, the details about their situation.

Victims of child sex trafficking have experienced a form of sex slavery that necessitates appropriate assessment and treatment modalities to reflect the trauma they endured. However, there is a lack of evidenced-based practice for working with this population. In the American child welfare system, public child welfare workers depend on licensed private therapists and providers who are knowledgeable in treating child sexual abuse but who struggle with the treatment options available for child victims of human trafficking because of the poor best practice fit (Fong & Cardoso, 2009). Service providers need to determine the specific form of treatment needed. Typical treatment modalities of individual, family, and group therapy for child sexual abuse, commonly used by child protective services, may not be appropriate for child trafficking. Victims of trafficking may require greater sensitivity due to fear of exposure, lack of anonymity, and because family members may not be accessible (Fong & Cardoso, 2009). According to Fong and Cardoso (2009), child protection agencies should collaborate with private organizations working with the exploitation of children to identify appropriate treatment and therapy options, to recognize cultural competency, and to adapt services to meet the diverse backgrounds of trafficking victims.

It is imperative that not only child welfare professionals, but also the general public and communities, become more educated about child trafficking because there are various implications for the well-being of children based on awareness. Stakeholders, potentially impacting the fate of a child, include the justice and juvenile justice system, prosecutors, judges, district attorneys, schools, health care providers, and the public. Lack of awareness and education has the propensity to result in uninformed communities, juries, and other key individuals and entities, and may ultimately impair the rescue and proper treatment of child trafficking victims.

Another implication for practice concerns the structure of state child welfare agencies. The often bureaucratic nature and size of the organization can present challenges in terms of implementing new policies and procedures as well as the issue of buy-in from leadership may also cause resistance (Walts & French, 2011). Participant Five echoed this sentiment,

Well I think it is kind of from the top down because the definition that you read in the Colorado Revised Statutes is from 18-3-502 so like the Children's Code is Title 19 and to my knowledge there's definitions for physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, but there's no definitions related to child trafficking and then same thing like in the Child Welfare Training Academy they don't really touch on it so like I think if there's not policies in place, if there's not training in place specifically to train all workers and then if there aren't protocols with law enforcement about identifying like child trafficking like I think that that's it's kind of hard to look for it if it's not required to look for it, does that make sense?

Additionally, there are also many pressures and differing priorities with typically high employee turnover and huge caseloads. There is already a very full training curriculum for caseworkers and child protection agencies. This issue of turnover and endless training was mentioned in the current study as well. Participants shared the need for training to be brief, required, and informative. As illustrated by Participant Two,

I see that as a challenge for our agency to get people trained. I don't know what they are learning now in schools, in bachelors or masters programs, if this is being discussed, it

sure wasn't when I was in school so it's up to that sort of individual's continuing education kind of efforts and if it's not something that is expected from the agency now, my experience is that most people, unless it's demanded of them and expected, they're not going out and finding it on their own.

Participant Eight shared,

Brief basic education doesn't have to be a whole day because people tune it out, it has to be down and dirty and something as graphic as possible or as clear as possible as to the guidelines then people would start thinking that way.

Participant Three spoke to the mandatory nature of the training, "I'd say what works well for our office is if it's a required training, if it's not required not many people go." Participant Two, with 21 – 30 years of experience at the agency, spoke to the challenge of high employee turnover,

I also think probably a huge challenge for our agency is the turnover that we have in caseworkers ya know I am kind of a rare bird around here to have that kind of experience often times new caseworkers coming right out of college are staying a couple 2-5 years, I don't know what the length of career of a caseworker is anymore but I know that there are not very many of us with 20 some years of experience, even ten years is huge around here so you just about get somebody trained and they leave and I think, I mean that is a challenge in any area of child protection, but because it is so high stress and the government and the expectations and the regulations and the caseloads and all that stuff are huge.

Participant Two also mentioned the hectic schedules and reality of the work,

I think there has to be a mandatory element to it just based on what I know of caseworkers' behaviors is that because of the, and it's not necessarily like they're slackers, but they're busy and things, it's the last, I mean when you have mandates of things you have to get done then finding the time to do training is always the last thing on your list; however, the state of Colorado last year or two years ago requires that we have like ongoing credits of 40 hours a year of training and it shouldn't be, I mean we just turned in our training logs and this county is really is good about providing in house trainings so there's really no excuse to not get your training in. I noticed when we had one the other day that a lot of people were here from other counties that were scrambling to get their hours in and I think part of it is because it's such a huge chunk of your day to do an eight hour day of training somewhere far away drive blah blah blah so that's the last thing you want to do is take a whole day out of your work load because your work just stacks up for you it doesn't nobody is taking care of it when you're gone training.

According to Macy and Graham (2012), it is possible that human service providers are offering typical services to victims of sex trafficking and do not recognize them as trafficking victims. The consequences of such practices do not enable proper identification or appropriate services. Victims of this crime are considered especially vulnerable due to the horrific conditions common of trafficking situations and the intense trauma endured. Consistent with the recommendations presented by Macy and Graham (2012), the current study found that child welfare professionals need a preliminary set of questions and screening strategies in order to properly identify trafficking victims within the context of human services.

The lack of proper identification and response mechanisms among agencies and service providers yields severe consequences for the welfare of children and youth, including re-exposure to exploitive and unsafe environments. The identification and treatment needed for child trafficking victims is different than other forms of abuse. The trauma often endured by trafficking victims may exceed the level of maltreatment most victims of child abuse and child sexual abuse experience (Walts & French, 2011). If this trauma and the effects of the trauma are not properly addressed and treated, the outcome for children can be intensified and longer-lasting than other types of abuse.

The literature suggests that victims of sexual abuse are extremely vulnerable and are at a heightened risk of becoming involved in trafficking situations. Traffickers often prey on people who have a history of sexual abuse (Polaris Project, 2013). Additionally, “while anyone can become a victim of trafficking, certain populations are especially vulnerable. These may include: undocumented immigrants; runaway and homeless youth; victims of trauma and abuse; refugees and individuals fleeing conflict; and oppressed, marginalized, and/or impoverished groups and individuals” (Polaris Project, 2013, para. 4). Furthermore, according to Polaris Project (2013),

“Runaways and at-risk youth are targeted by pimps and traffickers for exploitation in the commercial sex industry or different labor or services industries. Pimps and sex traffickers are skilled at manipulating child victims and maintaining control through a combination of deception, lies, feigned affection, threats, and violence” (para. 6).

The following language is often associated with trafficking and serves as a guide for child welfare professionals to be aware of and to listen for when working with potential child trafficking victims. The list was compiled from calls made to human trafficking hotlines (to law enforcement and service providers) and intake with service providers working with child trafficking victims who may have been victims or third party observers of potential trafficking cases: slave or slave-like, being forced/made to do; being sold or traded for things; working a lot/too much; threats of deportation; no identification and/or passport taken away; debt to pay off; fear of employer or alleged guardian; unaware of how they got to current location; unsure or told to lie about age; any reference to prostitution, pornography, or commercial sex acts; any reference to pimp or making money for a boyfriend; threats to family; sleeps in basement or garage; escorted or supervised when out; living with a bunch of people; never been to a doctor; not allowed to socialize with friends or outsiders (or anyone); cannot talk to visitors; not allowed to talk on the telephone; not allowed/cannot go to school; not allowed/cannot have friends; and not allowed to leave the house (Walts & French, 2011, p. 48).

Human service agencies need training and development around child trafficking and screening procedures. From the findings of this study, child welfare professionals are very much interested in learning more about child trafficking and learning how to properly screen and identify victims. Child welfare professionals shared the sentiment that they believe they critically

need the training regarding child trafficking laws and policy as well as victim identification since they are front line workers designated to protect and serve in the best interests of the children.

### Recommendations

This section discusses the recommendations generated from this study with respect to policy and practice as well as future research. The theoretical framework guiding this study, critical theory, denotes the need to generate action. This study serves as a foundational glimpse of the perceptions of child welfare professionals in the identified geographic area of Colorado. From the review and analysis of the study's findings and conclusions, and with the impetus to create change, the following recommendations are offered.

#### Recommendations for Policy and Practice

A significant issue concerning policy and practice and recommendations for identifying, responding, and working with child trafficking is the relative newness of the recognition that child trafficking is occurring, and it is in the United States, and in the identified geographic area of Colorado. The recent media and public attention the phenomenon has received is critical to the acceptance of this as a current social problem necessitating action.

This subject and methods of working with victims will require the development and testing of recommended practices in order to determine best practices and to build upon evidence-based screening protocol. The current study found that the identified geographic area has a strong network of providers and partnerships within the community, and in the past, has demonstrated successful collaboration on projects. It is essential that communication, resources, and referrals within the community be strengthened around the problem of child trafficking and a multi-disciplinary approach be taken to address the issue.



According to Walts and French (2011), the necessary policy and practice recommendations include: implement training and resources; provide training and resources; protect the human rights of victims; build resiliencies; properly identify the victims; know the rights and resources available to victims; treat the victims for trauma and after effects; identify cases as trafficking; and empower victims (p. 114). The following recommendations are offered based on the findings from this study:

- 1) Incorporate definitions and laws related to child trafficking in the Colorado Children's Code, Title 19 of the Colorado Revised Statutes;
- 2) Implement training and development about child trafficking in the Child Welfare Training Academy that all new child welfare workers attend;
- 3) Provide training for all current child welfare professionals at the agency about child trafficking, its prevalence, what to be aware of, the definitions in the state of Colorado and the United States, laws, and identification measures;
- 4) Develop screening protocol and appropriate interviewing skills/questions for child welfare professionals and intake workers with identification mechanisms to capture the language often associated with child trafficking;
- 5) Create task force at identified agency to address child trafficking in the community and to collaborate with other key stakeholders (i.e., human services, law enforcement, mental health, schools, domestic violence/sexual assault agencies, and health care);
- 6) Develop best practices for collaboration/partnerships between child welfare agencies, human services, law enforcement, mental health, schools, domestic violence/sexual assault agencies, and health care;

- 7) Identify resources related to child trafficking to support child welfare professionals in their work;
- 8) Develop best practices for working with victims of child trafficking to address the multiple needs of this population;
- 9) Redesign report system to include child trafficking as a form of child abuse rather than the current standard classifications; and
- 10) Prosecute under Colorado anti-trafficking legislation to build precedence and ensure traffickers receive the most severe punishment and victims are afforded the proper restitution, treatment, and care.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Research is generally lacking with respect to human trafficking and the literature that is available is not very consistent due to the hidden nature of the phenomenon. There is a lack of research centered on child trafficking in the United States and even more so through the lens of child welfare. There are many opportunities for future research related to child trafficking in general as well as specifically within child welfare and child protective services.

The critical paradigm, the guiding theoretical framework of this study serves to articulate the severity of child trafficking and the importance of advancing the research concerned with this atrocious crime. Future research focusing on child trafficking and child welfare at the local, national, and global level is much needed. Specifically related to child trafficking and child welfare, the following recommendations apply:

- 1) Collect quantitative data about the prevalence of child trafficking in the identified geographic area and Colorado;

- 2) Interview child welfare professionals in different geographic regions of Colorado about awareness and prevalence;
- 3) Interview child welfare professionals in Colorado and the United States about their experiences working with state child welfare agencies, legislation, courts, victims and families;
- 4) Interview survivors of trafficking to learn more about their experiences in a phenomenological study;
- 5) Interview traffickers to generate a profile and to learn about the recruitment tactics, motives, and lifestyles;
- 6) Research evidenced-based practices for trauma-informed therapy and victim-centered services, specifically for child trafficking victims.

### Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings from the study's three research questions collected from the ten participants and in relation to the literature concerning child welfare and child trafficking. Implications for policy and practice related to child welfare and child trafficking as well as recommendations for policy and practice and future research were presented. This work concludes with final reflections about the journey, the study, and the experience.

### Final Reflections

I first became interested in human trafficking while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Bulgaria in the summer of 2004. I would never have imagined that six years later it would become the topic of my dissertation research. At the time, the subject matter was not receiving much, if any, media attention, and the level of awareness in general was quite low, even among colleagues and friends of mine. It certainly was not an issue perceived to affect Colorado,

especially in the identified region, nor did I ever believe it would turn out to be a true fit with my program specialization in Organizational Performance and Change. I feel incredibly grateful for the educational opportunities I have had in my life and it is my hope that this study will empower others to further the research concerning human trafficking and child trafficking and fight this fast growing, atrocious violation of human rights.

Change is needed in public awareness, policy, and practice in order to best meet the needs of the victims as well as to ensure proper punishment of traffickers to deter the growth of the industry. Yes, the trade of human beings is an industry; an industry that is alive and thriving; an industry that represents a complete abuse of vulnerable populations and innocent children. I do not want to live in a world where we treat people as commodities. I do not believe this represents social justice; rather, I agree with the statement by Participant One, “Child trafficking is evidence of just like a fractured people in general, like any other sin or folly that maybe takes over a culture or a population of people.” It is unjust, fueled by greed, and serves as a means of exploitation and severe abuse. I believe by increasing awareness, promoting education and empowerment, addressing the root causes of trafficking as well as the issues that make individuals venerable to trafficking, and working to combat this global problem, we can realize a world free from slavery. In closing, as stated by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

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## APPENDIX A

### Recruitment Script

Dear [NAME]:

My name is Stephanie Mace and I am a PhD candidate in the School of Education at Colorado State University. I am conducting a research study to explore child trafficking in Colorado. You have been identified to participate in this study based on your role as a professional working for the welfare of children.

It is my hope that you will participate in this study designed to better understand child trafficking in Colorado. Your participation is important because child trafficking is an increasing concern in the community, and because as a child welfare professional, you offer unique insights into the phenomenon of child trafficking in the state.

Please look for the upcoming email which details the study on [date]. If you have questions or comments please contact me at 503- 206-9401 or Stephanie.Mace@colostate.edu or Don Venneberg at Donald.Venneberg@colostate.edu.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Mace

## APPENDIX B

### Instrument Script

Dear [Name]:

You are being asked to take part in a research study carried out by Stephanie Mace in the School of Education at Colorado State University. You have been identified to participate in this upcoming study based on your role as a professional working for the welfare of children. I would like the opportunity to invite you to participate in this important study of child trafficking in Colorado.

The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of child trafficking in Colorado. There are two parts to the study: An interview and a five question demographic survey.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time. You may skip any particular question you do not wish to answer and you may discontinue participation in the interview at any point. The interview and demographic survey will take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete.

You are assured that all responses will remain anonymous and published results will not identify you by name. This interview guide meets all the requirements for the protection of respondent privacy and confidentiality and is approved by the Colorado State University Institutional Review Board. There are no known risks for participating in the study. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher has taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential risks.

The interview guide has been developed by the researcher and is based on a semi-structured format. The interview will be audio recorded to ensure your comments are heard and nothing is missed. Recordings will be kept in a locked location that only the researcher may access and will be destroyed after transcription. No names will be included in the transcription and no other identifying information will be collected or reported. You may ask questions at any time during the interview.

I appreciate your participation in contributing to this important study about child trafficking in Colorado. If you have questions concerning the study, at any time, please contact Stephanie Mace at (503) 206-9401 or [Stephanie.Mace@colostate.edu](mailto:Stephanie.Mace@colostate.edu) or Don Venneberg at [Donald.Venneberg@colostate.edu](mailto:Donald.Venneberg@colostate.edu).

Thank you,

Stephanie Mace

## APPENDIX C

### Demographic Survey

Please complete this information about yourself and your position.

1. Length of time at current position (please circle one):

- 0-1 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 30+ years

2. Gender (please circle one):

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

3. Race/Ethnicity (please check all that apply):

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Other: (please specify)

4. Age in years (please circle):

- 29 or less
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 or more

5. What is your highest level of completed education? Please list degree and/or certification.

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Guide

This interview will include a series of questions concerning your perspectives related to child trafficking in Colorado. These questions relate to the three main goals of the research:

- (1) To describe the level of awareness of child trafficking
- (2) To describe the meaning of child trafficking
- (3) To describe the challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims

#### **Level of Awareness Questions**

1. How would you rate your level of knowledge about child trafficking?

Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	2	3	4	5

2. Please explain your beliefs/perceptions of child trafficking in the world?

3. Please explain your beliefs/perceptions of child trafficking in the United States?

4. Please explain your beliefs/perceptions of child trafficking in the local area?

5. How did you first hear about child trafficking?

**\*\*Were you aware of it before your current position? Please explain.**

Awareness raising campaign or public service announcement

Media (television, radio, internet, movie, theater)

School (high school, college, graduate)

Job training program

Professional conference

Part of job description

Family, friend, or colleague

Personal interest or study

Other (please specify)

6. Are you familiar with official statistics concerning child trafficking in Colorado, that is, how many cases of child trafficking are officially recorded per year? If yes, approximately how many cases of child trafficking were officially reported in Colorado last year?

7. Do you think the child trafficking cases officially recorded in the state of Colorado accurately reflect the extent of child trafficking that is actually occurring in the state? Please explain.

8. Do you know if Colorado has specific laws related to child trafficking? If yes, please explain.

9. How would you rate your organization's general level of knowledge about human trafficking?

Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	2	3	4	5

10. Have you or anyone in your organization received formal training related to child trafficking? [e.g., *Classes, workshops, training sessions*] If yes, please explain.

11. Are you familiar with any resources related to child trafficking/human trafficking for caseworkers?

### Meaning Questions

12. If you were to describe the issue of child trafficking to another person, how would you describe it?

13. Who and what is involved in child trafficking?

14. What words and images come to mind when you hear the term child trafficking? Please describe.

15. What does child trafficking mean to you?

a. How does this relate to child abuse?

16. Do you think there are similarities/difference between child trafficking and the following?

a. Child abuse

b. Child sexual abuse

c. Child sexual exploitation

d. Child prostitution/familial prostitution

e. What sources of information do you draw upon in building these descriptions? Please explain.

17. If you were to offer a definition for child trafficking, what would it be? Upon what sources/resources do you base this definition?



## **Victim Identification Challenges Questions**

18. How does your definition of child trafficking influence how you identify victims?
19. Do you screen for child trafficking in intake procedures? Please explain. Are there other procedures for child trafficking victim identification?
20. To your knowledge, have you ever worked with victim of child trafficking at your agency? If yes, how do they come into contact with your organization and about how many in a given year?
21. Are specific criteria necessary for children/youth to be identified as victims of child trafficking in your current position? If yes, what are these criteria?
22. Is the identification of victims of child trafficking difficult in your current position? If yes, please explain.
  - a. What do you think are the greatest challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims?
23. Do you think victim identification could be improved? Please explain.
24. How does the phenomenon of child trafficking relate to your role as a child protective services worker?
25. Do you think caseworkers need training and development around child trafficking? If yes, what do you think is needed?
26. Do you think local service providers and key stakeholders (legal/law enforcement/caseworkers/shelters/safe houses) can work collaboratively/form partnerships to better address child trafficking? If yes, how do you think this could be best accomplished?
27. Is there any additional information you would like to share?
28. Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your participation!

## APPENDIX E

### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

**TITLE OF STUDY:** CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS IN COLORADO

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Donald L. Venneberg, PhD, School of Education, Donald.Venneberg@colostate.edu, 970-491-2965

**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Stephanie L. Mace, MSW, School of Education, Stephanie.Mace@colostate.edu, 503-206-9401

**WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?** You are being invited to participate in this study based on your role as a professional working for the welfare of children.

**WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?** This study is being conducted by Donald Venneberg, Assistant Professor, in the School of Education at Colorado State University and Stephanie Mace, doctoral candidate, in the School of Education at Colorado State University.

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?** The purpose of the study is to describe the perspectives of child welfare professionals with respect to child trafficking in Colorado. This study has three main goals: (1) to describe the level of awareness of child trafficking; (2) to describe the meaning of child trafficking; and (3) to describe the challenges associated with the identification of child trafficking victims. This study is designed to better understand child trafficking in Colorado. Your participation is important because child trafficking is an increasing concern in the community, and because as a child welfare professional, you offer unique insights about child trafficking in the state.

**WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?** The study will take place at a location of your preference. The location can be in the office of the Co-Principal Investigator or an identified, quiet place of your choice. The total time commitment for your involvement in this study is estimated at 75 minutes. The interview and demographic survey will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete and the review of the transcript for accuracy will require an additional 15 minutes.

**WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?** There are two parts to this study. *Part 1: Interview and demographic survey.* You will be interviewed about child trafficking in Colorado. The interview consists of 28 questions that cover three main topic areas: level of awareness of child trafficking; meaning of child trafficking; and victim identification challenges. The interview includes a four

question demographic survey. *Part 2: Review of transcript from audio recording.* You will be asked to review the interview transcript (approximately one month after the interview) for agreement. The transcript will be emailed to you for your review.

**ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?** You should not take part in the study if you are under 18 years of age.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?** It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

**ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** There are no direct benefits from taking part in this study. However, your participation will help to better understand child trafficking in Colorado and to inform prevention and protection practices for children at risk of being trafficked.

**DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?** Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?** We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

**WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?** You will receive \$25 cash compensation for participating in this study. You may keep the \$25 even if you withdraw your consent prior to the conclusion of the interview. Your identity/record of receiving compensation (NOT your data) may be made available to CSU officials for financial audits.

**WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?** Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Donald Venneberg, at 970-491-2965 or the Co-Principal Investigator, Stephanie Mace, at 503-206-9401. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

The CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on April 26, 2012 approved this consent form.

**WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?** The interview will be audio recorded to ensure the accuracy of the information collected. You will be contacted approximately one month after the interview (initial participation) to review the transcription from the audio recording for your agreement.

I agree to participate in the interview and demographic survey: Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_  
I agree to review the transcription for agreement: Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person providing information to participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Staff

## APPENDIX F

### Recruitment Flyer

**What:** A research study being conducted at Colorado State University about child trafficking



**Title of Study:** CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS

**Who:** Child welfare professionals are invited to participate in this study

**Why:** To learn more about child trafficking in the community



**Details:** Participation will include a one-on-one interview

**Total Time commitment:** Approximately 75minutes

**Compensation:** \$25 for your time

**Contact:** Stephanie Mace at 503-206-9401 or Stephanie.Mace@colostate.edu or Donald Venneberg at 970-491-2965 or Donald.Venneberg@colostate.edu

APPENDIX G

IRB Approval Letter

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: April 27, 2012

TO: Venneberg, Don, Education

Oltjenbruns, Kevin, Education, Mace, Stephanie, Education

FROM: Barker, Janell, CSU IRB 2

PROTOCOL TITLE:

CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE  
PROFESSIONALS IN  
COLORADO

FUNDING SOURCE: NONE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 12-3310H

APPROVAL PERIOD: Approval Date: April 26, 2012 Expiration Date: April 12, 2013

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS IN COLORADO. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol.

This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Janell Barker, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1655 Janell.Barker@Colostate.edu

Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381 Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu

Barker, Janell

Approval is to recruit up to 10 participants with the approved recruitment and consent material.

The above-referenced project was approved by the Institutional Review Board with the condition that the approved consent form is signed by the subjects and each subject is given a copy of the form. NO changes may be made to this document without first obtaining the approval of the IRB.

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Approval Period: April 26, 2012 through April 12, 2013

Review Type: EXPEDITED

IRB Number: 00000202

APPENDIX H

IRB Amendment Approval Letter

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: July 28, 2012

TO: Venneberg, Don, Education

Oltjenbruns, Kevin, Education, Mace, Stephanie, Education

FROM: Barker, Janell, Coordinator, CSU IRB 2

PROTOCOL TITLE:

CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE  
PROFESSIONALS IN  
COLORADO

FUNDING SOURCE: NONE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 12-3310H

APPROVAL PERIOD: Approval Date: July 25, 2012 Expiration Date: April 12, 2013

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS IN COLORADO. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol.

This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Janell Barker, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1655 Janell.Barker@Colostate.edu

Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381 Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu

Barker, Janell

Amendment approved to use the revised demographic survey. No change in risk.

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Approval Period: July 25, 2012 through April 12, 2013

Review Type: EXPEDITED

IRB Number: 00000202

Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office

Office of the Vice President for Research

321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011 Fort Collins,  
CO

TEL: (970) 491-1553

FAX: (970) 491-2293