

## Introduction

Human sex trafficking is an issue that is not only present abroad, but also at home within the United States. The common notion of sex trafficking centers on the belief that individuals engaged voluntarily with the males who serve as their sex buyers / pimps. This is false. Human trafficking occurs at a systematic level and "a trafficking recruiter can be a family friend [...] or even someone well-respected within the community who can build trust of potential victims" (Kim & Hreshchyshyn, 2004)<sup>2</sup>. Human trafficking is an industry that generates billions of dollars and intersects with strip clubs, pornography, escort services, modeling agencies, etc. Dr. Lauren Martin and Alexandra Pierce's 2014 published work *Mapping the Market for Sex with Trafficked Minor Girls in Minneapolis: Structures, Functions, and Patterns* focuses on the context of; who is involved in the market; how does this exploitation system work; and where does human trafficking occur in Minnesota<sup>3</sup>. The research I will be engaging in that will elaborate on Dr. Lauren Martin's work focuses on the buyers (i.e the demand) of human trafficking victims in terms of content data analysis as a means to assess trends.

## Research Focus

This research project focuses on the formation of a protocol codebook. The aim is to disseminate information presented in published news articles which highlight sex trafficking related cases, especially in regards to how the sex buyer in the article is depicted.

## Abstract

The issue of human sex-trafficking permeates not only on an international scale, but a domestic scale as well. Sex-buyers play a critical role in feeding the economy of the demand of sex trafficking victims. Minnesota is not exempt from this reality. This research project examines the formulation of the group protocol established to assess how sex buyers (Johns) are depicted in published media through coded content analysis. First, a search for news articles with the keywords "prostitution" and "sex trafficking" was conducted; then, a content analysis was carried out using a detailed codebook protocol, which serves as a guideline for identifying sex buyers and sex buyer information in this article pool. This research study focuses on the challenges the research team faced in terms of defining who is a sex buyer and how much information is needed to be identified to specify an individual as a sex buyer in the articles. Since language is varied and different terms can be used to communicate the same meaning, it was important for the research team to agree on which terms would constitute "sex buyer language" in the studied articles. The creation of the research protocol is a guideline for how to code for quantitative data in an effort to communicate qualitative findings from published news articles.

## The Sex Buyer in the Sex Trafficking System<sup>1</sup>

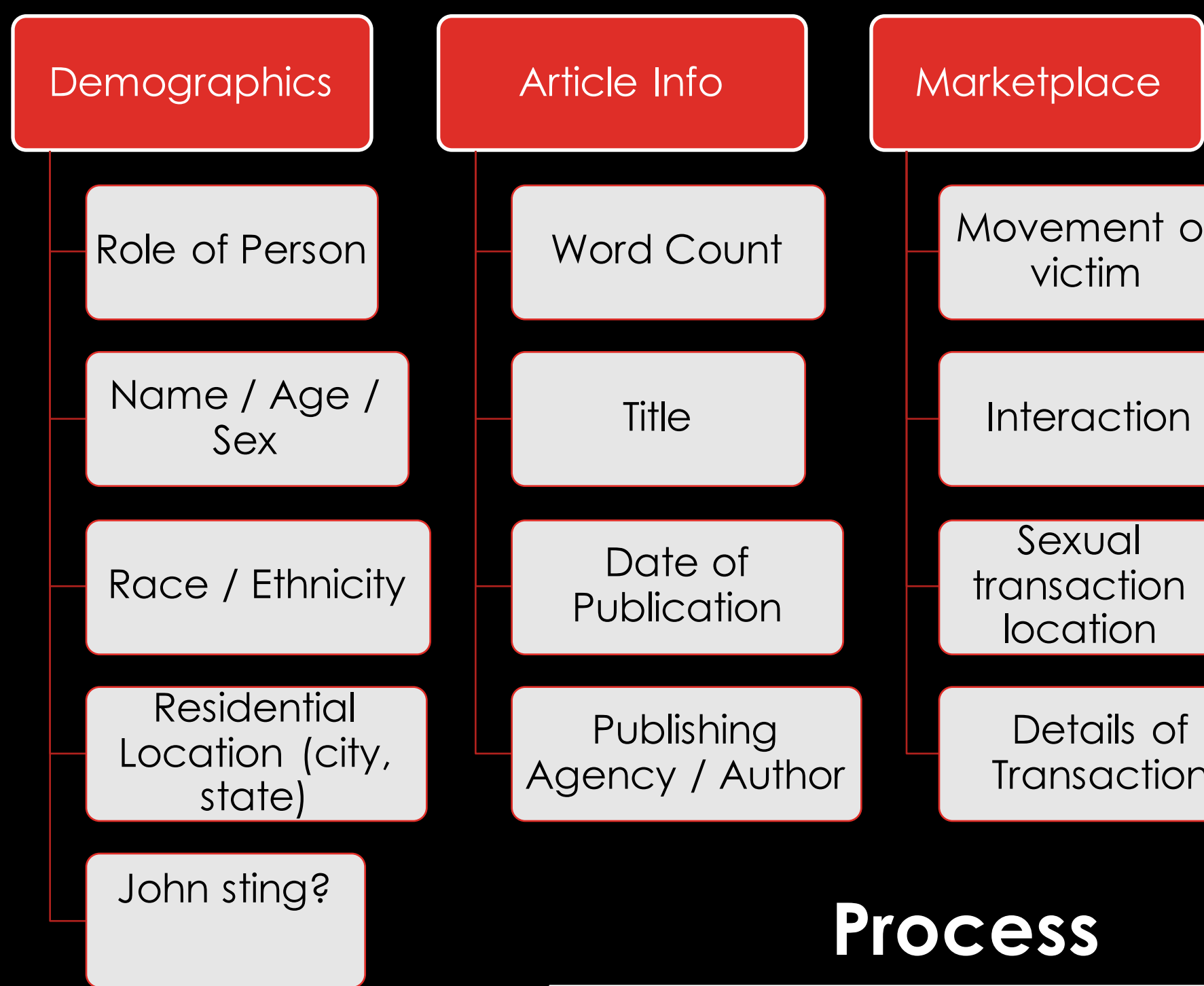
- Economically supports the functionings of sex trafficking
- Perpetuates the gendered notions of domination and control
- Supports rape culture
- Solidifies the exploitation of rape culture



## Method

### Goals of the Distinguishing Variables

- Assess which demographic information is presented in the news media – what is the "picture" of a sex buyer that is created?
- What variables are repeatedly shown or not included?
- How are the individuals involved (sex sellers, pimps, etc.) with the sex buyer presented? Are they presented at all?
- How does the presentation of the sex buyer contribute / challenge common notions of who the sex buyers are?
- What additional information besides those pertaining to the sex buyer is included in the article

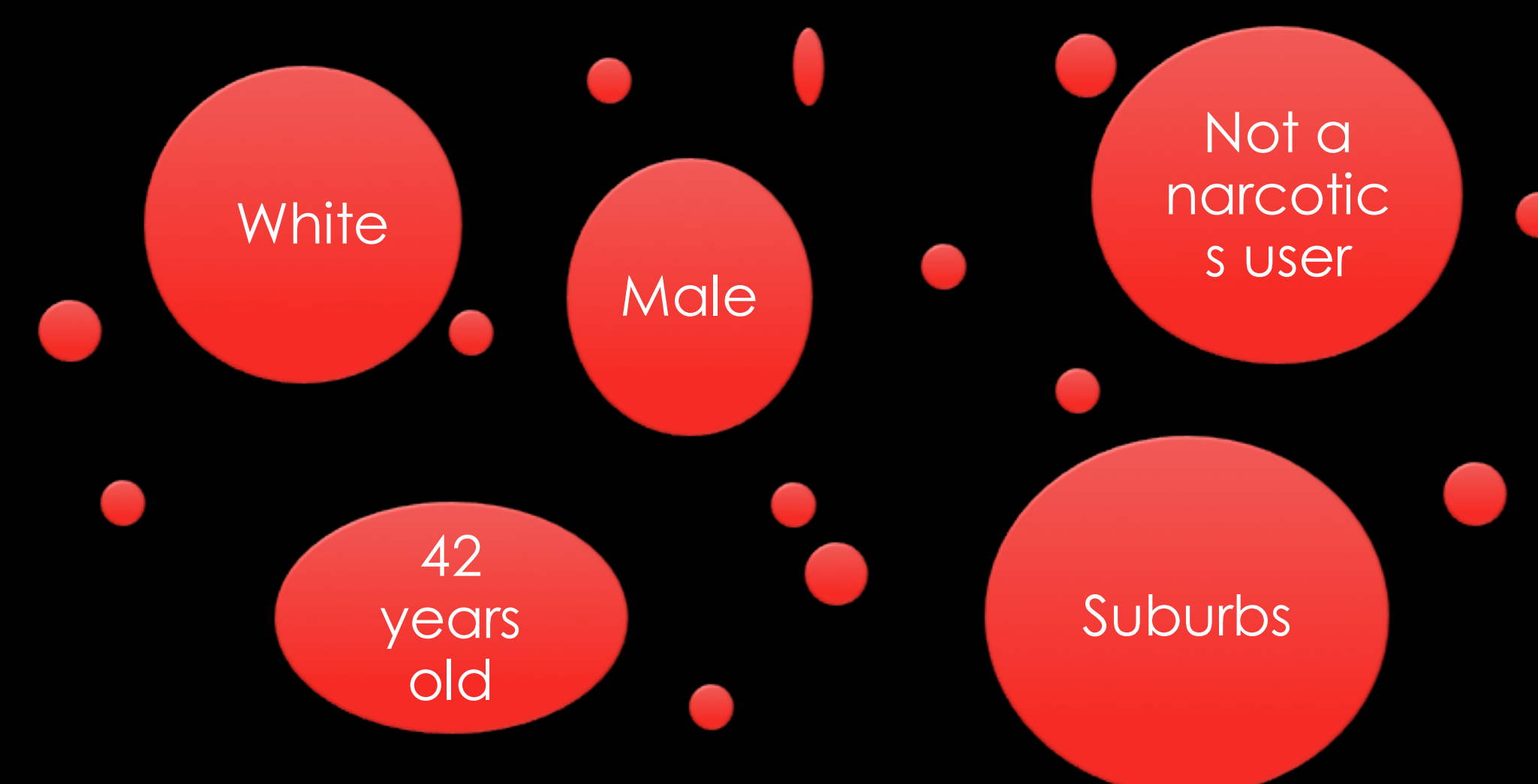


## Process

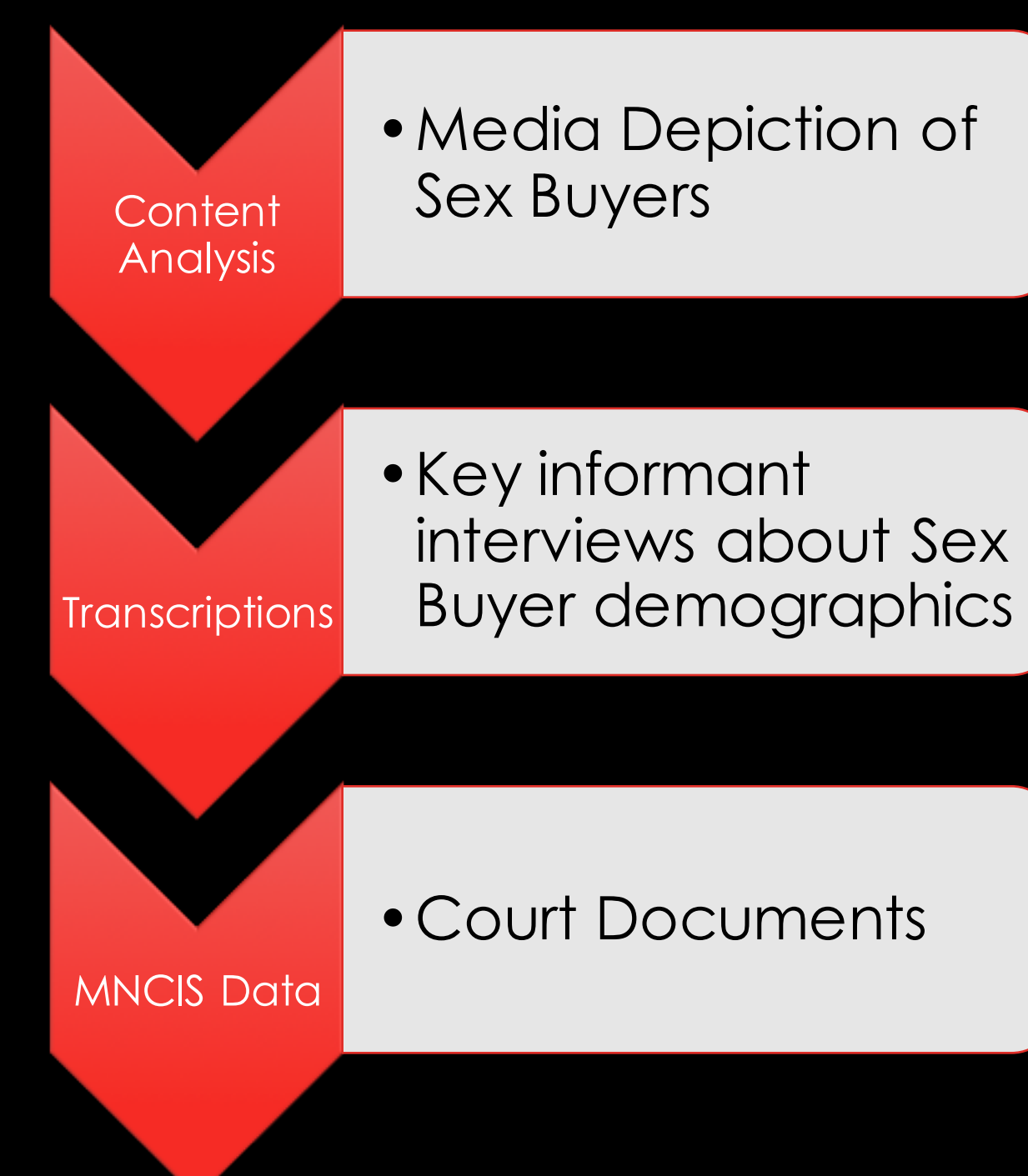
- Gathered approximately 1,800 number of articles from GoogleScholar and LexusNexus with keywords sex trafficking, prostitution, and Minnesota.
- Coded for 7 randomly selected pilot articles using RedCap software. Through this process, inclusion and exclusion factors were established by having each group member code the same articles. The protocol was fine tuned as coding methods were compared / contrasted.
- Sorted through the articles alphabetically, twice, in two batches - phase one of coding and phase two of coding; in this way, coding reliability was formed. The articles that needed reviewing were focused on during the phase two process.
- Coding data from RedCap quantifies the qualitative data. The number of responses given for each question within each category (demographics, article info, and marketplace structure) will indicate the news media environment around the sex buyer and sex trafficking.

Demographics	Article Info	Marketplace	Additional Info.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Power Structure</li> <li>■ Urban vs. Rural vs. Out of State</li> <li>■ Job type = Education</li> <li>■ Income levels</li> <li>■ Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Who says what?</li> <li>■ Which news outlets are reporting / highlighting sex buyers?</li> <li>■ What concepts / themes are consistently said when sex buyers are being reported?</li> <li>■ How in depth do articles go in relation to addressing the sex buyers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the connecting force? How are the sex buyers and those selling sex connected?</li> <li>■ Is there a third party involved in connecting the sex buyer and the individual selling sex?</li> <li>■ How mobile are the sex buyers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pricing</li> <li>■ Are there additional illegal crimes and activities noted when sex transaction occur?</li> <li>■ How are the pimps / sex sellers depicted?</li> <li>■ What type of punishments / charges, if any, are noted?</li> </ul>

## What does a Sex Buyer look like?<sup>3</sup>



## Triangulation of Data



## Discussion

### Results Summary

The analysis of sex buyers in the content analysis portion of the research project resulted in the formation of a protocol, which coded for: demographic, article, and marketplace information. The operational terms that would indicate a sex buyer in these contexts includes, but is not limited to: age, sex, gender, where the sexual transaction took place, who was involved, what the nature of the sexual transaction was, and how the sex buyer came to interact with the individual selling sex. During the content analysis portion of the research, my team and I coded for information based on how the news articles portrayed sex buyers in terms of the aforementioned operational terms.

### Challenges

A main challenge in the formation of the protocol included the variables in the published news articles which would support the operational definition of a sex buyer. Since each article has the potential to format and frame a sex buyer in a unique way, it is important to have a collective understanding of what a sex buyer is within the definition of Minnesota Statutes. In terms of the protocol formation, the findings demonstrated that challenges were presented in the form of: finding which information in the articles would constitute and define sex buyer / sex buyers; how much demographic and situational information would be collected from the article to have a better understanding of the sex buyer population; and how key terms would be defined.

## What we know about Sex Trafficking in Minnesota?<sup>4</sup>

- Minnesota is ranked as the top 13<sup>th</sup> state in terms of incidences of juvenile sex trafficking incidences
- Per month, at least 200 girls in Minnesota are sold for sexual services
- A majority of victims who are sex trafficked are forced to enter prostitution or pornography.

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## References

<sup>1</sup>Farley, M., Schuckman, E., Golding, J. M., Houser, K., Jarrett, L., Qualliotine, P., & Decker, M. (2011). Comparing Sex Buyers with Men Who Don't Buy Sex: "You can have a good time with the servitude" vs. "You're supporting a system of degradation." In *Psychologists for Social Responsibility Annual Meeting July* (Vol. 15, p. 2011).

<sup>2</sup>Kim, K., & Hreshchyshyn, K. (2004). Human Trafficking Private Right of Action: Civil Rights for Trafficked Persons in the United States. *Hastings Women's LJ*, 16, 1.

<sup>3</sup>Martin, L., & Pierce, A. (2014). *Mapping the Market for Sex with Trafficked Minor Girls in Minneapolis: Structures, Functions, and Patterns*.

<sup>4</sup>Minnesota Office of Justice Programs, & Minnesota Statistical Analysis Center. (2014, September). *Human Trafficking in Minnesota: A Report to the Minnesota Legislature*. Retrieved April 27, 2016, from [https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/forms-documents/Documents/2014 Human Trafficking Report.pdf](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/forms-documents/Documents/2014%20Human%20Trafficking%20Report.pdf)