THESIS

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES BY ADVOCACY GROUPS, LAW ENFORCEMENT,

AND JOURNALISTS ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING: IMPACTS OF AGENDA BUILDING,

AGENDA SETTING, AND FRAMING

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ABSTRACT

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES BY ADVOCACY GROUPS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND JOURNALISTS ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING: IMPACTS OF AGENDA BUILDING, AGENDA SETTING, AND FRAMING

This study is based on 15 qualitative in-depth interviews with 15 communications professionals in Denver, Atlanta and Raleigh, and represents advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists to better understand communications messaging about sex trafficking. This study examines the ways the three aforementioned groups develop communication messages about sex trafficking using agenda building, agenda setting, and framing. Sex trafficking is defined as the sexual exploitation of an individual for profit, a subset of human trafficking. Economic factors, public policy factors, and sociocultural factors are highlighted from the data to determine what influences play into message creation. Results show that advocacy groups, law enforcement, and journalists all engage in some level of agenda building, agenda setting, and framing. The results show that all three groups participated most in framing the issues, whether through an awareness frame, a crime frame, or a community issue frame. Additionally, sociocultural factors played the largest role in influencing message creation.

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Introduction

      Issues advocacy, the practice of raising public awareness about social problems, depends

on the successful development and diffusion of communications messages by advocacy

organizations, journalists, and law enforcement. Those who work to eliminate social problems

are constantly attempting to raise public awareness and gain the public's support in abolishing

those issues. One such issue is the sexual exploitation of men, women and children, commonly

referred to as sex trafficking.

      This study will lay the foundation for studying different communications approaches

among three groups of professionals as they develop and disseminate messages about sex

trafficking in Raleigh, Denver and Atlanta. These three cities are major hubs of sex trafficking;

by understanding the way in which trafficking is discussed among advocates, journalists and law

enforcement, message creators for these groups can attempt to work together more effectively

and create better public awareness of one of today's leading social issues.

      Advocates often lack the communications training to properly frame and spread messages

to successfully influence public opinion. Another barrier they face is reaching the public with

their message is the lack of resources; however, with the rise of social media, advocates now

have a more direct channel to their audiences.

      Law enforcement and journalists tend to have more of a public reach and message

writing training, yet tend to lack the correct understanding of the social problems. Law

enforcement works to enforce current standards of societal conduct and bringing law violators to

justice. Journalists inform apprise the public on a more informational level. Their goal is to pass

along and interpret facts obtained from advocates, law enforcers, lawmakers, and other related groups.

This study aims, by exploring the current practices of each group's message framing and agenda building practices, to offer suggestions that will facilitate efficiency in message dissemination.

Speaking about coverage of human trafficking in general, McCoy, an orphaned child expert, states that "despite adequate understanding of the human trafficking problem and its global nature, law enforcement, NGOs, and media reporters each contribute to the inadequate communication of the problem to the American public" (2004, p. 3). Certain interest groups select which pieces of the issue they publicize and leave out other parts, offering inconsistent information to the public. In order to amend this, message producers need to reevaluate the entire messaging process, beginning with the development of content.

Human trafficking is a global crisis affecting our most valuable resource – other humans. Although labor trafficking is the largest sector of human trafficking, sex trafficking is the most psychologically damaging. This study focuses on sex trafficking because of the prominent nature of this branch of trafficking in major cities around the United States.

The concepts of framing, agenda building and agenda setting will be explored in further depth in the literature review to create a clearer picture of what message builders focus on. This researcher chose framing, agenda building and agenda setting to better understand the motivations behind creating content to raise human trafficking awareness in society. These concepts will be used as a framework for the message creation process. In addition to the three main concepts of framing, agenda setting and agenda building, three societal factors – public

policy factors, economic factors and sociocultural factors – will be addressed to see what specific frames emerge from each category.

Through a qualitative approach using semi-structured in-depth interviews, this researcher investigates how different professionals frame the messages they construct as they deal with the issue of human trafficking. This researcher will interview law enforcement, journalists and advocates in an attempt to better understand the different roles they play in the communication process about human trafficking, as well as better understanding the existing relationship between these professionals as they work to make the public more aware.

This study seeks to understand the ways in which advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists, who work to raise public awareness of sex trafficking, craft and distribute communications. This analysis will also examine the way in which economic, social/cultural and public policy factors influence message framing. This research will add to the body of literature to assist researchers, advocates, law enforcement and journalists in Raleigh, Denver and Atlanta in developing a more thorough understanding of the message building process for human trafficking messages.

What is Human Trafficking?

Anyone who took American history in elementary school should be familiar with what is known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the route taken by Europeans who went to Africa, kidnapped or bought Africans, sailed across the Atlantic Ocean and sold these men, women and children as slaves to Americans (Bean, 1972) Many people have the false belief that slavery ended with Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the conclusion of The Civil War. Slavery still exists today, on larger scale than ever before, but is commonly referred to as human

trafficking instead of slavery. According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime's (2013) website, human trafficking is:

> 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.

Human trafficking is the fastest growing area of organized crime, surpassed only by narcotics and arms deals (Hodge, 2008; United Nations, 2002). According to Interpol (2013), trafficking in humans is a $39 billion industry; however, because this is only an estimate, the number may actually be double that, maxing out at $73.2 billion (Kunze, 2009). There are currently more than 27 million people enslaved in the world today; 4.5 million of those are forced to work in the sex industry (TIP Report, 2012).

Eighty percent of the trafficked females worldwide are recruited for the sole purpose of prostitution and sexual exploitation (International Justice Mission, 2010). The sex trade is so popular because of the high profit and low risk for the traffickers and pimps that go with the selling of humans. Unlike drugs and guns which can only be sold once, women's and children's bodies can be sold multiple times a day for long periods of time. When the slaves become diseased or injured or die, they are easily replaceable with new enslaved men, women and children. According to the TIP Report (2013) it is estimated that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year.

There is much work being done worldwide to combat trafficking, to prosecute traffickers and exploiters, and to bring freedom to victims in order to add to the number survivors. There are many rehabilitation groups all over the world run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

faith-based organizations, and governments. Many of these rehabilitation centers offer counseling, medical care and job training to help the survivors overcome the abuses they have suffered.

With the rise of new technologies, trafficking has expanded worldwide to places because traffickers have easy access to prospective victims. As Simmonds states, "the intersection between new communications technology and human trafficking is troubling. The Internet is perpetuating the growth of the human trafficking and sex trafficking industries, as well as concealing these illegal activities through underground, or online, networks" (2012, p. 20).

Traffickers have always abused women and children for the sexual pleasures and satisfaction of persons around the world; this is not a new phenomenon. Masters have held slaves captive since the beginning of time. With the advance of new communication technologies, particularly the Internet and mobile phones, the ability to develop, transmit, and receive information has grown exponentially. This growth has unfortunately enabled traffickers easier access to potential victims, the ability to transfer money for trafficking purposes, more channels to sell victims to customers via websites, and use GPS tracking to keep tabs on their slaves. As Latonero states, "Increasingly, the business of human trafficking is taking place online and over mobile phones" (2012, p. iv).

No longer do traffickers have to physically travel around the U.S. or other nations to recruit victims; through online message boards, social networking sites, and mobile devices, pimps, traffickers, and pornographers manipulate, coerce, and eventually enslave children and women into the sex industry. Human trafficking via the Internet offers a more anonymous and private venue for these criminals and customers to exploit women and children, while

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subjugating the women and children to further humiliation by publishing photos and videos online (Kunze, 2009).

Another area of the sex industry, sex tourism, appeared online in 1995 (Kunze, 2009). Sex tourism involves traveling to a specific location for the purpose of fulfilling sexual fantasies or desires. People can use online message boards to rate their "companions" and offer advice to others looking to travel to those destinations. The content on the message boards is often misogynistic, graphic, and violent. Often children are used for this form of exploitation.

There are many anti-trafficking organizations that exist in the world, including Not For Sale, International Justice Mission, The A21 Campaign, Love 146 and the Polaris Project; these organizations rescue victims and prevent trafficking through raising awareness. The following excerpt was taken from the Polaris Project's (2013) website; this letter was written to Craigslist by a girl who identified herself as MC:

> I was first forced into prostitution when I was 11-years-old by a 28-year-old man. I am not an exception. The man who trafficked me sold so many girls my age, his house was called "Daddy Day Care." All day, other girls and I sat with our laptops, posting pictures and answering ads on Craigslist. He made $1,500 a night selling my body, dragging me to Los Angeles, Houston, Little Rock -- and one trip to Las Vegas in the trunk of a car. I am 17 now, and my childhood memories aren't of my family, going to middle school, or dancing at the prom. They are of making my own arrangements on Craigslist to be sold for sex, and answering as many ads as possible for fear of beatings and ice water baths.

Sadly, this account is only one of millions of similar stories. Online ads placed on websites such as Craigslist.com, Backpage.com, and Eros.com are used to market children and young girls under the guise of escort services, in-call and out-call services, chat rooms, pornography, and brothels disguised as massage businesses (Polaris Project, 2013).

Made in a Free World, International Justice Mission, Free the Slaves, Not For Sale, Polaris Project, The A21Campaign, and Love146, seven of the most well-known anti-trafficking organizations, work tirelessly around the globe to provide aid to victims, bring awareness to

individuals in all communities, and prosecute the people responsible. One of the main ways these groups reach out and raise awareness is through social media campaigns. Social media is a great tool for these organizations to use, particularly Twitter, because of the brevity and speed with which a message can be relayed. Since people usually have their phones on them, this a good way to constantly interact with one's audience. This also allows the organizations to frame the messages in a way that depicts what content they want audiences to understand. These organizations no longer have to rely on the media to set the agenda. They can build their own agenda and directly present it to the public through social media campaigns.

According to research conducted by Facebook (2014), Facebook has roughly 1.3 billion active monthly users, making it an ideal place to advocate for social justice issues; there is the potential to reach one seventh of the world's population. According to Latonero, Twitter is a vital "venue for raising awareness of human trafficking and mobilizing support around legislation, promoting work and volunteer opportunities, and potentially putting public pressure on individuals and organizations" (2012, p. 22). Researchers need to continue to analyze the positive and negative outcomes possible from advocacy efforts on social media (Latonero, 2012).

In the United States in 2000, President Clinton signed into law the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which "authorized the establishment of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons" and "the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to assist in the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts" (Gozdziak & Collett, 2005, p. 102). Since 2000, TVPA has undergone several modifications, including increased penalties for sexual traffickers. In 2003 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security launched an initiative expressly designed to focus on the sexual trafficking of children (U.S. Department of State, 2006).

Sex trafficking makes up 46% of the trafficking in the U.S. (NFS, Batstone, 2013). The average age of entry into prostitution or the commercial sex industry in the U.S. is 11 to 14 years old (Polaris Project, 2013). Traffickers are skilled at profiling runaways and approach them within their first 48 hours on the street (Shared Hope International, 2013).

Few research studies have been conducted on the media's role in the increasing of awareness and change in attitude of members of the public. Marchionni found "implications of the elite press apparently embracing the government's agenda on trafficking, rather than serving as a watchdog on trafficking priorities" (2012, p. 155). Media and governments have framed human trafficking as a social problem; the issue started out framed as a violation of women's rights but has since been cast in a crime frame.

Three cities that have been named as the large hubs of activity in human trafficking are Raleigh, Denver and Atlanta. Atlanta and Denver have two of the highest reported profit for pimps who sell people for sex. North Carolina is one of the top ten states for human trafficking tips called into the National Human Trafficking Resources Center. As the state capital and due to the large number of resources available, Raleigh was selected as the third city to analyze

Denver has a large runaway population. According to the Volunteer Network to End Human Trafficking, approximately 300 homeless Denver youth are involved in a sex trafficking situation each night (Urban Peak "Point in Time" public health survey, 2007). The I-25/I-70 intersection serves as a crossroad for human trafficking and as a gateway for the Las Vegas circuit. Denver is also part of another circuit that includes Colorado Springs, Chicago and Seattle (The Human Trafficking Project, 2007). Colorado recently has increased steps to address the problem.

The following are pimps' average weekly cash incomes between 2005 and 2011.

$32,833
ATLANTA

$17,741
MIAMI

$12,025
DALLAS

$11,129
SAN DIEGO

$31,200
DENVER

$18,000
SEATTLE

$5,000
KANSAS CITY

$11,588
WASHINGTON, DC

URBAN INSTITUTE

Figure 1: Weekly Cash Incomes for Pimps in Eight Major Cities from the Urban Institute (http://datatools.urban.org/features/theHustle/index.html)

Through the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking (LCHT), a nonprofit organization, there has been significant progress to increasing awareness and developing legal statutes. Amanda Finger, executive director of the LCHT, was quoted in the Westword blog (Asmar, 2013) about a new action plan for Colorado:

> Colorado has the first state action plan in the country. Our goal is to serve as the backbone organization for this action plan and to steward this and take it around the state so providers, organizations and law enforcement understand how the action plan was developed and can look at where they slot in. The critical piece over the next one to three years will be truly committing to filling these gaps. (p. 2)

Atlanta was named by the FBI as one of 14 U.S. cities with the highest rate of children used in prostitution (Innocence Atlanta, 2013). According to the Department Family and Children's Services (2012), 300-500 children become involved in sex trafficking each month in this city. The head of the Innocence Atlanta Campaign (2013) states that many of the victims are runaways who found life at home unbearable.

In a scene from the documentary film *Playground*, an Atlanta Police Sergeant states that "[m]en will actually fly into Atlanta, get on the Internet, say 'I want a boy…who looks like he's thirteen…' order it, show up here, have sex, and be gone" (Kunze, 2009, p. 251). Although trafficking is prevalent, even earning status as a political buzzword, many people are uninformed about the situations in these cities.

Concept Overview

Figure 2 is the concept map for the proposed factors of influence on the agenda building process: sociocultural factors, public policy factors, and economic factors. This researcher examined which of these factors directly influence the messages and their interpretation. The research believes that all three factors play varying roles in the creation of organizational messages by law enforcement, journalists, and advocacy organizations.
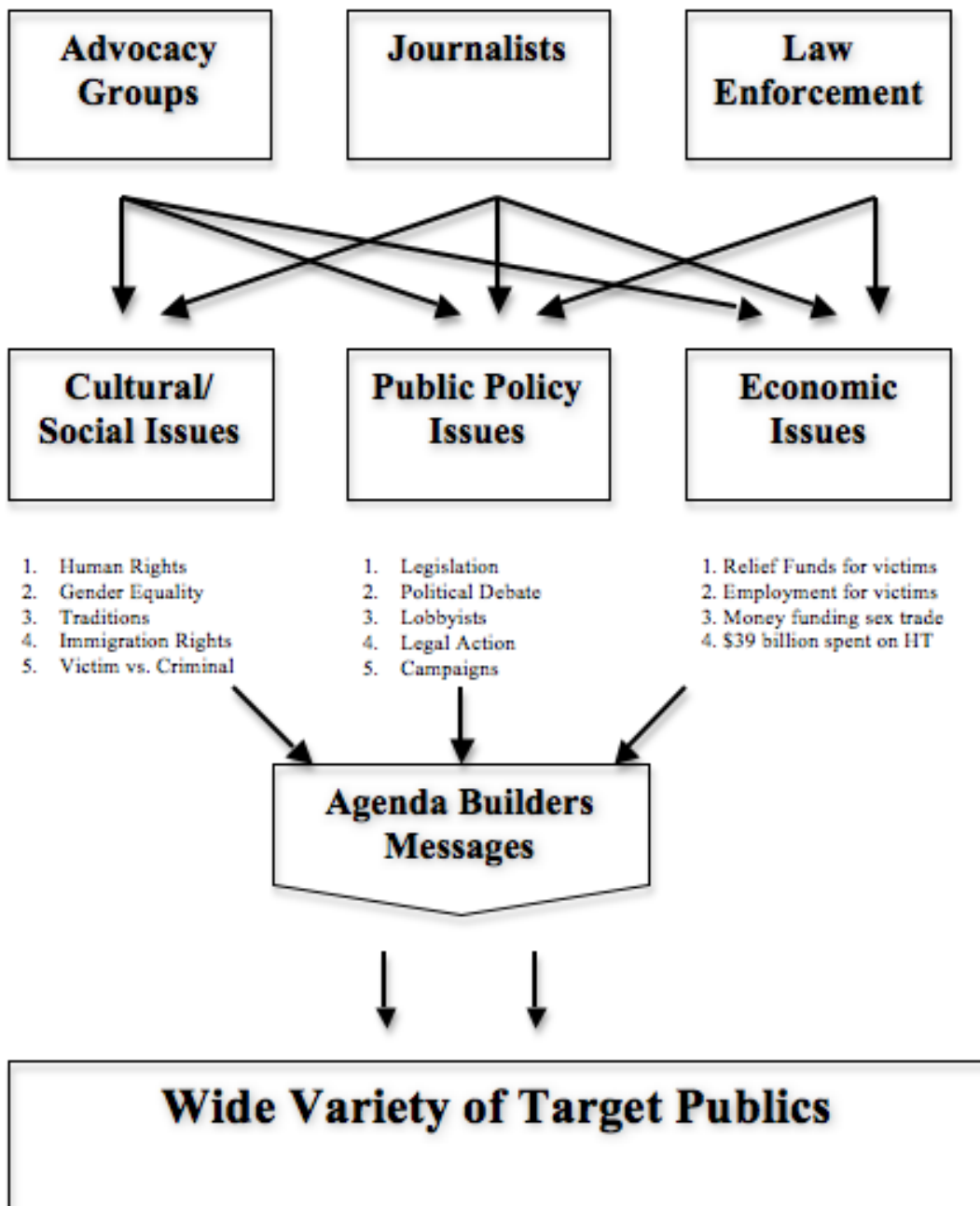
Figure 2 – Concept Map of Factors of Influence

Literature Review

Table 1 – Three Major Concept Definitions

	Agenda Building	Agenda Setting	Framing
Study Definition	Intentionally developing content with the purpose of making the public aware of the topic through dispersal of publicity materials	Something observed among members of the public; agenda setting is not a deliberate action by media workers—it just happens	To select some aspects of a perceived reality to make them more salient, thus promoting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation

Agenda Building

Cobb and Elder (1971) were one of the first to discuss the theory of agenda building in their article "The Politics of Agenda Building: An Alternative Perspective for Modern Democratic Theory." Cobb and Elder (1972) then examined agenda building in their book, The Dynamics of Agenda Building. Despite the seemingly overall simplicity of the concept, there are several definitions of agenda building. The most well-known and most-often quoted definition is from Cobb and Elder (1971). For this paper, the researcher has chosen to use the following definition: "Agenda building is when influential groups or individuals determine what they believe is an important and newsworthy issue, and attempt to persuade media to add that issue to their media agenda. In regard to advocacy organizations, this will hopefully in turn influence public opinion and create public policy change.

The media are referred to as the gatekeepers of the news (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), but that title implies they are not the producers of the news. Thus, one must ask, who is it that builds the content for the gatekeepers? These gatekeepers are not above bias and therefore can be selective in which groups or individuals they rely on for information and content; these include

wire services, special interest groups, public relations campaigns, advertisers, politicians, social movement organizations, nonprofits, and similar entities.

One of the most time-honored and popular ways for news media to obtain content is from public relations practitioners and public information officers. In their original study, Cameron, Sallot, and Curtin (1997) indicated that journalists view public relations practitioners negatively as a whole, but on a personal level, they tend to speak positively of the practitioners they work with and know. In their more recent study, Sallot and Johnson (2006) found that practitioner-journalist relationships were more valued than in the previous 1997 study. Some scholars estimate that public relations may impact between 25 and 80 percent of news content (Cameron, Sallot, and Curtin, 1997; Cutlip, 1962). Zoch and Molleda (2006) claimed that public relations practitioners attempt to set the agenda by placing positive stories about their organizations in the media.

Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, & Harrison (1995) described agenda building as "sources' interactions with gatekeepers, a give and take process in which sources seek to get their information published and the press seeks to get that information from independent sources" (p. 90). Turk (1986) suggested that these information subsidies not only reduces the cost of producing news and influence the media's agenda, but also if used they can establish what the public views as the most salient issues. Thus agenda builders can help facilitate agenda setting to aid in the development of the public agenda. She also found that journalists prefer subsidies with no spin or self-promotion of the organizations; otherwise they prefer to gather their own information.

Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, & Harrison (1995) similarly noted that sources help to build the agenda through the dispersal of information subsidies.

Those who build the agenda must take action, according to Cobb and Elder (1983):
The media ordinarily are not initiators of (issue) arousal. A group must gain some initial success before the media will focus on an issue. Once the media take an interest in a controversy, however, they will often play an important role in reinforcing or altering the prevailing definition of the conflict. (p. 143)

According to Curtin (2000), "the broad scope of agenda building requires tracing the evolution of an issue from its inception to its conclusion in public policy. This is difficult to do because many variables influence the creation of public policy" (p. 19). The ultimate goal, no matter how the agenda is built, is to influence the public and eventually have the public opinion and public agenda influence public policy. Agenda builders and agenda setters all hope to eventually use the cultivated public agenda to influence and direct the political agenda.

Cobb and Elder (1983, pg. 77) organized segments of the public and the influence of the political agenda into five stages:

(1) Asserting control over the definition of issues

(2) Enlarging conflicts to different subgroups of the population

(3) Framing causes in symbolic and emotive language

(4) Influencing the setting in which issues are fought

(5) Defining the most salient aspects of issues

The agenda builders can only influence the media to present their messages to the public in a persuasive way that draws attention to the aspects the agenda builders want. Even if the media does this, there still is no guarantee that the audiences will grasp the issues as salient to them.

Agenda Setting

The concept of agenda setting can be traced back almost a century, to Walter Lippmann's book, *Public Opinion* (1922). Lippmann, who was dubbed the "intellectual father of agenda setting" by McCombs and Reynolds (2009, p. 2), titled the first chapter of the book, "The World

Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads." Lippmann argued that the news media paint a picture of the world outside an individual's direct experience and thus influences the shape the mental picture of the world that individual creates. According to McCombs and Reynolds (2009), Lippmann argued that "Public opinion responds not to the environment, but to the pseudo-environment, the world constructed by the news media" (p. 2).

Agenda setting, although still not expressly labeled as such, was later explored by Cohen (1963) who stated "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (p. 13). Stated another way, the media shape what becomes popular or important in the public's opinion. Influenced by the work of Cohen (1963) and Lippmann (1922), McCombs and Shaw (1972) decided to look at how the media influenced the opinion of the undecided voters in Chapel Hill based on the concept both Lippmann and Cohen had discussed – that media play a role in the issues that the public deems important. In their study, McCombs and Shaw (1972) found that the issues covered by the news media correlated significantly to what the audience ranked as important. This emphasized the observation made by Cohen that the media can influence what people think about, but also demonstrated that what the media talk about becomes important to the public, and thus the public agenda. They were the first to label this phenomenon agenda setting.

They repeated this study in several cities around the country, and the results supported their original findings. Since their original study, researchers have conducted more than 425 empirical studies on agenda setting (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009).

Lang and Lang (1966) claimed that, "The mass media force attention to certain issues.... They are constantly presenting objects, suggesting what individuals in the mass media should

think about, know about, have feelings about" (p. 468). This emphasizes the fact that the media does not tell people the way in which to think, but they simply highlight topics that individuals and the public as a whole should be thinking about.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006), "the most popular subjects in agenda setting research are (1) how the media agenda is set (this research is also called agenda building), and (2) how the media choose to portray the issues they cover (this is called framing analysis)" (p. 391). These two subjects will be looked at in more detail in later sections of the literature review.

Salwen (1990) noted "Supporters of the agenda-setting approach stress that the news media influence public cognitions about issues, not attitudes" (p. 16). Salwen references Weaver (1982), who stated that the effects of agenda setting were thought to be harmless, only providing information to audiences, not manipulating or attempting to persuade them. However, this could be debated because, as will be discussed in a later section, focus on certain issues and not others creates competition between issues for public attention. Wimmer and Dominick state that the public agenda – "or what kinds of things people discuss, think, and worry about (and sometimes ultimately press for legislation about) – is powerfully shaped and directed by what the news media chose to publicize" (2006, p. 390).

Roger and Dearing (1988) divided agenda setting up into three areas of focus and developed a model illustrating the three main components of agenda setting (Figure 3). Traditional agenda setting looks at how the media conveys content to influence the public opinion. The news media select which issues to highlight. Media agenda setting looks at how the media chooses certain content/issues to broadcast. Individuals other than the news media, such as advocates and law enforcement, develop this content. This process often precedes agenda setting.

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The third area of focus is policy agenda setting, in which those who build agendas on certain issues utilize media coverage to influence public opinion. The public opinion influences the policy agenda and those who make public policy. Political figures play central roles in shaping the policy agenda.

The circle continues, with different agendas vying for public attention and policy change. Whether or not the audience adds an issue to its agenda depends on how those objects are framed and what frames the audience members use to interpret those messages.

Framing

Goffman (1974) was one of the first to mention frames and the public's use of frames to understand the world around them. A frame is defined as a set of expectations that people use to organize or make sense of a social situation at a certain time (Goffman, 1975). Tuchman (1976) claimed that news media constructed frames to maintain the status quo among the public. These findings were supported with Gamson's (1989) and Gitlin's (1980) studies that when promoting certain frames other views of an issue or event is ignored.

In the communication literature, framing is most closely associated with Entman's 1993 piece on framing. In his explanation of framing, Entman (1993) stated the two essential: selection and salience. "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (pg. 52).

Entman claimed that frames "define problems" and offer suggestions as to the cause. In addition, they offer moral evaluations of those problems and what suggested course of action or inaction should be taken. Thus, frames can be utilized in the selection stage to depict an issue in order to produce the desired outcome the agenda builders want.

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Zoch and Modella (2006) compare framing to a window in a house:

> The message framer (agenda setter) has the choice of what is to be emphasized in the message, as the view through the window is emphasized by where the carpenter frames, or places, the window. If the window had been placed, or framed, on a different wall, the view would be different. (p. 281)

Frames are also compared to wooden frames put around pictures because it "draws the eye to particular elements in the scene while excluding extraneous surroundings" (Hallahan, 2011, p. 178).

Framing is often thought of as the second level of agenda setting, and is defined as "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution" (Entman, 2004, p. 5). More recently, Entman (2007) stated framing as "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation" (p. 164). Framing performs four specific functions: the promotion of a particular problem definition, identifying causes, moral judgment, and endorsing remedies of improvements (Entman, 1993, 2004). When looking at this model, one can apply issues, such a social problems, to this set of functions. Agenda builders and agenda setters create the frame in which to set a social problem. These entities then use those frames to cast blame and attribute responsibility. Sometimes those frames draw on the ethical values the public holds. Finally, they frame ways in which this social issues could be remedied. The next section of the literature review looks at this process in more detail.

Referencing Gamson (1992), Weaver (2007) referred to framing as a "signature matrix" that includes "various condensing symbols (catchphrases, taglines, exemplars, metaphors, depictions, visual images) and reasoning devices (causes and consequences, appeals to principles or moral claims)" (pg. 143). Hallahan (1999) explained framing as the emphasis or de-emphasis

on particular facets of political or social reality, thus allowing media to shape the perceptions by the audience.

Similar to agenda building, frame building refers to "the processes that influence the creation or changes of frames applied by journalists" and others who develop specific message frames (Scheufele, 1999, p. 115; see also Scheufele, 2000, and Zhou & Moy, 2007) Journalists tend to frame issues due to influence from:

(1) Social norms and values

(2) Organizational pressures and constraints

(3) Pressures of interest groups

(4) Journalistic routines

(5) Ideological or political orientations of journalists (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978).

According to Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley (1997), "frames influence opinions by stressing specific values, facts, and other considerations, endowing them with greater apparent relevance to the issue than they might appear to have under an alternative frame" (p. 569).

Framing in the field of communications has been characterized by equal degrees of conceptual obliqueness and operational inconsistency (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). This is because there is no consensus on a set definition. Part of this is because the vast array of disciplines that framing spans, from politics to communication to sociology. Another reason framing is hard to define is because it happens on multiple levels. Agenda setters also frame issues, sometimes the way the agenda builders intend while other times they change the frame. The audience also deals with framing, but instead of creating the frames for a message, they interpret messages through specific frames of reference they have acquired through experience.

Lim & Jones (2010) quote Druckman as he presents two types of conceptualization of a frame. "The first is a frame in communication, indicating that a frame reveals properties of communication" (p. 292). This type of frame is what public relations professionals and journalists use to manipulate the messages to encompass the desired attributes. "The second is a frame within thought processes, referring to social actors' cognitive principles of understanding a situation" (Lim & Jones, 2010, p. 292). This is what Scheufele (1999) described as the audience frame.

One study recently conducted by Kensicki (2004) looked at social problems and the way in which the news media framed them. Kensicki found that while the news media will cast blame on parties believed to be responsible, they rarely identify ways the public can affect change. Due this lack of "mobilizing information" (Lemert, 1984) the public is often given information with no way to use it. Weberling (2012) suspects that this is "why nonprofit organizations have become more reliant on direct communication with constituents" (p. 109).

Impacts of Agenda Building, Agenda Setting, and Framing

An issue is a topic that is "disputed between two or more individuals or organizations, and often center on the allocation of political, economic, and social resources" (Hallahan, 2011, p. 189). Grunig & Hunt (1984) define an issue as a topic or topics around which publics are formed. Heath (2006) defines an issue as a dispute between parties based on gaps in facts, values, or policies. Crable and Vibbert (1985) explain that an issue arises when an individual or group attribute significance to a perceived problem (or opportunity). Another way issues emerge is through people sharing information using new media technologies such as social networks or blog pages. An issue can exist without the sufficient verification to prove it is really a problem (Hallahan, 2001).

For most social marketing campaigns, the specific issue being looked at is a social problem, which Blumer (1971) claims only exist in how the problem "is defined and conceived by society" (p. 300). Hilgartner & Bosk (1988) best define a social problem as "a putative condition or situation that is labeled a problem in the arenas of public discourse and action" (p. 55). Luoma-aho and Vos (2010) discuss how issues are also defined and perceived by organizational stakeholders. Similar to Hallahan's (2011) claim that advocacy groups must develop sufficient public concern about an issue, Luoma-aho and Vos comment, "due to various new and social media, stakeholders can express their opinions to a wider public and build constituencies easier" (p. 4).

Social problems do not exist in a vacuum. Issues are in constant competition for the spotlight of the media. Social problems do not follow the stages in nice, orderly form. "Many problems exits simultaneously in several stages of development and patterns of progression from one stage to the next vary sufficiently to question the claims that a typical career exists" (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988, p. 54; see also Clignet, 1981; Wiener, 1981). The social problems process is what Hilgartner & Bosk (1988) refer to as "the complex institutionalized system of problem formulation and dissemination" (p. 55).

Starting with the beginning of the public agenda development process (the formulation stage), agenda builders focus on a social problem or issues that they deem important. This issue can be political, economic, or social. The public relations practitioner or other relevant individual prepares an information subsidy to pass along to the media. For the remainder of this section these agenda builders will be referred to as operatives, borrowing the term from Hilgartner & Bosk (1988). Operatives build an agenda based on the aspects of the social problem they wish to bring to the public's attention.

Competition first appears in this stage, between the different potential frames for a social problem. The sociology literature calls this process claims making or appeals. The operatives frame the messages in a way to potentially create the interpretation of the frame they want the public to accept. This only happens if the gatekeepers/news media do not tamper with or reframe the message of the operatives. There are two ways, according to Benford (1997) to frame issues: generic issue frames or topic frames. Generic issues frames include social justice, equality, and human rights (Hallahan, 2011). Topic frames, also called issues-specific frames by De Vreese, (2005), focus on more specific issues, such as sex trafficking in major hubs such as Denver or Atlanta.

A vital task of operatives is to not only to gain the public's attention through the messages but also to maintain public interest and spark conversation on the issue. Manheim (1987) states that this is key to getting the issue onto the public agenda and then eventually on the public policy agenda. Issues that are more dramatic, conflict loaded, and concrete (Merez, 2009) tend to draw more public attention and have a better chance of being acquired by the public agenda. In order to stay in the public spotlight, operatives must balance the correct amount of attention with the correct repetition of messages. If one of these is out of balance, gaining and maintaining the public interest is going to be much more difficult. The issue will most likely fade into the background noise of all of the other competing issues.

Once the operatives have crafted the social problem in the appropriate frame or frames, they pass the information along to journalists and news media. Although agenda builders may have crafted a message frame of an issue and passed it along to the news media, there is no guarantee the issue will be added to the news media's agenda. This is what Hilgartner & Bosk (1988) refer to as the "carrying capacity of public institutions." The public arena only has so

much time and space to hold and broadcast social problems. Those operatives that do not

carefully craft their messages risk missing out on the opportunity to engage the public. Hilgartner

& Bosk (1988) look at social problems as they develop, live and die in what they call public

arenas:

> These arenas include the executive and legislative branches of government, made for TV movies, the cinema, the news media (television news, magazines, newspaper and radio), political campaign organizations, social action groups, direct mail solicitation, books dealing with social issues, the research community, religious organizations, professional societies, and private foundations. It is in these institutions that social problems are discussed, selected, defined, framed, dramatized, packaged, and presented to the public. (p. 58-59)

Social media is considered a new arena where the awareness of social problems diffuses

into society and members of the public can engage. Through social network sites such as

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, social problems reach audiences much faster than they did

before the Internet was available; however, due to the vast nature of the World Wide Web, the

number of pages addressing a social issue may be too large for an individual to read all of them.

Many people use social media to gain information and news; this results in the replacement of

journalists as gatekeepers and allows the agenda builders to distribute content to their audiences

directly (Westerman, Spence, & Van Der Heide, 2012). Social media also tends to focus on the

human interest frames over any other news frames, such as economic frames or political frames.

(Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012). Asur, Huberman, Szabo, and Wang (2011) state:

> The source of that content can originate in standard media outlets or from users who generate topics that eventually become part of the trends and capture the attention of large communities. In either case, the fact that a small set of topics becomes part of the trending set means that they will capture the attention of a large audience for a short time, thus contributing in some measure to the public agenda. (p. 434)

Although there are a large number of arenas with different characteristics, the ability to

focus on any issue is limited by the capacity that can be entertained by each public arena. "It is

this discrepancy between the number of potential problems and the size of the public space for addressing them that makes competition among problems so crucial and central to the process of collective definition" (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988, p. 59). Thus, the prevalent social issues are determined by the mental and emotional space available to the journalists, not by the level of danger to society and its members.

Journalists and reporters must sift through all the social problems and determine which ones line up most with their own agenda, the current political agenda, and what they think the public wants and/or needs to know. The responsibility as gatekeeper in the instance of social problems is not one that should be taken lightly, yet corruption and personal bias often influences the decisions made by the media. Clearly, there could never be coverage of all of the social problems that exist. But do citizens realize the responsibility they offer to journalists? Do those who produce and share the news media content take the responsibility lightly? What factors are influencing the journalists, if they are not reporting social problems in an unbiased way?

Journalists, when they receive the content from sources, have the ability to leave the message framed as it is, or frame it in a way that they see more fit. This will influence the way the audience perceives the issue and whether members of society see it fit to add to the public agenda. The political and economic interests of the news institutions also might affect the issues covered and the way in which they are framed.

Economics can play a major role in the focus on social problems. "When an economy is expanding and things are going well, it becomes easier to think in terms of spending resources to deal with problems" (Miller, 1976, p. 139). Miller goes on to say that when cost of living rises or the stocks market drops, things considered non-essential by the public and/or government, including social problems, are allocated less resources.

Political forces also influence the news coverage of social problems. Affiliates and the political agenda of elites, e.g. powerful players in society such as law enforcement and high-ranking journalists, influence what issues editors allow their journalists to cover. One study noted that the topics discussed in the presidential State of the Union address became the issues that the media focused on throughout the next several years (Wanta, Stephenson, Turk, & McCombs, 1989).

The public agenda-setting process is complicated. For social issues to reach the public agenda, they must successfully pass through the media or directly from the advocacy groups in the form intended by the operatives in order to influence the public agenda and later public policy. Influencing public policy is the ultimate goal of agenda builders.

Once the news media report on a social issue, the public interprets those issues through the personal frames they use to process information. People often attempt to make sense of social problems and other issues by assessing who is responsible (Iyengar, 1991). Responsibility can be on the individual or societal level, depending on the interpretation of the audience member (Scheufele, 2000).

In this study, these concepts are going to be studied through the lens of a human rights issue labeled human trafficking, more specifically sex trafficking. The operatives in the agenda building process, in this case advocacy groups and law enforcement, play an important role in beginning the development of adding a social issue to the public agenda. The next section explores how agenda setting, agenda building and framing have been studied by researchers with regard to trafficking, and what factors are considered to influence the operatives and gatekeepers.

Influential Factors for Agenda Building, Agenda Setting, and Framing

Framing, agenda building and agenda setting are practices that individuals and organizations use to develop communications messages. In additions to these three major theories, there are several factors that influence the creation of messages. This study will focus on three major influences to these messages: economic factors, public policy factors, and sociocultural factors.

The economic factors considered will be relief funds for victims, employment for victims, money that is funding the sex trade, and money spent on raising awareness though campaigns. Because human trafficking is a supply and demand issue, economic influences play a large role in the practice of human trafficking. Individuals also are more vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking due to economic factors such as poverty. The practice of human trafficking brings in approximately $32 billion a year for organized criminal operations. (International Labor Organization, 2008).

Public policy factors include elected officials, how persistent the advocacy groups and their audiences become, and the angle that journalists present to motivate people. If changing the law is added to the public agenda through agenda setting and framing, then public policy debate will turn to engaging members of the public.

Social factors include ways in which people view other humans, the importance of human rights and gender equality, the social beliefs and values of journalists and law enforcement, the ethical dilemma with regards to human trafficking and the health risks created by sex trafficking. Many publications use the terms "illegal immigrants" and "human trafficking victims" interchangeably, thus creating public confusion about the difference between the two. Immigration rights have long been debated in the United States, but illegal immigrants come and

stay of their own free will; human trafficking victims do not chose to stay and work on their own accord. Human trafficking at its core violates the natural rights ascribed to every human being. Treating a person as an object to be sold and bought for sex is unethical and morally wrong. Another social influence is the emotional appeal used by message makers with disturbing stories of abuse and violence. These stories may be exaggerated to gain the audience's attention.

While there is much research on the nature of human trafficking as a global phenomenon, there is little about the motivations behind the framing of this issue by agenda setters and agenda builders. Marchionni (2012) comes close with her agenda building analysis of the United States and British press. Her study found "implications of the elite press apparently embracing the government's agenda on trafficking, rather than serving as a watchdog on trafficking priorities" (p. 155). Most information available today is about the numbers of trafficking victims and survivors, the amount of money spent on trafficking each year, and the countries that participate in trafficking activities.

There can be no policy changes without the public agenda adopting human trafficking as a priority; for this reason, having a clear message to deliver to the public is vital because there can be no political change without the public's awareness and support. In her study, McCoy (2004) conducted a content analysis of 520 articles and found that domestic newspapers only made up 21 percent of the articles (51 articles) that discussed human trafficking. She found that the foreign news media covered human trafficking more than the domestic news media did. Through this study, better understanding of the communication goals and influences may lead to more cohesive messages between these three groups in the future.

Research Questions:

In order to better understand the message strategies of advocacy groups, law enforcement, and journalists, four research questions were developed to look for evidence of agenda building, agenda setting, and framing.

RQ1. In what ways are agenda building, agenda setting and framing used consciously by anti-human trafficking advocacy groups?

RQ2. In what ways are agenda building, agenda setting and framing used consciously by law enforcement?

RQ3. In what ways are agenda building, agenda setting and framing used consciously by journalists?

RQ4. Which economic, social/cultural, and public policy factors influence advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists in their constructing of messages about human trafficking?

Methodology

This researcher sought to understand the ways in which advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists work to raise public awareness of sex trafficking, and craft communication messages. This study also explored how economic, social/cultural and public policy factors influence the way in which messages are framed by each of these three groups. To determine the answers to the research questions, a qualitative research approach was used for a phenomenological study. This study employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews with active members of advocacy groups, journalists and law enforcement. Smith (1995) states "semi-structured interviews and qualitative analysis are especially suitable where one is particularly interested in complexity or process or where an issue is controversial or personal" (p. 10).

Qualitative research was chosen because of the exploratory nature of this study. While much is known about the specific communication strategies for human trafficking awareness messages, there is little research on the motivations behind these three groups being studied. There is also limited qualitative data on the influences that impact message building and dispersion. As this study sought to find rationale on a personal level, in-depth interviews provided the best possible supporting data. Through the interview process, this study proved credible because the individuals interviewed are professionally involved with message crafting. Their expertise, or lack thereof, are exemplified through their answers. The results are valid if the answers to the research questions that are "well-grounded and well supported" (Creswell, 2007, p. 215).

While the resulting data for this study was very thorough and explanatory in nature, it is not transferable to a large audience due to the size of the sample and the qualitative nature of the

research; therefore the study was strictly exploratory in nature. However, this researcher did not look to find transferable data but rather information that better examines the phenomenon of framing, agenda setting and agenda building in human trafficking awareness campaigns.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study because other methods do not allow for understanding of the motivation of key players in the message crafting process. Also, a content analysis is difficult to use as a methodology because of the lack of a universal definition for human trafficking as a social issue, often mislabeled in print media as human smuggling and illegal immigration. This researcher sought to clarify what influences play a role in agenda-building and agenda-setting practices; this was best studied through the in-depth analysis of interviews with those key players. As Smith (1995) said, "the investigator has an idea of the area of interest and some questions to pursue. At the same time there is a wish to try to enter, as far as is possible, the psychological and social world of the respondent" (p. 12). This is important in many ways; one of which is that the respondent in the interview can introduce issues or areas of conversation that the reviewer was not aware of before the discussion.

Before beginning the initial stage of picking out participants, the researcher gained IRB approval (Appendix A) and successfully defended this proposal to her committee.

Participants

The three main groups interviewed were advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists. The groups all create and circulate communications materials on many social problems. The problem focused on in this study was human trafficking, more specifically sex trafficking.

The word advocacy, according to Merriam Webster dictionary, means "the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal" (Merriam-Webster, 2013). Advocacy groups are groups of

individuals supporting a cause, issue or social problem. In the study, the specific advocacy groups observed were any organization in Denver or Atlanta that work to prevent human trafficking through awareness campaigns, advocates for legal action, raising money to combat human trafficking and offering counseling services and job training to survivors. These include organizations such as the previously mentioned Polaris Project, International Justice Mission and Not For Sale. Advocates use multiple communication channels such as social media, traditional press and news media, controlled media such as brochures and e-newsletters, and personal communications to reach their target audiences. The specific types of advocates interviewed in this study included public relations directors, campaign managers, executive directors and community relations directors.

Law enforcement officers are the individuals who work for the criminal-stopping agencies such as police officers, FBI agents, and state troopers. These officers cannot uphold justice without the proper laws in place that allow them to arrest traffickers and johns. Thus law enforcement rely heavily on the success of public policy debates. In this study, the researcher looked at individuals who work for Raleigh law enforcement, Denver law enforcement and the Atlanta law enforcement, whether as a public information officer, a task force supervisor, or someone who worked in a communications capacity.

The final group observed in this study was journalists. The journalist was defined as someone employed by a local and credible news publication, TV station or radio show. This person must have published at least one article in the last six to eight months on the issue of human trafficking. The most prevalent publications are *The News & Observer, The Denver Post* and *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*. These individuals were the most difficult to locate for

interviews because of erratic pattern of articles about sex trafficking. Other local publications were considered if the two major newspapers did not have adequate resources.

The first stage of the study was to pick 18 individuals to be interviewed by the researcher. The number 18 was chosen because it allows nine individuals from each city and three individuals per professional group. This allowed an array of opinions from both cities as well as within each profession in the two cities. The sampling for this study was purposive. Each individual was chosen based on their credentials, involvement in producing messages that address human trafficking awareness, whether they worked in advocacy, government, or journalism, and whether they lived in Raleigh, Denver or Atlanta. Raleigh, Denver and Atlanta were convenience samples due to the geographic location of the researcher during the time of the data collection. This allowed for comparison between the three types of organizations examined and allowed the researcher to compare and contrast regional differences in three large cities known for having human trafficking problems.

Initial research to find individuals to interview was conducted via the Internet. Advocacy websites provided contacts for communications directors and other individuals who help develop advocacy groups' messages. Law enforcement included the Denver police and Atlanta police websites, either a human trafficking task force member or a public information officer. The journalists were selected based on their knowledge of the subject, determined through previously written articles on the subject. After the participants were selected and agree to be interviewed, this researcher set up interviews.

By using in-depth interviews, this study hoped to gain an insight inside advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists as they worked to frame messages relating to human trafficking. As Brunner (2008) states, "qualitative methods are most useful and powerful when they are used

to discover participants' worlds" (pg. 158).

Data Collection Process

The second stage of this study was conducting the interviews. They were scheduled in Denver and Atlanta during the first full month of data collection. The interviews were scheduled via email with the individuals, explaining to them the purpose of the study and the interview (see Appendix B for a sample recruitment script). If the individual agreed to participate, they were asked to sign the informed consent form at the time of the interview. This document is explained in the original contact as well as at the interview (Appendix C)

The interviews were conducted at the individuals' work places or over the phone. Each interview was scheduled for 60 minutes in order to allow for an adequate amount of time for the participants to respond to each of the researcher's questions thoroughly. The interviewing process took approximately two months. Half of the interviews were conducted in person, while the others were conducted via the telephone.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, with open-ended questions to facilitate gathering information needed for the study. This researcher attempted to conduct all interviews in person with each respondent, but had to conduct five of the 15 interviews over the phone. Each interview was recorded on a voice recorder in order to be transcribed. The research asked participant's permission to use an audio recording device. The interviewee also approved of the conversation being recorded and used for further analysis through signature on the consent form. Although the audio recording device was used, observational notes from the interviews were also taken and incorporated into the final analysis.

Each interviewee was asked if his or her name could be used, which was documented and approved of by them on the consent form. Permission was a check off option on the consent form. The researcher chose to only identify the city of origin throughout the discussion portion.

The interviewer chose not to identify the organization that the individuals worked for either. The interview questions are listed in Appendix D. These questions were merely guidelines for the interviewer to facilitate the conversation to focus on the topic and keep the interview on track with the research topic.

Data Analysis

The third stage for this study was the analysis of the data. The researcher transcribed approximately 15 hours of interviews. Once transcribed, the interview texts were analyzed for categories the demonstrated agenda building, agenda setting, and framing. The researcher also analyzed the transcriptions for emergent themes that arose throughout the data. The researcher used quotes from the interviews in the discussion section to elaborate on the possible conclusions that can be drawn from the data collected.

Categories were chosen from the literature for each of the three theoretical concepts of agenda building, agenda setting and framing. Those categories were then broken down in to codes that best expressed those categories in the text data. These code sheets are in Appendix E

Agenda building analysis.

The categories for agenda building were used to examine the how different organizations work to gain traction for the issue in order to have it put on the media's agenda. Traditionally, information subsidies are the primary way that information about an issue or an organization is delivered to media outlets. Ohl, et. al. (1995) talked about sources and their interactions with gatekeepers as a "give and take process" where both gain. In their study on coverage of corporate takeovers, Ohl et. al.(1995) found that story angle had an impact on the frequency of coverage. Agenda builders create their communications to evoke emotion and action from the public, thus making story angle a key part in agenda building. The ultimate goal, no matter how the agenda is

built, is to influence the public and eventually have the public opinion and public agenda influence public policy. The three following categories highlight key pieces of the agenda building process:

1. Evidence of information subsidies – this category was used to analyze the use of information subsidies. Codes for this category included: press releases, brochures, flyers, public service announcements, online resources, emails, billboards, radio ads, commercials, e-newsletters, posters, graphics/logo, info cards, and media alerts.

2. Enlisting others – this category highlighted the partnerships built to further the organizations agenda. Codes in this category included: advocacy groups, law enforcement, teachers, service providers, churches, other law enforcement agencies, truckers, airlines, hotels, reporters, social workers, legislators, hospitals, and district attorneys.

3. Story angle – this category was used to analyze the approach each organization used to present the issue of sex trafficking to the public at large. Codes for this category included: making it personal, factual approach, labor trafficking as a larger issue, painting a realistic picture of sex trafficking, build the story around a person, it happens in your community, and highlight the magnitude of the problem.

Agenda setting analysis.

The three agenda setting categories were determined using information gleaned from the literature review. These three categories were developed from the understood definition of the media. The first category comes directly from the defined role of the news, to inform the public of what is going on in the world. Category two, "the media agenda influences public discussion," comes directly from the study by Cohen (1963), who stated "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its

readers what to think about" (p. 13). The third category emphasizes salience of human trafficking to the public. The agenda setting categories were used to determine how the different organizations attempt to paint the picture of reality for the public, i.e. how they work to shape the mental picture the public perceives:

1. Highlighting topics the public should be aware of – this category focused on bringing specific attributes of the human trafficking story that the audience should be aware of. Codes included: sex trafficking is a community issue, telling a victim's story, defining what trafficking looks like and developing appropriate terminology.

2. Media agenda influences public discussion – this category highlighted the way the media's promotion or denial of an issue causes an increase in the public discussion of sex trafficking. Codes included: having tough discussion with people you know, the media denies the problem, presenting all sides of the issue, and numbers indicate that the problem is getting worse.

3. Issues discussed when salient to the public – this category was used to show the way in which the media would cover issues when they were relevant to the public. For example, one journalist wrote an article after an incident occurred in her community. The incident made the topic salient to her readers because it happened in their community. In addition to it happening where you live, other codes were labor trafficking is more prevalent and trafficking is always salient to the public.

Framing analysis.

The last concept, framing, was analyzed using four categories, developed using Entman's (2004) observation that framing performs four specific functions: the promotion of a particular problem definition, identifying causes, moral judgment, and endorsing remedies of improvements. These categories were applied to the data collected to determine the way in which

each group was selecting and highlighting certain aspects of human trafficking to promote a particular interpretation of the issue, evaluation of the problem, and solution to the issue:

1. Promotion of sex trafficking as a particular problem – this category looked at the different ways the three groups promoted sex trafficking as a problem. Codes included raising awareness, different types of trainings, outreach programs, campaigns, fundraisers, events, social media platforms, the Polaris hotline, incorrect understanding of prostitution by the public, and general lack of public awareness.

2. Identifying causes of sex trafficking – this category looked at what the different groups attributed the problem of sex trafficking to. The codes included sexual abuse, the ease of use on the Internet, porn, certain risk factors in adolescents, and the general cultural focus on sexual gratification.

3. Moral judgments of those involved – this category focused on the framing concept of casting blame or attributing responsibility for the issue. Codes included: penalizing the traffickers and the johns, prosecuting sites like Backpage.com, developing harsher punishments than exist, and shaming criminals publicly.

4. Endorsing remedies for improvement – this category focused on the frames of victory and success, the way each group thinks the issue can be remedied. Codes for this included pass legislation, work with multi-agency task forces, educate school children, teach others the warning signs, change stigmas, and shift cultural perceptions. For a full list of the codes used, refer to Appendix F.

Results

Fifteen individuals were interviewed for this qualitative study – seven advocacy group representatives, five law enforcement officers, and three journalists. The participants were located in Atlanta, Denver and Raleigh. The interviews conducted lasted from 20 to 60 minutes.

Each group of interviews was analyzed based on the three theoretical concepts of agenda building, agenda setting and framing. To look at the topic of agenda building, three categories were analyzed: evidence of information subsidies, enlisting others, and story angle. The concept of agenda setting was analyzed through three categories as well: highlight topics the public should be aware of, the media agenda influences public discussion, and issues discussed when salient to the public. The concept of framing was analyzed in the interviews through four categories: promotion of sex trafficking as a particular problem, identifying causes of sex trafficking, passing moral judgments on those involved, and endorsing remedies of improvement.

These categories were coded for themes and topics that occurred in the interviews. For example, "press releases" were a code for the category "evidence of information subsidies." These codes were then counted and the number for each category was totaled to get a collective count of 75 occurrences for journalists, 154 occurrences for law enforcement, and 412 occurrences for advocacy groups. See Table 1 for the complete set of counts.

Table 2 – Percentage of Category Occurrences

Concept	Category	Advocacy	Law Enforcement	Journalists
Agenda Building	Evidence of information subsidies	41	8	0
Agenda Building	Enlisting others	54	36	15
Agenda Building	Story angle	24	13	8

Agenda Setting	Highlight topics public should be aware of	9	3	7
Agenda Setting	Media agenda influences public discussion	7	2	2
Agenda Setting	Issues discussed when salient to public	1	2	8
Framing	Promotion of sex trafficking is a particular problem	171	56	23
Framing	Identifying causes of sex trafficking	31	9	3
Framing	Moral judgments of those involved	7	6	1
Framing	Endorsing remedies of improvement	67	19	8

Enlisting others ranked high in the agenda building comments for all three groups. The agenda setting categories ranked lowest for both law enforcement and advocacy groups, yet highest for the journalists. Each of the ten categories was then coded to show the comparisons among the three groups for each category.

Agenda Building Categories

Law enforcement and advocacy groups were the only ones to mention information subsidies. This is somewhat expected because journalists receive information subsidies and do not generally produce them.

One law enforcement interview participant mentioned the importance of law enforcement agencies enlisting others. Noting the lack of funding and manpower that plagues law enforcement, one interviewee stated that the partnerships they have with others is vital, because while the specific law enforcement office may not be able to develop and fund a campaign or event, with the help of others they can contribute to an event for the public.

Law enforcement and advocacy groups both emphasized that sex trafficking happens in each and every community. Law enforcement also equally stressed that sex trafficking might be the topic more frequently discussed but labor trafficking is much more prevalent throughout the

world. Journalists most frequently mentioned building the story around a person or people affected by this tragedy. Victim stories were noted as the best way to express to the public what was going on, offering a firsthand account of what a victim went through being trafficked. Advocacy group participants also focused the discussion on highlighting the magnitude of the problem and on the fact that the human trafficking affects everyone in some shape or form. Journalists also focused on the importance of painting a realistic picture of the situation, with of the comments pertaining to a realistic portrait of sex trafficking in the community. Advocacy groups and journalists both emphasized story angles that encourage readers to make a difference in their community through gaining knowledge and taking action in the community.

Agenda Setting Categories

Advocacy groups wanted to highlight the topic of sex trafficking through publishing articles and making the public aware that it is a community issue. Law enforcement was equally focused on talking about the egregiousness of the crime, that arresting traffickers has nothing to do with profiling but criminal violations of the law, and that they require funding to work on the issue. Journalists focused on equal parts of telling victim stories and defining what trafficking actually looks like to the public. One participant mentioned that a lot of people think of sex trafficking as some dramatic experience like in the movie Taken. However, often that is not the case. A handsome man will entice a vulnerable girl, make her feel special and even "date" her. Then once he has gained her trust, he will exploit her through mental and sometimes physical bondage. All three groups agree that this is an issue that the public should be aware of.

While the journalists spoke solely of presenting all sides of the issue, the advocacy groups had a few different views of this category. Advocacy groups focused on addressing the root of the problem. People need to have tough discussions with those in their lives. Someone is

committing this crime on the demand side, so obviously men and women are paying to have sex with victims. Some comments spoke about the media attacking advocacy groups for making the problem seem much larger than it actually is while other comments focused to the media's denial of the problem altogether.

This was the category with the least input from both law enforcement and advocacy groups. Yet this category was one of the largest for journalists. Journalists believed that the issue was salient to the public because it happens where you live. They also mentioned that labor trafficking is more prevalent than sex trafficking.

Framing Categories

This category, promotion of sex trafficking as a particular problem, also contained the majority of the data from the interviews. Though not specifically asked in any of the interview questions, many of the organizations spoke about the causes of sex trafficking as it happens in America. Advocacy groups lobbied highly for the link between sexual abuse and people being susceptible to trafficking schemes. The popularity of porn was also ranked high as a cause for sex trafficking. Advocacy groups sited the culture's acceptance of sexual gratification no matter the cost as influential in causing this societal problem, where law enforcement termed this same concept as the "culture's insatiable appetite for sex." Journalists added to the discussion the lack of education and poverty as two other potential causes of people being trafficked for sex.

The category of moral judgments of those involved, ranked highest with law enforcement. Law enforcement comments related to moral judgments focused on showing the punishment for traffickers to the public in an effort to warn other traffickers and offenders of the punishment possible for committing this crime. By showing the public the punishments for

trafficking people, law enforcement hope to show that other traffickers when they get caught, this will happen to them too.

Advocacy groups offered the most remedies for improvement. This is to be expected since they do most of the work with the issue, and determining ways to combat and end human trafficking is a part of their mission. Law enforcements greatest remedy focus was working with task forces. Advocacy groups emphasized, changing stigmas, shifting cultural perceptions, and working with multi-agency task forces as a remedy of improvement. Law enforcement participants mentioned identifying trends, building cases, and working in partnership with others as other remedies to be implemented. Journalists mentioned that this is a community issue, and therefore is going to take the community working together to end it.

In analyzing the interview data, several patterns emerged. Advocacy groups were seen to be the front-runner in promoting the problem of sex trafficking. Law enforcement promoted the problem but within the safety frame – human trafficking creates an unsafe atmosphere for the public. For law enforcement, to combat human trafficking is a public safety issue. Journalists wanted to primarily present the different sides of the human trafficking issue through facts, victim stories, and pertinent local cases.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher explores the evidence for and against evidence of the three concepts of agenda building, agenda setting, and framing theory as related to the three groups interviewed; how economic, political, and sociocultural factors impact these groups' communications messages; and the future implications for the study findings.

RQ1: Agenda Building, Agenda Setting, and Framing by Advocacy Groups

Research question one considered how anti-human trafficking advocacy groups used agenda building, agenda setting and framing. Through analysis of the data, this researcher determined that advocacy groups engaged in all three of these practices.

Agenda building.

Advocacy groups engaged in agenda building primarily by enlisting the help of others. One of the main functions of advocacy groups is to enlist the help of others, so it is expected that they get others to work with them to spread awareness. One interview participant stated:

> One of our main goals is to just raise awareness. If nobody knows about it they're not going to [help], you're not going to get funding, you're not going to have legislation passed, that sort of thing. – Atlanta

Building the agenda is the first step in working toward getting human trafficking on the public agenda. This requires developing the resources to disseminate that message, through working with others, pushing out information about events and fundraisers, and sharing the stories about the issues.

Advocacy groups used more information subsidies than law enforcement and journalists. Of the information subsidies listed, press releases were the most mentioned, followed by electronic newsletters and online databases of resources. As stated earlier, the ultimate goal, no

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matter how the agenda is built, is to influence the public and eventually have the public opinion and public agenda influence public policy. Agenda builders all hope to eventually use the cultivated public agenda to influence and direct the political agenda. In this case, the advocacy groups want to influence several pieces of the public agenda by first making the public see the issue as a human rights violation. This was emphasized through multiple statements about sex trafficking being a local problem:

> We want people to know that this is an issue not only among humanity, but an issue that's in your own backyard but an issue that could affect your children or your children's friends. – Atlanta

> And that is that everyone can do something to stop human trafficking. And the other is that it is a crime. It's a human rights violation, it's a public health issue, and that the more we make it, bring awareness, then that's one way of lessening or diminishing the demand side of it. – Raleigh

> The more we talk to people, the more we see that there's just so many misconceptions and so little, just a lack of awareness of what's going on. I think people understand more of trafficking internationally, but a lot of people, like will say oh that happens in Denver? And we're like yes. That could be happening in your neighborhood. – Denver

All of these individuals stressed the importance of community understanding and involvement in the issue. One of the first ways these organizations accomplish this is through the information subsidies released. This researcher noted, however, that due to the rise of the Internet and the ease with which social media allows for public engagement, the traditional practice of sending information subsidies to journalists for publication mentioned less. A few groups did mention sending out press releases, but a majority of those were published either to organizations' websites or social media pages.

Another practice for advocacy groups was running ads on billboards, on the radio, in airport baggage claims, in bus stations, and in train stations. Since people are often trafficked

through travel hubs, getting the message out in those locations is vital to increasing awareness and recognition of the problem.

As part of the agenda building process, advocates also wanted to make sure that people had plenty of available resources. This included statistics with citations from authoritative sources, a hotline number to call, lists of warning signs, and online resource hubs:

> We wanted to be able to present data that we could back up with an authoritative source. So that's always governed our information. And every time we publish something, we footnote the source of the facts that we publish in our presentation material. – Raleigh

> This summer we released our trafficking resource hub online so we've kind of tried to put everything together that people might need like students, professors, we know, anybody who's interested in the issue. – Atlanta

Partnerships with law enforcement were the most mentioned way that advocacy groups enlist the help of others. Collaboration with other groups in the form of coalitions was often mentioned. Working with people skilled in different areas, whether health care providers, law enforcement, or churches, advocacy groups know that they depend on the help of others. Advocacy groups worked more with police officers than any other group. The reason for this may be because law enforcement is the first line of defense when it comes to trafficking. "They are in the trenches" as one interview participant stated. This partnership also proves beneficial because law enforcement handles the traffickers and johns (customers) while the advocacy groups can work with the victims.

Partnerships also allow for advocacy groups to spread their awareness message more quickly because they have more people advocating for their organization and the cause. Other organizations can get involved and help with such things as trainings, educating certain populations, or volunteering to organize or fund events. Partnerships are vital to the work of advocacy groups. More partnerships need to be formed between advocacy groups, law

enforcement, service providers, schools, legislators, judiciaries, and even media. The goal is to educate the public to protect them from perpetrators or to recognize potential trafficking situations.

The most prominent perspectives held by the advocacy groups was the importance of people understanding that trafficking happens where they live. The effect sex trafficking has on the community was present in the data nearly twice as many times as any other point of view. Making the story personal for people, showing that it affects their communities, was a huge focus of the advocacy group agenda building process:

> One of the big things that we try to always have in our messaging is that this could, this happens to everyone, no matter what you look like. It happens to somebody that looks like you it happens in every community. – Atlanta

> Human trafficking is here in our community. That it affects the vulnerable and that means people of all nationalities, all socioeconomic groups, and that vulnerability can be expressed just like a 12 year old girl who doesn't feel sure of herself and wants to be accepted in a group, she's vulnerable. – Raleigh

The story angle "everyone has a story" was mentioned by many of the participants. One of the advocacy participants explained a position they share with others: "No one wakes up at age sixteen and decides to become a prostitute." Another advocate participant put it this way: "I have yet to meet a woman who would just choose that work. I mean there are so many factors that play into it."

From the data, it is clear that advocacy groups demonstrate agenda building by working on building partnerships with others in order to make the issue of human trafficking something that the public should be discussing. Through developing materials that are distributed to the public through multiple avenues, advocacy groups attempt to shape the public's understanding of the issue. Gaining public attention through outreach and training is one way to introduce that specific organization's definition of the problem and potential solutions to their audiences and

gain traction within the community. Agenda building focuses heavily on media placement, yet it seems with the rise of avenues like social media, the reliance on traditional media seems to become less prominent.

In the agenda building process, particularly deciding the story angle, advocacy groups must determine how they will frame these issues. Framing and agenda building must work together. For example, using the "everybody has a story" angle helps implement the frames of changing stereotypes and stigmas. Advocacy groups must think of the ways in which they want to promote the problem of sex trafficking before they can begin to build the agenda. The data from the interviews indicates that the thought that goes into the advocacy groups' objectives and story angles influences which partnerships and subsidies they decide to use.

Agenda setting.

As previously noted, agenda setting was the smallest percentage of focus in the advocacy group interviews. One particular advocacy group, when discussing its first big press conference, talked of the influential role the media played:

> Raleigh has a television network that is for local news in Raleigh, its sort of one of those channels like an education channel on the Time Warner cable. And we convinced them to come out and video our community forum. And then we were able to get aired on their channel. – Raleigh

The recognition by the media that this advocacy group was doing important work enabled the advocacy group to help set the media's agenda and broadcast the conference to the public. Obviously, advocacy groups think trafficking is a topic worthy of public awareness because that is one of the primary reasons they exist. Having the media highlight the topic is important because they have a much broader reach than the advocacy groups. Advocacy groups only have so much influence by themselves; utilizing media outlets helps spread that message to a much larger audience as well as providing some legitimacy to the information provided.

A few participants mentioned the negative effects the media can have when they attack

advocacy groups or deny that the problem exists:

> The [major city newspaper] ran a two part article in January of 2013 that basically said the issues not that bad in [our city] and nonprofits exaggerate the problem and there aren't good statistics and it was really frustrating and discouraging and it was very detrimental because it was a like cover story basically in our biggest city's paper for two days in a row. And when you're trying to get that same community to get behind you financially support you, get involved as volunteers and then you've got a big media outlet saying its really not a problem, and that media outlet never asked anybody in our organization what we do, who we serve, how bad is the problem. – Atlanta

Another group talked about staff members being personally attacked over research they

had conducted on the number of girls being exploited as well the number of people buying and

selling girls:

> We were attacked kind of viciously by a reporter who attacked our methodology, and he just made it very personal and attacked some of staff members. So that was really difficult of course, and so it was easy to think that there were some ulterior motives on his part. Because he was working for a newspaper that was owned by Village Voice Media that owns backpage.com and that's the biggest online site for this. – Atlanta

The opposite is also true, according to one of the individuals interviewed in Denver.

When the media report on the issue, the public truly does become aware:

> Well everyone just thought it used to be in third world countries. And now they're seeing it's here. And I'm thankful for that. And I do think the media plays a part in that. – Denver

Advocacy groups have the least amount of mentions in the category "issue discussed

when salient to the public." This could be attributed to the fact that the issue is not going to be

very salient to the public until they understand that trafficking exists and in what forms.

The data indicates that the advocacy organizations currently are not far into the agenda

setting process. The continued efforts by advocacy groups to build an agenda through developing

partnerships and pushing out information subsidies are vital to become a part of the media's

agenda. Yet it can be noted that with the rise of Twitter, Facebook, blog sites, and other social media platforms, the agenda setting process could be seen to be in somewhat of a transition period. The data indicates the advocacy groups did not display much agenda setting.

Framing.

For the advocacy groups, the framing occurs at all points of the message creation process. From the aspects of the issue they try to highlight to the way in which they present the information, they are constantly working with frames. The most prevalent frames revealed by the data analysis were the frames of awareness, prevention, changing stigmas and community.

The most frequent ways advocacy groups promote the problem of sex trafficking are general awareness raising techniques and outreach programs. The Polaris Project National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline was mentioned as one of the most utilized resources among all advocacy groups. Through the promotion of the problem, advocacy groups also hope to increase the public's awareness about human trafficking, specifically by addressing the stereotypes of women in prostitution. This is done through community forums, fundraisers, press conferences, public service announcements, and campaigns.

A large portion of the awareness raising is being focused on trainings, which include:

- Airline training – training flight attendants to learn how to spot victims on flights
- Law enforcement training – training law enforcement how to spot victims as well as follow the correct procedures to get victims the help they need
- Health care provider trainings – teach healthcare providers such as emergency room nurses how to spot signs of trafficking
- Hotel trainings – teach hotel workers to be on the lookout for suspicious activities such a multiple men going to the same room on the same day

- Teacher training – training teachers how to educate their students with age-appropriate dialogue about ways traffickers lure young children into the sex trade

- Parent training – train parents how to spot signs that their child is being exploited or shows warning signs such as the vulnerabilities traffickers prey on

These trainings are important as they teach the warning signs that someone may present when they are being trafficked or being groomed to be trafficked. These include physical signs, emotional signs, and mental signs:

> The other form of outreach that we do is a medical training and we go to primarily hospitals right now but we're going to pregnancy crisis centers, paramedics, fire stations, and we basically train them from a medical perspective what indicators a patient may present that suggest that they are actually victims of trafficking. – Atlanta

Advocacy groups used social media most frequently, while journalists used social media some and law enforcement used it the least. Advocacy groups used the social media site Facebook the most. Yet social media did not seem to be a very effective means of promoting the problem. Several of the advocates interviewed noted that they struggled to achieve interaction on their social media sites, noting that individuals who are already aware of the issue often commented or liked posts. But as a means to raise public awareness, social media is not having as large of an impact on the general public as hoped for by advocacy groups.

Another large factor in the promotion of the problem of sex trafficking is that, while advocacy groups want to present the reality of the situation, they must also be careful not to re-exploit the survivors stories, which would victimize them again:

> We've kind of just made a decision that it would be exploitive of the women if they saw cameras coming in basically making a spectacle of them or putting them on display. – Atlanta

> We never want to exploit somebody's story and we also have to be careful because there's obviously, there are pimps involved, there are johns involved, there are things that

go way far beyond so we have to kind of just be delicate in what we say but we're letting people know that things are happening. – Denver

The advocacy group interviewees highlighted the stigmas people place on trafficking victims and women and girls in prostitution, as well as explaining the underlying causes that society overlooks. Often trafficking victims are also victims of childhood abuse (whether sexual, physical or verbal), suffer from low self-esteem, are groomed by what is referred to as the "boyfriend scenario," or are part of at risk populations. According to one study participant, one factor that influences the lack of action is that a culture exists that promotes sexual gratification no matter the cost, whether it is through things such as pornography, strip clubs, or rap music. One advocate interviewee shared the story of a young woman they had recently rescued:

> We talked to an 18 year old who we met in outreach standing on the corner and wearing the clothes and there's no pimp in sight. Now there was one; we didn't know that. We couldn't see him, so easily we label that, she's in prostitution. Well just a few months earlier, she had gone out on a few dates with this guy, on one of those dates he got her drunk, drove her to a part of town where he already had clients lined up, took her driver's license, kicked her out of the car and pushed her into that. She didn't seek it out; she didn't want that. At the end of the night, he put a bag over her head, drove her into the woods took the bag off and said, "If you ever try to leave or if you ever hold on to any of my money, I'll bury you out in the woods." So she's out on the corner terrified, every night, that he literally can find me anywhere, like I can't escape and if he finds me he'll kill me. And so we see her out there, now he is around the corner watching her from around the side of a convenient store. So what most people would drive by and label her as a prostitute, once we heard the story after we rescued her and heard her story, oh actually she had very little choice in that situation; she was a trafficking victim. – Atlanta

This story highlights the major point participants from all groups seemed to stress: that until you know someone's back story, assuming these young girls made the choice to be in prostitution or work as an escort not only dehumanizes them, is often untrue:

> We've just found so many people have huge misconceptions about people that are in prostitution for instance and that it's just about the money and their thinking, oh I just want to do this. And instead not realizing a lot of them have dealt with incest or sexual abuse in some form and are not seeing much of the money when they're often being

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coerced by a pimp and just really lack of awareness that sex trafficking is going on, even here in Denver. – Denver

Although there is not one specific cause of trafficking for sex, understanding the reasons why people are vulnerable to it makes it easier for organizations to raise awareness about how victims are coerced and/or forced into sex trafficking.

Advocacy groups are much more victim focused than criminal focused – identifying remedies for improvement ranks higher than the punishment for traffickers and johns (clients):

> Known pimps, known sellers of child sex are moving out of the Atlanta area are not trying to sell children for sex in the Atlanta area, or in the state of Georgia excuse me, because it's not worth it because the penalties are too high, it's not worth getting caught and because law enforcement is being trained. – Atlanta

By severely punishing those who commit these heinous acts, that will not only spread awareness that this is something that happens in communities, but it will also show the traffickers that getting caught is going to result in severe consequences. However, advocacy groups most often framed human trafficking as an ethical/moral issue.

Participants from advocacy groups noted shifting cultural perceptions as the largest remedy for improvement to the human trafficking problem, followed closely by prevention, providing a safe place for victims, changing stigmas, and teaching people the warning signs of trafficking:

> We have a huge heart to change stigmas. We believe that every person is valuable and has worth and we think a lot of people might hear the word prostitute or stripper and just naturally assume who that person is but that so takes away who she really is and that dehumanizes her. – Denver

Advocacy groups want to and must use frames to adjust the public's perception of prostitution, sex trafficking, and pimping in order to bring a better understanding to the public about the moral dilemma facing communities across the nation. Human trafficking itself is a

huge issue; these advocacy groups have chosen to focus on the crime of sex trafficking. By choosing to frame only sex trafficking, they are inadvertently choosing to highlight the problem of sex trafficking over labor trafficking, mail-order brides and organ trafficking. This reiterates McCombs (1997) statement that framing "is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed" (p. 6). By choosing to highlight the information about sex trafficking, these organizations are restricting the discussion only to that problem.

RQ2: Agenda Building, Agenda Setting, and Framing by Law Enforcement

Research question two explored how agenda building, agenda setting and framing are used by law enforcement. An analysis of the data led the researcher to determine that law enforcement engaged in all three of these practices.

Agenda building.

Law enforcement approaches agenda building differently than advocacy groups. As they encounter trafficking situations first hand, they are invaluable resources to advocacy groups trying to understand the realities of the problem. Law officers help inform the community of what trafficking scenarios look like, warning signs that someone is being trafficked as well as reporting the number of trafficking cases that occur within a community. As the knowledge of the law enforcement officers grows, so does their ability to raise awareness among the public. They, however, seek to build the agenda to raise awareness for the promotion and preservation of public safety.

Law enforcement study participants, while emphasizing awareness, expressed the belief that creating public safety motivated the need for awareness. Press releases are the information subsidy most frequently used by law enforcement; through these they deliver the information

most pertinent to the cases or arrests they have made. These are sent out to advocacy groups,

many of which noted that they had to translate the law enforcement jargon into a more readable

document for the general public. One interview participant spoke about the success of using

materials from national campaigns:

> Piggy backing on national campaigns I have found is always really successful because
> law enforcement doesn't always have the resources or talent or ability to develop
> campaigns. So we love to see what the feds are doing or what the people on the national
> level are doing. Their PSAs, their art work. And a lot of that they tailor for you anyways.
> – Raleigh

That particular law enforcement officer went on to say that they like to avoid

"reinventing the wheel." By using materials created by others to emphasize the issue, law

enforcement can avoid having to waste time and resources trying to do something that has

already been done. With the large number of issues that law enforcement must focus on, saving

time on this front helps them be more successful in their primary function – upholding the law.

Law enforcement participants also stressed the importance of working with others, such

as advocacy groups, airlines, churches, academia, task forces, or district attorneys. Without the

help of such organizations, law enforcement would not be able to tackle all the issues that they

do. Citizens help also plays a vital part to law enforcement work; tip lines help the police catch

criminals. One of the slogans used by a Denver law enforcement interviewee was "See

something, say something":

> People have wonderful information but if you're not asking all the right questions, you're
> not going to get it all from them. So [the captain] has worked with those call takers so not
> only is the hotline available but also when people do call it, we get the valid, useful,
> really good information and we're not leaving anything on the table. – Denver

Several law enforcement study participants noted that the emphasis on sex trafficking,

while important, is not nearly as big of a problem as labor trafficking, especially in agricultural

states such as North Carolina and Colorado. Members of law enforcement stressed the impact

this has on all members of society because human trafficking is tied to multiple enterprises, both

criminal and not; people may not know that the places they shop or farms they buy food from use

forced labor:

> The interesting thing about human trafficking to is that we have realized to through our years in it, that so many people think human trafficking is just sex trafficking. And it has been very, very difficult for us to get the message out about labor trafficking, because it is also quite a problem. But I think the issue is that sex trafficking is much more of a sensational story than labor trafficking is. So that's a challenge that we've faced for several years and every chance we get, we try to express to people that it's not just sex trafficking. – Raleigh

> The message to people is look, they are being trafficked here for a reason, prostitution, slave labor, all these other crimes that are associated with human trafficking and it branches out and contributes to the overall crime rate in Colorado, which is what we try to get across to people. This is why you should care. It's not just a bunch of people rolling down the roadway that doesn't hurt you in anyway. There are a lot of criminal enterprises that depend solely upon human trafficking, and that is why it needs to be stopped. – Denver

One of the most crucial steps for law enforcement in agenda building is maintaining a

good rapport with the journalists. In order to have the items on the police agenda placed in front

of the public, the law enforcement agencies and journalists must learn to work with each other.

This is often easier said than done with a sensitive topic like human trafficking. Law

enforcement must portray a truthful picture of the situation but also have to protect the rights of

the accused and the victims. This can create some tension between journalists and law

enforcement. Journalists often want to ride along or film a bust, while law enforcement must

protect the identities of the victims, especially when the victims are minors.

Framing occurs in law enforcement agenda building as well. Where advocacy groups

focus on building an agenda around ending the violation of human rights, law enforcement tend

to frame their materials around the victimization of an individual at the hands of a criminal.

Agenda setting.

Law enforcement focused mainly on agenda setting topics by noting that the public needs to be aware that trafficking happens where you live, and that those who commit these crimes are punished if caught. One study participant, a trafficking task force supervisor, pointed out that trafficking should be salient to the public every day while it still exists. It is a crime against people that happens every single hour of every single day:

> Instead of just a onetime thing instead of just raising awareness during the super bowl and talking about it during the super bowl, why aren't we talking about it year round? – Denver

Despite wanting to raise awareness about the issue, law enforcement must be careful due the sensitive nature of the information they gather about the traffickers or pimps involved. They cannot jeopardize a trial by tainting the public's view of the people arrested. Law enforcement agenda-setting practices are focused on getting the public to realize trafficking is a crime and that it happens, whether people see it or not.

> We've had an increase in pimping arrests, an increase in felony john arrests that are associated with the girls. So the numbers don't indicate the problem is getting better; they actually indicate that the problem is getting worse but I don't know if it's getting worse or not. But I can tell you that I've seen more kids now being trafficked than I ever have. – Denver

Stressing the fact that it happens in every community, law enforcement seek to use media as a way to disperse vital information to the public but also correct preconceived notions about human trafficking, such as the fact that labor trafficking is a much larger issue than sex trafficking:

> There are a lot of people who confuse human trafficking and human smuggling, and that's something that we always have to make a distinction on. There are a lot of people who think that human trafficking is something that only happens overseas. And if they do think it happens here, they think it only happens with foreign nationals, so the women are being brought in from China or Indonesia or something like that and being trafficked

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here. Which of course is happening. And then the other thing is that people, then if they know anything about trafficking, they assume it is all sex trafficking. And obviously that is my background and my focus and what I understand more, but I also the reality is that labor is a bigger issue. – Denver

It's not just a trafficking issue but it always seems to be attached to something else, whether it be organized crime, moving drugs, moving guns, the big thing in Colorado is right now, it's not that we're seeing less but relatively speaking, the prostitution thing that we talked about we've seen some big cases come out of that, but human trafficking is being used less in Colorado for prostitution than it is for labor trafficking. – Denver

Making sure the community understands the issue is vital to creating a safe public. Understanding that victims do not come from foreign lands but from local communities is part of changing the public's understanding and motivation to act. When people see the personal repercussions of sex trafficking, or human trafficking in any form, they may be more likely do something.

Framing.

Data from the interviews indicates that law enforcement absolutely wants to raise awareness about human trafficking. However, their approach is focused on educating those who are ignorant of the issue to prevent it from happening in order to increase public safety; the frame of public safety. The safety of the public is the main focus of law enforcement in all its endeavors, whether human trafficking, drunk driving, homicides, or robberies. While they definitely want to protect the victim, their primary motivation is to defend the law of the land and catch those who break the law. This sometimes can cause tensions between advocacy groups and law enforcement. The advocates want to protect the individuals just rescued, while the law enforcement officers want to follow protocol and go after the perpetrator, despite the trauma that these rescued people have endured. One law enforcement officer mentioned that his job requires him to build these cases and go after the criminals. But he stresses to the girls that he interviews

that by helping him, they allow him the ability to potentially arrest the trafficker and prevent this from happening to other girls.

Due to the large number of issues law enforcement must be aware of, sometimes they do not know the warning signs of a trafficking victim. Several study participants spoke of the need for law enforcement training as well as public trainings to make sure that the first lines of defense, law enforcement officers, know how to identify and intervene in these situations. One interviewee had to contact the researcher again to clarify misspeaking about the work of law enforcement with advocacy. That one action shows just how quickly the situation changes and how all organizations need to stay up to date on human trafficking procedures and actions by their specific organization. Organizations constantly need to be addressing these topics of salience in order to prepare their employees, particularly the public information officers, how to frame the subject when talking to the public.

Training the public to be aware of the warning signs is something that law enforcement focuses on almost as much as advocacy. One officer emphasized the importance of the public having a basic understanding of the issue:

> I want to train the public too because then when they're sitting on a jury of a trafficker, they don't have to ask those silly questions like, why didn't you run screaming from the hotel. Instead they are educated on the topic and they understand. – Denver

Explaining to the public that rarely do the victims have a choice is one of the major points that helps prevent scenarios like the aforementioned. In the endorsing remedies section, law enforcement officers stressed that this is a community issue and it is going to take a community effort to end it:

> If you try to save everybody and if you try to take human trafficking from beginning to end and attack it as a single agency it's never going to work, which is why we have joint task forces and partnerships. – Denver

Law enforcement has definitely begun to develop more awareness themselves as well as the public in more recent years but there is still more work to do. Often officers will arrest victims of sex trafficking and label them as criminals due to a lack of understanding of the issue. Awareness needs to be raised not only with the public but also among law enforcement officers. By framing sex trafficking as a crime, law enforcement is able to communicate its objective most clearly to the public.

RQ3: Agenda Building, Agenda Setting, and Framing By Journalists

Research question three explored in what ways agenda building, agenda setting and framing are used by journalists. Analysis of the data indicated that journalists engaged in all three of these practices.

Agenda building.

The journalists interviewed did not discuss information subsidies. This was not unusual because often they receive those sorts of informational pieces from others; they do not create them. Journalists work on the back end of the agenda building process, as they are the ones who determine which issues to communicate to the public.

Journalists did mention the importance of enlisting others, such as coalitions, advocacy groups, law enforcement, and district attorneys. Involving the stakeholders in the issue allows the media to present a wide range of opinion in published works or television news. Also, developing those relationships on a local level allows the media to stay informed of the cases relevant to its specific audience.

The journalists participating in the study all said the quintessential frame for any piece on sex trafficking is to find a victim or survivor and get her to tell her story. All three journalists interviewed echoed this sentiment:

The way that we frame every story is we try to find the people who are affected by the issue and build it around that person. – Raleigh

The first choice for every journalist is to find a real person. – Denver

I have these two girls, these two women tell me their story and trust me to put it out there. So obviously I hope that they like the way I portrayed it or respect the way I portray it. But I hope that people read those and change their perceptions of what they think or whom they think is prostituted. – Denver

The journalists, in addition to telling personal stories, stressed the importance of

presenting an accurate and balanced account of what was occurring in each of their respective

communities. While the labor trafficking industry is much larger and more prominent, sex

trafficking seems to hold the audience's attention more easily; it also seems to be more

compelling to write about. One of the participants noted this:

And labor trafficking for instance is bigger than sex trafficking. But there was just something about that vulnerability and about being able to relate, at least from that being a human being and from being a young teenage girl once, that drew me in to the point that I was like I have to tell this story and they deserve to have their voices out there. – Denver

With regard to agenda building, journalists seemed to take a two-fold approach: first,

they present the facts to the community – this is what sex trafficking is, here are some warning

signs, and here are some major implications based on the research. Secondly, journalists present

a personal account from someone who has survived this tragedy.

Agenda building involves media on a somewhat opposite side of the spectrum than

advocacy groups. As Cobb and Elder (1983) write, special interest groups must take actions to

arouse the media and capture their attention. Once the media are hooked, the issue takes off:

The media ordinarily are not initiators of (issue) arousal. A group must gain some initial success before the media will focus on an issue. Once the media take an interest in an (issue), however, they will often play an important role in reinforcing or altering the prevailing definition of the (issue) (p. 143).

The data analysis from the interviews confirmed the statement from Cobb and Elder. While the journalists did write about the issue, they had to wait until it was a topic with enough salience to the public to cover it. Two of the journalists mentioned previous interest in the issue but as a journalist, had to follow the standard journalistic procedure to present the issue to the public when it would be most impactful and relevant.

Agenda setting.

A journalist's role is to inform society of issues that affect its community. Agenda setting, therefore, plays a key part in journalism. As far as highlighting the problem, all three spoke about the importance of defining human trafficking for the public. One journalist talked about having set up an interview with a survivor but the girl decided it was not the right thing for her yet:

> When you lose the girl who says, yes this happens to me, you have to be very diligent to make up for that and to provide a clear enough picture that's not biased and still accurate without that real person. – Denver

Providing a human element to a journalistic piece makes it much more interesting for the audience to read; without that element journalists are challenged to create a compelling story.

All three journalists interviewed emphasized the unbiased nature in which they must and do present this issue:

> So, I can't honestly say that I'm an advocate for anyone approach cause I have been you know, impartial, but I can definitely say that you know I will put the different responses from the different advocates and different groups out there and you know then allow the person who is watching the story to make their own choices about what they think is the good solution. - Raleigh

> I'm just trying to tell people about something going on in our community. I'm not trying to sway them in anyway, I'm not trying to get them to give money to it, I'm not trying to get them to go talk to their legislators, it's great if they do that and if they believe in the cause that I wrote about, but at the end of the day I'm just putting the story out there to tell people that something's going on in their backyard. – Denver

One of the journalists, when talking about sex trafficking and its salience to the public, mentioned an instance where a law enforcement action about a suspected case of human trafficking started a public conversation, thus making an appropriate time to write about sex trafficking and its presence in the community:

> It's not just [I] wanted to write about human trafficking but also there actually seemed to be some kind of impetus. – Denver

Journalists are the key players in agenda setting. Agenda setting, best described by Cohen (1963), is that the media tells people what to think about, not what to think. By publishing materials on human trafficking, journalists are presenting an issue as relevant to their readers. Through the media outlets, those people who are more skeptical of claims made by advocacy groups may take the claims written about by a reporter they know and trust more seriously. A good journalist builds that credibility with their readers. One of the journalists interviewed talked about how social media helped her keep her audience informed of the due diligence she puts into her articles by demonstrating the amount of research she does for the pieces she writes.

Framing.

As with the other two groups interviewed, framing ranked highest for the most used of the three concepts. Most of the framing occurred in the promotion of the problem, through things such as conferences, panels, social media, and published materials. Journalists named educating the public and bringing awareness the most used frame when discussing sex trafficking. Twitter and Facebook were both mentioned as a way to push online copies of articles to the public. These two social media outlets broaden the audience by giving people who do not have traditional media subscription-access to the articles. Through raising awareness, journalists yet

again focus on defining trafficking, although opinions about the definition of trafficking may differ.

A journalist from Raleigh spoke about the responsibility of the journalists to label what trafficking was for the public so the public understands that it is not just what is portrayed in popular culture, such as movies like *Taken*:

> People have this vision of it as a van that pulls up full of Mexican women, and they've just been smuggled over the border. And their being holed up in this house and sometimes that is the story but it's also a lot of other things. Human trafficking is when a mother sells her child for sex for drug money. You know, that's human trafficking. So there's a lot of different types of trafficking and I think that there's a lot of things that haven't been labeled trafficking and the media has a role in letting people know that it is going on in your community and here's what it looks like. – Raleigh

One of the journalists from Denver spoke of making people aware that trafficking really does happen in their community. The kids being sold for sex are kids that live in your town, go to school with your kids, and no one is exempt from these risks:

> The big point is really to just explain to people what it is and make them understand that here in Colorado at least, the kids that are being trafficking are like your neighbors and these kids that you see on the street. They're Colorado kids. Um and I think that's a really big misconception and that's I think one of the big picture things that I'm hoping the article does. – Denver

The journalists spend less time mentioning the causes of sex trafficking because that did not align as much with their mission to inform. There also was very little written on moral judgments because as they all mentioned, journalists must remain unbiased. The journalists all agreed that the perpetrators need to be punished. One journalist from Denver mentioned that people also want to ignore the problem.

Another part of raising awareness is for the journalists to publish the warning signs that someone may be a victim of human trafficking. One of the Denver journalists attended a training and was given a lengthy list of trends that law enforcement had developed:

[They gave a] list of here's common threads they see in cases that are proved to be human trafficking. So not a here's a list and if you see one thing this girl is being trafficked. But if you see multiple of these factors, it's something to be concerned about. So I think it ended up being over 20 warning signs that we included in the paper. – Denver

Most of the remedies listed by the journalists tied back into the getting the public to understand and be on the lookout for this issue. As far as being influenced by the corporations that owned the news outlet, only one journalist mentioned the company that owned their media outlet:

Most people what they know about TV news comes from watching movies and watching shows like the newsroom. But the reality of TV news, especially local TV news, is we really are insulated from any kind of influence. We're not in a situation where we work for a huge company, make a lot of money, and have a lot of pressure to slant a story in any one direction. We're really able to produce a story based on what we believe is the most important element, and in this case it would be telling the victim's story. – Raleigh

Journalists frame the issue of sex trafficking most often as a problem in the community. By framing human trafficking as a community issue, this allows people to determine what they want to do with that information. Journalists also frame human trafficking through the use of victims' stories. A first-hand account is usually more impactful than journalists saying, "This is a problem." Credibility is key for journalists whatever frame they choose to use.

RQ4: Factors of Influence

Research question four explored what economic, sociocultural and public policy factors influenced advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists in their construction of messages about human trafficking. The data indicated several factors of influence.

Economic factors.

Human trafficking is a vast economic enterprise. As several interview participants mentioned human trafficking is also tied to other criminal enterprises such as gang activities,

trafficking drugs, trafficking guns, and running illegal businesses through fake fronts, such as massage parlors doubling as brothels. Human trafficking is a supply and demand issue. If there was no demand for the supply, then the whole enterprise falls apart. But because johns are willing to purchase people for sex or labor, the enterprise survives. One law enforcement officer spoke of the economics of trafficking:

> Our concern, the reason we got into human trafficking in the first place is because it becomes a traffic safety issue, where it's a multi-billion dollar business worldwide and so and again anybody who studied economics, the more people you traffic, the more money you get. - Denver

Another economic factor that arose from the data was funding to tackle the issue of sex trafficking. Law enforcement spoke of having to receive grants in order to be able to fund campaigns and initiative to educate the public. "They received federal grant money to work on this issues," said one journalist referring to the local law enforcement. Without the grant money, the law enforcement offices could potentially lack the funding to develop materials to raise public awareness. Law enforcement, a tax-funded entity, is allotted only so much money for departmental programs such a community forums on specific topics, creating task forces for certain community issues and choosing which programs to invest in is a constant battle. Task forces, street teams, investigations, and even educational materials for the community require funding and often that funding is not there for an issue such as human trafficking unless law enforcement can prove that it is an issue affecting their community.

Advocacy groups faced the same funding challenge that law enforcement officials did, but for somewhat different reasons. While they did require funding to raise awareness through community events and outreach programs, many of the advocacy groups also help victims through recovery programs, which can be run by the organization or another service provider. Advocacy groups, as nonprofits, rely on funding from donors and grants to continue the work

they are doing. Raising funds is difficult; when the average cost of helping one individual can be in the thousands of dollars, advocacy groups must always work to raise support. One of the groups that participated in the study runs safe houses, where rescued girls can stay for up to two or three weeks at a time until they can be placed in a recovery program. Often victims have multiple problems they need to be treated for, whether medical conditions developed from being repeatedly raped and abused, drug habits, which is often how traffickers mentally and physically control their victims, or psychological traumas from the entire ordeal. In addition to the cost of recovery programs for each of the girls rescued, this particular organization has reached maximum capacity at its safe houses and needs to obtain another one in order to keep rescuing victims. This is a huge financial burden that affects many organizations. Thus, Facebook posts and other publicly distributed messages are framed around the need for financial support for them to find another house.

Journalists influence the economic state of the other two groups by highlighting the issue of human trafficking. When the public understands the issue and desires to make an impact, they will know how to contribute or at least who to contact for additional information. The journalists interviewed highlighted their desire to inform but not promote a specific action:

> At the end of the day, I'm just trying to tell people about something going on in our community. I'm not trying to sway them in anyway. I'm not trying to get them to give money to it. I'm not trying to get them to go talk to their legislators; it's great if they do that and if they believe in the cause that I wrote about, but I'm just putting the story out there to tell people that something's going on in their backyard. - Denver

Public policy.

Lobbying for enacting legislation was engaged in by both advocacy groups and law. Advocacy groups engaged supporters to lobby for harsh punishments for traffickers, harsher penalties for johns, and more federal money devoted to fighting the issue of sex trafficking. Law

enforcement, while they cannot take a political stance, mentioned in the interviews that they do appreciate the lobbyists who work to get legislation passed regarding this issue. One advocacy organization participant said, "Our biggest event of the year is lobby day." When laws make it easier to charge traffickers and johns with specific crimes, law enforcement has an easier time developing cases that allow them to arrest perpetrators. This also helps district attorneys prosecute the criminals. One advocacy participant from Atlanta said "We had some major legislation passed in 2011 which severely increased a great deal the penalties for those who choose to sell children or purchase children for sex."

Campaigns on a local, state, and national level seemed to be very popular among advocacy groups. Campaigns can provide mass exposure to the issue of trafficking. Often, the larger nonprofits will run mass media campaigns highlighting legislative or judiciary. Facebook and Twitter make it easier to spread the word about these endeavors. The use of celebrities to garner traction for a legislation campaign was mentioned as well:

> You know it would probably be neat to see some kind of bigger campaign like how MTV U has the Against Our Will thing, or their targeting toward younger adults and teens . . . I remember seeing something that there was like, Sean Penn and Matt Damon wearing shirts saying "Real Men Don't Pay for Sex." – Denver

Journalists attempt to present an unbiased portrait of issues, so advocating for people to vote for legislation would violate journalistic ethics. Journalists can provide information about pending legislation, which may inadvertently create public action, but they do not directly solicit public action.

Sociocultural factors.

All three groups interviewed mentioned the fact that human trafficking is a crime against people. "It is not a faceless or victimless crime" according to one police sergeant. People suffer and are denied even basic rights of correct nutrition, physical safety, and feeling valued. Raping

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someone for profit dehumanizes him or her in ways most people will never understand. Advocating for the human right of freedom was a factor that influenced all three groups.

Gender equality is another sociocultural issue that impacts human trafficking messages. The obvious one is that human trafficking is a crime against women and girls. Treating women as commodities for the pleasure of men was something that many of the advocates spoke out against. There were some negative undercurrents however in the way in which some of the advocates spoke about men. One thing that this researcher noted was that almost every single interviewee mentioned sex trafficking as a crime against women. But boys and men are also trafficked for sex.

Generally men are more often seen as labor trafficking victims; yet they are still trafficked for sex as well, yet no one mentioned that fact in the interviews conducted. Heterosexual men are not the only ones who pay for sex; women, lesbians, and gay men also purchase people for sex. This highlights a key area that is lacking in the current promotion of the problem. While it is still vital to promote awareness about the sex trafficking of girls and women, there needs to be more awareness raised about the boys and men who fall prey to traffickers and clients. These voiceless victims need someone to advocate for them as well.

Another group that did not seem to draw much attention was the foreign nationals who are trafficked into this country. While they were mentioned in the interviews and are certainly assisted by advocacy groups and law enforcement, most efforts are directed at combating the sex trafficking of domestic minors, because it is easier to prosecute criminals for these particular offenses.

Advocacy groups mentioned religious beliefs as playing a large part in their efforts. Their faith motivated these individuals to fight for the freedom of the victims by providing a place for

restoration and healing for the victims. Although not always expressly stated, there was no

deception on the organizations part that they were motivated to act because of their religious

beliefs. Many spoke of being called to work at their organizations.

Another sociocultural factor that often induces bias is the perception that only certain

ethnic groups and socioeconomic groups are trafficked. Both law enforcement and advocacy

groups denied this; many of them stated the importance of the public knowing that trafficking

happens to all races and all classes.

Human trafficking as a health issue is another social factor to be considered. The fact that

these victims are forced to have sex with 10 or more men a night, the spread of sexually

transmitted diseases is highly possible. Most interviewees did not mention this issue, thus raising

the point that it is another area lacking attention.

Despite Marchionni's (2012) and McCoy's (2004) negative opinions of these groups

failing to work with each other, the data indicated that overall there were many positive

relationships between the groups. All three study participants in Raleigh were very familiar with

each other and mentioned that they celebrated the passing of landmark legislation as it makes it

easier to develop a safe community.

Based on the analysis of the data, this researcher has developed some basic suggestions to

facilitate the communications messaging process. Addressing human trafficking needs to be done

on a national level campaign that is similar to the way domestic violence was publicized in the

1980s. Some of the law enforcement and advocacy group study participants discussed this in

their interviews:

> We started working with our media, our local media they would publish ok you guys got
> the grant, this is what you are going to do, and then you would start to hear in the
> community people say, "well what is human trafficking?" So when you start listening to
> your community and you start getting those types of questions from either your

community or you co-workers you know that you might need to back up a little bit and start somewhere else. It's not like at this point we were saying, well let's do a campaign on domestic violence. Everyone knows what domestic violence is. But back in the 1980s before it was common household name if you will. It was the same thing. People would say, well what is domestic violence? So we found the same thing with human trafficking, that we really had to start at the beginning. – Raleigh

Human trafficking is like 20-30 years behind domestic violence law is. So 30 years ago domestic violence was sort of in a similar awareness level as [human trafficking is] now and we should study what they [did] to raise the awareness and make people recognize that domestic violence really does occur and people can get help for it. – Raleigh

In order to do publicize this on a national level, the frames used to present domestic violence as a cultural issue would need to be determine and applied to communicating about human trafficking. For example, the No More Campaign is a relatively new endeavor against domestic violence and sexual abuse. This campaign involves every major domestic violence and sexual assault nonprofit in the United States. They also have corporate sponsors and celebrity advocates. This large population coming together to spread the word is what helps make up the pieces of a successful campaign.

While it may take a while to develop a national campaign, local and statewide campaigns can still make a difference. Shirley Franklin, the former mayor of Atlanta, helped implement a "Dear John" campaign targeting the exploiters of human trafficking victims and explaining that they would not go unpunished. This helped raise awareness in the Atlanta area to the problem the city was facing.

Another implication that this study highlights is the need for more overall general awareness about all forms of human trafficking.

Conclusion

Based on the qualitative analysis of the interview data, it was determined that agenda building, agenda setting and framing are indeed being used by advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists. Each group uses these processes in different ways to disperse the same general message – human sex trafficking occurs and something needs to be done about it.

Advocacy groups focused most of their attention on raising awareness of what sex trafficking is. A society cannot work to prevent and eradicate a social ill until they are aware of it. Through developing awareness materials such as social media sites, email blasts, public campaigns, and partnerships, advocacy groups work to highlight the way sex trafficking violates basic human rights.

Law enforcement message development focuses on the criminal aspects of sex trafficking. They frame sex trafficking as a violation of public safety, and that working to eradicate sex trafficking allows them to create a safer public for the community at large. This is done through awareness raising activities involving both the advocacy groups and journalists. Public safety is law enforcement's number one goal.

Journalists focus on highlighting sex trafficking as it pertains to their readers. Sex trafficking cases occurring in the local community has an impact on the people within the journalists' publication circulation. Journalists also work to present a realistic picture of sex trafficking in order to educate the public about a large-scale issue that occurs in local communities. They play a large role in agenda setting as the gatekeepers of the media.

Each of these groups plays a vital role to the communications process. While they frame things differently, the final goal is the same – to end a crime against people in their communities.

However, in analyzing the data, this researcher has noted that the agenda setting process needs to be reevaluated due to the ubiquity of the Internet, and in particular social media. No longer do people rely solely on the newspapers or local TV stations to inform them of what is happening in the world. Twitter, Facebook, and other social media outlets have become more popular ways of disseminating information. The question of credibility still comes into play. These postulations lend themselves to some further areas of study.

Implications

Through the results of this study, communication professionals can gain a better understanding of the practices of each of these three groups as it pertains to sex trafficking. Individuals in all three fields can see what approaches can work and apply those approaches to human trafficking. Other suggested best practices are:

- Develop relationships with individuals in the community. These relationships provide a network to build public awareness and create more opportunity to reach people.

- Enlist the help of people who have communications training, particularly in advocacy groups. Someone who can write concisely and effectively is going to be able to explain the issue to the audience without isolating them from the problem.

- Continue to learn and be informed. Stay up to date on current legislation in the area. Be aware of relevant activity at the national level and utilize those resources. Rescue and Restore, a compilation of information by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is a great resource.

- Utilize the talents and gifts employees and volunteers have. Connect passions with goals and outcomes.

- Focus on education and prevention. Educate young people on what to be aware of. It is no longer enough to say "stranger danger." Trafficking occurs often through someone a young person knows and trusts. Talk with parents. Build self-confidence in young people.

Areas for Future Study

One possible area of study would be to develop an anti-human trafficking communications campaign modeled after a previously successful domestic violence public campaign, and implementing that campaign in a specific population group, such as one of the highly ranked cities with cases of human trafficking, to see if that increased awareness and involvement.

The methodology of such a study could be applied to several other social issues, including the issue of labor trafficking. Interviews could be conducted with people who work against labor trafficking and see what similarities and differences exist among advocates, law enforcement, and journalists in the processes of raising awareness.

Another area of study could be to interview people in the communities that these organizations work in to see what level of awareness the general public, such as business professionals, college students, or other members not part of the three groups looked at in this study, has about the issue of sex trafficking in their community. The levels of public awareness could be measured against the communications messages distributed by the three groups and see which groups most influence the public's awareness and understanding of the issue.

Limitations

This researcher acknowledges several limitations in this study on the role of agenda building, agenda setting and framing of communications messages about sex trafficking by

advocacy groups, law enforcement and journalists. Although this researcher hoped to conduct 18 interviews, only 15 were completed, thus creating an unbalanced representation of opinions among the three groups studied. However, all the participants interviewed provided a broad range of perspectives that provided insight into the agenda building, agenda setting and framing processes. Due to the limited time frame of this study, the patterns expressed here are not generalizable, but further study could help support the conclusions of this particular study.

Conducting the interviews with the selected individuals proved somewhat difficult. Although 15 people were interviewed, the research attempted to contact over 60 individuals, most of who never responded. If the time period for conducting the interviews had been extended, this researcher may have been able to recruit more people.

This study could also have been expanded to include a content analysis of communications actually created by each of the organizations represented in the interviews to see how their comments compared to the actual communications messages distributed. This is another possibility for future study.

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Appendix A
IRB Approval Letter

Colorado State University
Knowledge to Go Places

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE:	December 16, 2013
TO:	Switzer, Jamie, Journalism & Tech. Comm.
	Burnham, Annie, Journalism & Tech. Comm., Luft, Gregory, Journalism & Tech. Comm.
FROM:	Barker, Janell, Coordinator, CSU IRB 2
PROTOCOL TITLE:	Agenda Building, Agenda Setting and Framing Communications about Human Trafficking by Advocacy Groups, Government Officials and Journalists
FUNDING SOURCE:	NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER:	13-4675H
APPROVAL PERIOD:	Approval Date: December 11, 2013 Expiration Date: November 20, 2014

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: Agenda Building, Agenda Setting and Framing Communications about Human Trafficking by Advocacy Groups, Government Officials and Journalists. 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

Janell Barker

Barker, Janell

Approval is to recruit up to 18 participants (6 journalists; 6 governmental officials; 6 advocacy group members) with the approved recruitment and consent. 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

_____

Approval Period:	December 11, 2013 through November 20, 2014
Review Type:	EXPEDITED
IRB Number:	00000202

Page: 1

Appendix B
Sample Recruitment Script

Researcher: Hello (Insert Name). My name is Annie Burnham and I am a graduate student at

Colorado State University in Fort Collins. I am working on my thesis study in order to graduate.

My study involves message strategies used by professionals such as law enforcement, journalists

and advocacy groups as they address the social problem of human trafficking. I am contacting

you because after researching professionals with knowledge of this specific social problem, you

meet the requirements for an interview participant. I am looking to conduct an interview with

you asking you about the process that goes into crafting awareness messages that are distributed

in some public fashion. This would require sitting down with me, preferably in your office, for a

60-minute interview. The interview would be tape recorded and used for my research this spring.

Would you be interested in being a participant?

If Yes: Thank you so much. I will be in the area between (date – date). Would sometime (date

and time) work for you? (Decide on a date and time). Thank you again. Now I will have a

consent form for you to sign at the time of the interview that meets the Institutional Review

Board requirements but I will take your agreement to be part of the interview as your verbal

consent. Do you have any questions for me? My contact information is 828-234-6430 and my

email address is annie.burnham@colostate.edu. Please feel free to contact me anytime between

now and the interview if you have questions or concerns. Thank you for your time.

If No: Thank you for your time.

Appendix C

<div align="center">

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

</div>

TITLE OF STUDY: *Agenda Building, Agenda Setting and Framing Communications about Human Trafficking*

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: *Jamie Switzer, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Journalism and Technical Communications Department at Colorado State University, Jamie.switzwer@colostate.edu*

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: *Annie Burnham, Journalism and Technical Communication Department, Master's student, annie.burnham@colostate.edu or 828-234-6430*

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY? You are being invited to participate in this study because you meet the requirements of living in either Atlanta or Denver, and you work in a capacity where you construct communication messages about human trafficking. These specific capacities are: an advocacy group member, a government official, or a journalist.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? This study is being conducted by Master's student, Annie Burnham, under the guidance of her advisor, Jamie Switzer, Ph.D.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this study is to better understand the crafting of communication messages as they relate to the social issue – human trafficking. By looking at three specific groups that develop messages about human trafficking and raising awareness through these messages, the researcher hopes to see what economic, public policy, and sociocultural issues influence the way a message is created and distributed.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? You will be asked to answer a series of interview questions about the subject of human trafficking awareness message strategy. This interview will last 60-90 minutes and be audio recorded.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
- You do not have much understanding of human trafficking as a social issue and do not work in some form with the communication of messages to the public about human trafficking.
- You are not comfortable talking about the motivations behind messages for your organization that influence how you shape your communications.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
No foreseeable risks to participants. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

<div align="center">

Page **1** of **1** Participant's initials _____ Date _____
[*Insert the page number and space for participant initials and date on every page.*]

</div>

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There is no direct benefit to you associated with being in this research. There are benefits for the researchers in that they will better understand the factors that influence communications messaging and how those factors differ among professions.

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. When we write about the study to share with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials unless you have given the researchers permission to include your name/organization..
Please let us know if you would like your comments to remain confidential or attributed to you. Please initial next to your choice below.

> Yes - I give permission for comments I have made to be shared using my exact words and to include my (name/position/title) to be published in the CSU digital library. _____ (initials)

> No - You can use my data for research and publishing, but do NOT publish my (name/position/title). _____ (initials)

We may be asked to share the research files with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee for audit purposes, if necessary.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? No compensation will be given for this study.

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 investigator Annie Burnham at 828-234-6430. 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.

This consent form was approved by the CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on (Approval Date).

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?
The researchers would like to audiotape your interview to be sure that your comments are accurately recorded. Only our research team will have access to the audiotapes, and they will be

Page **2** of **2** Participant's initials _____ Date _____
[*Insert the page number and space for participant initials and date on every page.*]

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destroyed when they have been transcribed [*If you will be using the audiotapes for other research or teaching purposes, give the participants the opportunity to give their permission for this here*].

Do you give the researchers permission to audiotape your interview? Please initial next to your choice below.

Yes, I agree to be digitally recorded _____ (initials)

No, do not audiotape my interview _____ (initials)

Permission to use direct quotes:

Please let us know if you would like your comments to remain confidential or attributed to you. Please initial next to your choice below.

I give permission for comments I have made to be shared using my exact words and to include my (name/position/title). _____ (initials)

You can use my data for research and publishing, but do NOT associate my (name/position/title) with direct quotes. _____ (initials)

Permission to re-contact:

Do you give permission for the researchers to contact you again in the future to follow-up on this study or to participate in new research projects? Please initial next to your choice below.

Yes _____ (initials)
No _____ (initials)

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 2 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

Page **3** of **3** Participant's initials _____ Date _____
[*Insert the page number and space for participant initials and date on* <u>*every*</u> *page.*]

Appendix D
Interview Questions

Prepping for Interview:

1. Review the consent form and obtain participant's signature; remind participant that they may

withdraw at any time.

2. Turn on tape recorder

3. Review objective of the study and why you are conducting interview

4. Begin questions – starting with a few simple getting to know you questions to put individual at

ease (where were you born, where did you go to school, what is your official title at work, etc.)

Interview Questions for Advocates:

1. Tell me about when you personally were first made aware of human trafficking.

    a. How did you become involved in human trafficking advocacy with your current

       organization?

2. What do you do in your position as an advocate to raise public awareness about human

   trafficking?

3. When developing messages for public release about human trafficking what would you

   say are factors of influence (political, economic, and/or social)? Be specific

4. When focusing on messages about human trafficking, what would you say your goal is or

   goals are in that communication?

5. How would you characterize your approach to addressing human trafficking with law

   enforcement?

    a. Due to the differences and similarities in your approach, what would you say are

       the consequences on the public's understanding?

b. Can you give me some specific examples of your experiences working with law enforcement to address this issue?

6. How would you characterize your approach to addressing human trafficking with journalists?

    a. Due to the differences and similarities in your approach, what would you say are the consequences on the public's understanding?

    b. Can you give me some specific examples of your experiences working with journalists to address this issue?

7. Social Media?

8. What do you think should be done to improve public understanding of human trafficking?

9. What will it take to get more people involved

10. What drives you to fight against human trafficking?

Interview Questions for Journalists:

1. Tell me about when you personally were first made aware of human trafficking.

2. What do you do in your position as a journalist to raise public awareness about human trafficking?

3. When developing articles for public release about human trafficking, what would you say are factors of influence (political, economic, and/or social)? Be specific

4. When focusing on messages about human trafficking, what would you say your goal is or goals are in that communication?

5. How would you compare your approach to addressing human trafficking with an advocacy group?

a. Due to the differences and similarities in your approach, what would you say are the consequences on the public's understanding?

6. How would you compare your approach to addressing human trafficking with law enforcement?

a. Due to the differences and similarities in your approach, what would you say are the consequences on the public's understanding?

7. In what ways do you use social media sites to promote awareness?

a. What specific sites do you use? In what way?

8. What do you think should be done to improve public understanding of human trafficking?

9. What drives you to fight against human trafficking?

Interview Questions for Law Enforcement:

1. Tell me about when you personally were first made aware of human trafficking.

2. What do you do in your position as a government official to raise public awareness about human trafficking?

3. When developing messages for public release about human trafficking, what would you say are factors of influence (political, economic, and/or social)? Be specific

4. When focusing on messages about human trafficking, what would you say your goal is or goals are in that communication?

5. How would you characterize your relationship with advocates and advocacy groups?

a. In what ways do you work with them, in regard to human trafficking?

b. Can you give me some specific examples of your experiences?

6. How would you characterize your relationship with journalists?

a. In what ways do you work with them, in regard to human trafficking?

b. Can you give me some specific examples of your experiences?

7. What do you think should be done to improve public understanding of human trafficking? What will it take to get more people involved

8. In what ways do you use social media sites to promote awareness?

a. What specific sites do you use? In what way?

9. What drives you to fight against human trafficking?

Appendix E
10 Categories of Analysis and Code Counts

Concept	Category	Advocacy Group	Law Enforcement	Journalist
Agenda Building	Evidence of Information Subsidies	Press releases – 6 Brochures – 2 Flyers – 1 PSAs – 3 Online resources – 4 Emails – 2 Billboards – 3 Radio ads – 1 Bookmark – 1 Commercial – 3 E-newsletter – 5 Posters – 2 Graphics/logo – 3 Info cards – 3 Media alerts – 2	Press releases – 3 Radio – 1 PSA – 1 Graphics – 1 Poster – 1 Billboard – 1	None
Agenda Building	Enlisting Others	Unaware groups – 1 Service providers – 3 Rural communities – 1 PTA – 1 Dept. of Education – 2 Rotary club – 3 Boys and girls club – 1 Businesses – 1 Athletes – 1 Sports casters – 1 Attorney general – 1 District attorneys – 2 Churches – 3 Police/FBI – 16 Journalists/Media – 2 State agencies – 4 National organizations – 1 Residential programs	NGOs – 2 Advocacy groups – 8 Citizens – 2 Reporters – 2 Airlines – 1 Charitable Organizations – 1 Churches – 1 Other Law Enforcement Agencies – 1 Academia – 1 Social workers – 2 Truckers – 1 District attorney – 2 U.S. attorney – 1 Legislators – 1 ICE – 2 Feds – 1 Coalitions – 3	Coalition – 1 Advocacy groups – 2 Nonprofit groups – 1 Service providers – 3 Law enforcement – 5 Social worker – 1 District attorney – 1 Attorney general – 1

		– 1 Health care providers – 1 Legislators – 1 Coalitions – 2 Judicial – 1 Legal aid – 1 Shelters – 2 Teachers – 1	Human services – 1 Probation officers – 1 Hospitals – 1 Shelters – 1	
Agenda Building	Story Angle	Make it personal to people – 2 It affects everyone – 4 You can make a difference – 2 It happens where you live – 6 Highlight magnitude of the problem – 3 The industry objectifies people and dehumanizes people – 2 Everybody has a story – 2 Humanistic – 2 Factual approach – 1	Factually correct – 1 Victimization of individual – 1 It happens where you live – 3 Affects people – 2 It's a safety issue – 1 Labor Trafficking is a bigger issue than sex trafficking – 3 Paint a back story – 1 Identify myths – 1	You can make a difference in your community – 1 Build it around person/people affected – 4 Paint a realistic picture – 3
Agenda Setting	Highlight Topics Public Should Be Aware Of	It's a community issue – 2 Publish articles on sex trafficking – 4 Developing the appropriate terminology for the audience – 1 Public interviews with experts – 1 Media showing all forms of trafficking – 1	Bring to life how egregious it is – 1 It's not about profiling people; it's based on violation of the law – 1 Grants given to law enforcement to work on issue – 1	Special reports – 1 Tell a victim's story – 3 Defining what trafficking looks like for public – 3
Agenda Setting	Media Agenda Influences Public Discussion	Having tough discussions with people you know – 3 Media attacks	Inappropriate to prostitute a child – 1 Numbers indicate	Present all sides of issue to let public decide – 2

		advocacy groups – 2 Media denies problem – 2	the problem is getting worse – 1	
Agenda Setting	Issues Discussed When Salient to Public	Report is released by authorities – 1	Documentation of current events – 1 Trafficking is always salient – 1	Labor trafficking more prevalent – 2 It happens where you live – 4 Big case breaks – 1 Public interest – 1
Framing	Promotion of Sex Trafficking as a Particular Problem	Raise awareness – 12 Presentations – 3 Police trainings – 4 Lobby day – 3 Organization Website – 9 Readability – 2 Victims are kids – 4 Research – 2 Medical trainings – 3 Hotel trainings – 1 Talking to parents – 1 Talking to teachers – 1 Talking to strip club owners – 1 Facebook – 13 Twitter – 11 Blog – 1 YouTube – 2 Interviews – 1 Hotline (Polaris) – 4 Outreach programs – 15 Business policies – 1 Classes on subject – 1 Campaigns – 8 Info at bus station – 1 Info at airports – 1 Pinterest – 1	Offer a platform for advocacy groups – 1 Show the truth without exploiting victims – 1 Raise awareness – 12 Facebook – 4 Website – 2 Twitter – 3 Educate those who are ignorant of trafficking – 5 Documentary – 3 Outreach – 1 Events – 1 Publish on prosecution – 1 Define human trafficking – 2 It involves other crimes – 3 Show complexity of issue – 1 Train law enforcement to work with victims – 3 Hotline – 3	Conference – 1 Panel – 1 Educate/bring awareness – 8 Twitter – 3 Facebook – 3 Website – 1 Outreach – 1 Changing stereotypes – 2 Hotline – 1 Clear up misconceptions – 1 It's local kids being trafficked – 1

		Fundraisers – 3 Events – 6 Etsy shop – 1 Awareness month – 2 Conventions – 1 Panel discussions – 3 T-shirts – 1 Mugs – 1 Documentaries – 5 Research grants – 1 LinkedIn – 1 Radio interview – 1 Incorrect judgment of women in prostitution – 3 Avoid re-exploitation – 4 Phone app – 1 Make police more aware of crimes they can charge pimps with – 1 People lack awareness – 7 Mailing list – 1 Post news stories – 2 Community forum – 5 Curriculum – 4 Subway stations – 1 Press conferences – 5 Public training – 1 Define problem – 3 Training teens – 1	Campaign – 3 Grants – 1 Awareness day – 1 Law enforcement lacks awareness – 2 Public lacks awareness – 2 Audience appropriate information and training – 1	

Framing	Identifying Causes of Sex Trafficking	Cultural acceptance of "sexual gratification no matter the cost" – 2 Risk factors – 4 Sexual abuse – 5 Previous assault – 1 Boyfriend scenario – 1 Threats – 1 Easy to conceal on the Internet – 2 Incest – 1 Porn – 3 Strip clubs – 2 Sexual addiction – 1 Vulnerabilities – 4 Being part of the juvenile delinquent system – 4	Internet sites enable easy prostitution of victims – 3 Boyfriend scenario – 1 Gang involvement – 1 Grooming runaways – 1 Vulnerabilities in individuals – 1 Porn – 1 Culture's insatiable appetite for sex – 1	Grooming due to vulnerabilities – 1 Poverty – 1 Lack of education – 1
Framing	Moral Judgments of Those Involved	Penalize the perpetrator – 2 Punish the johns – 1 Prosecute sites like Backpage for their role – 1 Harsher penalties than exist – 1 Human rights violation – 1 Public health issue – 1	Exploiters pursued by FBI – 1 Protect rights of the accused in publications – 1 Shame criminals – 1 Show punishment for traffickers – 3	People want to ignore the problem – 1
Framing	Endorsing Remedies of Improvement	Contact legislators/ senators/congressmen – 6 Pass legislation – 4 Solution to cultural messages – 1 Prevention – 4 Using passions and talents to make a difference – 4 Provide a safe place	Task force – 4 Work with victims to prevent trafficking in future - 1 Offer shelter – 1 Educate power players – 1 Continued vigilance – 1 Work with others	Teach people the warning signs – 2 The community working together – 4 Include a resource list – 1 Legislation – 1

| | | for victims – 6
Multi agency task force – 3
Educate school children – 4
Shift cultural perceptions – 7
Change stigmas of people – 6
Teach others the warning signs – 6
Offer action steps – 3
Donate – 4
Rescue – 5
Volunteer – 3
Jobs for victims – 1 | because no one person can fix it – 3
Prevention – 1
Identify trends – 3
Build cases – 2
Remove misconceptions – 1
Educate citizens so they know about issue on jury – 1 | |