PERCEPTIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE U.S.

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Language, Culture and Politics Association
June 10, 2016
VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human Trafficking is often a hidden crime.

"Modern slavery is less overt than historical state-sanctioned slavery because psychological abuse is typically used to recruit and then control victims."

(Dando et al., 2016)
Misconceptions about Human Trafficking

(SafeHorizon.org)

- **MYTH:** Trafficking has to include movement across borders.
- **FACT:** Victims of trafficking are often exploited in their own country or even in their own community.
- **MYTH:** Trafficking only pertains to sex.
- **FACT:** Labor trafficking is the largest form of human trafficking worldwide, but it is often overlooked and underestimated.
- **MYTH:** Women and girls are the only victims of trafficking.
- **FACT:** Men, boys, and transgender individuals are also victims of both sex and labor trafficking, in large numbers.
What is human trafficking?

- "The common myths about human trafficking cases and victims prevent individuals from identifying victims in need of help. These myths must be deconstructed through education and the effective awareness that successful prosecutions can generate. At its core, human trafficking is coercing a person to work, or to engage in labor or a commercial sex act—and it must be stopped (Richmond, 2015, p. 41)."
Highest Rates of Trafficking
(InsiderMonkey.com)

- 10. China
- 9. Ghana
- 8. Uganda
- 7. Nepal
- 6. Sri Lanka
- 5. India
- 4. Pakistan
- 3. Haiti
- 2. Brazil
- 1. Bangladesh
Problem

- Human trafficking is a complex issue and is thus, often misunderstood.
- Greater public awareness of the issue is crucial.
- Individuals generally learn about human trafficking through the media and unfortunately media reports are often insufficient.
Literature Review

- Perceptions of Psychological Coercion and Human Trafficking in the West Midlands of England: Beginning to Know the Unknown (2016)
  Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000) – primary law in the U.S. (addresses sex trafficking and forced labor)
  Palermo Protocol (established in 2000 and ratified by the U.S. in 2005)
Current Study - Pilot

- Sample – Lynn University Students
- H1: The researchers hypothesize that there will be some level of unawareness and a lack of specific knowledge about human trafficking.
- H2: The researchers hypothesize that there will be only a moderate amount of media coverage on human trafficking.
- Survey Research and Content Analysis
Survey Results

Convenience Sample N=23
- 91% 18-24
- 52% Prefer to receive news online/mobile
- 35% Prefer to receive news via social networks
- 17% Correctly named the top country for human trafficking
- 83% Believes trafficking involves movement across borders
- 91% Believes trafficking involves sexual exploitation
How would you define human trafficking?

- The majority of responses do highlight one or more components of trafficking; however, most responses are incomplete.

| I define it as bring people into countries that are kidnapped or don’t want to be there taking them against their will | 6/1/16, 4:12 PM |
| The selling of a human being. | 6/1/16, 4:12 PM |
| Kidnapping and selling a human being | 6/1/16, 4:12 PM |
| Forcing someone out of their home and making them do things against their will, i.e. Manual labor, prostitution, etc. | 6/1/16, 4:12 PM |
| Kidnapping and selling a human being | 6/1/16, 4:12 PM |
| Transporting people for sexual needs or working labor | 6/1/16, 4:11 PM |
| The act of holding or taking someone against their will for intended purposes such as work and sexual exploitation | 6/1/16, 4:11 PM |
Content Analysis Results
(Jan. 2015 – June 6, 2016)

- CNN - 45
- MSNBC - 22
- FOX News - 17
- CBS News - 6
- ABC News - 1
- BBC - 6
- REUTERS - 78
- NY Times - 28
Limitations

- Beginning stage of this research project
  Survey must be further developed to address the various branches of human trafficking
- Larger and more diversified sample in the fall
- More coders will code the material and then the intercoder reliability will be calculated
Conclusion

- Understanding the definition and complexity of human trafficking
- Psychological coercion
- Policy and Political discourse
- Media Framing
References