

CROSS-NATIONAL COVERAGE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A COMMUNITY STRUCTURE APPROACH

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Abstract

Using an innovative “community structure approach” to compare cross-national coverage of human trafficking in leading newspapers in thirteen countries with multiple national characteristics, all articles of 150+ words on the topic were sampled from a four-year span of 01/01/ 2005 to 12/31/2008, for a total of 322 articles. Articles were coded for “prominence” and “direction”, then combined into a “Media Vector” score for each leading newspaper (See John C. Pollock, “Tilted Mirrors: Media Alignment with Political and Social Change”, 2007, chp. 2). Initial Pearson correlations revealed two clusters of national-level characteristics had significant relationships: privilege (The “violated buffer” hypothesis expects that higher levels of privilege are associated with more government action to reduce human trafficking.) and vulnerability (Higher proportions of economically and socially “vulnerable” populations are associated with more government action to reduce human trafficking.) Specifically, Pearson correlations revealed that privilege related to healthcare access was the most significant variable cluster (physicians per 100,000: $r = .795$, $p = .001$; hospital beds per 10,000: $r = .727$, $p = .002$; infant mortality rate: $r = -.475$, $p = .050$), along with GDP per Capita: $r = .586$, $p = .023$. The vulnerability hypothesis was also confirmed: (poverty level: $r = .0607$, $p = .014$; thefts per 10,000: $r = .675$, $p = .016$). A rotated factor analysis and subsequent regression of factors with the media vectors yielded two variables accounting for over 96% of the variance: privilege, 66%; and female achievement (female literacy rate, female school life expectancy)/overall opportunity, 30%.

1. Introduction

According to the first annual report conducted by The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, human trafficking is the world’s fastest growing international organized crime involving billions of dollars. The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (2009) states: “Trafficking in persons shall mean 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” (The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, 2009, p. 1). Nearly every country in the world is affected by human trafficking (Monasebian, Hrbkova, 2006), and media coverage is expected to mirror that concern.

“International Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children”, an excerpt in *The American Journal of International Law*, discussed efforts of the United States government in combating trafficking, including a law signed by President Clinton, The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of

2000. “Among the findings stated in the law are: (1) at least seven hundred thousand persons annually, primarily women and children, are trafficked within or across international borders, with approximately fifty thousand women and children trafficked into the United States; (2) many of these persons are trafficked into the international sex trade, often by force, fraud, or coercion, leading to prostitution, pornography, sex tourism, and other commercial sexual services; (3) trafficking in persons is not limited to the sex industry but also involves forced labor and significant violations of labor, public health, and human rights standards worldwide; (4) traffickers lure women and girls- who are disproportionately affected by poverty, lack of success to education, chronic unemployment, discrimination, and lack of economic opportunities in their countries of origin-into their networks through false promises of decent working conditions at relatively good pay as nannies, maids, dancers, factory workers, restaurant workers, sale clerks, or models; (5) existing legislation and law enforcement in the United States and other countries are inadequate to deter trafficking and to bring traffickers to justice, and fail to reflect the gravity of the offenses involved; (6) current practices of sexual slavery and trafficking of women and children are abhorrent to the principles upon which the United States was founded (such as the inherent dignity and worth of all people, recognized in the Declaration of Independence); and (7) the United States must work bilaterally and multilaterally to

abolish the trafficking industry by taking steps to promote cooperation among countries linked together by international trafficking routes” (American Journal of international law, 2001).

The media often emphasize action against human trafficking to one of two parties: governments or non-governmental society groups. Communication scholars recognize these differing viewpoints as frames. Obviously, information disseminated by media outlets is not completely subjective because journalists are able to choose which frame they want to use for each story. Framing is the means in which a narrative is organized. “...Exposure to each frame prompts individuals to form opinions about news performance that are congruent with propositions that compose the frame” (D’Angelo, 2009, p. 3).

The frames that will be examined in this analysis inspect where the primary action lies when addressing the problem of human trafficking. The “government” frame suggests that it is the government’s responsibility to create laws and policies to eliminate this international epidemic. In this frame, it is the job of the government to enforce harsh consequences for human traffickers. By contrast, an alternative, second “societal” frame holds non-governmental groups responsible for ending the appalling business of human trafficking. This frame implies that groups outside of the government, such as private institutions, non-government organizations (NGOs) or non-profits should increase awareness and offer assistance to survivors.

Public awareness of an issue is increased by all forms of media, but newspapers have many qualities that make them superior to other forms of media for systematic study. Newspapers play an important role because they often set agendas for other media outlets. In addition, newspapers are often read by well-educated economic and political leaders. Such groups often have the ability to influence and make significant decisions that affect others in their communities. As a result, the information contained in newspapers and the way they frame issues can have a large impact on society. From a research perspective, newspapers also minimize methodological uncertainty by eliminating factors that complicate content analysis such as tone of voice in radio and both tone of voice and body language in television. Newspapers, then, are clearly an excellent media channel for this analysis.

This study employs an analysis using a “community structure model”, which studies how society affects media coverage. This approach is unusual since researchers usually focus on the reverse issue: how media affect society. The “community structure model” is based on the studies of several communication scholars, such as Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien (1973; 1980), Demers and Viswanath (1999), McLeod and Hertog (1999), and Hindman (1999) who pioneered a research paradigm in the “conviction that macrosocial forces play a key role in journalists’ coverage of critical events” (Pollock, 2007, p. 23). The model is significant because “recent studies have confirmed specific links between community

structure and reporting on social change” (Pollock, 2008, p. 871). Using this approach, the study will concentrate on how national characteristics are linked to newspaper coverage of human trafficking.

Two main research questions will be explored in the study of cross-national newspaper coverage of human trafficking:

RQ1. How much variation is there in cross-national coverage of human trafficking?

RQ2. What national characteristics are most strongly associated with that variation?

Several characteristics of communities might be associated with newspaper coverage of human trafficking. The study will examine how factors such as gross domestic product (GDP), infant mortality rate, and literacy rate are related to variations in cross-national coverage of the issue.

2. Literature Review

Human trafficking is an international problem that has been reoccurring for decades. It has been able to flourish because the profits of trafficking are high, the risks low. This prevailing issue has been a topic of study in several academic areas because of its impact worldwide. Fields such as women and gender studies, political science, and psychology have all explored this topic thoroughly. However, media coverage of human trafficking has been largely ignored by communication researchers.

The term “human trafficking” was searched in communication studies scholarly databases such as Communication and Mass Media Complete, ComAbstracts, and

ComWeb Mega Search. Thirteen articles were found in communication studies databases, however; only one article even touched on mass media. The other articles focused on specific incidences of human trafficking or the government response to the issue. In “Shining a Light”, the findings of research completed by Liz Chow on human trafficking were highlighted (Leone, 2007), yet no mention of media coverage was made. Another article, “The New Slave Trade” discussed factors that contributed to the increase in trafficking activity and government response to human trafficking (Maryniak, 2003). Only “The Edge of the Volcano” mentioned that human trafficking receives little attention in mass media. The article also noted that “authorities view trafficking as a security concern rather than a matter of exploitation” (Maryniak, 2007).

In contrast to the scarcity of material on human trafficking in communication journals, the field of political science shows great interest in human trafficking according to a search of the JSTOR political science database. A keyword search of “human AND trafficking” OR “trafficking AND women” OR “trafficking AND children” produced 585 results, vastly more than found in searches of communication databases. Article subjects were varied but the political science field recurrently addressed the circumstance that human trafficking, specifically of women as sex slaves, is a serious problem requiring intense efforts to defeat it, a practice using fear and brutality to control vulnerable young women.

“How the Sex Trade Becomes a Slave Trade: The Trafficking of Women in Israel”, cited Israeli law as a main reason for the problem. Israel has no law that prohibits the trafficking of women into Israel. There is not even a law against the sale of persons. Many young women living in Russia and the former Soviet Union, where the economy is near collapse, are willing to take chances on any opportunity to leave, even if somewhat perilous (Stone & Vandenberg, 1999). Unlike the field of communication studies, the field of political science contains substantial literature on the subject of human trafficking, especially regarding young women.

The psychology field is also interested in human trafficking. A keyword search of “human trafficking” in the PsycINFO database of EBSCO Host yielded 88 hits. Dominant themes focused on difficulties in collecting data on trafficking and the physical and emotional ramifications of trafficking on women and children. “Distortions and Difficulties in Data for Trafficking”, for example, originally published in *The Lancet*, one of the world’s leading medical journals, discussed key missteps of trafficking research. These missteps include researchers and law enforcement agencies focusing only on women and children in sex work and confusion with people smuggling and illegal immigration (Loff & Sanghera, 2004).

“The Health of Trafficked Women: A Survey of Women Entering Posttrafficking Services in Europe”, reported on psychologists and trained counselors interviewing 192 women throughout Europe in 2004 and 2005 who had been trafficked

and sexually exploited, evaluating both their mental and physical health status within 2 weeks of entering post trafficking services. An alarming 95% of the female participants said that while being trafficked they were sexually abused. Approximately 63% of them reported having 10 or more concurrent physical health problems after entering a rehabilitation program, and 57% of participants were diagnosed with post trauma-symptoms (Zimmerman, 2008, p. 57).

In addition to the psychology field, Women's and Gender Studies yielded substantial interest as well. An Ebscohost search found 689 results for the key words "human trafficking". One article by a board member of the abolitionist organization *Free the Slaves*, who traveled around the world interviewing sex workers, their families, police and even brothel owners about this serious issue, argued that in an effort to lessen human trafficking, economic costs of being caught should be raised (Kara, 2008).

Elzbieta M. Gozdiak looked more closely at the trafficking of children, stating "The average age of trafficked persons is reported to be 20 years old, indicating that a significant number of trafficked persons are under the age of 18" (Gozdiak, 2008, par. 12). In addition, "Children who cooperated with the perpetrators or enjoyed aspects of their experiences (such as fine clothes, freedom, boyfriends, drugs, or alcohol) may have been more susceptible to trauma and more resistant to therapy. Thus, their self-identity, understanding of their situation, and subsequent goals often conflicted with the goals of service providers and law

enforcement officers" (Gozdiak, 2008, par. 25).

Academic fields such as psychology, political science, and women and gender studies have produced a rich amount of research regarding human trafficking. However, the field of communication studies has not given sufficient attention to this significant topic. This paper attempts to remedy this imbalance by investigating cross-national media coverage of human trafficking.

3. Hypotheses

Using the community structure approach, at least twelve individual hypotheses can be tested regarding international human trafficking. These hypotheses can be classified into three main cluster groups: violated buffer, vulnerability, and stakeholder.

Privilege: "The Violated Buffer Hypothesis"

A study completed by Pollock, Mink, et al. (2001) found that the higher the percentage of families with annual incomes of \$100,000 or more in a city, the less favorable the reporting on allowing women in combat positions, linking privilege and reporting framing women in combat negatively as a threat to a cherished way of life. Another study focused on international newspaper coverage of NGO efforts and AIDS, discovered that privilege can be measured by literacy rate. "Essentially, the

proportion of privileged citizens in a country negatively correlates with the ‘developing’ coverage of NGO efforts to reduce HIV/AIDS” (Eisenberg et al., 2006, p. 34).

The violated buffer hypothesis (elaborated in Pollock’s *Tilted Mirrors*, ch. 4) posits a link between levels of privilege in a city and negative reporting on practices that contain biological threats or threats to a cherished way of life (Pollock, 2007, p. 101). Human trafficking is a threat to any modern civilized nation’s way of life and therefore the violated buffer hypothesis will likely apply. Because human trafficking never has “favorable” reporting, it is likely that those who believe more should be done to halt human trafficking will hold a government responsible for solving the issue, unwilling to leave the issue to “society” alone to fashion solutions. Therefore, the following hypotheses apply to the coverage of human trafficking:

H₁: *The higher the GDP in a country, the more likely coverage will emphasize government action against human trafficking (CIA Factbook, 2009).*

H₂: *The higher the GDP per capita, the more likely coverage will emphasize government action against human trafficking (CIA Factbook, 2009).*

H₃: *The higher the literacy rate, the more likely coverage will emphasize government action against human trafficking (CIA Factbook, 2009).*

Healthcare Access

It is reasonable to expect that countries with a high regard for citizen health would have more coverage emphasizing government responsibility for human trafficking. Previous research has shown a

positive correlation between the number of physicians per 100,000 people in a city and coverage favoring expanded stem cell research (Pollock, 2007, Ch. 3), as well as favorable coverage of the Master Settlement Agreement [MSA], a government-brokered agreement, banning tobacco ads targeting children (Pollock, 2007, Ch. 4). Having a high percentage of physicians per 100,000 citizens is one measure of the type of community responsibility a country can manifest. Therefore, it is likely that countries with a higher sense of community responsibility might place more responsibility for halting human trafficking on the government. Thus:

H₄: *The greater the number of physicians per 100,000 people, the more likely coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (Human Development Report, 2008).*

H₅: *The greater the number of hospital beds per 10,000 people, the more likely coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (United Nations Statistics, 2009).*

Vulnerability

The Vulnerability Hypothesis explains the link between vulnerable populations--such as the poor; the unemployed; or those living in high-crime areas--and the proportion of coverage that directly reflects the concerns of those less privileged. Previous studies have shown that citizens inhabiting a city consisting of a high percentage of families below the poverty line are more likely to resort to crime and in turn are more vulnerable to facing capital punishment (Pollock, 2007, p. 142). For the United States, media coverage can reflect the concerns of

those below the poverty level, and living in high-crime areas, and in turn newspapers may report with less favorable coverage of the death penalty (Pollock, 2007, p.142). A study by Gretale et al. (2005) confirmed that the greater levels of national vulnerability will correlate with more favorable coverage at the United Nations' efforts to reduce HIV/AIDS (Gretale et al., 2005, p. 28). Human trafficking is a serious crime that conventional wisdom suggests often happens in impoverished cities or nations across the globe.

Communication scholars have developed the guard dog hypothesis to explain the view that local media often function less as watchdogs alert to the misuse of power than as guard dogs that protect the interests of elites (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1995). "...The Minnesota researchers suggest that city media function to preserve the interests of city elites collectively by maintaining a vigilant view of leadership interests, prepared to punish and ostracize those elites who betray or embarrass those interests" (Pollock, 2007). The media may punish by severe criticism anyone or any group who diverges from the collective interests of elites by portraying them as not "belonging" to a world of privilege and respect. To the extent that newspapers reflect elite and government perspectives cross-nationally, it is reasonable to expect that vulnerability will be linked to low expectations for government involvement.

H₆: *The higher the infant mortality rate, the less likely coverage is to emphasize government action*

against human trafficking (United Nations Statistics, 2009).

H₇: *The greater the percent of citizens below poverty level, the less likely the coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (United Nations Statistics, 2009).*

H₈: *The greater the thefts/100,000, the less likely coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (World Desk Reference, 2004).*

H₁₀: *The greater the mortality rate, the less likely coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (United Nations Statistics, 2009).*

Stakeholders

A classic study using the community structure approach found that communities with a large number of stakeholders tend to report favorably on the concerns of citizens who hold great stakes in an issue. The research confirmed that larger protest groups gain more attention and favorable coverage than smaller groups (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). Using the community structure approach, it is likely that nations highly responsive to stakeholders will more likely manifest media coverage emphasizing government responsibility for human trafficking. A study on the Beijing conference's efforts to promote women's rights completed by Hammer, et. al. (2005) suggested that one measure of women's strength is stakeholder female life expectancy. "...The higher amount of female stakeholders will correlate with favorable coverage of Beijing plus ten and the commitment to advancing women's rights" (Hammer et al, 2005, p. 29). It seems likely, if

nations are responsive to their stakeholders, that coverage will likely emphasize government responsibility for human trafficking. Therefore, the following hypotheses are reasonable:

H₁₀: *The higher the abortion rate, the more likely coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (United Nations Statistics, 2009).*

H₁₁: *The higher the female literacy rate, the more likely coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (CIA Factbook, 2009).*

H₁₂: *The higher the years of female school life expectancy, the more likely coverage is to emphasize government action against human trafficking (CIA Factbook, 2009).*

4. Methodology

Sample Selection

The study examined articles from thirteen English-language newspapers from various nations throughout the world. All articles of 150 words or more on human trafficking were sampled from a four-year span of January 1, 2005 to January 1, 2009, for a total of 322 articles. The timeframe chosen allowed for the most recent media communication to be analyzed and also permitted a large enough timespan to collect a representative sample from each newspaper. Newspapers were chosen from several different countries because human trafficking is an international problem. The following papers were used for data collection: *Bangkok Post*, *London Times*, *New York Times*, *Singapore Straits News*, *The China Daily*, *The Times of India*, *Gulf News*, *The Nation*,

New Vision, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Turkish Daily*, and *The Jakarta Post*.

All articles found in these newspapers were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine how the topic was covered. The qualitative coding examined themes and media frames in the articles, while the quantitative coding was based on the “prominence” and “direction” of each article:

Qualitative Measures

Throughout the analysis of each article, two frames were analyzed in regard to human trafficking. While investigating each article, it was noted whether there was a presence of either of the two following frames: whether it is the government’s responsibility to create laws and policies to eliminate human trafficking or whether it is primarily society’s responsibility to increase awareness and offer assistance to survivors.

Quantitative Measures

Article Prominence: Each article analyzed was coded using two scores: prominence and direction. The prominence score is a numerical rating ranging from 3-16 points. In order to determine the prominence score, four dimensions were analyzed. The first is placement, which refers to the positions of an article in a newspaper (front page of first section, front page of interior section, inside of first section, or other). Secondly, headline size focuses on the number of words that comprise the headline of the article. The next dimension is article length, which refers to

the total quantity of words in the article. The final measurement includes photographs, graphics or any type of visual found in the article (one, two or more). The higher the numerical rating given an article, the higher the prominence score will be, as illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: Prominence Score*
(for coding databases)

<i>Dimension</i>	4	3	2	1
Placement	Front page of first section	Front page of inside section	Inside of first section	Other
Headline Size (# of words)	10+	8-9	6-7	5 or fewer
Length of Article (# of words)	900+	650-899	400-649	150-399
Photos/Graphics	2 or more	1		

* Copyright John C. Pollock 1994-2008

Article Direction: The article direction score was determined after an analysis of the content and tone of each article. The articles were coded as “government action”, “societal action”, or “balanced/neutral” according to the following characteristics:

Government action: Articles were coded as “government action” if they conveyed an emphasis on human trafficking as an international problem that either described or demanded action or guidance from the internal government of a country. For example, one article from *Bangkok Post* explained that “Earlier this year the Cambodian government introduced a new anti-trafficking law, and while it has raised awareness of the issue it has also led to a draconian crackdown on sex workers...”

(Jagan, 2008, Dec. 7). Another article from *China Daily* mentioned that “The government plans to set up the first national mechanism for combating trafficking to protect women and children from forced labor and prostitution” (Chinadaily.com.cn, 2007, Sept. 4).

Societal action: Articles were coded as “societal action” if they described or stressed solutions to human trafficking regarding private groups, non-governmental groups (NGOs) or non-profits as primary agents in efforts to end the business of human trafficking. The articles coded with this perspective sometimes also advocated that these groups should increase awareness and offer assistance to survivors. As an example, one article from *The Nation* (Kenya) suggested that “The World Tourism Organization (WTO) is mobilizing key players in tourism throughout the world to implement tourism ethics that will eradicate sexploitation” (Mayoyo, 2006, June 27). Another example that portrayed societal action was seen in *Philippine Daily Inquirer*: “Led by the Visayan Forum Foundation Inc. (VFFI), civil society members said that covenant was a multi-sectoral effort hoping to put a stop to the endless flow of Filipino women and children being trafficked globally” (Balana, 2008, Aug. 20).

Balanced/Neutral Coverage: Articles were coded as “balanced/neutral” if they offered information about human trafficking but without any specific perspective. These articles did not show either governments or societies taking action against the international business of human trafficking.

An article from *Singapore Straits Times* discussed the background of human trafficking without emphasizing government or society taking action for the problem. The article discusses the amount of people trafficked each year and why the problem occurs so frequently (Gay, 2005, March 14).

Scott's Pi.

Half of the articles were each coded by two researchers, yielding a Scott's Pi coefficient of inter-coder reliability of .85.

Calculations of Media Vectors using a Coefficient of Imbalance

The prominence and directional scores were combined using psychology's Janis-Fadner Coefficient of Imbalance to calculate a "Media Vector," so called because of its similarity to a vector in physics, which combines the magnitude (the prominence) and the direction to attain a measure of impact. Effectively, the "Media Vector" is essentially an assessment of issue "projection." Media Vector scores can range +1.00 and -1.00. The scores which fall between 0 to -1.00 designate societal responsibility of the topic. However, the scores that fall between 0 and +1.00 indicate government responsibility of the topic (See Table 2).

Table 2: Calculating the Media Vector*

<p>g = sum of the prominence scores coded "government action"</p> <p>s = sum of the prominence scores coded "societal action"</p> <p>n = sum of the prominence scores coded "balanced/neutral"</p> <p>r = g + s + n</p> <p>If $g > s$ (the sum of the government prominence scores is greater than the sum of the societal prominence scores), the following formula is used:</p> <p>Government Media Vector:</p> $GMV = \frac{(g^2 - s^2)}{s^2} \quad (\text{Answer lies between } 0 \text{ and } +1.00)$ <p>If $g < s$ (the sum of the societal prominence scores is greater than the sum of the government scores), the following formula is used:</p> <p>Individual Media Vector:</p> $SMV = \frac{(s^2 - g^2)}{g^2} \quad (\text{Answer lies between } 0 \text{ and } -1.00)$
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*Media vector copyright John C. Pollock, 2000-2009

5. Results: Considerable Coverage Variation; Violated Buffer, Vulnerability and Stakeholder Hypotheses Confirmed

In reference to the first research question, Media Vectors reveal considerable variation in coverage of government action to end human trafficking, from .6868 (United Arab Emirates) to -.0036 (Kenya). It is noteworthy that all except for one of the Media Vectors leaned toward the government taking action. Kenya is the only country that emphasized society taking more action than the government.

Table 3: Media Vectors Measuring Government Action for Human Trafficking

COUNTRY	NEWSPAPER	MEDIA VECTOR
United Arab Emirates	<i>The Gulf News</i>	.6868
United States	<i>NY Times</i>	.5016
China	<i>China Daily</i>	.5010
United Kingdom	<i>The London Times</i>	.4420
India	<i>Times of India</i>	.4238
Thailand	<i>Bangkok Post</i>	.3872
Uganda	<i>New Vision</i>	.3540
Singapore	<i>Singapore Straits News</i>	.3430
Turkey	<i>Turkish Daily</i>	.1697
Indonesia	<i>Jakarta Post</i>	.1542
Philippines	<i>Philippines Daily Inquirer</i>	.145
Israel	<i>Jerusalem Post</i>	.0825
Kenya	<i>The Nation</i>	-.0036

In an initial attempt to explore the nature of any links between country characteristics and variations in coverage, Pearson correlations were calculated:

Table 4: Pearson Correlations between National Characteristics and Media Vectors Measuring Support for Government Action

Country characteristics	Pearson correlation	Significance
Physician per 100,000	.795	.001**
Hospital beds per 10,000	.727	.002**
Percent Below Poverty Level	.607	.014*
Thefts per 100,000	.675	.016*
GDP/Capita	.563	.022*
Female School Life Expectancy	.586	.023*
Infant Mortality Rate	-.475	.050*
Abortions per 1,000	-.563	.057
GDP	.343	.125
Longevity	-.267	.189
Female Literacy Rate	.194	.263
Literacy Rate	.108	.363

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Country demographics linked to “privilege” in the form of healthcare access, such as physicians per 100,000 and hospital

beds per 10,000, were significant at a 1 percent level or better. Another measure of privilege, GDP/capita, was significant at the 5 percent level, as was a “stakeholder” measure, female school life expectancy. Other characteristics significant at that level included measures of “vulnerability”: percent below poverty level, thefts per 100,000, and infant mortality rate. It is also worth noting that abortions per 1,000 was a characteristic marginally significant at .057. The “violated buffer”, “vulnerability” and “stakeholder” hypotheses were all partially confirmed through Pearson correlations linking country characteristics and cross-national coverage of human trafficking.

Privilege: The Violated Buffer Hypothesis Confirmed

The violated buffer hypothesis (elaborated in Pollock’s *Tilted Mirrors*) postulates a link between levels of privilege in a city and reporting on practices that contain biological threats or threats to a cherished way of life (Pollock, 2007, p.101). It is likely that those who believe more should be done to stop human trafficking support government activity addressing this issue.

Healthcare Access Indicators Confirm The Violated Buffer Hypothesis. Regarding health care access, the greater the number of physicians per 100,000 people and the greater the number of hospital beds per 10,000 people, the more likely coverage is to emphasize government activity to address human trafficking. Our expectations were confirmed with quite significant results. In fact, these variants are the most important in

this study of human trafficking: Physicians per 100,000 ($r = .795$, $p = .001$); hospital beds per 10,000 people ($r = .727$, $p = .002$). These results may have emerged because countries with high regard for citizen health may regard government as clearly responsible for controlling human trafficking.

Another hypothesis associated with privilege expecting higher GDP per capita linked with coverage emphasizing government activity concerning human trafficking was confirmed with significant results ($r = .563$, $p = .022$). Other indicators of privilege, including overall GDP and literacy rate, were not significantly associated with violation in coverage of human trafficking.

Vulnerability Hypothesis Confirmed.

The vulnerability hypothesis explores links between vulnerable populations such as the poor; the unemployed; or those living in high-crime areas—and the proportion of coverage that directly reflects the concerns of those less privileged. To the degree that newspapers reflect elite and government perspectives cross-nationally, it is reasonable to expect that vulnerability will be linked to low expectations for government involvement, leaving resolution to society. Indeed, higher infant mortality rates were indeed associated with lower proportions of government activity, as expected by the Guard Dog Hypothesis ($r = -.475$, $p = .050$).

Yet the current study generally confirmed the opposite view. A study by Gratale et al (2005) confirmed that the greater the levels of national vulnerability (in particular, infant mortality rate) correlated with more favorable

coverage of United Nations' efforts to reduce HIV/AIDS ($p = .28$). Consistent with the 2005 Gratale, et. al. study, and apart from longevity, several characteristics revealed significant results. Both thefts per 100,000 ($r = .675$, $p = .016$) and percent below poverty level ($r = .607$, $p = .014$) were linked with coverage emphasizing more government involvement, suggesting newspapers in developing countries are indeed capable of “mirroring” the concerns of less fortunate citizens, quite apart from the audience that buys and reads newspapers. This capacity to mirror the interests or concerns of the less fortunate is consistent with confirmations of the vulnerability hypotheses in US cities in studies in *Tilted Mirrors* (Pollock, 2007, ch. 5).

Stakeholders

The community structure approach expects that nations highly responsive to stakeholders are more likely to reveal media coverage emphasizing government responsibility for human trafficking. This expectation was confirmed with female school life expectancy ($r = .586$, $p = .023$), suggesting that the more attention paid to women in a nation, the more coverage emphasized government activity concerning human trafficking. Female literacy rate was not significant. Abortion rate was directionally disconfirmed ($r = -.563$, $p = .057$). We predicted that the higher the abortion rate, the more likely the coverage would emphasize government responsibility, whereas the statistical results linked abortion rate to coverage emphasizing “societal” responsibility with a negative correlation.

Overall, the major umbrella hypotheses of violated buffer (in particular regarding health access), vulnerability and stakeholders were confirmed.

6. Regression of Factors Finds Privilege and Female Achievement / Opportunity Highly Significant

A varimax rotated factor analysis was performed on the independent variables, yielding three significant factors, all with Eigenvalues of 1.00 or more. Regarding factor variance, Factor 1 (Female Achievement/Opportunity) accounted for 58.4% of the variance, Factor 2 (Access) accounted for 16.02% of the variance, and Factor 3 (Privilege) accounted for 11.7% of the variance. Total factor variance accounted for was 86% (See Table 5).

Table 5: Factor Analysis of National Characteristics

	Varimax Rotated Component Matrix	
<i>Factor</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Factor Loading</i>
Factor 1: Female Achievement/ Opportunity	Female Literacy Rate	.91
	Overall Literacy Rate	.9044
	Female School Life Expectancy	.853
	Infant Mortality Rate	-.752
	Population	-.737
Factor 2: Access	GDP/Capita	.733
	% Below Poverty level	.967
	Physicians per 100,000	.934
Factor 3: Privilege	Hospital Beds/10,000	.905
	GDP	.711
	Abortion rates	-.704

After running a regression of the factors against the media vectors, privilege and female achievement/opportunity were found the two leading indicators, accounting for most of the variance (almost 97%). One possible reason for privilege accounting for 66.4% of the variance is that countries with more economic privilege may have greater means to take action against human trafficking.

Female achievement/opportunity accounted for 30.4% of the variance. One possible reason this indicator was so strong was that perhaps countries with greater attention to their female populations may have a greater interest in the overall rights of all citizens. By extension, governments in such countries may assume a larger role taking action against human trafficking.

Table 6: Regression of Factors liked to Human Trafficking

Model	R (Equation)	R Square (Cumulative)	R Square Change	F Change	Significance F Change
Privilege	.815	.664	.664	342.437	.000
Privilege, Female Achievement/ Opportunity	.984	.968	.304	1632.770	.000

7. Implications for Further Research

This study explored cross-national newspaper coverage of human trafficking. An examination of a broader range of nations, particularly in South America, could have improved the validity of the investigation. In addition, increasing the number of nations examined would help to capture a more

diverse and inclusive international perspective on human trafficking sources. Another implication for further research is to expand the sampling frame to capture more articles per paper to obtain a more nuanced media vector measurement for each nation. For some papers we were able to find as many as 31 articles, but some only had 15 articles. One last implication for further research is to expand the number of indicators examined. Such indicators could include female life expectancy and AIDS rates among women. Nevertheless, this cross-national investigation of links between country-level characteristics and newspaper coverage of human trafficking traces clear connections between multiple structural measures of privilege and female achievement/opportunity and coverage emphasizing government activity to reduce or eliminate human trafficking, results that merit continuing testing and further exploration.

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