

Global Sex and Labor Trafficking Participation Modes: Strategic Implications

Vernon Murray
Marist College

Julia Solin
Marist College

Holly Shea
Marist College

We analyzed participation modes for sex and labor trafficking victims from a large, global, sample. Results indicate that most victims are “Willing Assimilators.” Thus, they are “voluntarily” (i.e., no interpersonal coercion) trafficked (e.g., due to economic desperation), and cease working at will. The percentages of coerced victims are twice as high for sex trafficking compared with labor. Information regarding which strangers to trust when pursuing sex work or traditional work should reduce subsequent enslavement. Similarly, better information may help potential “Enlightened Apostates” (i.e., lured and enslaved by a loved one) decide which types of friends and relatives to trust.

Keywords: human trafficking, victim intervention marketing, social marketing, slavery

INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is a “complex social problem” (Carvalho and Mazzon 2019) requiring effective social marketing interventions. This study employs Murray, Dingman, Porter, and Otte’s (2015) nine categories of trafficking victims in a “Victim Intervention Marketing” framework. Essentially, it posits that victims enter and remain in trafficking situations *voluntarily* (i.e. no interpersonal coercion), *semivoluntarily* (i.e. social pressure from a loved one), or *involuntarily* (e.g. abduction). This affects the victim’s attitude and behavior toward the trafficking situation. For instance, most abductees have a positive attitude toward rescue, and will escape if possible. However, an opposite set of attitudes and behaviors is presumed to apply when victims work voluntarily. For, leaving a job that feeds an impoverished family can have dire consequences. Based on the mix of victim attitudes and behaviors in a given human trafficking situation, specific marketing interventions (e.g. “radical confrontation,” Frazier and Sheth, 1985) are prescribed.

Sex versus labor trafficking studies are not new. However, this study addresses them within the intervention marketing context. Thus, prescribed, theory-based interventions may be applied. Moreover, while the Murray et al. (2015) study aggregated sex and labor trafficking with a small sample

(n = 190), this study separately analyzes and compares sex and labor trafficking using a large sample (n = 28,000).

HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFINED

The United Nations (UNODC, 2000) defined human trafficking as, “The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring 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 includes, at a minimum, the exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” (United Nations, 2000). Similarly, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 defines human trafficking victims in terms of “vulnerability” to sex, labor, and organ exploitation.

We approach human trafficking from a marketing perspective. Therefore, we apply the Murray et al. (2015) definition. Thus, “Human trafficking involves the activities of an egregious, interorganizational, opportunistic, marketing distribution system wherein people (or their organs) are treated as products or property. All other things equal, egregiousness (severity of abuse) ranges from relatively low under voluntary participation, where fraud is often employed, to relatively high, where traffickers use force and coercion to elicit involuntary participation (slavery).” Consistent with Murray et al. (2015), all slavery (involuntary servitude under conditions of force or coercion) is human trafficking, but not all human trafficking is slavery. This view of trafficking is also consistent with Weitzer (2014), and Chuang (2012), who noted, “Through exploitation creep, the concept of ‘slavery’ is now fully conflated ... with trafficking.”

SOCIAL MARKETING

The United States Agency for International Development defines social marketing as, “... the use of commercial marketing techniques to achieve a social objective. Social marketers combine product, price, place, and promotion to maximize product use by specific population groups...” According to LeFebvre (2012), “Social marketing develops and applies marketing concepts and techniques to create value for individuals and society. This is done through the integration of research, evidence-based practice and the use of social-behavioural theory together with the insights from individuals, influencers and stakeholders. These inputs and perspectives are used to design more effective, efficient, sustainable and equitable approaches to enhance social well-being. The approach is one that encompasses all the processes and outcomes that influence and are associated with change among: individuals, organizations, social networks and social norms, communities, businesses, markets, and public policy.” The long-term goal of social marketing is “Planned Social Change” (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Fox & Kotler, 1980; Sheth & Frazier, 1982; Murray, 1997, etc.). According to Sheth & Frazier (1982), “planned social change refers to active intervention by change agents... with a conscious policy to... change a particular social or consumption behavior by means of one or more strategies...” They added, “Planned social change is... a *managerial rather than a behavioral task* that requires making decisions as to which strategies to use... for which target groups,” to achieve societal change objectives.

To facilitate social change management, Sheth & Frazier (1982) developed a “Model of Strategy Mix Choice for Planned Social Change.” It presents an attitude-behavior matrix wherein targets are: 1) behaviorally “engaged” or “non-engaged,” and 2) have either a positive or negative attitude toward the desired change. Each of the four cells within the ensuing matrix represents a unique mix of the target’s attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, each cell prescribes a unique mix of interventions. For instance, “rationalization” and “attitude change” are prescribed when attitude is negative, but behavior is positive (“engaged”). In contrast, “inducement” and “behavioral change” are prescribed when attitude is positive, but behavior is negative (“non-engaged”).

SOCIAL ACTIVIST MARKETING

“Social activist marketing” (Murray, 1997) is defined as a subset of social marketing (Kotler, Roberto, & Lee 2002, p. 3). It involves “(1) more important and socially divisive issues, (2) conflict between the social marketer and the target, and (3) greater reliance upon coercive influence strategies such as boycotts, protests, strikes, etc.” Thus, it applies to human trafficking, wherein trafficker (and sometimes victim) opposition to interventions are typical. For instance, voluntary workers have an incentive to oppose intervention that put their employer out of business. Per the Murray et. al. (2015) discussion, we offer “Victim Intervention Marketing” as an application of social activist marketing. It is employed in the human trafficking context to offer a more sophisticated communication solution than a mere “awareness” campaign. Intervention marketing is discussed in the next section.

VICTIM INTERVENTION MARKETING

Szablewska and Kubacki (2018) found that “marketing tools and techniques are now commonly used in anti-human trafficking campaigns” However, the authors found a dearth of discussions about “outcome, process, or impact evaluations” in anti-human trafficking social marketing contexts (Lefebvre, 2011). Murray, et al. (2015) addressed “process,” and presented human trafficking situations as existing along two dimensions. They are the impetus for: 1) entering, and 2) continuing in a trafficking situation. Within this two-dimensional framework, victims participate along three levels of egregiousness: “voluntarily,” “semi-voluntarily,” and “involuntarily.” See Table 1. “Voluntary” in the intervention marketing framework refers to the absence of interpersonal coercion. Thus, being trafficked “voluntarily” is synonymous with the United Nation’s (2000) human trafficking “consent.” Victim’s consent does not disqualify the event as human trafficking exploitation. The outcome of an intervention marketing analysis is a matrix of victim participation modes (e.g. percent of “Willing Assimilators”) and prescribed theory-based interventions. See Table 2.

TABLE 1
***VICTIM PARTICIPATION MODES**

<u>Voluntary Entrants</u>
<i>Willing Assimilators:</i> Economic desperation drives these exploited victims to accept jobs under deplorable working conditions. They work, are paid, and depart at will. They are not pressured to stay.
<i>Disillusioned Contrastors:</i> These victims accept jobs due to economic desperation. They are strongly discouraged from leaving, but they are not forced. Methods of discouragement include passport theft, false romance, and facilitating drug dependence.
<i>Tricked and Trapped:</i> Victims exploited in this mode accept jobs due to economic desperation. Subsequently, the trafficker uses threats or coercion to force them to continue working.
<u>Semi-voluntary Entrants</u>
<i>Peaceful Displacers:</i> Here, a friend or relative persuades the victim to accept a certain job. There is no force or coercion. The victim begins working because of social pressure. However, he continues because it is his preference.
<i>Responsible Martyrs:</i> These victims accepted and remained in a given job because of social pressure from a friend or loved one.
<i>Enlightened Apostates:</i> Social pressure from a friend or loved one led the victim to accept a certain job. However, subsequently, the victim was forced or coerced to continue working.

Involuntary Entrants

Stockholmers: These victims have Stockholm Syndrome. They were forced into the trafficking situation, but remain voluntarily.

Karmic Acceptors: They were forced into the trafficking situation. However, they remain out of some sense of a cosmic plan. They believe they are “supposed” to be enslaved—at least in the short run.

Trapped and Robbed: This group consists of two types. The first part is minors (below age 18). The second group consists of adults who have entered and continued in the trafficking situation due to force or coercion.

*Adapted from Murray et al. (2015), Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice.

TABLE 2

***A SUBSET OF INTERVENTION MARKETING INFLUENCE STRATEGIES AND TACTICS**

Reinforcement: This strategy would be used when the marketing channel participant (the victim) has a positive attitude toward the intervention marketer’s channel program and behaves in accordance with it. Here, the intervention marketer would reinforce the participant’s efforts toward leaving the channel.

Rationalization: The channel manager uses this when the participant has a negative attitude toward participation, but participates anyway. For instance, a woman in India may not want to donate her hair to traffickers. So, the intervention marketer might leverage her attitude to dissuade her from future participation.

Information Exchange: Here, the channel manager offers information to persuade the potential victim to participate (or to continue) in the channel. For instance, an intervention marketer might inform a cross-border victim of his rights in the new location.

Confrontation: An intervention marketer might use *moderate confrontation* with a victim who is considering joining a trafficking channel, and *radical confrontation* if the victim actually decides to participate in it.

Negative and Positive Normative: Here, an intervention marketer might encourage a victim who has a positive attitude and behavioral intention regarding participation by telling them it is, for instance, socially acceptable to be a disloyal girlfriend to a loved one who wants her to work at a dangerous job.

Rewards: These are arranged by the channel manager and levied upon the victim. Intervention marketers may use both economic and noneconomic rewards for victim behavior that is consistent with leaving the channel.

Inducement: In some cases, the potential victim likes the idea of joining the intervention marketer’s channel program, but declines participation in it. The reason may be others’ opinions (i.e., subjective norm). Here, the intervention marketers may offer such inducements as small amounts of money to dissuade a financially desperate person from joining the channel.

Request: Here, the channel manager expresses his or her wishes regarding the victim or potential victim’s participation in the channel. However, they do not threaten or take a hard-sell approach. For instance, a wealthy family in a poor country may ask a poorer family to give them one of the children to raise, educate, etc. These have the potential to become exploitive, as is seen among the so-called “Restavek” children of Haiti.

Free-Market Solutions: In instances where a person voluntarily joins an exploitive channel, as in the case of debt bondage, one way to liberate them is for the intervention marketer to pay off the debt to the channel manager.

Cultural Pluralism (Information Exchange): In some cases (e.g., temple hair donation in India, or in China where it is dishonorable not to pay off a debt bondage), the intervention marketer should consider dissuading the victim’s trafficking channel participation. This might be achieved by informing him/her that in other parts of the world, it is the debt bondage trafficker who would be shamed, not the victim.

*Source: Murray et al. (2015), Frazier et al. (1985).

METHODOLOGY

To identify and compare global sex vs. labor trafficking participation modes, we employed data from the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC 2018), a UN affiliate. The CTDC describes itself as “...the first global data hub on human trafficking, publishing harmonized data from counter-trafficking organizations around the world.” Its goal is to “... equip the counter-trafficking community with up to date, reliable data on human trafficking.” We isolated victims based on their affirmative answer to having been exploited for sex (n = 19,000) vs. labor (n = 9,900). We categorized variables in the dataset according to victim participation mode in Murray et al. (2015). See Table 3. The weakness in using CTDC data is that respondents are not randomly selected. Therefore, selection biases are assumed. However, such problems with data quality are endemic to human trafficking research. The reason is traffickers do not supply governments with accurate or sufficient information to effectively oppose them. Similarly, victims may be reluctant to supply enough information to enable their identification.

TABLE 3
CTDC VARIABLES IN THE INTERVENTION MARKETING FRAMEWORK

	Voluntary	Semivoluntary	Involuntary
Victim’s Entrance	Debt Bondage False Promises Recruited All cases not involuntary or semi-voluntary	Other Notable Person Intimate Partner Friend Unspecified Prior Relation Family	Abduction Minor/Child Forced Marriage Forced Military
Victim’s Continuance	All cases not involuntary or semi-voluntary	Psychological Abuse Psych. Substances Threat of Police Withholds Documents	Threats Physical Abuse Sexual Abuse Restricts Movement Restricts Med. Care Uses Children Withholds Necessities

*All variables in this table have corresponding variable names in the CTDC Codebook

RESULTS

Globally, the majority of sex (83%) and labor (88%) trafficking victims are adults, while the remaining victims are minors. All other things equal, sex trafficking arrangements are only slightly worse (more egregious) than labor trafficking arrangements. The former has a global enslavement rate of 32%, while the latter has a rate of 38%. This statistic is computed by summing the victim percentages in the five categories that entail involuntary participation. Thus, one-third of the world’s sex trafficking victims are enslaved at some point.

MAJOR SEGMENTS

See Figure 1. The three largest sex trafficking segments are Willing Assimilators (38%), Enlightened Apostates (32%), and Tricked and Trapped (14%). This data pattern is slightly different for labor trafficking, where the three largest victim types are Willing Assimilators (49%), Enlightened Apostates (18%), and Trapped and Robbed (14%). Thus, all other things equal, roughly 80% of the world's intervention resources should target these segments. The strategic interventions for each of these four segments are presented in Table x. Regional and local adaptations would increase effectiveness.

Willing Assimilators

This segment comprises the largest percentages for both sex and labor trafficking victims. Roughly half (49%) of labor trafficking, and (38%) of sex trafficking victims fell into this category. Based largely on Frazier and Sheth (1985), Murray et al. (2015) intervention marketing solution would be to employ “Radical Confrontation.” More specifically, the Murray et al. (2015) calls for changing the victims’ “Beliefs and Attitude” toward participating in a trafficking situation, and to “Add Attributes” for the victim to consider (e.g. the risk of eventually being held captive).

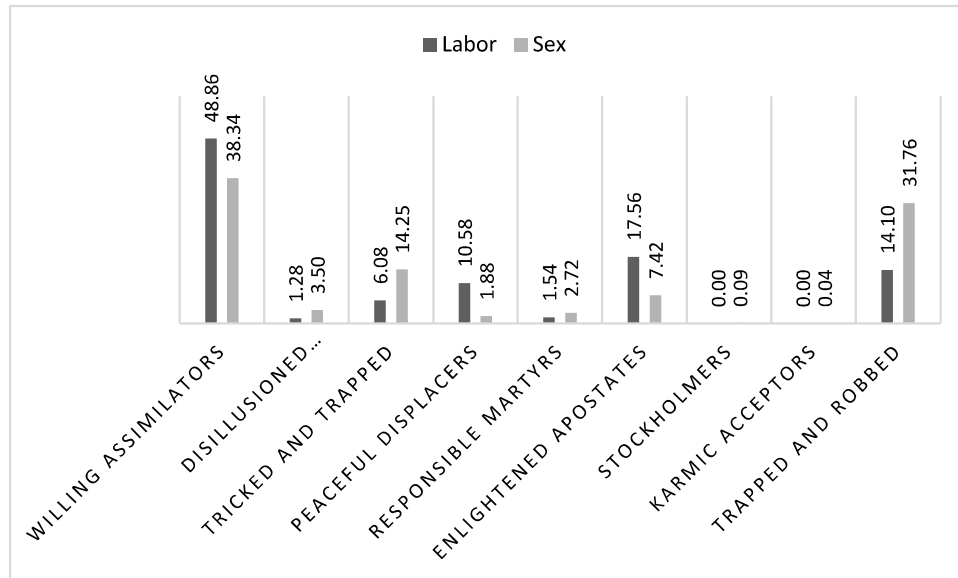
Enlightened Apostates

This group entered the trafficking situation on the advice of a friend or relative, only to be subsequently enslaved. The percentage of labor trafficking victims in this category is eighteen percent (18%), while the percent of sex trafficking victims in this category is only seven percent (7%). The Murray et al. (2015) framework would prescribe “Negative Normative [messaging] Against the Trafficker.” This would include, for instance, encouraging potential victims to mistrust certain friends and relatives. The intervention framework also calls for “Inducements.” This includes offering victims “Economic & Noneconomic Rewards” (e.g. in exchange for information about the trafficker.), making “Requests” of the victims (e.g. regarding trafficker vulnerabilities), “Countering of [the trafficker’s] Information” (e.g. the police tend to harm escapees), and “Encouraging and Facilitating Flight/Escape.”

Trapped and Robbed

This segment consists of children, and adults who have been coerced into participation. As Figure x indicates, fourteen percent (14%) of labor trafficking victims are Trapped and Robbed, while thirty-two percent (32%) of sex trafficking victims fall into this category. Roughly Ninety percent (91%) of Trapped and Robbed sex trafficking victims are female, while only 40% of Trapped and Robbed labor trafficking are female. Thus, females comprise most of the sex trafficking victims, while the gender percentages are more balanced for labor trafficking.

FIGURE 1
GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PARTICIPATION MODES: SEX VS. LABOR



MINOR SEGMENTS

The smallest of the minor segments were “Karmic Acceptors” (n = 8 out of 19,000) and “Stockholmers” (n = 18 out of 19,000). In each case the victims were American women trafficked for sex within the United States. Stockholm Syndrome has long been associated with human trafficking (e.g. Karan and Hansen, 2018; Raghavan and Doychak 2015; and others). It is not uncommon. However, Murray et al. (2015, n = 190) found no instances of Stockholm Syndrome and 1% Karmic Acceptors. Interventions for these two groups are similar to those in Table x for Responsible Martyrs.

GROUP COMPARISONS

The percentage of Enlightened Apostates in sex trafficking is half the percentage as in labor trafficking. This may suggest that friends and relatives are more hesitant to encourage a loved one to take a sex worker job than they are for traditional forms of labor. However, for Tricked and Trapped, Trapped and Robbed, Responsible Martyrs, and Disillusioned Contrastors sex trafficking percentages are twice those of labor trafficking. This means the risk of a voluntary entrant being tricked into enslavement by a stranger is twice as high for sex work compared with non-sex work. Similarly, child trafficking and adult coercion are twice as likely for sex trafficking. Moreover, while the percentages are low, voluntary sex workers are twice as likely (3.5% vs. 1.5%) as voluntary laborers to be dissuaded (not forced) from leaving the trafficking arrangement. Trafficker tactics include passport seizure, fraudulent romance, and more.

CONCLUSION

Overall, thirty-two percent (32%) of global labor trafficking victims are enslaved at some point, while almost forty percent (39%) of global sex trafficking victims are enslaved at some point. In global sex trafficking, the greatest need for victim intervention marketing is among the “Trapped and Robbed” (children and forced adults) segment. It is smaller than the Willing Assimilator segment, but it entails more egregiousness (i.e. force and coercion). In the global labor trafficking arena, the greatest need for victim intervention marketing is among “Enlightened Apostates.” While this segment contains fewer victims than

are found among Willing Assimilators, they are forced and coerced (i.e. enslaved). National interventions should consider both the percentages of victim types, and the severity levels of their experiences.

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