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The Dominant Human Trafficking Paradigm and Economic Elite Interests

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Abstract

Human trafficking has become a highly politicized and popular social issue in recent decades within the United States. However, the dominant discourse surrounding the issue has become a hyperbolic and sensationalized account of the issue, in which important dimensions are omitted, complicated, and, in some cases, distorted. Also, given the clandestine nature of human trafficking, an absence of clear and accurate statistics has allowed this damaged discourse to dominate the common discourse.. This dominant discourse has been referred to as the dominant human trafficking paradigm (DHTP). The DHTP narrative has been documented and discussed by a number of critical scholars, but never in terms of how it protects the interests of the economic elite. The DHTP protects these interests through ignoring structural issues which drive human trafficking, which are exacerbated by global inequality largely driven by globalization and neoliberal policy, failing to make the important connection between migrant and trafficked labor, and over-emphasizing the occurrence of sex trafficking. Accordingly, using a grounded theory based level of analysis, my research observes the different types of human trafficking coverage between corporately owned, mainstream media sources (Fox and CNN), which are arguably dominated by economic elite interests, and publicly (NPR) or independently (AlterNet) owned media sources which are far less dominated by the interests of the economic elite. Research findings showed that both of the corporately owned, mainstream media sources were more committed to covering stories within the DHTP than both the public and independently owned sources for articles published in 2013.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Human Trafficking: The Construction of a Social Issue

Human-trafficking is considered to be the third-most profitable criminal enterprise of our time. Global earnings attained through this transportation and exploitation of people is estimated to be at more than \$31 billion (Belser, 2005). It has also been estimated that twenty-seven million people are living in bondage world-wide (Bales, 1999). Other, more recent estimates consider this number to be much larger, with an estimated forty-five million people living as a trafficked person (ILO, 2008). Other statistics put this number between 4 and 27 million individuals (U.S. Department of State, 2007). However, given the clandestine and criminal nature of trafficking individuals, the specific statistical research has varied. Simply put, “no one, U.S. or international agency is compiling accurate statistics” regarding human-trafficking (Weitzer, 2007). This has added to the confusion surrounding how human trafficking should be viewed and addressed. These available statistics are also complicated by a lack of consensus between governments, international agencies, NGOs, and academics as to how trafficking should be defined. The most commonly cited international definition is from the UN’s *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (UN, 2000). More commonly referred to as the *Palermo Protocol*, this document defines human trafficking as:

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. (2000)

Despite this seemingly proper definition, a number of scholars have taken many issues given how it does not fully address all the dimensions of human trafficking, and fails to provide goals and purposes aimed at ending this practice (Stewart, 2014). For example, one such scholar posited that the conflation of social issues in the Palermo Protocol, such as trafficking, forced prostitution, migration, and sex work, does a disservice to addressing the issue in a guided manner (Kimm & Sauer, 2010). A number of scholars also feel that this definition falls short due to its focus on the criminal enterprises of human trafficking, especially sex-work (Galusca, 2012). The Palermo Protocol has also been critiqued due to its lack of understanding that human trafficking is largely driven by global inequality (Cheng, 2007). How this definition came to be constructed and reinforced as the dominant conceptualization of human trafficking in America was the product of a number of factors. Namely, the work of many activists and NGOs in the last two decades pushed human trafficking to the forefront of international concerns for the United States. Historically, this has been traced to what one critical scholar referred to as the “moral crusade” made by a number of concerned activists during the early 2000s (Weitzer, 2007).

According to Weitzer’s social constructivist perspective, social conditions only become problems after successful claims-making by interested parties (2007). These interested parties engage in successful claims-making behaviors through exaggerating

the gravity, incidence and severity of social conditions in order to advance them to the stage of social problems (2007). Beyond the label of a social problem, the inclusion of morality in the social construction of problems can assist their motives by identifying the social condition of interests as an “evil” (2007). This tool of social transformation has also been present in other instances, including in the passage of numerous drug laws in the United States (Musto, 1973). Weitzer and other social constructivists have referred to this type of social transformation as a “moral crusade” (2007). In terms of how human trafficking came to be defined as a major social problem, two very unlikely, but highly interested and motivated parties became bedfellows in the moral crusade: the religious right and radical feminists (2007).

During the mid-1980s, a coalition of the religious right and radical feminists came together in a major campaign against pornographic materials. Despite their differences regarding abortion and gender issues, these groups found agreement on their opposing views regarding the sex industry, namely pornography and prostitution. It should be noted that these views are not shared among all feminists. There are a wide-array of different feminist camps with different views, especially when concerned with women’s participation in sex-work. Radical, or “abolitionist” feminists are rather defined by this distinction in which they contend that women participating in the sex industry, whether voluntary or not, perpetuates the objectification and exploitation of women world-wide. Other, traditionally defined as “liberal feminists,” may vary on their stance towards certain types of sex-work such as prostitution, but some feel that placing these types of

sexualized restrictions on women's work does a greater disservice to women's status and power.

Both of these groups played dominant roles at the national level of policy. For example, members from each group were involved in the Reagan administration's commission on pornography (Meese Commission, 1986), and influenced subsequent policy (2007). This unlikely alliance emerged yet again in 2000 during the Bush Administrations first term. Given the Bush Administrations right-wing, Christian platform, the feelings towards sex-work and human trafficking by members of the moral crusade were generally aligned with the presidency's position as well. The moral crusade defined by this alliance promoted sex-work to the forefront of the trafficking debate through different types of political action. This framing of human trafficking as a sex-work issue would come to greatly define how it became addressed and defined. This promotion was based on a number of "core claims" which buttressed the idea that prostitution represents a "social evil" (Wietzer, 2007). Among other core claims, the assumption that violence is omnipresent in prostitution and sex trafficking, that those involved in trafficking (i.e. the laborers, traffickers, and customers) are inherently evil, and that sex workers lack agency dominated the human trafficking discourse (2007). While some of their claims are certainly still up for debate, many critical scholars have taken issue with these points; especially the issue of agency in sex-workers and, by extension, trafficked laborers in general (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012). For example, two subsequent studies have shown that most women involved in the sex industry were not tricked or coerced into their occupation (Agustin, 2005). While this is not to say that

women involved in the sex industry are exercising complete agency, neither is there substantial support for these women as “perfect victims.” These women, much like those involved in mail-order bride services or other agencies which deal in the commoditization of women, make decisions that are largely based on a lack of other economic opportunities, especially in their home countries.

These core claims came to influence political elites through a number of political actions taken by the moral crusade alliance. These political actions included grassroots efforts such as demonstrations and protests, in addition to more legitimate methods such as consultations and lobbying efforts (Weitzer, 2007). Their efforts were also largely successful due to their support by the mainstream media (2007). This isn't surprising given that the corporately owned, mainstream media is more likely to provide positive coverage of a social movement organization that does not challenge the interests of the corporate class; also referred to as the *economic elite* (Peoples, 2008). According to Weitzer, these core claims came to be institutionalized within domestic and international policy such as *The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000* (TVPA) and the Palermo Protocol (2000). Since the passage of these policies, many activist groups have cropped up in order to understand and combat human trafficking. For example, it is now estimated that over 50 of these groups exist in North America (Polaris Project, 2014). While this is first and foremost a positive finding, as any efforts to combat human trafficking are noble, the rapid and great rise in the popularity of this issue produced and perpetuated a number of early assumptions regarding human trafficking which had yet to be substantiated.

The Dominant Discourse: Sex-Work

While the issues surrounding sex-work are an important dimension of the human trafficking issue, the rise of these core claims has ultimately distorted an already limited discussion. This is especially true regarding assumptions that those involved in sex trafficking, or other types of labor trafficking, exert no agency. Numerous studies have shown this is not the case. For example, a recent study of Colombian women involved in human trafficking challenged this dominant narrative. In her study, Warren (2012) interviewed trafficked women in Colombia between 2007 and 2011. These women worked in a variety of fields including but not limited to prostitution. Her interviews revealed that most of these women rejected the victim label, and that they were highly accepting of their occupation after their initial debts were paid off (2012). This study was not meant to necessarily exonerate the traffickers as reasonable, non-predatory individuals or organizations. But to demonstrate that these women did exercise some agency in accepting positions overseas, a conclusion that directly challenges the dominant trafficking discourse. Of course, as previously mentioned, agency, in these terms, must be situated in the context of lack of other opportunities available for these women. Agency here refers to how these women self-identify with their occupation as a choice. Warren's work is not alone. A number of similarly concerned scholars have conducted other studies in different regions of the world (Bastia, 2006 : Smit, 2011).

In her work, Natasha Ahmad found that the majority of Bangladeshi women living in Indian slums, working in brothels and manufacturing, and were believed to fit

the trafficked person criteria, had in fact migrated voluntarily and were not deceived or coerced into crossing the border (Ahmad, 2005). What these women did share was destitution at home which catalyzed their migration and illegal transportation across the border. Ahmad's study showed other, surprising results as well. The majority group of women who claimed not to have been coerced or deceived into taking these occupations also felt that their lives had improved since leaving Bangladesh (2005). In addition, and even more surprising, the minority group of women interviewed, who felt they had in fact been coerced or deceived, generally shared this sentiment as well. This "better living" was fulfilled by a place to live, a job which provided more income than they would expect to receive in Bangladesh, and a bank account with savings (Ahmad, 2005). In addition to Ahmad's findings, another study, this time of Vietnamese migrants in Cambodia, showed that out of the 100 women interviewed, only six were tricked or coerced into working in a Cambodian brothel (Busza, Castle & Diarra, 2004). A similar study of trafficked women from Eastern Europe to Holland showed similar results in which the majority of the women had not been misled into an occupation in sex-work (Agustin, 2005). While the legitimacy of prostitution and other forms of sex-work remains debated by feminist scholars as to whether or not they constitutes a legitimate profession for women, or simply violence against women (Stewart, 2014), these studies have shown that, despite the dominant human trafficking discourse, these women are largely choosing to participate in these occupations given their lack of opportunity for other types of work available in their home country and abroad.

The Palermo Protocol definition has also been criticized due to its over-emphasis on prostitution, while ignoring all the other types of labor exploited in human trafficking. Given that most trafficking of individuals occurs for other types of labor outside of sex trafficking (Bales & Cornell, 2008 : Smit, 2011), this over-emphasis is not only problematic but inaccurate. For example, according to statistics from the United Kingdom's Human Trafficking Center, more than half of the trafficked adults in the UK, were referred for post-trafficking services, worked in industries outside of sex-work (2012). Other studies have also shown that individuals frequently work in fields that produce commodities sold in global markets such as coffee, sugar, cotton, and grains (Bales & Cornell, 2008 : NPR, 2013). Other service industry fields, such as restaurant worker and domestic servant have consistently been linked to human trafficking (Stewart, 2014).

This over-emphasis on prostitution can be seen in both the performance of law enforcement and mainstream media. For example, 8 out of 10 cases of human trafficking investigated by the FBI in 2011 were found to be instances of sex trafficking (Banks and Kyckelhahn, 2011). In addition, some media outlets such as CNN have reported that up 80% of human-trafficking involves the *sexual* exploitation of women and children (Grant, 2012 : CNN, 2012). However, as critics, both academics and activists, have pointed out, these statistics has largely been inflated due to the conflation of prostitution with human trafficking. That is to say, when all instances of prostitution found in an area are referred to as a dimension of "human-trafficking," it gravely distorts the statistics of individuals who were trafficked across borders for other

types of labor (2012). Conflating these two issues is also highly problematic since each of them carries their own unique debates regarding agency of those involved. Similarly, the FBI crime statistics are largely reflective of the *focus* of federal resources, which are aimed at the criminal occupations associated with human trafficking and not the myriad of labor exploitation outside of these areas (Sanghera, 2005). Some recent statistics estimate that sex trafficking only represents about 44% of all instances of human trafficking (AlterNet, 2013). Other estimates of sex trafficking are markedly lower. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that, out of 21 million trafficked individuals worldwide, only 4.5 million (21%) are trafficked for sex work (ILO, 2008). Unfortunately, given these definitional problems, the most accurate statistic is still unknown. What is known, however, is that sex trafficking does not constitute the largest sector of labor exploitation resulting from human trafficking. This is not to say that sex trafficking should not be focused on in human trafficking literature. Obviously, it represents a particularly damaging social issue, especially where children are involved. However, to lump it together with all the other issues associated with human trafficking, and gives it the lion's share of focus in media and global attention, does a disservice to addressing human trafficking as a whole.

The Dominant Discourse: Modern-Day Slavery?

In addition to these complications due to over-emphasis on sex trafficking, the Palermo Protocol and other dominant conceptualizations of human trafficking severely limit the discussion of the few differences between trafficked and migrant labor.

“Human trafficking is modern-day slavery” has become the shared mantra among many social activists, NGOs, journalists, legislators, and even some academics who seek to understand and address the issue of human-trafficking. Whether it’s the latest action movie featuring Liam Neeson (Morel, 2008), or the trending topic on an online media outlet, this disturbing phenomenon is reflected pervasively in media focus this dominant slavery narrative. While there are numerous instances of human trafficking that certainly constitute a clearly deplorable when using this “modern-day slavery” perspective. For example, 61% of individuals who fit the description form of slavery, found in types of bondage, smuggling, and domestic servitude, there are a wide-array of issues and instances that become complicated and misunderstood of a “victim of trafficking,” or VoT, instead self-identify as a “migrant laborer” (Pearson, 2002). This issue is most clearly articulated by leading critical scholar O’Connell Davidson:

The Protocol definition of the term ‘trafficking’ does not describe a single, unitary act leading to one specific outcome, but rather refers to a *process* (recruitment, transportation and control) that can be organized in a variety of ways and involves a range of different actions and outcomes. Trafficking, like traditional understandings of slavery, comes as a package, and there is room for dispute as to which particular actions and outcomes, and in what particular combination, should be included under its umbrella. The problem is compounded by the fact that many of the constituent elements identified in the Protocol definition of trafficking themselves present definitional problems [...] and by the fact that the abuses that come under the umbrella of ‘trafficking’ can vary in severity, generating *a continuum of experience rather than a simple either/or dichotomy*. (O’Connell Davidson, 2006: 8-9, based on Anderson and O’Connell Davidson, 2002, emphasis by Bastia, 2006)

Essentially, what Davidson is driving at, is that the Palermo Protocol’s inclusion of the necessity of coercion and /or abuse o take place in order for an offense to constitute

trafficking does little to address the myriad of differences experienced by both migrant and trafficked laborers. This was certainly seen in the previously discussed studies of trafficked women working in sex and other industries. It is very common for these individuals to instead identify as some type of economic migrant, which makes it difficult to charge and prosecute those using this labor abroad. However, what the difference truly is remains to be seen. While there are a number of particular differences between the various types of exploited transnational labor, it would appear that, when human trafficking is understood without the heavy imagery of enslavement, it becomes part of “business as usual” in the exploitation of migratory labor. This is especially true for migratory labor from the Third World. This grey area is not uncommon and has been explored by a number of other trafficking scholars (Ahmad, 2005 : Jagori, 2005). For example, in her study, Jagori observed that human trafficking in India is a part of labor migration (2006). She argued that this is the necessary “lens” to use when studying trafficking due to its conceptualization based on crossing borders which, inherently, makes it part of illegal migration. She also believed that this clarification enabled more awareness of the needs for women to move in search of work, and the inherent vulnerabilities resulting from the migration process. What she found was that the context and conditions in which trafficking of women in India occurs is highly similar to the conditions in which migration takes place (2005). These conditions included economic compulsions, socio-cultural practices, and, particularly, the greater threat of violence and lack of opportunity faced by these women in patriarchal society (2005). She also notes that abuse and exploitation found in instances

that were defined as the trafficking of women, were largely routinely faced by women in other migratory processes (2005). Unfortunately, this violence is a prevalent dimension of world-wide experience of women (Stewart, 2014), which has made them especially susceptible to trafficking.

These studies also provide additional context for the economic strife experienced by individuals in the Third World and worldwide, and that makes them susceptible to trafficked or other types of migrant labor. This has been another common critique regarding the Palermo Protocol. The degree to which fraud, force, or coercion must occur in order to represent a case of human trafficking is not specifically mentioned, and has contributed to confusion as to whether or not an instance of exploited transnational labor constitutes a case of human trafficking. The difference between human trafficking and migrant labor truly hinges on this distinction. As human trafficking scholar Tanja Bastia writes:

As many writers and analysts have already noted, trafficking involves elements of *coercion*, violence or deceit not generally present in most economic migration, making trafficking an involuntary movement while migration continues to be seen as voluntary. But the distinction between *voluntary or forced movement* is not as clear-cut as it may seem. Most people who have been trafficked wanted to seek work abroad, i.e. they are first and foremost migrant workers (Agustín, 2005) (Bastia, 2006)

This issue has forced a number of other scholars to conceptualize and study human trafficking as a dimension of migratory labor. A number of statistics have provided good reason to do so. For example, many individuals who fit the description of a Victim of Trafficking, or VoT, instead define themselves as “migrant workers who have had some

back luck as a result of bad decisions” (Pearson, 2002). This self-identification has been common in a number of other studies of both VoTs in sex work and other industries (Agustin, 2006 : Andrijasevic, 2003).

There are a number of other findings that complicate the “modern-day slavery” perspective. For example, one troubling study showed that many sex-trafficked children live with their own families, and will use their earnings from sex work in order to add to the familial income (Seelke, 2009). Similarly, a 2002 study found that 57% of trafficked children live with this type of arrangement (Gonzales de Innocenti, 2002). While the agency of children is largely non-existent, and even more problematic than that of the women discussed in the previous studies, these studies challenge the dominant assumptions of the trafficking discourse. The image of a child kidnapped and enslaved in these positions generally dominates the image in the media and policy alike (Uy, 2011). The proliferation of the “modern-day slavery” narrative does not allow for stories of children working to support their families gain much traction in the media or in policy discussion. The omission of these stories and others like them, within the dominant discourse of human trafficking allows the “modern day slavery” narrative continued unchallenged proliferation. Of course, these circumstances underlying the prostitution represent abhorrent conditions which are akin to slavery, but, without understanding these particular nuances involved in the trafficking of children, the global community fails to understand the lack of opportunity and economic strife which pushes these families to participate in such repugnant practices.

This is not to say these instances are necessarily commonplace within human trafficking as a whole. Despite a lack of consistent data, it is clear that some trafficked individuals are certainly duped or misled into different sectors of labor. However, what is clear is that cases of distinct sex slavery make up the smallest amount of trafficked labor (Bales, 1999), but that language conflating human trafficking with slavery dominates the current discourse (Sanghera, 2005).

The Dominant Human Trafficking Paradigm

Critical scholars have argued that these complexities, issues, and vagaries are exacerbated by a number of “myths” (Ditmore, 2005 : Sanghera, 2005) within the dominant discourse surrounding human trafficking. These myths are tied to a number of assumptions already discussed, such as conflating human-trafficking with prostitution and other forms of sex-work, involvement of organized-crime, and other issues that are only *dimensions* of the greater issue of human-trafficking. In addition to these myths, a number of key issues have been largely omitted within the dominant paradigm. Many of these omissions are concerned with the lack of attention paid to global-structural issues, namely the phenomenon of globalization and neo-liberal policies, and the way they contribute to impoverishment and displacement of unskilled labor that are most often at risk for being trafficked (Chang, 2007, Jac-Kucharski, 2012).

These perspectives in which human trafficking represents hegemonic sex trafficking and/or clear cases of slavery are problematic at best and simply inaccurate at worst. However, given the lack of dependable statistics and understanding of the issue, it is difficult to completely disregard these perspectives. One of the main issues lies

within the fact that these perspectives are most widely seen in both popular and news media when human trafficking is discussed (Uy, 2011). Accordingly, “[m]any of the claims made about trafficking are unsubstantiated and undocumented, and are based on sensationalist reports, hyperbole, and conceptual confusions, a problem that extends to wider international discourse on transnational crime” (Kempadoo, 2005). The dominant human trafficking paradigm (DHTP) was coined in order to refer to this hyperbolic treatment of a very real and complicated issue (Sanghera, 2005).

Economic Elite Interests

While these hyperbolic conceptualizations of human trafficking serve to sensationalize the already grand issue, thus leading to greater entertainment value and higher ratings in media, it is also clear that this narrow framing of the issue serves to protect to the interests of the economic elite. This unintended consequence of the DHTP has yet to be explored by other scholars interested in the framing of human trafficking. The interests of the economic elite are protected by this narrative for a number of ways. By putting greater emphasis on sex-trafficking and other criminal aspects of human trafficking (i.e. smuggling, coercion, etc.), other sectors of labor, such as the food industry and other types of agricultural work, which have been linked to using trafficked labor (Belser, 2005 : ILO, 2008) remain largely unseen by the public eye. This allows major corporations in these industries to continue to exploit migrant and trafficked labor without fear of reprisal, whether by NGOs or government through policy, against such practices. Additionally and more troublesome for major

corporations which rely on migrant, trafficked, and other types of transnational labor, discussing human trafficking more holistically would sharpen the grey area between these types of labor given their overwhelming similarities (Bastia, 2006 : Pearson, 2002). This sharpening would largely reveal the grey between migrant and trafficked labor to be an illusion and that these issues of transnational labor exploitation are one in the same. Given the heightened focus on human trafficking in recent years, it would be potentially catastrophic to major corporations to have these blurred lines brought into focus. If the 50-plus human trafficking groups in North America alone (Grant, 2012) were to shift their focus from sex trafficking to all instances of global labor exploitation and abuse, it would represent a very powerful political force in battling the inequalities of globalization and the exploitation of labor worldwide.

The DHTP, Economic Elite and the Mainstream Media

The connection between the economic elite and mainstream, corporately owned media has been documented for many decades (Chomsky & Herman, 2001, Parenti, 1985 : Project Censored, 2008, 2013). According to Chomsky and Herman's seminal work in *Manufacturing Consent*, the mainstream, corporately owned media in the US is dominated by a number of filters meant to protect and maintain the interests of both economic and governmental elites in America (2001). They refer to this system as the *propaganda model* of mainstream media. The most important, and obvious, of these filters is the ownership filter. Essentially, they argue that issues which may challenge the parent company's business interests will be omitted from coverage or framed in such a

manner that avoids damaging the company image. For example, Chomsky and Herman identify the “derisive and hostile” coverage of the 1999 Seattle protests against the policies of neo-liberal institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank as one such product of this ownership filter. Accordingly, CNN referred to the protests as “much ado about nothing,” without any real exploration of the protestors grievances. This type of coverage represents a protection of the ideological corporate ethics which dominate the US economy and society. This type of coverage continues today. For example, according to research done by Project Censored, a journalism program operating out of Sonoma State University, with overlapping interests in politics, journalism, and sociology, the corporately, owned mass media coverage of the occupy Wall Street Movement and similar protests against wealth disparity in the US between 2011 and 2012 were treated with similar ambivalence and hostility (Project Censored, 2013). This type of coverage typifies the treatment of social movements by the mainstream media when these movements challenge the interests of the economic elite (Peoples, 2008). This process has also been referred to as “media representation bias” (2008). Given the increased consolidation of media ownership through the formation of conglomerates in recent years (90% of all major media outlets are now owned by 6 corporations) (Project Censored, 2013), this web of ownership interest has become ubiquitous throughout major mainstream media outlets; thus limiting any topics that may be damaging to economic elite interests. This has been referred to as a type of “corporate hegemony” in which the mainstream media are largely monopolized by a few business elites

(Bagdikian, 2004 : Croteau and Hoynes, 2001 : Peoples, 2008). In addition to the ownership filter, Chomsky and Herman identify the advertising filter (2001). Media greatly depends on advertising money to remain solvent and in business (Gamson et al., 1992). Accordingly, this dependence on major corporations and other companies in advertising limits mainstream media's greater freedom to report on topics that may damage the interests of their advertisers. This additional filter has also greatly enhanced the hegemonic influence of the economic elite on mainstream media in the US.

Given this structure of corporately owned, mainstream media, stories about human trafficking that may damage the interests of the economic elite are likely to be framed in a biased manner in order to eliminate said threat. Focusing on sex-trafficking and other elements which typify the DHTP limits the discussion and takes the focus away from "legitimate" businesses and other organizations that may be using trafficked labor. This phenomenon has already been observed. For example, one major media outlet, CNN, claimed that "at least 100,000 [sex-trafficked] juveniles are victimized" each year (Grant, 2012). This statistic has also been cited by a number of other mainstream media sources (2012). However, this statistic, which was cited from a University of Pennsylvania report from 2001, was based on youth that are *at-risk* of "commercial sexual exploitation," not those which have become victims (Grant, 2012). Despite similarly dubious statistics claiming as much as "80%" of human-trafficking is sexual exploitation, a 2012 report by the International Labor Organization showed that of the 21 million individuals trafficked into forced labor, only 4.5 million are involved in sex-work (ILO, 2008); a far cry from the dubious 80% estimate.

The DHTP represents an ideology that, whether an intended consequence or not, clearly protects the interests of the economic elite. It narrowly frames the discussion of human-trafficking in order to limit topics regarding types of labor exploited outside of sex-work and other criminal enterprises. In addition, it also omits the discussion of similarly exploitive conditions that migrant laborers face, which, if examined, could potentially broaden the scope of the human trafficking issue to include a myriad of global labor issues within legitimate enterprises (Bastia, 2006 : Bales, 2009). Therefore, it stands to reason that the protective ideology of the DHTP will be more pervasive within private, corporately owned media enterprises as opposed to those that are publicly and/or independently supported.

Accordingly, my research will analyze the different ways in which the two top rated, privately owned media networks of Fox News and CNN, the lonely but hegemonic, public media network of National Public Radio (NPR), and the widely read independently-owned, progressive media outlet of AlterNet treat the issue of human-trafficking, and, ultimately, whether or not one is more committed to the dominant-paradigm than the other. This will be determined through grounded theory based coding analysis of a sample of articles related to human trafficking from each source throughout the year 2013.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Economic Elite Theory and the DHTP

Sociologically, power elite theory refers to the way in which power is concentrated within the upper-echelons of society, and how this power is used to influence public policy, culture, and the general societal ethos; largely done for the purpose of maintaining this power and wealth. This has been conceptualized by a number of sociological theorists in the last sixty years (Domhoff, 2012 : Hall, 1984 : Miles, 1980 : Mills, 1956 : Parenti, 1985). While each theorists' interpretation varies slightly, there is far more uniformity than difference (Farazmand, 1996). C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* (1956) served as the foundation for elite theory for a number of sociological conflict theorists (Domhoff, 2012 : Parenti, 1985). While his work built on previous structural theories concerned with power (i.e. Marx, Weber) it differed in a number of important ways. Unlike Marxist structural theories, Mills' did not begin with a class-struggle perspective and did not view the mode-of-production as the leading cause of power concentration and oppression. Although, similar to the Marxian perspective, Mills identified the owners of the means of production (the bourgeois) as members of the power elite; namely the economic elite (1956). Also, unlike the Weberian perspective, which emphasized the power of bureaucratic structures (Weber, 1947 : 1984), Mills' power elite theory examined the socioeconomic background and overlapping interests of the elite members of various powerful bureaucracies and organizations, from the board of directors to members of the Presidents' cabinet, in

order to demonstrate the way in which agency is utilized by elites in positions of power (Domhoff, 2006 : Mills, 1956). Mills' power elite theory posited that power was concentrated within three dominant power bases: the political, economic, and military spheres (1956). Central to his theory is the way in which members of each of these power bases circulate between them, these members being united by their interests emerging from their high-status backgrounds. Mills referred to this process as the circulation of elites, but it is more commonly referred to as the "revolving door" today. Also in more recent years, elite theorists have noticed a decline in the power wielded by the military sphere (Domhoff, 2012), which generally serve as an arm of political power, and a drastic increase in the power exercised over government (the political elite) and mass society (Mills, 1956) by the economic elite (Domhoff, 1970 : 2012). The economic elite exercise this power through lobbying efforts, campaign contributions, funding of like-minded think-tanks, and mass-media (Chomsky and Herman, 2001 : Domhoff, 2012 : Parenti, 1985). Mass-media serves as a very powerful tool in influencing public opinion through the framing of social issues in a manner that the interests of the elite (2001). This will be discussed further later in the thesis.

While there are certainly a number of their specific interests that the economic elite serve to protect through policy, they are generally concerned with the preservation of a number of policies aimed at maintaining and increasing their wealth and power. Generally, these policies are concerned with privatization, the proliferation of globalization and neo-liberal global policies, and the weakening of labor power (Domhoff, 2012 : Farazmand, 1996). Accordingly, given this power elite model of

society, it is unsurprising that human trafficking has been conceptualized as it has been in recent years. While many historical elements are also culpable for this dominant discourse of human trafficking, namely the organization efforts of radical feminists and fundamentalist Christians (Uy, 2011), it can be argued that their conceptualization, which was largely focused on sex trafficking and human trafficking as clear evil in society, proliferated not only because of their efforts, but because it was congruent with the interests of the power elite; specifically the economic elite.

Elite Media Bias: The Propaganda Model and Contemporary Accounts

As previously discussed, privately owned mass-media institutions serve as a major tool of the economic elite in order to protect their interests by framing social issues in a manner that is congruent with their interests. This process has become especially ubiquitous in the age of major media conglomerates which have concentrated the ownership of 90% of all major media outlets in the hands of 6 major corporations (Lutz, 2012). This “corporate hegemony” has been documented by a number of scholars (Bagdikian, 2004 : Croteau & Hoynes, 2001 : Peoples, 2008). While these corporations cannot exert their influence explicitly, they have control over what is reported on, what is omitted, and in what manner it is discussed (Chomsky and Herman, 2001). All journalists are ultimately subject to the discretion of their supervisors, given their ability to hire and fire, ultimately reflecting the views of owners of the media firm (201). Furthermore, the economic elite in other sectors outside of media ownership influence the content of mass media in other ways. Privately-owned media outlet revenue is largely made up of advertising money (1988). Therefore, privately-owned media outlets

are constrained by their ability to attract advertisers, thereby limiting the negative things they can report on regarding their potential advertisers within the economic elite (1988). Similarly, major corporations, and other elite entities, often serve as potential sources, which is a relationship that could potentially be damaged by unsavory media reports regarding said corporations (1988). Therefore, mainstream media outlets must be particularly careful in how news stories concerned with the interests of the economic elite are presented in order to remain profitable and viable. In addition to the aforementioned filters, Chomsky and Herman also identify the source, flak, and anticommunism as a control mechanism as other filters within the propaganda model. These filters are also connected to the interests of the economic elite, given that they are often tapped as sources by journalists, use lawyers and other means to attack published stories that are damaging to their interests (Chomsky, 2001), and that, obviously, a consistent commitment against communism is congruent with their pro-capitalist interests.

These filters ultimately create sharp boundaries within the discourse of major media outlets regarding stories that may damage the image of major corporations in the United States and those that are supportive or benign. Studies examining public and progressive, online media outlets have shown stark differences in what stories are reported by the respective media outlets compared to the mainstream media during the same time frame (Project Censored, 2010 : 2013). For example, on March 2, 2009, when many major media outlets were fixated on the jury selection for the trial of baseball star Barry Bonds, they failed to cover the Supreme Courts rejection of appeals made by

American and Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange, in favor of Dow Chemical, Monsanto, and other companies (the economic elite) that made the toxic chemical and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War (Project Censored, 2010). While these stories may appear anecdotal, the last 30 years, as well as ongoing, research by Project Censored has shown that this is the rule and not the exception in corporately-owned, mainstream media (Project Censored, 2013). Most recent research by Project Censored has demonstrated that independently owned media outlets, such as Democracy Now! And AlterNet, in addition to media outside of the US, such as the BBC and Al Jazeera, challenge US corporate hegemony by covering the stories omitted or distorted by the mainstream media in the US. For example, their 2013 edition showed that the aforementioned media sources gave consistently more detailed coverage to issues such as sweatshop labor used in China by Apple, the severity of the garbage dump in the Pacific Ocean, and other stories which challenge the interests of the economic elite (2013). Accordingly, this bias is dominated by corporate hegemony in which the competition for mainstream media attention, the odds are stacked in favor of elites who are powerful social figures and groups who command abundant resources (Ryan, 1991). This type of coverage has been also been referred to as “media representation bias” (Peoples, 2008).

Human Trafficking in the Media: The Dominant Paradigm

Human-trafficking, as it is presented in the mainstream media, has been discussed by a number of scholars in terms of sexualizing and sensationalizing the issue; presumably in order to increase viewership (Uy, 2011 : Stewart, 2014). This is most

often done by discussing human-trafficking in terms of prostitution and other types of sex work (Galusca, 2012). This conflation of trafficking with prostitution and other types of sex-work, has essentially married the separate, although related, social issues. This is especially problematic when domestic prostitution, in which no international border may have been crossed by the sex-workers, is assumed to be part of human-trafficking. In addition to limiting the discussion to sex-trafficking, Uy contends that the “perfect victim” narrative, which focuses on a particular type of trafficked individual: a “third world” woman or child, smuggled across borders, forced to commit commercial sex acts, is particularly pervasive in media (2011). This is what Chomsky and Herman would refer to as a “worthy victim” within the propaganda model of mainstream media reporting (2001). “Worthy victims” are defined based on their tragic stories inability to challenge the interests of US economic, political, or, especially, military interests (2001). For example, in the context of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, the way in which Palestinian victims are often under-reported or totally omitted by US media represents an unworthy victim due to our close alliance with Israel (2001). This perspective has been seen in both major news outlets, as well as popular media such as film and television shows (Morel, 2008 : Uy, 2001).

The DHTP was first coined by Jyoti Sanghera in her article “Unpacking the Trafficking Discourse” (2005). Accordingly, Sanghera’s work was concerned with the “problem in which the ‘problem of trafficking,’ especially within the Asia-Pacific region, has been addressed by a majority of players over the last decade or so” (Sanghera, 4). Among a number of issues, Sanghera refers to a number of dominant assumptions

which dominate the mainstream trafficking discourse. These dominant assumptions include, but are not limited to:

1. *Trafficking of children and women is an ever-growing phenomenon*
2. *Most trafficking happens for the purpose of prostitution*
3. *All entry of women into the sex industry is forced and the notion of “consent” in prostitution is based upon false consciousness or falsehood*
4. *Police-facilitated raids and rescue operations in brothels will reduce the number of victims of trafficking in the prostitution industry*
5. *Anti-migration strategies based upon awareness-raising campaigns which alert communities to the dangers of trafficking (Sanghera, 5-6).*

Sanghera is also sure to point out that her critique is not meant to downplay or deny the severity and importance of human trafficking. Her critique is instead meant to challenge these commonalities that have unfairly and, in some cases, inaccurately come to define the dominant trafficking discourse. Another foundation of the DHTP is based on the lack of a distinction between trafficked and migrant labor (Ahmed, 2005 : Sanghera, 2005), despite the fact that research has shown striking similarities between trafficked and migrant labor. These similarities are based upon how the laborers self-identify (Bastia, 2006 : Pearson, 2002 : Warren, 2012) and the structural conditions which drive labor migration (Chang, 2007, Jac-Kucharski, 2012).

However, expanding the discussion to include these other types of labor, while paramount to holistically addressing human-trafficking, directly challenges the interests of the business-owning members of the economic elite who benefit from both trafficked and migrant labor. For example, addressing the structural forces that drive trafficked labor criticizes the neo-liberal policies which have been linked to driving trafficked-labor

across borders (Chang, 2007 : Chossudovsky, 1997 : Sindon, 2003), and challenges idealist notions of globalization. Also, expanding the discussion in order to look at the grey area between migrant and trafficked labor would potentially strengthen global labor power, and broaden the discussion to include all the different types of migrant-labor; both inside and outside of a human-trafficking narrative. While there are certainly instances of truth within these dominant myths, they have unfairly come to define the human trafficking issue in recent years (Ditmore, 2006 : Uy, 2011).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Question

My research will initially focus on the following research question:

1. Is there a connection between media ownership and media coverage of human trafficking? Specifically, do corporately-owned, privatized media sources frame more of their coverage of human-trafficking within the dominant-human trafficking paradigm as compared to public and independent sources of media?

Emergent research questions will also be discussed as they occur in data analysis. This is congruent with the details of grounded theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Grounded Theory Comparative-Content Analysis

Based on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), I used a grounded theory based comparative-content analysis approach in order to determine the way in which each trafficking article is framed. This grounded theory approach allows for trends to emerge organically within the analysis, and for previous expectations to be tested against the data. Given the methodological vagaries of grounded theory, and the misconceptions surrounding its use in qualitative data (Suddaby, 2006), it is important that I elaborate on the qualities of this approach and how I will be applying them.

Essentially, grounded theory was developed as an alternative to positivistic approaches which used strict measures of hypothesis testing and falsification in order to validate research. Glaser and Strauss contended that an organic process of theory development, based on how well data fit conceptual categories as developed by the

researcher well-versed in the subject at hand, can be just as, if not more, useful in interpreting ongoing trends within the social sciences. For example, developing a strict coding model based on the frequency of words used, or another more positivistic approach, would constrain this process. Without the freedom to develop the codes as the data is analyzed, it would be entirely possible that preconceived codes wouldn't fully apply to the data sample.

This method is based on two key concepts: "constant comparison" and "theoretical sampling" (1967) which are both utilized in my research. Constant comparison refers to the process in which data are collected and analyzed repeatedly in order to account for emergent trends in the coding process. Theoretical sampling refers to the selection of data based on the theory being developed. Accordingly, in the present research, all coding of sources was done side-by-side, and the initial theory that privately-owned media sources would be more likely to frame human-trafficking in terms of the dominant human-trafficking paradigm, which was based on a great deal of previous research, determined the sources and terms I developed in order to select my population data.

While my initial theoretical perspective is concerned with how the content relates to the DHTP, this type of analysis will allow me to observe, code, and analyze other trends that may become of concern to my ultimate research question (i.e. the different coverage between media sources based on ownership structures). This type of analysis also allows me the necessary freedom to develop and elaborate the specificities

of my codes in each wave. I believe this will generate more sophisticated and accurate data as determined by how material I am coding relates to the DHTP.

Sources and Population Selection

Sources

The following news outlets were selected based on their popularity, as determined by their ratings for the year 2013, their respective media ownership structure, and whether or not their online archives are available for 2013. Fox News was selected because it was the top-rated privatized news source for the year 2013 (The Huffington Post, 2014). However, given Fox News' politically right-wing reputation, I decided to also select the second top-rated corporately-owned, privatized news source for 2013: NBC News (2014). However, before the initial coding process could begin, NBC removed their online archives in early 2014. In response, I selected the third top rated news source with online archives available for 2013: CNN (2014). These sources are also owned by two different firms: News Corp and Time Warner, respectively.

National Public Radio (NPR) was selected as my public, government supported news source due to their position as the hegemonic source for publicly supported media in the United States. Finally, AlterNet was selected as my non-profit, progressive activist news source given its popularity among similarly structured news sites (AlterNet claims a readership of over 3 million visits per month) (AlterNet, 2014). Similarly, AlterNet has been used in a number of recent media analysis studies in order to determine

differences and biases within the private, mainstream media (Project Censored, 2010 : 2013). AlterNet was also selected due to the very small yield of the NPR sample in order to have a greater yield of data outside of the privatized media sources.

The variety of these sources provides a dimension of control. Selecting two corporately-owned mainstream sources (Fox and CNN) was necessary in order to demonstrate that their coverage of human-trafficking is more influenced by their ownership structures, than by their particular political leanings. Given Fox's reputation for framing media events with a conservative narrative (Project Censored, 2013), CNN provides a much needed "middle-of-the-road" corporately-owned, media source. Of course, given their similar ownership structures, I did not anticipate much difference between the two sources. In addition, AlterNet, as a progressively-leaning, independent news source, boosts a liberal perspective which may similarly affect the way they frame articles. Much like CNN, NPR provides a more mainstream source of publicly owned media.

Data Selection

Once the sources were selected, each source's website archives were accessed by searching "human-trafficking." From this pool, each article with one or more of the following term(s) "human trafficking," "sex trafficking," "modern day slavery," "modern day slave," "immigration," "migrant" and/or "human smuggling" in the headline that was published during the time period of January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013 were selected for analysis. These terms were chosen since they are more concerned

with the type of trafficking my thesis is concerned with (the trafficking of individuals for labor) and not the other many of types of trafficking (drug trafficking, gun trafficking, etc.).

From these criteria, 85 articles were selected and printed as my data population. Each article was then quickly read to ensure its relevance to the topic at hand. Only one article, from Fox News, which was concerned with the trafficking of animal parts for the sale, was removed due to irrelevance. The articles were then grouped first by month, and then by news source. This organization of the articles behooved the “constant comparison” coding process congruent with grounded theory methodology. The population for each month and news source was as follows:

Month	Fox News	CNN	AlterNet	NPR	TOTAL
January	2	2	2	0	6
February	1	0	2	0	3
March	1	0	1	0	2
April	1	1	2	1	5
May	3	2	2	1	8
June	1	4	3	3	11
July	5	1	3	1	10
August	2	2	2	2	8
September	4	2	3	0	9
October	3	2	0	4	9
November	2	3	2	2	9
December	3	1	0	0	4
TOTAL	28	21	21	14	84

Preliminary Key Concepts within the Dominant Human Trafficking Paradigm

In accordance with grounded theory procedures, a number of pertinent concepts found in much of the human-trafficking literature, especially literature concerned with how the issue is framed by popular and news media alike will be utilized as the basis for my initial coding. This will be followed by the development of categories and theory. In addition, these concepts will also be used to further compliment and understand emergent trends in the data as they occur. These concepts were developed using the critique of the dominant trafficking discourse developed by Jyoti Sanghera (2005), as well as similar points made by other critical theorists (Ahmad, 2005 : Bastia, 2006).

These key concepts are as follows:

1. *Most trafficking happens for the purpose of prostitution and other types of sex work*
2. *Anti-immigration measures and stricter border-control policies are necessary to combat human-trafficking*
3. *Trafficking only occurs through coercion of individuals*
4. *The majority of victims of human-trafficking are women and children*
5. *Trafficked labor is the equivalent of modern-day slavery*

The initial coding of each article was based upon these previously listed qualities, and whether or not the content of the article, and therefore the source at large, reflects these dominant ideas. This will be determined based on whether or not the aforementioned concepts are present within the stories covered and the language used. In addition, other emergent trends in the data will be coded as it pertains to the DHTP. This coding process is discussed at greater lengths in the data analysis section.

Theoretical Coding

Initially, a hard-copy of each article was grouped by month and then by source beginning with January 2013. Coding was done as the articles were read in chronological order. This method of coding allowed me to constantly compare the content of each source within each month. Also, while this is not my initial aim, this process allowed me to observe longitudinal trends within the data. Dependent on how the content of each article relates to the dominant human-trafficking paradigm, a coding system was developed during this process.

There were 3 separate waves of coding. In the first wave, articles were coded based on whether or not basic factors related to the DHTP were present. During this coding process, no distinction as to whether or not an article was within or outside of the DHTP was made. Articles were merely coded and then grouped based on the following areas of coding interest connected to the DHTP:

Labor: Sex work, criminal enterprises, agricultural, manufacturing, domestic servitude

Policy: Immigration, International

Victim Narrative: The sex and age of victim discussed

In addition and in congruence with grounded theory methodology, anything that appeared relevant to my research question was noted. High-lighting and stray note-taking were used to develop these codes.

In the second wave of coding, my aim was to further condense and develop the codes observed in the first wave. This process was especially important in consolidating the codes from emergent trends with that which were anticipated (i.e. those that fit within or outside of the DHTP). The increased specificity and sophistication of the codes developed in this wave set the foundation for the DHTP coding model developed in wave 3. This entire process allowed me to develop final codes that were directly related to the content and language from each article, and remove the problematic issues that may arise during less involved coding such as word count which doesn't provide enough detail as to the overall context of the article. In addition to condensing codes, any codes thought to be previously significant were collapsed due to inconsistent presence within in the data. This allowed me to develop a model of analysis that is grounded within the data itself; thus leading to more applicable levels of analysis for each article.

By the beginning of my third and final wave of coding, I had developed a concrete model of coding analysis related to the DHTP which allowed me to categorize all of the articles as either inside or outside of the DHTP. At this point, each category (within or outside) was clearly decided and developed based on the development of the DHTP coding model. This model provided justification for each distinction made between inside of outside of DHTP. This model is fully explained in the data analysis section. Of course, given the grounded theory approach, it was entirely possible that another type of categorization will be more accurate in the description of content for each article. However, as discussed in the data analysis portion, this was not the case. Following this categorization process, the article categories between the four different

sources were compared, with emphasis on the differences between the corporately-owned private media sources (Fox News and CNN), and the public/independently owned sources (NPR and AlterNet). Following comparison of the individual news sources, the data was then categorized by ownership structure by combining the data of the privately owned sources (Fox and CNN) in addition to the data from the publically/independently owned sources (NPR and AlterNet).

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Grounded Theory Based-Coding

Throughout the coding process I found that a few of my initial areas of coding were not discussed thoroughly enough in the data to be considered. For example, as previously discussed, the assumption that stricter immigration policies are needed to curb human trafficking is a common myth within the DHTP (Sanghera, 2005). However, I found that very few articles from all sources even mentioned immigration, and when it was discussed, it was in passing without any politicized recommendation. For this reason, during the second wave of coding, I decided to collapse this code from the rest of the process.

In addition, I found a particular consistent code related to the DHTP which I did not expect to see as pervasively as I did. This was the discussion of women and children victims of human trafficking. And while, according to most recent statistics, women and children represent the largest portion of victims of human trafficking (ILO, 2008), I still felt this emphasis fit well due to its specific discussion within literature on the DHTP and its pervasiveness within the data. Therefore, this code was added during the second wave, and further developed before the third wave of coding. This additional code allowed me to make greater distinctions between whether or not an article reflected the DHTP during the 3rd wave of coding.

Essentially, these methods, which are congruent with the practice of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), allowed me the freedom necessary to seek, collapse,

and further develop particular codes related to the DHTP throughout my data analysis. This was a vital part of my research which will be discussed more thoroughly below.

Wave 1

All articles were read in the following chronological order, beginning with January 2013: Fox News, AlterNet, CNN, and NPR. I felt the constant mix between the privately owned sample (Fox and CNN) and public/independently owned sample (AlterNet and NPR) was necessary in order to clearly seek codes which were particularly focused on differences between each of the sources.

In the first wave, I coded articles for the following qualities: discussion of trafficking, immigration policy, and different types of labor exploited outside of sex trafficking. I also coded for specific geographic locations, discussion of slavery, and discussion of structural issues (poverty, familial support, etc.) which drive trafficking. Initially, these codes were not meant to identify whether or not an article was within or outside of the DHTP, but to provide description of the content of each article for further development in the following coding waves. However, many of these initial codes were collapsed. As previously mentioned, the immigration code was abandoned due to lack of consistent discussion in the data. Also, while there a number of different regions discussed between each article in the data, it was largely concerned with Russia and China due to a negative report published by the US regarding their commitment to combating human trafficking. I noted that the coverage of this report was roughly the same between all sources, and that it did not directly relate to the DHTP. Accordingly, it was collapsed. All other codes were kept at this time in the process. In addition, at the

end of this wave, another area of concern was developed to be coded in the second wave.

Wave 2

During the first wave, I noted that three of the same stories were covered by all 4 sources. This initially appeared to be an excellent source of data, since the emergence of politicized differences related to the DHTP between each of these articles, despite the similar content, would be especially significant. These articles focused on a US trafficking report which lambasted Russia and China for their lack of effort, and criminal charges brought against a Saudi princess for human trafficking (the charges were eventually dismissed). However, it became clear during my second wave of coding that there was little to no differences between the coverage of these stories. Therefore, by the end of wave 2, this area of observation was collapsed for this reason.

In addition to adding and collapsing codes, my previous codes were expanded on in order to relate more clearly to the DHTP. The codes were expanded as follows: if the discussion of sex trafficking is conflated or used interchangeably with the term human trafficking, and/or if sex trafficking is discussed despite not directly relating to the story at hand, the story was coded as inside the DHTP. I felt this was a very important distinction to be made outside of the initial code which just focused on whether or not sex trafficking was mentioned, due to the differences I saw in how the issue was covered. For example, an article by AlterNet (the independently owned source), entitled “What is the Most Common Way People are lured into Sex Trafficking? New Study Shows Surprising Trends” (Gummow, 2013) was initially thought to be coded as within

the DHTP due to its focus on sex trafficking. However, after developing more sophisticated codes after the second wave, the content of the article clearly provided evidence that allowed me to change its status to outside of the DHTP. Such content related to clearly attacking the myth that sex trafficking is the most common type of labor exploited in human trafficking; citing a new study which claims this type of labor constitutes 44% of such trafficked labor (Gummow, 2013).

In addition, the “modern-day slavery” code was further developed in order to increase accuracy. After coding articles which use this term in the first wave, I made a similar coding distinction as I did with the prostitution code. Essentially, if it was used interchangeably with human trafficking, which promotes the image that all instances of human trafficking are a type of slavery, then it was considered to be within the DHTP. However, if it was mentioned along with a discussion of other types of labor exploited within human trafficking, then it was coded as outside of the DHTP. At the end of this wave, other previously used codes were further developed in order to make a clear distinction as to whether or not an article was part of the DHTP. For example, a CNN article which was entitled “We still need to end slavery?” was initially coded to be inside of the DHTP due to its use of the word slavery in conjunction with human trafficking. However, a paragraph of the article was devoted to discussing the different types of labor involved in human trafficking (restaurant workers, agriculture, domestic servants, etc.). This finding and further developed coding schemas allowed me to more accurately label this article outside of the DHTP.

Wave 3: The DHTP Model

Once I reached the third wave of coding, I began using a clear model related to the DHTP, which allowed me to code every article as either within or outside of this model. The table below demonstrates the criteria used in order to label each article inside or outside of the DHTP.

CODING AREA OF INTEREST	INSIDE DHTP	OUTSIDE DHTP
Sex Trafficking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflated with and/or used interchangeably with human trafficking 2. Mentioned in the article despite not directly relating to the story at hand 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed only as it pertains to the story at hand 2. Specific mention of other types of labor exploited outside of sex trafficking
Structural Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No mention of global poverty as driving force in human trafficking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some mention of global poverty as a driving force in human trafficking
“Modern day slavery”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflated with and/or used interchangeably with human trafficking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No mention of “modern day slavery” as it relates to human trafficking 2. Mention of “modern day slavery” with a discussion of different types of labor exploited

		outside of servitude
Sectors of Labor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only criminal sectors of labor discussed 2. Only sex work sectors of labor discussed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Types of labor outside of the criminal sectors discussed 2. Types of labor outside sex work discussed
Women and Children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclusive focus on women and/or children 2. Women and/or children mentioned despite not relating to the story at hand 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women and/or children not mentioned 2. Women and/or children mentioned in addition to men that are victims of human trafficking

Some articles received multiple codes from one or both categories. On the few occasions I encountered an article that received multiple codes from both the inside and outside coding categories, I was able to justify a label due to how much emphasis was placed on certain categorical codes. This was simply determined by the frequency at which these codes appeared. For example, an NPR article entitled “Why Slave Labor Still Plagues the Global Food System?” (Barclay, 2013) was initially difficult to classify given its conflation of human trafficking with slave labor (an inside code) in addition to its discussion of labor outside of sex-work and other criminal enterprises being discussed (an outside code). However, I was able to justify an ultimate code of Outside of the

DHTP due to the articles consistent discussion of the global inequalities which drive transnational labor (an outside code), as well as calling major corporations such as Wal-Mart to task for selling shrimp provided by a major Thai shrimp producer with noted labor violations, including using trafficked labor (Barclay, 2013). Other NPR articles had similar content. This is discussed at length in the results section. I did not encounter any articles that received the same number of codes within and outside of the DHTP coding model. However, had this been the case, said articles would have been coded as neither within nor outside of the DHTP.

Chapter 5

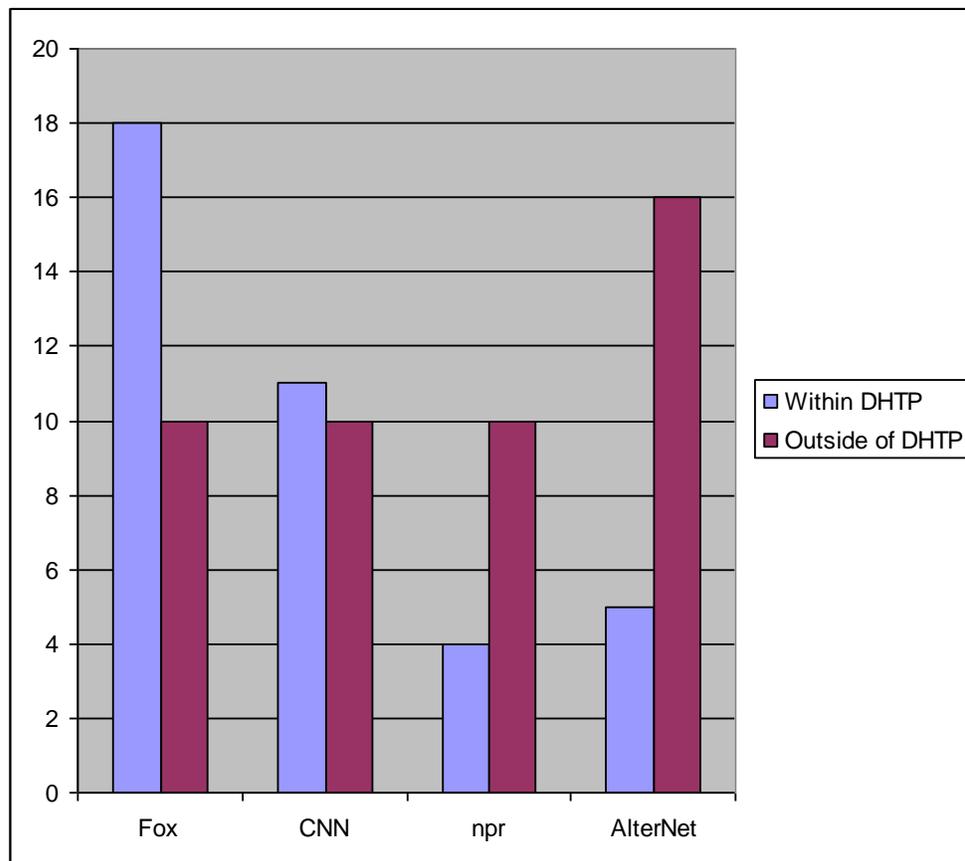
Results

The results were congruent with my initial expectations that privately owned media sources would be more committed to the DHTP than publicly or independently owned media sources. This increased commitment was reflected in which Fox News, the largest sample, was the most committed to this paradigm; with 64% of their article sample for 2013 (18/28) within the DHTP. Given Fox's conservative, pro-business reputation, this particular result was less than surprising. However, it is a consistent finding with my initial expectations given the way in which the DHTP represents the interests of the economic elite. The CNN article sample reflected 52% of the articles (11/21) within the DHTP. While this was only a slight majority of the articles, it still provides consistent findings that CNN, another private, corporately owned media enterprise, is generally more committed to the DHTP when covering human trafficking. This finding becomes much clearer as compared to the NPR (publicly owned media source) article sample which yielded a minority of 29% (4/14) articles within the DHTP. In addition, the AlterNet (independently owned media source) article sample yielded even fewer DHTP articles than NPR; with 26% (5/21) of their articles categorized as within the DHTP. These findings are reflected in the chart and graph below.

Articles Categorized by DHTP Association by News Source

News Source	Within DHTP	Outside DHTP	Total Articles	Percentage of articles within the DHTP
Fox	18	10	28	64%
CNN	11	10	21	52%
NPR	4	10	14	29%
AlterNet	5	16	21	26%

Articles Categorized by DHTP Association by News Source



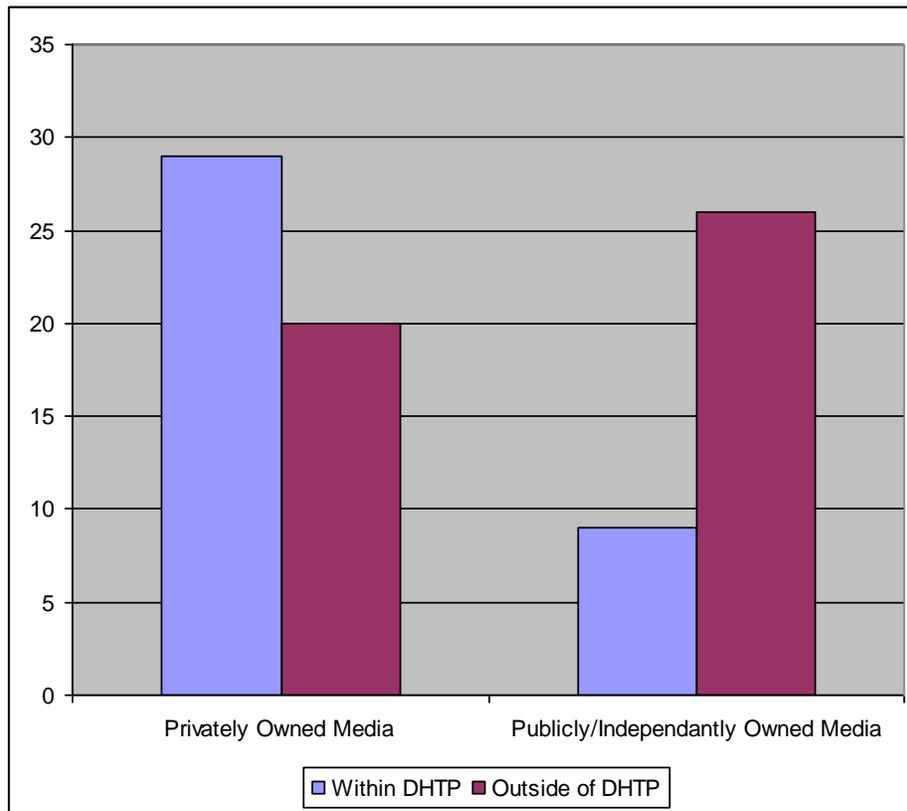
When the data were calculated cumulatively, in order to observe differences in ownership structures, this trend was made even clearer. Taken together, the private

media sources of Fox and CNN yielded 59% of their total articles (29/49) within the DHTP. Comparatively, the public and independently owned media sources, NPR and AlterNet, yielded 26% of their total articles (9/35) with the DHTP. Accordingly, mainstream, corporately owned media are 33% more likely to publish articles within the DHTP than alternatively owned media sources. These findings are reflected in the chart and graph below.

News Ownership Structures Categorized by DHTP Associated

News Ownership	Within DHTP	Outside DHTP	Total	Percentage of articles within the DHTP
Privately Owned	29	20	49	59%
Public/Independently Owned	9	26	35	26%

News Ownership Structures Categorized by DHTP Associated



Additional Results

Beyond the sharp distinctions made by the DHTP model, I noticed a number of other important differences in the coverage of human trafficking between private and public media sources. These differences represented more drastic differences in content which could not be fully accounted for by the DHTP coding model. For example, the amount of detail often varied between sources. While many articles were coded as outside DHTP for discussing global inequality, some articles discussed this process with much greater detail than others. As initially expected both NPR and AlterNet which were coded as outside the DHTP contained language and context that challenged the

interests of the economic elite in a far more direct manner than articles by CNN and Fox; even those that were coded as outside of the DHTP.

A number of NPR articles called particular corporations to task for using transnational labor, and made the connection between using illegal migrant and trafficked labor in doing so. For example, in addition to the article on the food industry previously discussed, an article entitled “A ‘Wake-Up Call’ To Protect Vulnerable Workers from Abuse” brought the company of Hill County Farms to task for abusing and exploiting laborers with intellectual abilities at one of their turkey farms in Atalissa, Iowa. Another NPR article entitled “World Immigration Called ‘Win-Win’ For Rich Nations, and Poor” addressed a number of issues largely omitted by the DHTP. For example, one such excerpt from the article read as follows:

Being a migrant worker is risky because in many countries they have few rights and protections. The Middle East takes in more migrant workers than any other region. The latest U.N. statistics show almost 17 million work in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Human rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch say abuse of migrant workers is rampant in the region.

The groups also cite reports of human trafficking among migrant workers in several developed countries. And in the U.S., a class-action lawsuit in federal court in Louisiana alleges wide-scale industry abuse of oil and gas workers (Noguchi, 2013).

Here, in this passage alone, we see a connection made between migrant and trafficked labor, as well a demonstration of how these abuses occur in major legitimate businesses within the oil and gas industry. This type of pointed journalism was not found anywhere in the Fox and CNN samples. Of course, given the results, many of the Fox and CNN articles outside of the DHTP made some mention of trafficked laborer exploited in

industries outside of sex-work. However, their treatment was never this specific, long, or comprehensive. In addition to finding this type of article in the NPR sample, the AlterNet sample provided similarly unique results.

An article in the AlterNet sample entitled “What is the Most Common Way People Are Lured into Sex Trafficking? New Study Shows Surprising Trends” was primarily concerned with a report released by the Polaris Project in November of 2013 which analyzed 9,298 cases of human trafficking reported by to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) (Gummow, 2013). The NHTRC is a 24-hour national hotline call center in the US. In the article, the author cited a number of findings from the study which directly challenged the dominant myths and narratives surrounding human trafficking. For example, they reported that only 44% of all of the cases were those involving elements of force, fraud or coercion, and that forced abductions only accounted for a small percent of documented trafficked persons (Gummow, 2013). AlterNet also published a similar article entitled “10 Surprising and Counterintuitive Facts about Child Sex Trafficking” (Gummow, 2013), which similarly challenged the common narratives surrounding human trafficking. Among some of the “surprising and counterintuitive” facts was that, as mentioned earlier, many children involved in sex trafficking are known to be doing so by their parents and provide household income for them. In addition, the article directly discussed the problems of conflating sex work with human trafficking in that it “aggravates the situation for children who are commercially sexually exploited” due to the associated stigma (2013).

In the articles that were coded as outside the DHTP from the Fox News sample, none of them made any mention of a legitimate or major business that exploited trafficked or other types of migratory labor. Some of these articles certainly made mention of the different sectors of labor exploited outside of sex-trafficking, but never with the specificity and detail that was present in the NPR articles previously discussed. For example, an article entitled “27 million modern day slaves – what you can do to prevent it” easily received a code outside of the DHTP due to its focus on all sexes, distinction made between human and sex trafficking, and for making mention of unequal economic opportunities which drive trafficking. However, the article specifically cited a San Francisco chain restaurant which was involved in trafficking allegations in early 2001 (Snyder, 2013). Despite this mention of a legitimate business, the author failed to mention the specific name of the business.

There were similar findings within the CNN sample. Even though number of the articles received codes outside of the DHTP due to addressing other types of labor exploited outside of sex-work, none of these articles specifically discussed specific companies that are guilty of this type of exploitation. For example, an article entitled “Human trafficking roundup nets 75 in Spain, France,” simply made the distinction between these different types of labor by referring to them as “harsh labor conditions in clandestine factories or forced into prostitution” (Goodman, 2013). While, given the development of the DHTP coding model, this was enough of a distinction to grant the article on the whole an outside code, it did not show nearly the level of detail which was present in a number of similar articles from NPR and/or AlterNet. Their representation

of the issue is still limited, since it only discussing factory work and sex work as options for trafficked laborers, but also because this is the only mention made in the entire two page article about the types of labor exploited in trafficking. Other articles within the CNN sample which were ultimately coded as outside the DHTP shared this lack of detail. For example, another CNN article entitled “Slavery: the victims living all around us” made the following distinction between the different sectors of labor. The author writes, “...the case shows that hidden slavery is taking place around us, within our everyday environments, whether it be on construction sites, mobile soup runs for the homeless, at cheap takeaways, in nails bars and in domestic homes...” (Boff, 2013). While the author makes important mention of sectors outside of sex work, it lacked the specificity found in the NPR and AlterNet sample.

These strong findings were only present in the NPR and AlterNet sample, and demonstrate qualitative support that the corporately owned, mainstream media sources are less likely to engage human trafficking in this holistic manner. While these findings may be explained by the increased sophistication associated with NPR and other alternative media outlets, I feel this is not enough to explain the difference given the specific content of their coverage. The fact that the NPR articles directly challenged two major corporations (Wal-Mart and Hill County Farms) in their discussion of human trafficking, which was totally absent from both the CNN and Fox article sample, demonstrates their greater willingness to address news stories that may damage the interests of the economic elite as compared to their corporately owned counterparts.

Chapter 6

Discussion

These findings demonstrate the way in which the DHTP is buttressed by the corporately owned, mainstream media in order to protect the interests of the economic elite, and reveal how this relationship ultimately limits the discussion of the potentially broad topic of human trafficking. Without the constraints of the DHTP, the potential for the issue to grow in order to incorporate a number of important associated issues is entirely possible. These issues include, but are not limited to, broadening the focus of human trafficking to include human rights violations against migrant laborers of all kinds, addressing global poverty and displacement of laborers who are susceptible to trafficked and migrant, transnational labor alike, which involve similar dangers (Jagori, 2005), and to address the connection between this global inequality and neo-liberal policies concerned with globalization and greater concentration of wealth for the economic elite. While the hegemonic presence of the economic elite in all avenues of social life (Mills, 1956) makes this difficult to navigate, these findings show that the hegemonic presence of mainstream media can at least be side-stepped in alternative media sources.

As previously discussed, the grey area between trafficked and migrant labor is only distinguished based on a number of hyperbolic assumptions regarding trafficked labor as “modern day slavery,” in which the agency of the VoT’s is completely removed. While I am not arguing that those persons who are trafficked are exercising pure agency, this entire denial of of agency serves to remove any discussion of action

propelled by a lack of opportunity, and to reinforce the slavery perspective. However, as has been shown throughout this thesis, use of fraud or coercion is not always present in cases of human trafficking, VoT's often self-identify as migrant laborers instead of the stigmatizing term VoT (Bastia, 2006 : Pearson, 2002), and the driving structural forces which contribute to the movement of transnational labor are often shared between both migrant and trafficked labor (Chang, 2007 : Ahmad, 2005). As such, the sharp distinction made between migrant and trafficked labor is a flimsy one at best. Some scholars have argued that this distinction between the two merely exists in order to transform labor migration into a societal evil under the guise of "trafficking" (Ahmad, 2005). Accordingly, Ahmad contends that "...trafficking serves as a front for undocumented economic migrants to be hounded and rounded up, followed by forced eviction or deportation by the authorities" (227). The fact of the matter is, absent more accurate statistics demonstrating the true differences between the two, research, activism, and policy aimed at human trafficking should be understood within the greater context of global labor migration, and these "economic migrants" should be treated more like victims and less like criminals. Also, given the stigmatizing label of VoT, this conceptualization of VoTs as "economic migrants" would dampen the previously associated stigma. In addressing the labor and human rights violations that plague this entire realm, with particular focus on challenging the companies that heavily use these sources of labor to provide greater transparency, greater understanding of and ability to address human trafficking is possible.

The connection between human trafficking and neo-liberal policies, buttressed by the advancement of globalization, has been explored by many scholars in recent years (Brewer, 2009 : Polakoff, 2007). The policies of globalization have been shown to exacerbate global inequality between the first and the third world, through the exploitation of cheap labor abroad, the use of subsistent wages, and policies which put profits above the environment. As Brewer writes in his work “Globalization and Human Trafficking:”

Globalization fosters interdependence between states for commerce and facilitates the transfer of commodities. Comparative advantage in goods and cheap labor in developing states has played a significant role in objectifying and exploiting humans for economic ends. In developing states where agrarian lifestyles once predominated, citizens are left without an education or the appropriate skills to compete in an evolving work-force. To a large extent, the lesser developed countries of the world have become the factories and workshops for the developed countries. A high demand for cheap labor by multinational corporations in developed countries has resulted in the trafficking and exploitation of desperate workers who, in turn, are subjected to a lifetime of slave-like conditions.

Similarly, Polakoff writes that these policies have created a “fourth world” and a form of “global apartheid” in which the people in peripheral nations exploited by these policies are now defined by their high rates of homelessness, lack of public infrastructure, and high rates of poverty (2007). These people are the most susceptible to becoming a trafficked or migrant laborer given the lack of economic opportunity created by these policies. The exploitation of peripheral nations by transnational capital is often buttressed by neo-liberal policies such as structural adjustment programs (SAPs). Essentially, as what happened in Latin America during the 1990s (or the “lost decade” as it is commonly referred to), the inability for third world nations to pay off their loans

given by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, caused these institutions to levy austerity programs against these nations, which are generally defined by providing incentives to foreign capital while cutting public programs (Chang, 2007 : Chossudovsky, 1997). Much like the corporately owned, mainstream media mistreated the coverage of the Seattle protests in the late 1990s against these and similar policies, and the Occupy movement (which protested against like-minded policies which generate domestic and global inequality), they continue to promote an image of human trafficking which ignores the important elements which fuel global inequality and trafficking.

While these criticisms of human trafficking are not necessarily anything new to literature previously discussed, my findings demonstrate new and important reasons for its proliferation. Many previous feminist scholars, who represent a good number of researchers in this particular field, have stressed the importance of how the dominant trafficking discourse is related to women's (especially those from the third world) globally low status due to patriarchal world systems (Desyllas, 2007 : Stewart, 2014). This is most clearly seen in how the dominant discourse serves to sexualize the issue by focusing on sex-trafficking, and how issues of agency are relatively ignored due to preconceived notions of inferior status. While this is certainly an important, gendered perspective on the success and proliferation of the DHTP, my findings also demonstrate that the DHTP is largely intact due to the way in which it protects the interests of the economic elite. These two forces operate in tandem in order to promote status-quo perceptions of human trafficking.

Conclusion

This research provides additional insight into how the human trafficking issue should be defined and addressed. However, this is not to say that elements of the DHTP should be ignored entirely. While my research, along with other burgeoning works on the DHTP and general complexities regarding trafficking coverage, have noted the pitfalls, dangers, and inaccuracies of the dominant trafficking discourse, the issues covered within this paradigm are still a connected and important part of the human trafficking issue. There are certainly especially horrendous instances of kidnapping, coercion, and other forms of intimidation used in order to trap individual laborers in a number of unsavory occupations not limited to the sex industry. However, given that these instances represent the exception and not the rule (Bales, 1999 : Bales & Cornell, 2008); these cases should not define the issue of human trafficking as a whole. Human trafficking should not be conceptualized as “modern day slavery,” but issues of slavery should of course be included in the discussion of human trafficking; when it specifically pertains to it. Human trafficking should instead be generally understood as a dimension of labor migration, given their over-whelming similarities in the driving forces that motivate the movement both types of labor, exploitation, and the self-identification of such laborers (Pearson, 2002 : Agustin, 2006). And, given their similarities, activists, international agencies, and governments which are concerned with human trafficking should pay closer attention to the types of exploitation, damages, and general strife faced by migrant laborers. The line between the two has been so thoroughly blurred by recent research that it hardly remains, and this is necessary in order to address the issue

holistically. In addition to this recommendation, it is also paramount that prostitution and other forms of sex-work are understood and addressed outside of human trafficking. While they are certainly part of the issue, these forms of labor carry a myriad of extra complications related to agency, the global status of women, and the protection of children. Labeling these actions as an “evil” under the umbrella of “human trafficking” ignores these specific nuanced issues that drive sex work. Also, it takes focus away from the already abundant migratory labor issues which should define human trafficking as a social problem.

The ultimate intention of this research was to add to the wide-array of literature on the biased type of reporting that is still present in corporately owned, privatized media networks. This research demonstrates a clear example of media representation bias (People, 2008), in which the way organizations and social issues are presented in the media are done so in a way that is congruent with the media firms interests. These interests normally gravitate towards economic elite interests present in the corporate hegemony of mainstream media. This type of reporting exists in not only human trafficking but, arguably, any topic which may damage these interests. And, given the financial focus of our society, this includes a great deal of important issues related to labor, the economy, and environmental policy. Consumers of media should be aware of the different filters, largely dominated by the powerful interests of the economic elite, associated with different media organizations, and the way in which they operate to obfuscate, frame, and distort certain issues. In addition, by focusing on human trafficking as the main topic of focus, my research provides additional light on this

particularly misunderstood subject and challenges many of the dominant myths that are reinforced by corporately owned, privatized media and other concerned agencies.

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