

Sex Trafficking Along an Urban Midwestern Corridor

Rachael Shaw

Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice & Department of Management & Marketing, Carthage College
 Celebration of Scholars 2019: Exposition of Student & Faculty Research, Scholarship & Creativity



Abstract

A combination of a criminal justice senior thesis and a business management senior thesis focusing on sex trafficking along the Chicago Milwaukee corridor (I-94) with specifications to Kenosha/Racine counties. This is the combination of analysis from two educational disciplines to study sex trafficking in a Midwestern community and how each discipline understands sex trafficking.

Introduction

Sex trafficking is an unseen part of numerous communities in the United States including the Midwest. This unseen part of communities may be known but is not always visible. The lack of visibility is a large contributor in the recovery of victims and the prosecution of offenders. There is also issues with a lack of uniformity of how sex trafficking is defined and regulated through international and national agreements and protocol. The marketplace for sex trafficking has had the opportunity to flourish in communities that border prosperous Midwest corridors, this opportunity to flourish has allowed the sex trafficking industry to become a notable factor in the black markets of these communities. Sex trafficking and those that partake in said market place have influences coming from both inside the black market as well as the traditional community that allows sex trafficking to continue to prosper.

Interviews

Members from a midsized Midwestern community who specialize in work with victims of sex trafficking were interviewed to see how their community addresses sex trafficking and the victims of sex trafficking. Much of what was discussed during the interviews echoed what previous research had revealed about law enforcement effectiveness, trafficker and victim relationships, and current legislation. These interviews were also able to add more specific details about their own community such as were victims were originally trafficked from, victim's ability to accept what has happened to them, and the direct changes that the area law enforcement is going through. Information from the conducted interviews also provided context to the business model of sex trafficking in the area.

Industry Analysis

SWOT Analysis

An evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunism, and threats of the sex trafficking industry along the corridor.

Successful Business Model

An outline of what would allow a business to thrive. (Johnson, Christensen, & Kagermann, 2008)
 Sex trafficking businesses have prospered in these communities due to having easy access to fulfill each aspect of the business model

Criminal Justice Analysis

Labeling Theory

The theory that an individual after being labeled as deviant will behave in a way as to fulfill said deviant behavior (Becker, 1963).

The stigma the surrounds an individual once they have been labeled as deviant has a major impact on if the individual will act to fulfill said deviancy (Goffman, 1963).

General Strain Theory

The theory that there is pressure put onto individuals by society to fulfill culturally sufficient goals (Agnew, 1992).

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Enforcement spends less time focusing on Sex Trafficking than other Illegal Acts • Weaker Criminal Charges compared to drug offenses • Higher Profit Margins compared to other illegal activities • Victims easily hide in plain sight • Victims often have an engrained fear of law enforcement 	Weakness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal Acts are being committed • Must have enough girls/women to reach the demand
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected Increase in Local Population • Projected Increase in Local Businesses • Increase in Online Marketing 	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Enforcement Agencies • Illegal Drug Market

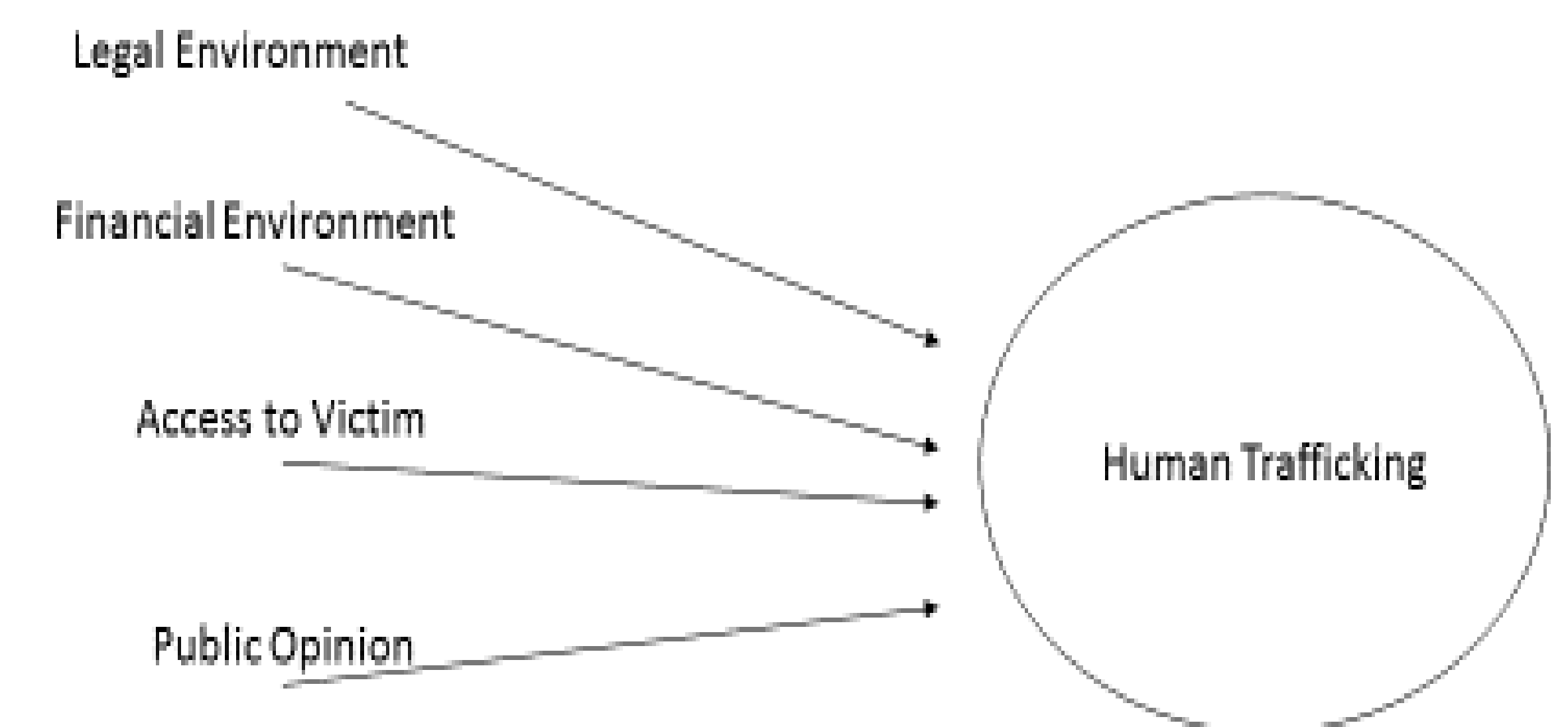
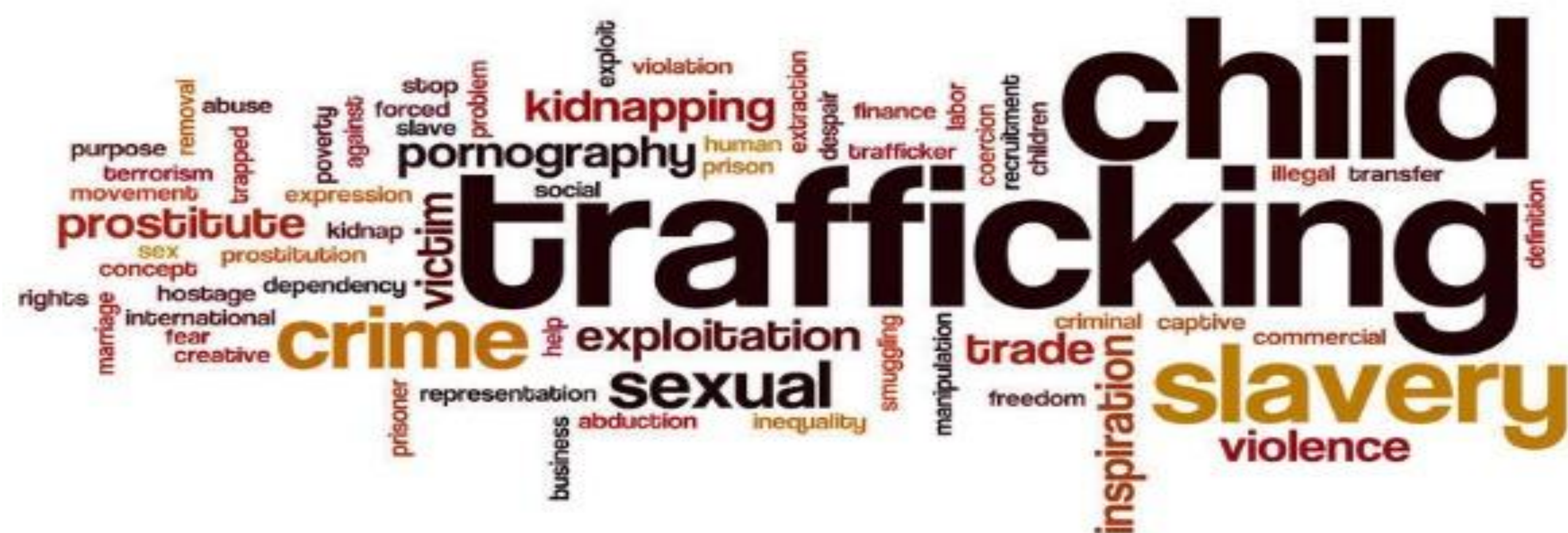


Figure 1. SWOT Analysis for Sex Trafficking in the Kenosha & Racine Counties

Figure 2. Path Diagram for Sex Trafficking in the Midwest



Acknowledgements & References

This research and analysis was completed to shine a light on a hidden community and those that are affected by sex trafficking. A special thanks goes to Gregory Barron and Wayne Thompson for unwavering support in an uncomfortable topic.

1. Agnew, R. (2006). General strain theory: Current status and directions for further research. *Taking stock: The status of identifying and prosecuting sex trafficking cases in the Midwest United States. Feminist criminology*, 10(1), 7-35. *criminological theory*, 15, 101-123.
2. Becker, H. S. (2008). *Outsiders*. Simon and Schuster.
3. Goffman, E. (2009). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Simon and Schuster.
4. Johnson, Mark W., Clayton M. Christensen, and Henning Kagermann. "Reinventing your business model." *Harvard business review* 86.12 (2008): 57-68.