

Separating the Innocents from the Illegals:

Visual representation of the victims of sex trafficking in anti-trafficking campaigns

Tijana Stolic
University of Helsinki
Faculty of Social Sciences
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Tiivistelmä/Referat – Abstract <p>This thesis critically explores the discursive formations around the visual representation of the victims of sex trafficking in six anti-trafficking campaigns totalling 18 photographs. Critical discourse analysis is utilised as a methodological approach, while semiotics and iconography are used as methods of visual analysis. Picking up on the previous studies of the discourses of trafficking, the study aims to place the dominant discourses of trafficking into the context of humanitarian appeals and distant suffering, adding to the scarce literature addressing the visual representation of the victims of trafficking.</p> <p>Three dominant discourses are found within the data: deception, imprisonment, and survival. These discourses are placed into a broader theoretical and socio-political context by drawing upon photo-theory, feminist theory on the visual representation of women, solidarity and distant suffering in humanitarian appeals, and recent academic debates on the discourses of sex trafficking.</p> <p>The results of the study show that trafficked women are victimised, objectified and depicted as lacking agency with the aim of eliciting public pity, thus adding credence to the dominant discourses of trafficking discussed both in this, and in previous academic studies on sex trafficking. Victimization marginalises, both legally and morally, those women who enter the sex industry in ways that do not involve irregular migration and prostitution resulting from deception. Therefore, the data overlooks the less commercially appealing cases of trafficking, focusing rather on worst-case scenarios. Siding with a liberal feminist approach to representing victims, the study argues for a more inclusive representation of sex trafficking. This would address the needs of both the victims of forced and voluntary sex trafficking for the sake of clarifying the definitions of trafficking victims and ultimately, for the sake of creating both more inclusive and better targeted anti-trafficking campaigns. In a broader societal sense, the results of the thesis aim to add to the discussion leading to a more victim-centred international legislation on human trafficking.</p>			
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Abstract

This thesis critically explores the discursive formations around the visual representation of the victims of sex trafficking in six anti-trafficking campaigns totalling 18 photographs. Critical discourse analysis is utilised as a methodological approach, while semiotics and iconography are used as methods of visual analysis. Picking up on the previous studies of the discourses of trafficking, the study aims to place the dominant discourses of trafficking into the context of humanitarian appeals and distant suffering, adding to the scarce literature addressing the visual representation of the victims of trafficking.

Three dominant discourses are found within the data: deception, imprisonment, and survival. These discourses are placed into a broader theoretical and socio-political context by drawing upon photo-theory, feminist theory on the visual representation of women, solidarity and distant suffering in humanitarian appeals, and recent academic debates on the discourses of sex trafficking.

The results of the study show that trafficked women are victimised, objectified and depicted as lacking agency with the aim of eliciting public pity, thus adding credence to the dominant discourses of trafficking discussed both in this, and in previous academic studies on sex trafficking. Victimisation marginalises, both legally and morally, those women who enter the sex industry in ways that do not involve irregular migration and prostitution resulting from deception. Therefore, the data overlooks the less commercially appealing cases of trafficking, focusing rather on worst-case scenarios. Siding with a liberal feminist approach to representing victims, the study argues for a more inclusive representation of sex trafficking. This would address the needs of both the victims of forced and voluntary sex trafficking for the sake of clarifying the definitions of trafficking victims and ultimately, for the sake of creating both more inclusive and better targeted anti-trafficking campaigns. In a broader societal sense, the results of the thesis aim to add to the discussion leading to a more victim-centred international legislation on human trafficking.

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1. Introduction

The trafficking of people for prostitution, or more commonly known as sex trafficking, is the illegal transportation of people, using coercion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation (Andrijasevic, 2007). It is an illicit underground industry present in many countries worldwide, generally including migrants moved from the third world into developed countries, but this is by no means the rule. People are moved within countries, as well as from one country to another, trafficked, deported, and re-trafficked, with no reliable statistics on the extent of the industry (Doezema, 2000; Milivojevic & Pickering, 2013). Sex trafficking is related to irregular migration, prostitution, organised crime, and other human rights violations, and it is difficult to accurately represent its victims. Consequently, various NGOs, government, and non-profit organisations launch humanitarian campaigns that address human trafficking. Their aims are varied but generally include aiding victims, persecuting traffickers, raising awareness, and lobbying for changes in international legislation.

Since the media – a term which in this case encompasses anti-trafficking campaigns – has an important role in framing the context of humanitarian activism and the way public opinion and government policies are devised (Höijer, 2004: 518), it is important to study the way trafficked women are represented in humanitarian campaigns. Thus the aim of this study is to critically analyse the discourses used in the visual representation of the victims of trafficking in anti-trafficking campaigns. The research question guiding the analysis is: *what discourses are present in the visual representation of the female victims of sex trafficking in anti-trafficking campaigns?*

The main research guidance for this study was the semiotic analysis of anti-trafficking campaigns performed by Andrijasevic (2007), and an analysis of films done by Arthurs (2012) who critically analysed the representation of distant suffering and made suggestions for the development of a more ethical relationship between victims and spectators. Additionally, research performed by Siegel (2009, 2012) and Agustín (2005, 2007), who argue for an emphasis on victims' agency with regard to discourses and representations of victimhood in trafficking provided an invaluable

guide for placing anti-trafficking campaigns into a wider social and legal context. The research of these four scholars reveals the fundamental problems of studying human trafficking: it is exceptionally difficult to synthesise this issue into a narrow humanitarian appeal because sex trafficking is related to gender issues, prostitution, slavery, organised crime, and international migration, all of which influence the way victims are perceived. Meanwhile, the existence of humanitarian campaigns within the consumer society often fosters stereotypical and dramatic representations.

Although the line of argumentation of study is adopted from the work of the abovementioned scholars – advocating more agency in the representation of women – its aim is not to discount the previous research on sex slavery and forced trafficking. As Siddarth (2009) establishes in his book *Sex Trafficking*, sexual slavery is very much a reality in many countries the world over, and the victims of this crime endure unimaginable cruelty during their time as slaves. This study by no means endeavours to diminish the importance of knowing the circumstances of sex slaves, but merely argues for a more inclusive representation of the victims of trafficking, and an acknowledgment and appreciation of the choices of those women who choose through free will instead of coercion to illegally migrate and operate within the sex industry, a choice which can lead to their exploitation.

The studied data consists of six anti-trafficking campaigns comprising of 18 photographs, whose aim is to raise awareness, funds, and solidarity regarding sex trafficking, and lobby for change in trafficking legislation. The methodological approach used to analyse data is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), while the methods used to analyse the campaigns are semiotics and iconography. The signifiers, signifieds, and signs are extracted from data using semiotics and iconography, from which the dominant discourses are isolated and critically analysed within the context of humanitarian campaigns, feminist studies, photo-theory, and previous research on the discourses sex trafficking.

In order to place the study into a broader social context, the study examines the representations of suffering in humanitarian campaigns. The purpose of humanitarian campaigns is to elicit a desire in viewers to be good citizens of the world and help

distant sufferers, which is, according to Wilkinson (2005: 141-3), reflected in the viewers' feelings of moral duty as well as in the multitude of efforts to protect people's human rights. Thus, because humanitarian campaigns are public calls to attention on the issue, they hold the power to form public opinion. The hypothesis of the study is that, in anti-trafficking campaigns, women are victimised in order to make campaigns more dramatic and help to fulfil their goals.

The problematizing starting point is provided by the research of scholars who have criticised the discourses related to anti-trafficking campaigns and its victims. After the dominant discourses are extracted from the data, I discuss the issues these scholars have criticised. Namely, the main criticism of the representation of trafficking is its conflation with illegal migration and prostitution (Sanghera, 2005: 10). Correspondingly, the dominant discourses of trafficking are women's innocence (Doezema, 2000; Andrijasevic, 2007), vulnerability (Sanghera, 2005), anti-migration concerns (Sharma, 2003; Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, 2007; Milivojevic and Pickering, 2013), entrapment and deception (Sanghera, 2005), which victimises women (Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, 2007; Stiles, 2012), and eliminates their agency from the forms of representation.

The study begins with an introduction to the topic, followed by chapter two, which presents the key terminology, justifying the choice of the most significant terms used throughout the study, and proceeds to outline the theoretical framework regarding photography, the visual representation of suffering, the representation of women as passive throughout the history of photography, and finally critically summarises previous academic studies of anti-trafficking campaigns and their conclusions. Chapter three contains the rationale behind the choice of Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodological approach, explains how semiotics and iconography are utilised as methods of analysis, and describes the data collection process. This chapter also contains a description, timeline, and official goals of each analysed campaign, and outlines the ethical considerations that present themselves during the course of the study. Chapter four contains a subchapter on each discursive formation found in the data, which includes innocence, imprisonment, and survival. Each discourse is

discussed, illustrated by examples, and analysed using critical theory. I then present the conclusions of the study. Finally, chapter five contains the discussion which places the discourses found in anti-trafficking campaigns into wider academic context and discussing the difficulties of studying sex trafficking. It proceeds with a discussion of the limitations and challenges of discursively and visually analysing data, and following this, I discuss the relevance of the study and offer suggestions for further interdisciplinary studies of the victims of sex trafficking.

2. Photography, humanitarian appeals, and the dominant discourses of trafficking

As humanitarian appeals reside within the realm of cultural signifiers and complex discursive practices, their meanings should often be re-evaluated and their signifiers unpacked in order to analyse the meanings they carry. This chapter outlines the key terminology utilised in the study, and contextualises photographic representation as a tool that can be utilised to shape public opinion. It then proceeds with a discussion of photographs of suffering in humanitarian appeals, a feminist look at the representation of women, and the representation of the victims of sex trafficking in humanitarian campaigns.

2.1 Key terminology

The following is a listing of and justification for the choice of key terms that are used throughout the analysis.

Victim as opposed to ‘survivor’ is chosen to refer to women in the studied campaigns, and this choice stems from the academic discussions of trafficked women. Namely, the term ‘victim’ emphasises a woman’s lack of agency in the choice to migrate, which – as will be demonstrated throughout the course of this study – does not encompass all known routes into the trafficking industry. Siegel (2009), who has performed extensive research on sex trafficking utilises the term ‘sex workers’ with reference to women who migrate illegally to enter the sex industry in Western Europe. However, she focuses on irregular migration for voluntary as opposed to forced prostitution, arguing that research on sex trafficking has focused too much on law enforcement and organised crime, failing to recognise that in many cases, women display a surprising amount of agency in the decision to migrate and become sex workers (Oude Breuil, Siegel, van Reenen, Beijer & Roos, 2011; van der Pijl, Oude Breuil & Siegel, 2011). Therefore, the term ‘victim’ is employed with reference to women depicted in these campaigns because, as will be demonstrated as the study progresses, they are largely represented without agency.

Sex trafficking is a term more commonly applied to the concept of exploiting women for prostitution. The working definition of sex trafficking is adopted from the *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (the Palermo Protocol), which is one of the most comprehensive pieces of international legislation addressing trafficking in human beings. It came into force in 2003, and as of 2013 has 158 parties (UN General Assembly). According to the Palermo Protocol,

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. (Palermo Protocol, 2000)

Prostitution is the subject of this study, which is the selling of sexual services in exchange for money, which is illegal in most countries worldwide. However, a distinction is made between forced and willing prostitution, and for the sake of clarity, the term prostitution will be utilised to refer to the type of work that women in the studied campaigns are forced to undertake, while sex work refers to the type of prostitution undertaken willingly. The definition of sex work is adopted from Siegel (2012: 262), who discusses women's migration for the purposes of sex work with the purpose of, among other reasons, advancing a woman's economic situation, sending remittances home, and traveling for the sake of an adventure.

Irregular migration refers to the illegal movement of people across sovereign state borders, performed both by small-time traffickers and larger clandestine trafficking rings. Trafficking is considered to be a form of irregular migration (Salt and Stein,

1997: 472), involving both migrants who willingly submit themselves to illegal migration, and those who are trafficked by force. Thus the term is quite encompassing, covering both forced and voluntary illegal migration. The difficulties this presents to anti-trafficking campaigns are exacerbated by the unreliability and difficulty in performing empirical research regarding the motives of the trafficked people and functioning of human trafficking organisations (Pastore and Monzini and Sciortino, 2006).

Moral solidarity between the suffering other and the viewer is summoned using photographs, as they are thought to have an ability to stimulate an audience response. Tester (1995: 472) describes the concept of moral solidarity as the ability of the viewer to reflect upon a humanitarian appeal with a degree of self-reflexivity, and be able to imagine the suffering of others with empathy, regardless of the race or colour of the suffering other. Solidarity, therefore, stems from empathy, which indicates that a lack of empathy causes a lack of solidarity, creating a disconnect between the victim and the implied moral solidarity. It should be noted, however, that Tester expresses reservations regarding the universal meaning of images since, as he notes, the meaning in contemporary technological reproduction is external to images. Context and outside influences have an impact on their signification (Tester, 1995: 473). The images in this study are reflected upon within the context of the current academic research on the discourses of sex trafficking in order to ensure a degree of relevance within the contemporary trafficking debate.

2.2 Photography as a vehicle of representation

Having established the key terms and the rationale for the choices of those particular terms, the focus now shifts to an exploration of photography as a mode of representation. Photography is discussed in terms of context, representation of suffering, a historical shift in the photographic representation of suffering, and its power as a medium.

As this study relies on semiotic interpretations, context is an important element in the process of locating the intended meanings and features in data analysis. Photography, as a form of art and signification, can act as a tool for creating and naturalising meanings, depending on the context. As noted by Barthes (1980) in his seminal work, *Camera Lucida*, a photograph is always related to its referent, but whether it makes a slight or a powerful impression on the viewer depends on the individual. It is, therefore, an “uncertain art” (Barthes, 1980: 19) whose meanings are not fixed but open for critical and personal interpretation depending upon the relationship between the viewer and the subject matter of the image. Photographs used in advertising depict specific signifiers and signifieds whose meanings are fixed by intentionally promoting one concept or meaning over another (Verschuere, 2012: 23). Societal frames further help the viewers to interpret and classify the incoming information (Scheufele, 2000: 301). Photographs used in advertising are interlinked with their referents in an explicit manner, and the relationship between a photograph and its meaning is framed by accompanying a photograph with a caption (Verschuere, 2012: 23). Although the nature of a photograph is to be the testimony of true events – of things that exist – as Sontag (1975 [2003]: 64) articulates, the meaning of a photograph is vulnerable in such a way that it relies on contextualisation for its ultimate connotation. Taylor (2000: 138) supports this point by arguing that contextualisation is an essential element in a humanitarian campaign’s ability to incite action in viewers. Context is very important for this study, especially since it relies on an interpretative methodology such as CDA, thus placing it within the framework of other academic research that discusses trafficking discourses ensures a level of accuracy in interpretation.

From the perspective of the subject matter, photographs are the most important evidence of suffering examined in this study, and those used in humanitarian appeal campaigns are imbued with ideological meanings. Campaign photographs often depict distant sufferers who address the viewers and ask for their help, such as donations and awareness-raising. Addressing the viewer by visual means is accomplished through the use of cultural codes. In semiotic terms, cultural codes on the level of connotation and denotation, according to Barthes (1977 [2001]: 73),

imbue photographs with meanings, and act as evidence of “having-been-there”. A photograph thus serves to remind a viewer of its authenticity as a witness to an event, yet leaves the viewer with the knowledge that she is merely an uninvolved observer. This aspect of the removed observer problematises humanitarian campaigns – because a viewer is always removed from an image, campaign photographs need to be simultaneously effective at addressing the viewer, appealing for help, and evoking pity, sympathy, and action from the viewer.

Historically, journalists refused to publish shocking photographs, fearing they would have a disturbing effect on the viewers, but this changed during the Vietnam war when photographers began to show what they considered to be the horrible and discomfiting truth (Berger, 1972). However, there has been a shift back to less shocking imagery, with recent research showing that newspapers use disturbing images sparingly, only publishing shocking images occasionally since, according to Taylor (2000: 130) they are the “measure of civility”. Recent research on the visual construction of conflict in newspaper coverage illustrates this point, showing that the media mostly refrains from graphic depictions of death (Roth, Huffman, Huling, Stolle, & Thomas, 2007), instead opting for metaphorical and veiled representations of death and injury (Pantti, 2013), prompting Campbell (2007: 369) to conclude that “news media is in actuality reluctant to portray unvarnished horror”. As it applies to this study, news media’s coverage of suffering can be related to humanitarian campaigns’ representation of suffering as they both make use of images of suffering in an attempt to prompt spectators’ empathy.

The reason why images have the ability to produce strong responses in viewers is because of the nature of photography. In a rather poetic interpretation of a photograph, Barthes (1980: 9) describes it as the return of the dead and a way for events and persons from the past to come back and haunt us in the present, never letting us forget their existence. A photograph is the evidence of “having been there” (Barthes, 1980: 70), which means that each photograph contains a signifier, for which there exists a referent in reality. Mitchell (1986: 54) terms the ability of photography to bear witness to true events “optical fidelity”. It is the capacity of

photographs to capture the historical and physical life-process, giving photographs an aura of representing reality, and prompting the viewers to see it as a truthful report (Höijer, 2004: 515). As a medium that was developed and popularised before the moving image, thus possessing the historical and indexical relationship to reality (Peirce, 1998: 5) is the main reason for the choice of photography as the medium of analysis in this study.

It is important to study the dominant discourses evoked by photographs because of its ability to act as witness to suffering. Berger (1972: 288) notes that photography creates discontinuity between the moment it depicts and our reality, thus merely providing testimony of the human condition that “accuses nobody and everybody”. Similarly, Rosler (2003 [1981]: 263) claims that photographs of social injustices work to elicit sympathy for the unfortunate and inspire those who are privileged to help, but at the same time, they are merely imagery and evidence of true events, which can be discarded and forgotten. Burgin (1977: 130) makes a similar remark, asserting that we receive photographs as environment, and that they do not actively seek out critical attention even though photographic discourse is innate to them. All this is not the fault of photographs as such: in defence of photographs, Taylor (2000: 138) notes that “[t]he indifference of people to the suffering of others is not an effect of photography but a condition of viewing it in modern industrialised societies”. Hence this study aims to critically examine the dominant discourses within photographs when they are placed in the context of an anti-trafficking campaign that exists within the context of the contemporary industrial society.

Although there is always a chance that a photograph might remain solely a piece of evidence that does not generate social discourse and change, the photographs in this study are meant to encourage social action. They are examined within the context of humanitarian appeals and their significations and discourses are hence unpacked, which is discussed below.

2.3 Photographs of suffering and the representation of solidarity in humanitarian campaigns

Photography is an important tool of representation, especially powerful when depicting images of suffering. Humanitarian campaigns use various methods to call attention to themselves: entertainment, injury, emotionalisation, and contextualisation through captions. This subchapter contextualises photographs as ways of depicting suffering, and the representation of distant suffering as a way of inviting solidarity with viewers, thus offering a lens through which the representation of women can be analysed.

The spectacle of suffering that humanitarian appeals depict in an effort to evoke public pity is influenced by consumer culture in the way it is framed to grasp one's attention. According to Kleinman and Kleinman (1997: 4), images of suffering appeal emotionally and morally to audiences by way of entertainment. Trauma is framed as a spectacle that seeks viewers' attention, prompts them to imagine potential scenarios, and motivates them to learn more about a particular image. Victims are treated as consumer products and marketed to audiences with the purpose of mobilising collective action and support, thus appropriating social suffering to invite audience participation. On the one hand this is a positive occurrence because otherwise the public would be unaware of the distant suffering others, but on the other hand it is a paradox of our time, Cohen (2001: 168-9) argues, that our reality is mediated, turning the audiences into tourists who look at and consume suffering from a distance, never truly able to grasp the reality of a particular situation. Moeller (1999: 35) has criticised the commodification of the suffering of others, arguing that media culture relays information to audiences by way of infotainment, thus creating communities tied by solidarity, but potentially also leading to compassion fatigue. Both Højjer (2004) and Moeller (1999) criticise the commodification of NGO appeals, questioning whether the attempt of humanitarian campaigns to evoke sympathy in viewers is evidence of cynicism or compassion. This study discusses the representations of suffering as evidence of commodification and consumer culture, criticising the discourses chosen to visualise the sufferers.

Additionally, some scholars have argued that press images marginalise physical injury and the cost of human lives even though this is the reality of conflict (Scarry, 1985; Roth et al. 2007), while Zelizer (2005) has argued that the media shy away from publishing photographs of suffering, unless it is the distant other that endures it. The suffering other is often marginalised in relation to ‘normal’ and punished at a distance (Taylor, 2000: 138). Additionally victims seldom speak to the viewers, and if they do, they recount personal histories rather than address social and political issues (Moeller, 1999: 108). Representation of suffering, therefore, is a balancing act that needs to relay information to the viewers without overwhelming their sensibilities, but most importantly it needs to show the sufferers in ways that would elicit public pity and result in public action.

Both negative and positive types of images have been used in humanitarian campaigns to invite viewers to feel a shared sense of responsibility and solidarity towards the distant suffering others. Negative images can excite the attention of the viewer using connotative meanings by depicting indeterminate moments before death, thus delaying the processing of information (Zelizer, 2005), and leaving the viewer to question the lead-up to and aftermath of the depicted moment (Moeller, 1999). A trait of negative imagery is that it uses ‘shock effect’ (Chouliaraki, 2010) to seek the viewer’s emotional engagement by emphasising death and innocence of the sufferer (Orgad, 2013), but Vestergaard (2008: 14) warns of “the passivity of the visual” that shifts the distant sufferer into the domain of the other, thus failing to communicate the misfortune of the distant others in an effective manner. On the other hand, humanitarian campaigns also represent positive images, appealing to a viewer’s sense of justice, contextualising suffering as an appeal to the benefactor’s altruism and moral purity (Orgad, 2013). During the 20th century negative images dominated, shifting later to more positive depictions of suffering until, in the 21st century, depictions of suffering reside in a place beyond pity. Instead, less moralising and more self-reflexive representations (Chouliaraki, 2010) are favoured.

In an article analysing the representation of suffering in photographs of war between World War I and the War on Terror, (Chouliaraki, 2013: 336) proposes that the

representations of suffering in the 21st century embrace an “emotionalisation of the public sphere” and thus focus on the emotional stories rather than an objective rendering of the horrors of battle. Thus she argues that a shift from negative and positive imagery to a more agonistic solidarity has occurred, proposing that agonistic solidarity, rather than being self-oriented, focuses on the suffering other because it “becomes explicit about the social values that inform its calls to action and problematises human vulnerability as a question of global injustice, collective responsibility and social change“ (Chouliaraki, 2011: 374). Agonistic solidarity’s focus is no longer on the sufferer but on the viewer, and it is based on morality of irony rather than pity Chouliaraki (2011: 374).

Apart from images, captions are used to contextualise photographs and steer their meanings in a desired direction. Context, according to Kleinman and Kleinman (1997) helps to draw the viewer closer to the situation depicted in a photograph. As mentioned earlier, some scholars like Tester (1995) are of the belief that contextualisation is essential to the signification of a photograph, and that, without this outside influence, the reproduced image would lack specific meaning. This theory is an echo of a more traditional theoretical thought, in particular that of Barthes (1980: 117-8), who asserts that each photograph possesses a polysemy of meaning and produces many signifieds, and therefore needs a linguistic message to guide the viewer towards its intended meaning. A similar view is expressed by Walter Benjamin (1936) who ventures, in his seminal essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, that if a work of art is separated from its aura of authenticity, its signification becomes separated from its original setting and context. For a medium such as photography, with its endless reproductive potential, this brings about a possibility to change and adjust the meaning of a photograph, and, through captions, guide its signification. Therefore, captions contextualise and explain images, create categories and generalisations of participants, and invite viewers to “engage with social categories rather than individuals” (Verschuere, 2012: 33). In other words, captions act as homogenising elements that create social groups such as ‘victim’, ‘prostitute’, and ‘survivor’.

These varied modes of representation address the problems of contextualising humanitarian appeals into broader social issues as ways of evoking public solidarity, and prompt an overarching question: can anti-trafficking campaigns ever be accurately and inclusively represented, and at the same time evoke the sympathy of the public, despite the inevitable connection between sex trafficking and the often controversial issues of irregular migration and prostitution?

2.4 Visual representation of women

In the following discussion, the representation of women in the media is firstly situated in a feminist discussion, after which I explore the role of women as the distant sufferers and define their roles as the ideal victims within humanitarian campaigns.

Within the scholarship that probes the representation of sufferers in humanitarian appeal campaigns, there is a notion that women are the ideal victims because they are perceived as marginalised, vulnerable, and innocent (Lamb, 1999; Moeller, 1999; Höijer, 2004). The presence of ideal victims is, in turn, necessitated by the increasing commodification of humanitarian organisations and campaigns, and their struggle for media attention in an attempt to gain support and funds for their causes (Vestergaard, 2008; Orgad, 2013). The studies of the ideal victim were preceded by classical feminist studies of the status of women in society, in which a woman is distinguished from a man and cast into a marginalised role (de Beauvoir, 1972; Irigaray, 1995).

The notion that a woman is a dependent being, relieved of agency and different than the neutral entity associated with being a man, figures greatly throughout feminist theory, and the representation of women in works of art. In her classical feminist writing, de Beauvoir (1972) demarcates a woman as being denied agency and seen as a negative because of her physical difference from a man, who is generally seen as the default unit in nature. Some time after, Irigaray (1989, 1995) built upon this distinction by calling for a perception of a woman as entirely independent from the definition of a man, which would discursively free her from being designated as the

other. In contemporary feminist thought on the visual representation of women, in her essay on the representation of women in the cinema, Mulvey (2003) postulates that a woman is the subject of the look, that she is objectified and sexualised as an erotic object of the story. A woman in cinematic representation is therefore the passive member of the heteronormative binary within the dominant ideological system, in which a man is considered as the active bearer of the look, while a woman is the object of the audience's gaze, who endures the fetishistic and scopophilic gaze of the viewer (Mulvey, 2003). This notion of the objectified woman resonates throughout feminist thought, and is therefore a significant element to reflect on while analysing the representation of women as the ideal victims.

Additionally, following from the traditional societal gender roles in which men are seen as the stronger breadwinners while women are perceived as more passive and domestic, is an image of a woman as innocent and in need of the viewer's help. She is what Höijer (2004) theorises as the 'ideal victim'. Some victims, however, do not qualify for help because the abuse they suffer is either minimalised and not seen as traumatic enough (Lamb, 1999: 114), or is unknown to the public through the fault of media channels that choose to report on certain atrocities over others (Höijer, 2004: 517). Academic explorations of successful humanitarian campaigns have teased out the elements that constitute the 'ideal victim' as a cultural construction (Höijer, 2004). According to the results of this type of research, helplessness and innocence are the most significant elements that establish a person's status as a victim, and this status is most commonly associated with women and children (Lamb, 1999), while men are less commonly the recipients of audience compassion (Höijer, 2004).

The photographic representation of women is, therefore, problematic and populated with signifiers that have historically added to women's objectification. Further, the representation of the ideal female victim as helpless, pure, innocent, and blameless prior to the abuse (Lamb, 1999: 108) is related not only to women's historical representation as vulnerable and weak, but also to her image as the sufferer. Since this study focuses specifically on women as sufferers, this feminist consideration is

essential for the discourse since it relies on and potentially reinforces the historical notion of woman as the weaker gender.

2.5 Representation of the victims of sex trafficking in anti-trafficking campaigns

Although a considerable amount of scholarly literature has been published on the legal, discursive, and practical matters of sex trafficking, sex work, and irregular migration, representations with regard to discourses of suffering within visual studies are not as multiple. This chapter critically summarises existing research on anti-trafficking campaigns paying particular attention to the research of Andrijasevic (2007), who has performed a semiotic analysis of anti-trafficking campaigns produced by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is methodologically the closest and thus most relevant in relation to this study. It also summarises other recent research analyses of anti-trafficking campaigns including an academic analysis of a Public Service Announcement (PSA) by Stiles (2012), an analysis of two anti-trafficking films by Arthurs (2012), and a critique of the IOM's multimedia campaigns by Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud (2007). Additionally, Doezema (2000), Berman (2003), Sanghera (2005), and Milivojevic and Pickering (2013) have provided some revealing critiques of the current discourses of sex trafficking, which are also taken into consideration.

In her semiotic analysis of anti-trafficking campaigns created by the IOM between 1998-2002 in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, Andrijasevic (2007) takes a feminist standpoint and analyses signifiers such as spaces, framing, positioning, and representation of female bodies to discuss the dominant discourses within the images. She criticises the victimisation discourse which, she argues, positions women as passive objects and reinforces gender stereotypes as well as women's domesticity, lack of agency, and anti-migration discourses. Andrijasevic (2007: 26) also makes note of a paradox within anti-trafficking campaigns: the intent of anti-trafficking campaigns is to warn women of the potential dangers of irregular migration, but they tend to resort to stereotypical representations of gender roles,

depicting women as passive and objectifying their bodies. This stereotypical representation will be probed in the analysis of the studied data.

A more recent analysis of two films about trafficked women by Arthurs (2012) also uses visual analysis. It places anti-trafficking campaigns into the context of distant suffering, and proposes that an ethical relationship with the victims of trafficking can only be achieved if we avoid “voyeuristic ways of seeing these women as objects of our compassion”, and recognise their agency instead of imposing the viewer’s perspective of power. More importantly, Arthurs (2012) proposes that the ability of audiences to empathise with a distant suffering other is based on the victim’s innocence and purity, while the stories of those who migrate illegally in search of work opportunities and enter the sex industry are disregarded, and the idea that these two paths are inextricably interlinked is ignored. My analysis follows a similar theoretical framework, analysing anti-trafficking campaigns within the context of humanitarian intervention and solidarity with viewers, with the exception that my data constitutes still images, while Arthurs analyses film. Nonetheless, her analysis proposes a cosmopolitan ethics in which the victims’ agency is recognised and the viewer’s status as a privileged group is minimalised in order to eliminate the delineation of who is and who is not deserving of help (Arthurs, 2012: 142).

Further, Stiles’ (2012) rhetorical and semiotic analysis of a PSA featuring actress Emma Thompson uncovers the discourses of victimisation, domesticity, vulnerability, and anti-migration. Her suggestions include a separation of anti-migration from anti-trafficking discourses, which resonates strongly with other research on trafficking. Another critique of anti-trafficking campaigns, in particular of IOM’s information campaigns, by Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud (2007) suggest that it is difficult to distinguish whether the goals of these campaigns are to prevent irregular migration or human trafficking, and that the boundaries between the issues themselves are blurred. The particular focus of this study is its strength, allowing it to probe discourses and policies and reveal the connection between border control in a globalised world and how these concerns permeate the work of humanitarian organisations. In the following paragraphs, I extract the dominant discourses of

trafficking from these campaigns and discuss them in view of other academic critiques of trafficking discourses.

The discourse of domesticity is criticised in a number of scholarly studies of anti-trafficking campaigns (Sharma, 2003; Andrijasevic, 2007; Stiles, 2012) the idea being that anti-trafficking campaigns serve to warn their intended audiences that they are better off staying home than migrating into more developed countries. By offering viewers harrowing tales of the deception of Eastern European women and their experiences of forced prostitution, anti-trafficking campaigns reinforce Eastern European stereotypes of domesticity and passivity (Andrijasevic, 2007). As feminist scholar Griselda Pollock argues, throughout the history of art women have been portrayed in domestic spaces or within other socially accepted boundaries of femininity (Pollock, 1989: 61) thus limiting their agency to the domestic domain and relating their femininity to domestic spaces. The analysis of domesticity in anti-trafficking campaigns draws on feminist arguments such as Pollock's in suggesting that women are portrayed as trapped (Andrijasevic, 2007), which promotes their return to their idealised homes (Arthurs, 2012), which is the metaphorical domestic space. This discourse is essential for the campaigns because, as Doezema (2000: 34) argues in her critique of the dominant discourses of trafficked women, it reinforces the idea of women's innocence. Only when a woman is established as innocent, forced, and unwilling to be a prostitute, and the responsibility for prostitution is lifted from her, can she successfully appeal for a viewer's help. This type of representation reinforces gender stereotypes and creates a simplistic representation of women as unable to defend themselves against being exploited for prostitution once they have left the safety of the domestic realm.

The discourse of domesticity is closely linked to anti-migration discourse. Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud (2007: 1682) have criticised anti-trafficking campaigns that discourage irregular migration for the ambiguousness of their purpose: on the one hand, they provide information to youth that would keep them safe from traffickers, but on the other they institute anti-migration discourses. Such campaigns contain testimonials of trafficking victims that warn young women in origin

countries against accepting job offers in foreign states by telling horrific stories of deceit and trafficking. Meanwhile, in their survey of the anti-trafficking discourse in the past 20 years, Milivojevic and Pickering (2013: 595) convincingly argue that a thinly veiled anti-migration discourse and an agenda of border sovereignty lies behind the campaigns that set out to rescue innocents. Doezema (2000) attributes the merging of the anti-migration and anti-trafficking discourses to the necessity of representing trafficked women as innocent victims for the sake of successful humanitarian campaigns. A trafficked woman's innocence and purity is seen as the most important element in evoking solidarity with spectators, therefore taking away her agency both in the decision to migrate, and to engage in prostitution is a necessity (Doezema, 2000: 43).

Sanghera (2005: 11) further argues that the unproblematic conflation of anti-trafficking and anti-migration discourses strengthens gender bias, pointing to studies that demonstrate that the tightening of border control has driven trafficking further underground instead of preventing it. In the same vein, Sharma (2003: 58) critiques strict migration policies, offering a somewhat utopian solution: the relaxation of national immigration policies that would free up the flow of migrant workers across borders. This would be impossible to implement in practice, but Sharma's (2003) proposition reveals how intertwined irregular migration and human trafficking are, and demonstrates a need to separate the trafficking discourse from that of migration.

Another discourse within anti-trafficking campaigns noted by Andrijasevic (2007: 26) is objectification of the victims of trafficking. Objectification is illustrated through the representation of women's bodies as passive objects (Andrijasevic, 2007: 30), and women as incapable of escape and yet trapped in a ring of prostitution where they are forced to perform sexual acts they neither enjoy nor respond to (Stiles, 2012: 197). An important observation related to the objectification of women is that the goals of anti-trafficking campaigns are to warn women about the dangers of irregular migration, but paradoxically, this type of representation strips women of agency, representing them solely as passive and objectified victims, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes (Andrijasevic, 2007; Stiles, 2012). Objectification therefore

victimises women and draws the limits of their agency. Moreover, because it is related to gender and the limits of femininity in a stereotypical manner, objectification is related to other discourses such as the abovementioned female domesticity, and imprisonment.

Imprisonment and objectification are closely linked; indeed, the two discourses work back and forth to reinforce one another. They are discussed by Andrijasevic (2007) as adding to the victimisation of women, as both discourses require the presence of a passive and sometimes wounded body. Andrijasevic (2007) notes the physical and mental entrapment of women, their inability to escape traffickers, and the lack of progression of their testimonials beyond being trafficked, as symbols of imprisonment. Meanwhile, Stiles (2012) perceives the woman's status as a passive prisoner pleading for the viewer's help as emphasising her status as an object without agency. On a theoretical level, imprisonment can be related to Foucault's (1977) discussion of the panopticon prison as a way to control and survey the body of a prisoner. Power, in this case, is derived from one's ability to survey the body of a prisoner without being seen, while the prisoner is trapped without the possibility of escape. It establishes the prisoner as the powerless being that holds no agency. A feminist extension of the theme of harbouring power by looking without being seen is what Mulvey (2003: 48) terms 'scopophilia' with regard to narrative cinema. The concept of scopophilia refers to the objectification of a sexualised body that is on display for the viewer's pleasure but which cannot return the viewer's gaze, thus becoming a passive object. Positioning the woman as an erotic object of the viewer's gaze applies to still images inasmuch as it objectifies the woman by, for instance, hiding her gaze, placing her in a physically submissive position in relation to the viewer, or emphasising and sexualising parts of her body.

The most significant element of the campaigns studied by Andrijasevic (2007) is, therefore, the female body. It is the site that is acted upon in images, carrying the most potent meanings related to the representation of victims. The wounded female body is central in emphasising domesticity, immobility, and passivity, especially when the body is objectified and the skin violated. The violated female body is also

the site used to create solidarity between victims and viewers. In academic literature on the representation of suffering in humanitarian media campaigns, women are the ‘ideal victims’ because they are perceived as helpless (Höijer, 2004: 517), pure, and innocent (Moeller, 1999: 107-8), and these traits are juxtaposed with extreme violence enacted upon their bodies as a potent plea for help. The ‘Natashas’ (Milovojevic and Pickering, 2008: 589), which is a generic name scholars have given to the ideal trafficking victims – young, physically and psychologically tormented women from Eastern Europe – are utilised to illustrate the severity of the problem, and they fit very well into the ideal victim paradigm.

The present chapter has outlined the dominant discourses of trafficking that have been discussed in recent academic literature. This analysis will proceed in close consultation with the representation of victims presented here, critically evaluating the relationships and questioning their relevance. What follows are the discourses noted by scholars studying the victims of sex trafficking from the perspective of policy and grounded research with a feminist angle.

2.6 Discourses of trafficking victims from the perspective of field research

There are two additional scholars who have performed interviews and participant observation of sex workers, and have written extensively on sex trafficking. From a policy perspective, Siegel (in Siegel & de Blank, 2010) argues for a distinction between sex work and forced prostitution, while Agustín (2007) advocates this distinction from a radical feminist standpoint. The research of these two scholars stresses the need to emphasise victims’ agency and challenges the current perception and treatment of trafficking victims, which is largely influenced by the existing victim discourses, including innocence and forced migration.

In her influential book *Sex at the Margins*, Agustín (2007) calls for a change in the attitudes and politics of what she calls the ‘rescue industry’, referring to NGOs and government-led humanitarian organisations that aim to help victims. She highlights that these organisations fail to acknowledge the multitude of situations that may lead

to trafficking, recognising only partial truths, and representing all victims as lacking agency. Additional studies (Siegel & de Blank, 2010; Oude Breuil et al. 2011) address the agency of sex workers as an important element in the treatment of victims by authorities, emphasising the agency of women in migrating illegally and choosing to work not only as sex workers but also as madams. These arguments are based on interviews, participant observation, and other academic research on trafficked women, which indicates that women who become the victims of trafficking are often aware of the illegality of their migration to a foreign country but unaware of how they will be treated (Berman, 2003; Kelly, 2003; Jahic & Finckenaue, 2005; Doezema, 2000). In worst-case scenarios these women are enslaved, moved from country to country, and forced to work in the sex industry to repay the debt of migration to their traffickers (Doezema, 2000; Berman, 2003; Milivojevic & Pickering, 2013), but this does not hold true for all cases of trafficking (Andrijasevic, 2003). Interestingly, in the eyes of the international legislation, the boundaries between forced prostitution and voluntary sex work are blurred, and all irregular migrants who engage in sex work are perceived as victims of trafficking.

Thus, the academic research mentioned above, and the research performed by the two scholars mentioned here, draw similar conclusions. Siegel and de Blank (2010) argue that the dominant discourses of trafficking – youth, innocence, coercion – do not reflect the situations of all women who are considered to be trafficked, since, according to their research, victims display agency both in deciding to undertake irregular migration and to enter the sex industry (see also Agustín, 2007). These circumstances, however, are absent from those campaigns analysed by Andrijasevic (2007: 31), who makes note of this absence criticising the campaigns as failing to address those women who seek out jobs in the sex industry. This is a notable absence from the campaigns, which sheds light on the fact that the anti-trafficking campaigns which have been analysed in the recent past (Andrijasevic, 2007; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Stiles, 2012) focus more on irregular migration and border control than addressing the needs and varied situations of the variety of sex trafficking victims. Thus, as noted by Andrijasevic and Anderson (2009) in a more recent essay on anti-trafficking campaigns, it is clear that the conflation of anti-trafficking and

anti-migration campaigns is not only a representational but also a policy-related problem.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach to this study is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is the analysis of the usage of language in a given text, and the analysis of everyday representations which shape our view of the world, thus connecting empirical knowledge with theoretical. Iconography and semiotics were used as methods of visual analysis because they can be used to dissect the meanings of photographs, while CDA is treated as an approach rather than a methodology since it facilitates a theoretical analysis of a broad range of factors which may influence the meaning of a text (Meyer, 2001: 14-15). Therefore, the justification for the use of this kind of method of analysis is the premise that photographs, like language, can shape the way we understand the world. The following chapter explains the choice of CDA and outlines the multimodal approach to semiotics and iconography that was used to analyse anti-trafficking campaigns.

A qualitative method was chosen for this study since its primary objective is to interpret signs within photographs and captions. Although both qualitative and quantitative methods can potentially be suitable for one study due to the diversity and complexity of research in practice, quantitative methods are more concerned with generalisations while qualitative methods better facilitate an analytical focus on representations (Brannen, 2004: 283-4). This study focuses on representation and meaning, which is why a qualitative method of analysis is better suited for it than a quantitative one. The data contains visual and linguistic elements and the analysis calls for their interpretation in order to understand how the female victims of sex trafficking are represented in anti-trafficking campaigns. Thus, since the goal of this study is to map out the specific systems of knowledge, that is the specific discourses, and to learn how these forms of knowledge are encoded in visual materials, a qualitative method of study was utilised (Tonkiss, 1998: 248).

3.1 Choice of critical discourse analysis

According to Rose (2007: 142), “discourse is a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it”. Discourses are the flows of knowledge through time that influence our view of reality, and studying them allows us to explore the “[a]ssumed truths [...] which are presented as being rational, sensible and beyond all doubt” (Jäger, 2001: 34). Discourse, thus, helps us to situate ourselves and others in the world, to create social differences and adhere to them, and to view people and things through cultural, political, and social lenses, which means that language does not only reflect reality, but organises and constructs it (Tonkiss, 1998: 246). These lenses are formulated with the help of everyday representations, of which visibility is an essential element. Apart from analysing what is represented, discourse also invites us to note the elements that are absent from particular representations, allowing the researcher to understand the omissions and limitations that exist in and around objects of study. In this study, everyday representations and omissions are extracted from anti-trafficking campaigns and discussed with the help of discourses noted in previous research.

Critical discourse analysis is a variant of discourse analysis and is an interdisciplinary and multi-methodical approach. Wodak and Meyer (2009: 25-6) note that CDA need not be constrained to analysing solely language; instead, a sociocognitive approach to CDA allows the researcher to focus on the relationship between discourse, cognition, and society. This sociocognitive approach is based on the idea that images, written text, and semiotic significations are some of the elements that constitute social representations, which are the basis of intellectual exchange between members of a social group. Thus, photographs and captions used in anti-trafficking campaigns were analysed using a CDA approach, but utilising visual methods of analysis. To help with this analysis, Wodak and Meyer (2009: 26) outline the social representations that help us to understand discourse: knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies. Since this study is interested in meaning-making through visibility, semiotics and iconography were used as methods of analysis, while the knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies were explored through the lenses of feminist studies, victim discourses, and distant suffering.

In the context of this study, CDA was used to understand the social meanings and social identities that form within and around visual texts. Specifically, the interest of the study was to analyse how the female victims of sex trafficking are visually depicted in anti-trafficking campaigns, keeping in mind that the premise of the study is that anti-trafficking campaigns contain photographs whose purpose is to appeal to audiences and create solidarity between viewers and victims. Apart from a photograph, each campaign contains a short piece of text, usually a caption or an explanation of the campaign. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 18) the visual and textual portions of a particular text (in this case a campaign poster) are independently constructed parts that are connected but not necessarily dependent on each other. The analysis of a text that contains a visual and a language component falls under the notion of multimodality, the use of which will be explained in the following subchapter.

Finally, the main reason why CDA was chosen as a way to study anti-trafficking campaign materials is because, as noted by Fairclough (2001: 123), it allows for semiotic interpretation and evaluation of both visual and linguistic materials, enabling me to understand the relationships between visibility and language in anti-trafficking campaigns. In this study, discourse analysis was used to, as Rose (2007: 142) describes, explore ways of seeing through intertextuality. This means that the meaning of one text or image is always dependent on the meaning of other texts and images that exist in a wider societal context. In this study, that applies to visual and linguistic texts that attach meanings to concepts such as victimisation¹, agency² and distant suffering³. In the context of humanitarian appeals, these concepts are used to invite the viewers to action and position them in a place of power compared to the distant sufferers. It also means that the explored visual materials work back and forth

¹ For victimisation in the context of trafficking see: Berman (2003), Kelly (2003), Jahic (2005), Doezema (2000).

² Andrijasevic (2007), Oude Breuil et al. (2011), and Agustin (2007) discuss the agency of the victims of trafficking, proposing more focus on their agency rather than victimisation.

³ Chouliaraki, (2011) argues that distant suffering in humanitarian appeals presents itself as agonistic solidarity. For a discussion of distant suffering as infotainment see Kleinman & Kleinman (1997).

by not only operating within discourses to reinforce them, but also having the potential to construct new discourses. The focus of this study lies in the analysis of photographs, and semiotics and iconography were used precisely because they help to isolate the cultural, social, and historical signifiers that give depth of meaning to photographic subject matter. Indeed, as was discussed with regard to feminism and the ideal victim, the producers of campaigns rely on the viewers' familiarity with these meanings.

3.2 Utilising CDA: semiotics and iconography

“[S]eeing is not believing but interpreting” (Mirzoeff, 1999: 13), or, in other words, signifiers found in images can be, but are not necessarily directly related to their usual signifieds, thus to arrive at an informed interpretation, images need to be examined in broad socio-cultural contexts. The aim of this study is to explore the process of meaning-making in anti-trafficking campaigns anchored in visuality and representation. CDA affords itself to this kind of analysis since it is a multifaceted approach that makes use of different methods of analysis. In particular, semiotics and iconography were chosen in combination because they are complementary methods of visual analysis (Cottle, 1998: 190), and as elements of CDA because, as noted by Wodak (2004: 186), studying subjects through discourse analysis can be “multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, oriented towards different data and methodologies”. What follows is the rationale behind the choice of semiotics and iconography as methods of data analysis, and an explanation of the multimodal nature of visual materials which interrelates images and captions.

Semiotics is the study of signs. According to Eco (1976: 68) signs are unchanging cultural units, the understanding of which helps us to understand “language as a social phenomenon”. Signs consist of two types of codes: denotation and connotation, whose application in this study will be explained in chapter 3.5: *Data Analysis Techniques*. Semiotics is concerned with the search for “dominant codes or myths or referent systems that underlie the surface appearance of signs” (Rose, 2007:

144-5). Semiotics affords itself to the interpretation and evaluation of both visual and linguistic materials, which is why it is useful for the analysis of discourse (Fairclough, 2001: 123).

Iconographical analysis extends the semiotic one by revealing cultural and historical attitudes of a specific moment in time, and meanings that are both intended and unintended by the artist (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004: 101). Iconography is a method complementary to semiotics and, according to Panofsky (1983: 51), it is concerned with the subject matter or meaning of an object. The objects of analysis in this study are anti-trafficking campaigns, and the exploration of the intended and unintended meanings they carry is the core issue of interest in the study, hence the choice of an iconographic method. Panofsky (1983) outlines three levels of meaning in iconography: representational, iconographical, and iconological, and the way they are applied in this study is explained in chapter 3.5. *Data Analysis Technique*.

Semiotics and iconography were used to map out the discursive formations in photographs of women in anti-trafficking campaigns at a specific historical moment. As Rose (2007: 74) advises, in order to study visuality and representation, a researcher should firstly take a photograph apart, recognising and recording signs embedded in it using semiotics, thus mapping out the way in which they are related to a broader system of meaning. The second step is separating the signs into signifiers and signifieds and studying their meanings because signs are associated with referents in the world other than themselves (Rose, 2007: 75). Adding to the semiotic analysis, iconography features prominently in the second step of analysis because it helps the researcher to identify and interpret what Panofsky (in van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004: 101), calls 'symbolical' values, or both generally accepted and unaccepted conventions which the artist has knowingly or unknowingly placed into a text. This two-step process works back and forth, therefore semiotics and iconography are treated as complementary and inseparable methods of analysis.

Finally, it is important to note that meaning-making in the data relies on both images and captions. As Mitchell (1986: 82) muses, pictures want "to be seen as complex individuals occupying multiple subject positions and identities", thus they should not

be thought of as language, but as separate entities to be discussed and understood in various ways using varied interpretative streams. The data in this study consists of photographs and captions, both of which were treated as semiotic and iconographical elements that contain signs, which add meaning to photographs. This type of interaction between elements of a text is based on the notion of multimodality. Due to the social and cultural complexity of the semiotic landscape of our society (Iedema, 2003: 33), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 177) discuss semiotic analysis as a method that allows both images and language to influence meaning-making, defining any text that relies on more than one semiotic code as multimodal. Modality is the ‘reality value’ (Jewitt & Oyama, 2004: 151) of a text, thus multimodality relies on an integration of all elements of a text into a whole for its meaning.

3.3 Data collection

The data was collected over a period of five months, between July and November 2012. The campaigns were active between the years 2008 and 2012, and all campaigns that fit the criteria outlined below were included in the data. The data collection yielded six campaigns, totalling 18 photographs.

I searched for the appropriate campaigns using Google and Google Scholar. The search terms were: “anti-trafficking and campaign”, “sex trafficking and campaign”, “human trafficking and campaign”, “trafficking and campaign”, “human trafficking and photography”, “anti-trafficking and photography”, “sex trafficking and photography”, “trafficking and photography and campaign”. I included the term ‘photography’ into the search because it is an essential element of the study, and the campaigns which included only activism without photographic materials were not included in the data. The coordinating conjunction “and” was included and excluded from the keywords on an ongoing basis, to expand and limit the search.

The subjects of study are women, and the objects of study are anti-trafficking campaigns of which women are the protagonists. The data collection therefore includes only campaigns that feature women regardless of their age, race, and

manner of portrayal. Additionally, medium of photography is an essential element of this study, therefore, each campaign that was included in the data utilises this medium. Further, since the language used to conduct this study is English, only those campaigns that were in English were included. Moreover, campaigns created by non-governmental (NGO), governmental, and private organisations were included as well. Because this study is concerned with sex trafficking, only campaigns that focus on this type of trafficking were included in the data, while campaigns against trafficking for slave labour and trafficking of men were excluded.

The genre of imagery in the campaigns varies: some of the photographs are staged but retain a documentary quality, while some are staged with a focus on metaphorical elements. The ages of the depicted women vary from pre-teens and young women – who make up the majority of subjects – to middle-aged women.

Images with vague references were excluded, meaning that, if it was not clear whether an image referred to sex trafficking or other kinds of trafficking, it was excluded. Additionally, images from the same campaign that were repetitive or too similar were also excluded. Thus, if the caption and the subject or subject matter of two images were the same, only one was included in the data. The campaigns are in the forms of outdoor posters, indoor and outdoor photo-exhibitions, online posters, online photo-exhibitions, postcards, and pamphlets (digital and printed).

Due to the limited number of anti-trafficking campaigns that have been created since 2008, it was an intentional decision to not restrict the data search geographically. This is reflected in the data, and as a result, the campaigns originate both in Europe and North America, but address trafficking in a larger geographical area.

The websites that were consulted included those of large organisations such as the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency (CBP) which released the *Blue Campaign*, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) which released the *Blue Heart Campaign* both of which were analysed in this study. I also chose to analyse a campaign endorsed by The Body Shop, a global cosmetics manufacturer, and a campaign that was commissioned from the McCann-Erickson

advertising company for the 2008 European Anti-trafficking Day. Additionally, I collected a sample of smaller projects such as the *Red Light Campaign*, and the *Bought & Sold* campaign. This group of campaigns represents a sample of campaigns created by governmental institutions, NGOs, as well as small independent projects, which gives the study variety in terms of scope.

3.4 Descriptions of campaigns

Each of the six studied campaigns is described here, outlining the types of organisations that created them, timeframes, official campaign goals, dissemination formats, and geographical scopes. The information is also presented in Table 1 in the appendix for ease of access to information.

a. The “Some people are very attached to their work” campaign was created in December 2008 by the Belgium chapter of the multinational advertising company McCann-Erickson (McCann-Erickson advertising agency, n.d.). The poster can be seen online at: <http://www.mccann.be/work/brands/samilia?page=2>. It was commissioned by the Samilia Foundation, an NGO based in Belgium, whose mandate is the prevention of trafficking, prosecution of traffickers, protection of victims, and making partnerships with other anti-trafficking networks (Samilia Foundation, 2014). The campaign was created to commemorate the European Anti-Trafficking day in 2008, and the campaign consists of three posters, only one of which was studied because it is the only one that addresses sex trafficking, while the others serve to raise awareness of trafficking for slave labour. The campaign was commissioned to commemorate the European anti-trafficking day, and was distributed in the form of postcards, and indoor and digital posters.

b. “The Body Shop Campaign” (also called Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People) is a worldwide campaign of The Body Shop, in collaboration with ECPAT International’s Thailand chapter. The Body Shop is a global cosmetics manufacturer, while ECPAT is an international charity organisation whose purpose is to protect children against commercial and sexual exploitation. The campaign was

active throughout 2009 in 45 countries in Europe, North America, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and Africa (The Body Shop USA, n.d.). The campaign materials consist of an electronic booklet that can be ‘leafed through’ by clicking on the links provided on each page of the booklet, and it is available online at: <<http://www.thebodyshop.ca/en/values-campaigns/trafficking-booklet.aspx>>. The official goals of the campaign are to encourage long-term changes and action against sex-exploitation of children and young people, to raise awareness about the cause, and to raise funds in order to help those in danger of trafficking and bring relief to children that were trafficked (ECPAT and The Body Shop, 2009). Two of the four campaign posters of the campaign are analysed in this study since they contain images of women.

c. The “Blue Campaign” by the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which is under the umbrella of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been available on the CBP website since July 2011: < <http://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/what-is-blue-campaign> >. The official goals of the campaign are “investigating human trafficking, arresting traffickers, and protecting victims” and providing relief to foreign-born victims of human trafficking in exchange for help with persecuting traffickers (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). The campaign materials with photographs of women include two awareness posters, only one of which addresses sex trafficking. The campaign materials are available online, and include the poster analysed in this study, as well as posters addressing other forms of trafficking, pamphlets, tear cards, and pocket-sized plastic cards. The public is encouraged to print and hang the posters in public spaces, and disseminate the campaign materials.

d. “Bought & Sold” is an awareness-raising campaign against sex trafficking that was created in 2009 by photographer Kay Chernush who runs a non-profit organisation called Art Works for Freedom. The mission statement of the organisation is to “transform public attitudes, inspire anti-trafficking action and give voice to survivors” (Art Works for Freedom, 2012), which is therefore the official goal of the campaign. The campaign takes the form of a photo-exhibition which has been

exhibited in The Hague, Amsterdam, Groningen, Rotterdam, and Utrecht between 2009 and 2011, and as of 2014 remains active on the campaign's website:

<<http://www.artworksforfreedom.org/index.php#/bought-sold--the-exhibit/LeaptoFreedom>>. For the purposes of this study, only the six photographs that contain images of women who were trafficked for prostitution were included, while the remainder of the images that address trafficking in general or trafficking for slave labour were excluded from the data.

e. "The Blue Heart campaign" is an awareness-raising campaign of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The campaign was created in order to offer help to governments, NGOs, and intergovernmental organisations to assist the victims of trafficking to recover from their physical and psychological trauma (Chain & Engel, 2012). The campaign was released in 2009 and the main material used is a pamphlet that includes photographs of four people who represent different kinds of human trafficking (child trafficking, labour exploitation), one of which appears to be a victim of sex trafficking and was therefore analysed here. Kay Chernush, the creator of the "Bought & Sold" campaign, which was also analysed in this study, took the photographs. Although the focus of the text in the pamphlet is on human trafficking in general, one of the three photographs that are included in the pamphlet depicts a victim of sex trafficking, which is why it was included in the study.

f. The "Red Light Campaign" is a photo-exhibition created by an NGO of the same name whose official goals state that it "aims to foster empathy and understanding about the suffering caused by human trafficking and to help survivors of trafficking through pragmatic means and effective philanthropy" (Chain & Engel, 2011). The Red Light Campaign consists of twelve staged photographs, which were created as an exhibition, and are available for staging in galleries and other exhibition spaces, but the website does not state whether the exhibition has been staged yet. Since some of the images depict the same subject matter from different angles, only seven unique photographs were analysed here to avoid repetition. The campaign is based in London, U.K, and the whole exhibition, as well as information about the NGO and

the campaign is available online at:

<<http://www.redlightcampaign.org/index.php/our-work/8-photography-exhibiton/2-the-exhibition>>.

3.5 Data analysis technique

The following is a clarification of how semiotics and iconography were used to analyse the studied data. The layers of signification of both methods are defined, and the way in which they are applied to the data is described. The chapter also describes the system used to classify the semiotic and iconographical symbols into tables presented in the appendix.

Semiotics and iconography share some important attributes, which is why van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2004) consider them to be complementary methods. The most important trait that iconography and semiotics share is that the iconological symbolic level of meaning in iconography can be thought of as the equivalent of connotation in semiotics. The main difference between the methods, and the reason why they are used in conjunction in this study, is that the iconological symbolic level of meaning involves an investigation of the origins of the representational conventions used in the objects of study (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004: 101-2). Semiotic analysis, although very useful in identifying signifiers and signifieds, does not offer the historical depth of research that iconography does, therefore iconography was an essential component of a thorough analysis.

Iconography is described by art historian and father of iconographical analysis, Erwin Panofsky (1983), as a three-tiered model of analysing visual materials. The first level of interpreting meanings is the 'representational meaning', which only requires a recognition of a sign and its rudimentary interpretation. For example, some objects in the studied data include a bed, rope, underwear, high heels, windows, and buildings, all of which are recognisable objects identified by their forms.

The second level is ‘iconographical symbolism’ on which we are able to interpret the iconography of the sign we have encountered, or, in other words, recognise the ideas and concepts it carries. These are outlined in Appendices 4 and 4a, which contain the elements such as clothing, background, and objects in images, but also the evaluation of women’s agency and gaze. For instance, if only parts of a woman’s body are in the image (for instance image 4.1 in appendix) and those parts are wearing red lipstick or high-rise leather boots, or are located behind a red-light window, iconographical symbolism allows the viewer to interpret these objects as signs of prostitution.

The third level of interpretation is ‘iconological symbolism,’ which situates the sign in a broader cultural realm and allows the interpreter to analyse the signifiers identified through iconographical symbolism (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004: 100-1). This is done by employing what van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2004: 115) call “integrative interpretation”, which means arriving at the deeper meanings of an image through the “autobiographical, psychoanalytical, theological, sociological” or other aspects of the author’s historical and cultural mindset. Thus the viewer explores the cultural, social, and historical circumstances within which the image operates, and which inform its symbolic meaning (Rose, 2007: 151). In this study, the iconological analysis is the most comprehensive, and relies on the interpretation of the discursive formations found in images by critically engaging with the current academic research on sex trafficking and distant suffering, which is discussed in *Chapter 4: Discursive formations regarding the victims of trafficking*.

Since iconological symbolism relies on historical themes and concepts associated with certain symbols (Panofsky, 1983: 66), it is especially useful in guiding the analysis that leads to the discovery of the dominant discourses of the studied campaigns. For instance, women’s youth, nudity, and passivity are symbols of innocence. Within the context of a humanitarian appeal, a woman’s innocence indicates that she is the distant sufferer and therefore establishes her status as a helpless victim who needs the viewer’s sympathy.

A method of analysis complementary to iconography is semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs on two levels: denotation and connotation. Denotation consists of recognising who or what is in the photograph, or, in other words recognising the signifiers in the photograph. These signifiers, which can, for the purposes of this study, be equated with the representational meaning in iconography, are outlined in appendices 3 (which includes: lighting, colour, shot, camera angle, and editing techniques) and 3a (which includes background and setting, the body, the gaze, and whether the woman is active or passive). Signifiers are interpreted by relying on a certain amount of cultural knowledge of the world in which we live. As van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2004: 95) point out, some contexts encourage multiple meanings, and some do not, and in the case of this study, the context is provided by captions, which are outlined in appendix 2.

The second, deeper layer of meaning in semiotics is connotation, and this is where we recognise what the people, places, or things depicted in images represent. In other words, connotation is the interpretation of the signifier that leads toward the signified meaning. We arrive at the signified meaning with the help of “cultural associations which cling to the represented people, places and things, or through specific ‘connotators’, specific aspects of the way in which they are represented” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004: 97). Connotation is a near equivalent of the iconological symbolic meaning in iconography, but the two methods share an important dissimilarity: iconological meaning is concerned with historical context, which is why they were used in conjunction.

Throughout the analysis, I looked for “recurring themes and visual patterns” (Rose, 2007: 155), which allowed me to extract the most common and important signifiers. The questions that guided the semiotic analysis are outlined by Berger (2004: 174) and the analysis itself is presented in tables 3, 3a, 4, and 4a in the Appendix:

- What kinds of shots, camera angles, and editing techniques are used?
- How are lighting and colour used to give meaning to signs?
- What are the important signifiers and what do they signify?
- What is the system that gives meanings to these signs?

- What ideological matters are involved?
- What are the central oppositions or discrepancies in the text? (e.g. text vs. image, signifiers of victimisation vs. empowerment).
- Are there paired opposites in the image? (e.g. victim/trafficker, suffering/empowerment).

The data was analysed on the denotative level by extracting all the elements contained in the first two questions (see appendices 3, 3a). After this, the connotative meanings were explored by asking the remaining questions, and most of the analysis was spent on analysing, combining, and contextualising the signifiers to reveal what they signify. For example, the formal analysis performed in *Chapter 4: Discursive formations regarding the victims of trafficking* relied heavily on the signifiers extracted from images such as camera angles, placement of the body, the gaze, the background, etc.

3.6 Issues regarding ethics

The study focused on campaign materials which are available for public view, and thus do not contain any sensitive personal information, nor do they compromise the confidentiality of any of the parties involved in creating and implementing the campaigns. Additionally, this study was concerned with representations as opposed to human subjects, which means that it was based on theory and interpretation, thus subject to the scrutiny of theoretical research as opposed to the feedback of the participants about interpretations and claims made in the study.

Additionally, the analysed data was collected from online archives of organisations that produced these campaigns, all of which are available for public view. The usage of campaign materials for the purpose of a discourse analysis constitutes fair use, since it does not use any of the materials for the purpose of profit or promotion.

4. Discursive formations regarding the victims of trafficking

The discussion of the representation of the victims of sex trafficking proceeds as follows: after the iconographical symbols and the connotative signifieds were identified, three underlying themes were isolated from the 18 photographs: innocence, imprisonment, and empowerment. Each subchapter firstly contains an analysis on the connotative and iconographical level with the purpose of extracting the most prominent signifiers. Secondly, current academic debates regarding the representation of trafficking victims, photo-theory, and literature about solidarity and feminist arguments on victim agency are used to unpack and discuss the three dominant discourses.

4.1 Innocence: trafficking of women through deception

Innocence is established through captions and by visual means including the gazes of the victims and viewers, the urgency of the appeal, and the elimination of the victim's awareness of the social and political climate surrounding her appeal. Each of these signifiers is explored in this chapter, and then placed into the context of a humanitarian appeal.

Firstly – in term of the linguistic level of signification – innocence is present in captions and campaign goals. For example, figure 1⁴ tells “Sasha’s story,” a vague account of deceit of a young woman by an “agency” that promised her a “shoot” abroad, implying that people posing as talent hunters for a modeling company deceived her (see Table 2 in appendix). It proceeds to account her excitement about traveling abroad for the first time – connoting her youth and poverty – after which she recounts being captured, filmed, and raped before escaping without her passport and not seeking police assistance. Of all the studied images, this one provides the

⁴ Please note: campaign photographs within the text are referred to as ‘figures’, while ‘images’ are their equivalents in the tables within the appendix. The figure and image numbers do not correspond to each other. The appendix also contains a list of figures, which contains the figures that are not included within the text.

most detailed account of deception, but overall there are four images with captions, which is a fifth of the data, in which women offer testimonials that contain statements about their innocence and deception that resulted in trafficking (see table 2 in appendix). These four captions recount that the young women were trafficked as a result of accepting false modeling (image 2) and babysitting (images 2.1, 4.1) jobs in unidentified foreign countries, or that they were forced through blackmail to work as prostitutes (image 4.3). These four images belong to two campaigns, while the remainder of the images do not offer information on how trafficking occurred, however, the caption in figure 3 tells the spectator that the girl in the image was “lured by fairy tale promises, she learned not every prince is charming”, implying she trafficked as a result of deception.

As for campaign goals, the campaign featuring figure 3 was created by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which connotes a strong anti-migration discourse, while Sasha’s tale of deception upon leaving home, and the accounts of deception in the remaining images promote female domesticity as a way of avoiding deception and trafficking. Half of the campaigns, therefore, attempt to curb trafficking by encouraging women to stay at home even though five campaigns (save for the *Some people are very attached to their work* campaign) advocate the offer of assistance to trafficking victims as one of their official goals. Anti-migration and domesticity discourses are, therefore, strongly incorporated into these anti-trafficking campaigns. This kind of depiction is problematic since on the one hand, it merges anti-migration and anti-trafficking discourses (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007) instead of advocating victim-centred strategies, and because it reinforces gender boundaries (Andrijasevic, 2007; Stiles, 2012) by utilising the discourse of female domesticity.

Secondly, innocence is established through visual means. The idea of the victims’ innocence (as well as youth and suffering) is well established using the gaze of the victims and that of the viewer. The first type of gaze that stresses their innocence is the submissive one that belongs to the women in campaigns (all visual signifiers are outlined in appendices 4, 4a). In figure 1, the Slavic-sounding Sasha’s story of deceit

is recounted, accompanied by a photograph of a teenage girl whose small body, clad in a large dark t-shirt, reclines flaccidly over a piece of furniture inside a tightly-cropped photographic frame. She does not confront the viewer with her gaze but instead desolately gazes downward, and similar is true of the gazes of the women in the rest of the images: their gazes are pleading and sad, or entirely eliminated from the frame, as in figure 2 where a woman's torso from neck to thighs fills the frame. Sasha's innocence is further established in captions: "I thought they were my friends. I trusted them", she tells the viewer in a supposed quote situated on top of the photograph and written in a font that looks like a schoolchild's careful handwriting.



Figure 1: Sasha's story (The Body Shop campaign, image 2.1 in appendix)

The second type of gaze is that of the viewer who is, for the most part, not challenged by the gazes of the women in the campaigns. As seen in Table 3a in the appendix, twelve figures portray women whose gazes are either not visible in the images, or are pointed down- or upward, while six women look at the viewer, none of them with a challenging or oppositional gaze.

Instead, the gaze of the viewer acts upon the woman in the photograph (see Mulvey, 2003), and in many cases objectifies the woman for the voyeuristic pleasure of the viewer. For instance, in image 2, we can see a woman's torso from the neck to her thighs. Her breasts are exposed, and she is wearing a pair of small, tight, beige underwear. Her hands fall limply on her side, and the words "money transfer" and

“bancomat” are printed on her nude body. This woman makes no attempt to cover herself, while the captions accompanying the image tell the viewer, in first person, that she was trafficked and blackmailed into prostitution. This type of depiction tells the viewer that she is a money-making instrument, available for purchase to her customers, passively submitting without enjoyment. She is stripped of agency, and therefore not responsible for her own prostitution, a fact that corroborates her innocence. Additionally, while she is on display to the customer, she is also on display to the viewer. Objectified by her nudity, passive due to the impossibility of a confrontational gaze, she a titillating object of the viewer’s voyeuristic gaze. Most women in the campaigns likewise passively exist within their photographic frames, some dressed, and some in various forms of undress, not confronting the viewer with their gazes, thus surrendering power to the viewer.

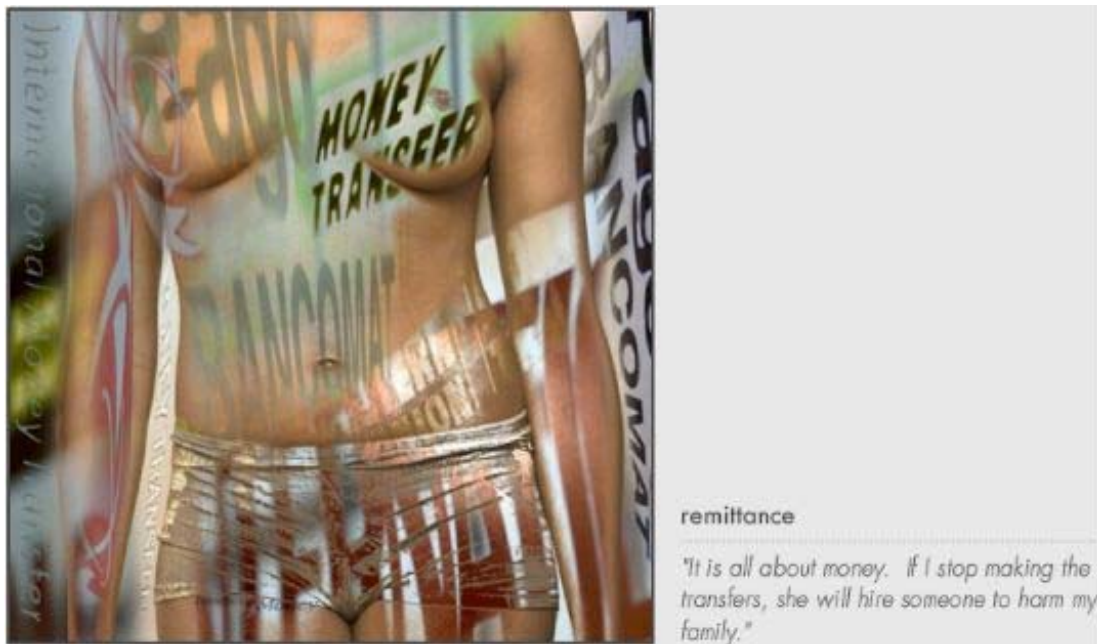


Figure 2: Remittance (Bought & Sold campaign, image 4.3 in appendix)

Innocence is further established by omitting certain information, such as the ages of the depicted women. The women in all photographs are young, appearing to be between the ages of 15 and 30, implying their innocence through youth. Sasha’s age is not stated, but her story implies she is a minor since the caption tells that she “had dreams of becoming a model” and that she secretly pursued a modelling contract which led to trafficking because she was “scared her parents would stop her”. Having

a ‘dream’ profession is usually associated with children, while her awareness that she needs her parents’ approval or permission in order to look for work further strengthens the idea of her youth and innocence. Further, *The Body Shop* campaign, to which this image belongs, focuses on the exploitation of children and young people (ECPAT and The Body Shop, 2009). Moreover, figure 3 depicts a young woman in a dirty room that contains an unmade bed, an old mirror, and a dilapidated desk with toiletries. We can see the woman’s reflection in the mirror as she gazes at the viewer with a pleading and sombre gaze. She is wearing a wrinkled tank top, her hair falls loosely down her back, and she wears a thick layer of red lipstick, blush, and eye makeup, while her hands cover her belly in a protective motion. She is presumably a young adult, but we cannot be sure whether she is underage, which, in combination with the dirty room and unmade bed, gives the photograph a sexualised and ominous tone.



Figure 3: Fairy tale (US Customs and Border Protection, Blue Campaign, image 3 in appendix)

Furthermore, the urgency of the innocent women’s appeals is expressed by eliminating the past and future from the narratives in the campaigns (Zelizer, 2005), thus not informing the viewer of the beginning and outcome of the depicted situation. The woman in figure 2 tells us that “[i]t is all about the money. If I stop making the transfers, she will hire someone to harm my family”. The quote is in the present tense, implying that there are other trafficked women in this situation at the

moment of viewing the campaign.

Further, not only is the plea temporally ambiguous, it is separated from the political aspect of humanitarian campaigns and political intervention. The women's stories are told in narratives and testimonials, and the victims are seemingly unaware of the climate surrounding human trafficking as a political, social, and human rights issue, but instead only focus on relaying emotional stories about the suffering of trafficked women to the viewer (Orgad, 2013). Firstly, the fact that the distant sufferer has a voice encourages the viewers' moral solidarity (Chouliaraki, 2011: 374), and secondly, reading a first-hand account while viewing an image that lacks an ending conveys a sense of urgency (Zelizer, 2005). Sasha tells us that she was trafficked, along with two other girls, to a foreign country and forced to prostitute herself until she escaped, but was too afraid to go to the police and instead wandered the streets alone without her passport, which the traffickers had taken. Her story lacks a conclusion, thus leaving the viewer to wonder what happened to Sasha upon escape and what happened to the two girls who were left behind. This ambiguousness conveys the urgency of Sasha's plea for help. By separating them from the wider political and social context of humanitarian campaigns, the women are established as the innocent sufferers who depend on the viewer's goodwill.

Innocence is therefore established through captions, victims' gazes, objectification, and lack of socio-political context in the victims' accounts of suffering. In the remainder of this chapter these signifiers of innocence are placed into the context of distant suffering and humanitarian appeals, demonstrating that innocence is used to infantilise and victimise women, adding potency to the humanitarian appeal.

One of the problems with the discourse of innocence is that it blurs the line between the trafficking of women and children, which is, in this data, addressed in the same vein. For example, the woman in figure 3 appears to be a teenager, and the caption addresses the trafficking of both children and adults, thus blurring the line between these crimes. This is problematic because not only are two separate issues merged, but women are infantilised (Sanghera, 2005: 13). This can be associated with the idea that women and children are seen as the ideal victims in humanitarian appeals

(Lamb, 1999; Moeller, 1999; Höijer, 2004), but there is an important difference between women and children, which is based within the practical and legal matters related to addressing their trafficking. Namely, children cannot legally give consent to travel to another country, nor can they consent to sexual or labour contracts with adults. Unlike children, however, women can give consent to move to another country and enter into sexual relationships, be they legal or not.

The need to separate the trafficking of women and children is evidenced by academic research, which has shown that women who are considered to be trafficked often willingly migrate to foreign countries for the purpose of sex work (Doezema, 2000; Berman, 2003; Kelly, 2003; Jahic & Finckenauer, 2005; Monzini, 2005) due to a variety of reasons, including a lack of work options in their countries of origin (Doezema, 2000; Jonsson, 2009: 5). Infantilising women through the discourse of innocence eliminates the possibility of thinking about trafficking in a wider social, legal, and economic context. Apart from the conflation of the trafficking of these two groups in representations, it has also been noted that the trafficking legislation of multiple countries equates the trafficking of women with that of children (Sanghera, 2005: 13). Equating women and children, in turn, encourages the viewers to think of trafficking as always a forceful act, while failing to note that, in a wider pro-sex work context (Agustín, 2007; Siegel, 2012), trafficking is related not only to forceful migration and deceit, but also to willing irregular migration, sometimes for the purposes of sex work. Likewise, by associating the trafficking of women with that of children, campaigns take away agency from women and give them innocence, thus implying that the women are not responsible for being trafficked, and are unwilling to be prostitutes. The topic of sex work and willing irregular migration is avoided in the campaigns by stressing the innocence of women, thus eliminating this topic of legislative and academic disagreement from the humanitarian appeal.

Furthermore, imposing the viewers' position of power over the victims (Doezema, 2010; Arthurs, 2012) is a strategy in humanitarian appeals that serves to elicit the viewers' compassion for the innocent victim. Because the representations of the suffering others in humanitarian campaigns serve to appeal to the moral fabric of the

Western viewers and call on their humanity to raise awareness and funds for the cause (Chouliaraki, 2011: 368), it is important that the victim is seen as innocent and thus deserving of help. The depiction of victims as utterly helpless, which is present in the majority of the data in this study, produces what Chouliaraki calls ‘shock effect’ (2010: 110), making the viewers feel guilt and a moral obligation to help. Victimisation through innocence is, therefore, a way to show that trafficked women need help, placing the ‘helper’ (Agustín, 2005: 107) in the central position, and giving the helper both the power to look and the power to choose to help. An important note here is that the sufferer must be innocent in order for the viewer to feel pity for the injustice that has beset the victim, an effect which is aided by women’s representation as innocent.

This subchapter explored the significations that form the discourse of innocence, and the implications this type of representation has on trafficking victims as it relates to humanitarian appeals and with respect to how this influences the perception of trafficking victims in a wider social context. What follows is an analysis of the discourse of entrapment, which is closely related to innocence. These discourses exist hand in hand, and are intertwined in the data, as will be seen in the following analysis.

4.2 Imprisonment: trafficked women as prisoners without agency

The following subchapter firstly identifies the mental and physical signifiers of imprisonment, and secondly, proceeds with a discussion of imprisonment in the context of a humanitarian appeal. Within this iconological discussion, traffickers, objectification of victims, and slavery are identified as elements that eliminate women’s agency and strengthen the imprisonment discourse.

In the photographs belonging to this discourse women are either physically or mentally trapped, and imprisonment is expressed symbolically in images and stated in captions. This discourse encompasses ten images in which a woman’s movement is physically constrained (images 2, 2.1, 3, 4, 4.1, 5, 6, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6 in appendix), and

five images where they are psychologically trapped (images 1, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5), for a total of 13 photographs. Additionally, five images depict women as survivors – a discourse that will be examined in *Chapter 4.3: Survival: women with agency?*

The analysed images that contain this discourse rely on the representation of mental and physical imprisonment. Physical imprisonment contains literal representations of imprisonment such as a young woman tied by rope in figure 4. Mental imprisonment is characterised by symbols of restricting one's movement. Figures 5 and 6 exemplify mental imprisonment as they depict, respectively, a woman's legs from the knee down, which have merged with her stiletto heels, and a woman with a man's hand around her neck. Physical and mental imprisonment are related and often combined, leading to the same result, i.e. the inability of a trafficked woman to escape, thus for the purposes of this study they are treated as signifiers with the same meaning.

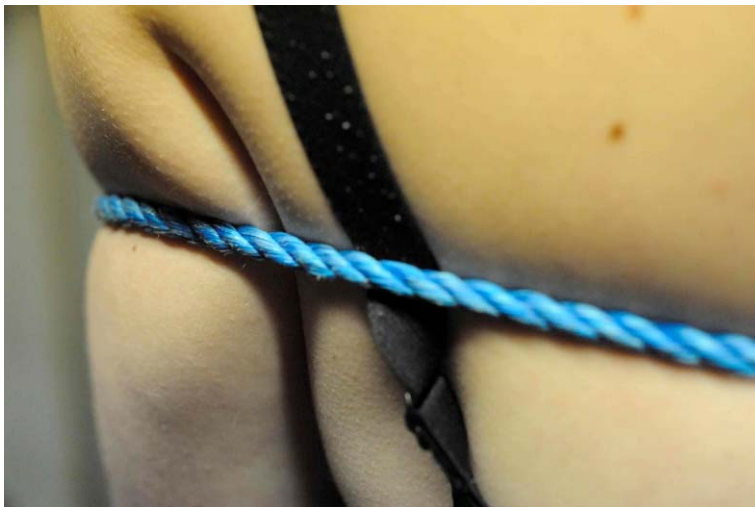


Figure 4: Rope (ArtWorks for Freedom campaign, image 6.6 in appendix)

The first signifier of imprisonment is physical, and it is exemplified by figure 4, which depicts a part of a young woman's shoulder clothed only in a black bra strap and tied by blue rope. The bra strap is twisted by the rope, while her soft flesh curves under the

tightness of the rope. There is no caption accompanying this image, therefore the only information we have about this woman is that she is imprisoned both by the rope tied around her torso and within a tight photographic frame.

The second signifier of imprisonment is mental and it is exemplified by, among others, figure 5. In this photograph the woman faces away from the viewer, standing

on a dark cobblestone street, and there are silhouettes of houses in the background in front of her. Presumably she is wearing an item of clothing, but there are no visible pieces of clothing covering her legs, drawing attention to their nakedness, which is amplified by the photo-manipulation in which her high heels are melded with her skin.

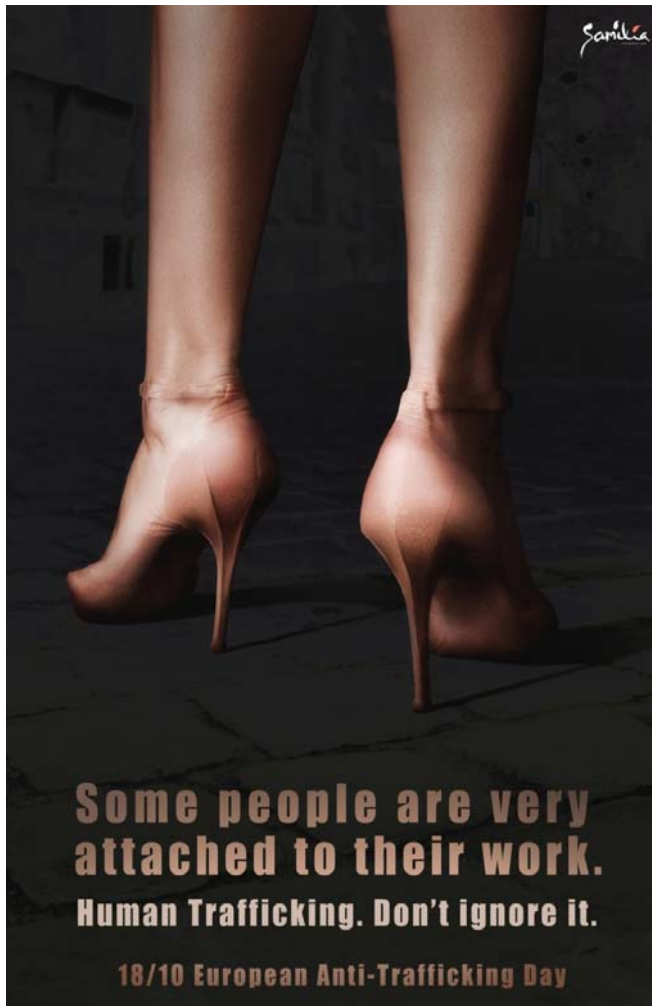


Figure 5: Some people are very attached to their work (Some people are very attached to their work, image 1)

heels with a woman's skin eliminates her agency from the choice of wearing them, signifying that she has no agency in selecting her own appearance, and by extension, working as a prostitute. In combination with the portrayal of a woman whose legs have merged with her stilettos, the caption tells the viewer that she is "attached to [her] work", thus establishing a direct link between her profession and her high heels.

The strongest signifier of her imprisonment is the caption accompanying the image, which states: "Some people are very attached to their work. Human Trafficking. Don't ignore it." The signification works in the following way: wearing heels is associated with elongating a woman's figure, thus making her more sexually attractive. Associating high heels with work brings up thoughts of prostitution because prostitutes wear high heels as part of their "uniform" since their job is to attract customers with their provocative appearance.

Finally, merging a pair of

Both physical and mental imprisonment are caused by and related to traffickers. Although they are absent from ten images, the traffickers' presence hovers heavily over the campaigns. Indeed, since women's agency is removed, traffickers are established as the aggressors who imprison and force them into prostitution. For example, figure 6 depicts a woman with a bruised eye and a large male hand wrapped around her neck, while a woman in image 6 (in appendix) is seemingly in the process of being prostituted as she stands in a dark alley with two conversing men. Similarly, the women in images 4 and 4.1 from the *Bought & Sold* campaign are depicted as being forced into prostitution. Both images depict parts of women's bodies, such as face and midriff in figure 4, and lips, legs, and a silhouette of a woman behind a red curtain in figure 4.1. In both images the women are subjected to the surveying eyes of men whose faces the spectator cannot see.



Figure 6: Blue heart campaign (UNODC campaign, image 5 in appendix)

Traffickers are, therefore, clearly established as the aggressors in a binary that includes the innocent victims and the evil perpetrators as opposites (Doezema, 2000; Berman, 2003; Andrijasevic, 2007). In de Beauvoir's (1972)

feminist terms, this relationship is described as a master-slave relationship, in which the woman's status as the other is reinforced through her dependence on the man. In terms of a humanitarian appeal, the woman is the sufferer who has no agency and is imprisoned by the trafficker. Creating a binary of this sort is a very effective way of gaining public pity because it establishes a clear victim/perpetrator narrative. In the presence of an innocent distant sufferer who is betrayed, pity in the viewer is obtained by the feeling of antipathy towards the negative person, thus eliciting indirect sympathy and tender-heartedness toward the distant sufferer (Boltanski, 1999: 46-8).

The imprisonment discourse is signified by the objectification of women and their representation as slaves to their traffickers. By depicting women as imprisoned, and therefore unable to choose for themselves whether to stay or leave their traffickers, and whether or not to work as prostitutes, their agency is removed. The woman in figure 3 stands in her (bath)room, the women in images 2 and 6.3 sit in small dark rooms with no visible exits, while the woman in image 4 tells us that “[t]hey sell you like a product. We girls were just part of the menu” (see table 2 in appendix). The quoted woman likens trafficked women to food that can be ordered and bought from a menu, consumed at the buyer’s convenience, and if unsatisfying, discarded, which is an example of a combination of mental and physical imprisonment. As discussed in *Chapter 4.1: Innocence: trafficking of women through deception*, images of objectified women in these campaigns cater to men’s voyeuristic viewing, and simultaneously stress the idea that individual women are not the subjects of these images; the focus is rather on the idea of trafficked women as commodities and sexual objects. Objectification therefore serves to position women as passive objects, without agency. By removing women’s agency, anti-trafficking campaigns ensure that the women are seen as blameless victims making them eligible for the viewer’s help. Indeed, women’s purity is essential for successful humanitarian appeals (Doezema, 2000: 43) because that way women are seen as innocent victims whose purity is spoiled by trafficking instead of guilty prostitutes, undeserving of the viewer’s aid (Andrijasevic, 2007; Arthurs, 2012).

The signifiers of objectification are also related to signifiers of commodification. The photograph of the woman in figure 2 is covered with the words “money transfer” and “bancomat”, while the heels of the woman in figure 5 are merged with her skin, implying that these women are vehicles for making money. Similarly, the captions in figure 2 make reference to Prince Charming, a character in fairy tales who is presented to girls as the ideal mate: a handsome, charming, and rich gentleman. Finally, the woman in image 6.1 sits on a chair in her underwear, her head covered with a cow mask which, according to the description of the *ArtWorks for Freedom* campaign (see table 2 in appendix) signifies the mass consumption of a sacred object, i.e. the female body. This is a metaphorical representation of the

commodification of women's bodies for the sake of profit for traffickers. The women are thus objectified and at the same time established as innocent slaves to their traffickers, creating a simple narrative of suffering (see l'Anson & Pfeifer, 2013). In this way humanitarian campaigns bring suffering to the viewers through infotainment (Moeller, 1999: 35), and as Orgad (2013: 296) argues, attempt to "seduce" the public into buying their brand of humanitarianism. Since they exist within the consumer society and therefore must make a profit to stay in business, NGOs, non-profits, and perhaps even government organisations alike must create humanitarian campaigns that will become popular. However, Vestergaard (2008) points out that staging suffering in the same field where provocative and seductive consumer products compete for attention creates a moral conflict as well as an awareness that humanitarianism exists in the arena of advertising.

Additionally, slavery features strongly in the studied images, and, like objectification, it eliminates the agency of trafficked women, preserving their innocence and reinforcing the discourse of imprisonment. In figure 4 the depicted woman is enslaved by being tied with rope, while in figure 5 the woman's unbreakable attachment to her work connotes slavery. Many of the remaining images also contain signifiers of slavery: the woman in figure 6 is restrained by a man who grips her throat, while figure 1 depicts poor Sasha in a tight frame with no visible exits. Slavery is therefore, effectively established through physical imprisonment. Objectification and slavery signify these women's unwillingness to be prostitutes, but helplessness to escape from this predicament. In other words, representing women as imprisoned connotes the idea that they did not willingly transgress neither state boundaries by migrating, nor moral ones by being prostitutes (Berman, 2003: 60), which enables viewers to imagine the suffering of these women with empathy (Tester, 1995: 472) thus creating a strong appeal for help.

Academic researchers of trafficking as a border-crossing issue, both in terms of the physical violation of women and the violation of state lines, have criticised the dominant discourses related to trafficking victims (Berman, 2003; Andrijasevic, 2007). Their representations as passive, innocent, young women lured, trafficked,

beaten, blackmailed, and prostituted, fail to address the causes of irregular migration and women's choice in being sex workers. Criminalising all activities related to trafficking causes stricter state border control and a focus on arresting traffickers and breaking up trafficking rings, but does not place focus on why these women choose irregular migration (Berman, 2003). The answers are multiple, one of which is women's inability to obtain visas as a result of which they opt to enter into deals with traffickers, and are consequently considered to be trafficked (Davies, 2009). Much academic criticism is dedicated to the dominant trafficking discourses by academics whose research has shown that there are cases of irregular migration treated as trafficking in which women enter into business relationships with traffickers (Davies, 2009; Siegel & de Blank, 2010; Siegel, 2012) knowing they would be required to work as prostitutes, but are deceived about the working conditions (Doezema, 2000; Berman, 2003; Munro, 2006; Agustín, 2007, Andrijasevic, 2009). As Arthurs (2012) puts it:

[T]he trafficking discourse draws on a moralistic distinction between innocent victims who are coerced into sex work and culpable others who choose to migrate to make money in this way, when in reality there is no such neat division but multiple life stories that are full of ambiguous, risky journeys of hope, hardship and survival (2012: 153).

Such varied scenarios are absent from anti-trafficking campaigns because women who feature in them do not fit into the category of passive victims of trafficking who lack agency. Moreover, the stories of women who willingly migrate are omitted from campaigns because the knowledge of this information would surely interfere with the audiences' ability to sympathise with the victims.

This chapter has sought to make connections between the status of women as mentally and physically imprisoned by being objectified and represented as slaves, and the broader social and political issues that trafficking campaigns disregard when they opt for this kind of representation. Especially important are the issues that are omitted from campaigns, such as women's agency in migrating illegally and their choice to engage in sex-work. The following chapter discusses the absence of

women's agency from anti-trafficking campaigns, and its implications for the representation of women in the campaigns.

4.3 Survival: women with agency?

This portion of the study centres on the representation of women as survivors of trafficking, but I argue that they are nonetheless victimised for the sake of the humanitarian appeal. As the chapter progresses, I demonstrate that women's survival implies a small amount of agency, but what little agency they have is shrouded by their objectification and portrayal as the distant suffering others.

The survival discourse is present in two campaigns, totaling five photographs, and it is the least represented discourse. The *ArtWorks for Freedom* campaign includes two images of women in the process of emancipating themselves from the stigma and trauma of trafficking (figure 7 and image 4.4), and an image of a woman jumping from a balcony (figure 8). Additionally, *The Body Shop* campaign contains two images that portray young women sitting in dark rooms with no exits in sight, with the captions telling the viewer that one escaped, while the other attributes her rescue to the police (figures 1, 9 respectively). Although they are physically free of traffickers, the images do not depict women in their new environments, but instead show them hunted by their trauma while in the process of healing (figure 7 and image 4.4), or re-enacting their trafficking experience (figures 1, 8, 9). This type of depiction is problematic because it victimises, objectifies, and depicts trafficking survivors as the others, thus failing to show their empowerment. Each of these types of representation is unpacked below.

The agency of the women portrayed as survivors emerges together with their victimisation; if not visually in the campaigns, their previous status as victims is established in captions. The woman in figure 7 tells the viewer that “[she is] not afraid anymore,” suggesting she has felt frightened not only during her trafficking experience, but also after being rescued, until she decided to “reverse the voodoo onto [her] trafficker”. The previously discussed discourse of imprisonment and the



Figure 7: Voodoo inverso (ArtWorks for Freedom campaign, image 4.5 in appendix)

resulting trauma is present in her memory of trafficking, reminding the spectators of the woman's status as a victim. Similarly, figure 8 depicts a nude woman plummeting downward from a building, her body blurred to illustrate the speed of falling, her legs literally broken off as if she was a doll, while in the background silhouettes of people can be seen behind the windows of the building. The caption includes her account of the fall, telling us that she broke her legs in the process of breaking free. Visualising the lengths to which this trafficked woman went in order to escape from traffickers reinforces her status as a victim and, as a result, gives potency to the campaign's humanitarian appeal because it illustrates her desperation to escape the terrible situation she was in.

The representation of falling people is discussed by Zelizer (2004) as an 'about to die' moment, in which the hopelessness of the falling person, in combination with the spectators' act of witnessing her death makes for a horrific account of suffering. What makes this image victimising is firstly that the body is suspended in this moment – there is no clear indication in the image of the pavement that inevitably awaits the falling woman – and secondly, that the body is so blurred that there are very few identifiable features on her body. As the woman in figure 8 falls, her body is blurred and her legs broken off, so the spectator cannot clearly distinguish her

human features – she looks more like a doll with broken legs than a human being. Thus, the gruesome details of injury are eliminated from the image, while the suspension in time and space gives the campaign immediacy, indicating that there are other women in the same desperate situation at the moment of viewing, but also victimising the woman by eliminating her future from the image.

A further element that removes women's agency is objectification, which is exemplified by the nude woman falling from the balcony (figure 8) whose nudity signifies that she was with a customer when she decided to attempt an escape. Apart from nudity, her legs, which have broken off and fall alongside her, symbolise her objectification. She is being likened to a doll that can be used as the player sees fit and broken at the player's whim. In the context of the humanitarian appeal, the women's objectification imposes a relationship of power between the viewer and the

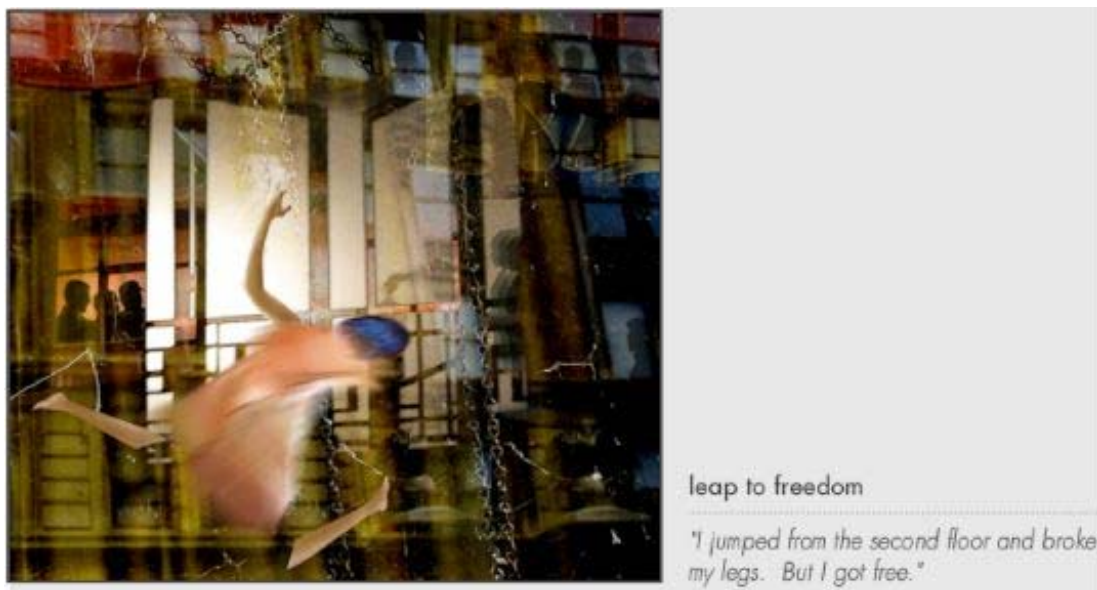


Figure 8: Leap to freedom (ArtWorks for Freedom campaign, image 4.2 in appendix)

sufferer in which the sufferer has none (Arthurs, 2012). Therefore, although the discourse that describes them is that of survival, the women's need for humanitarian aid is well established. The extent of their agency is not only limited, but the agency they did display briefly has failed them. Their failed agency is reinforced through the very fact that the women are present in the campaigns – they have been traumatised

and damaged by trafficking, and therefore still carry the title of the victims who needs the viewer's help.

Moreover, taking away women's agency through objectification and victimisation simplifies the stories of trafficked women for the sake of media reporting (Kelly, 2002) and marginalises the narratives of women whose cases do not belong to this type of representation. Thus, on the one hand, humanitarian campaigns exist within the framework of the global consumer market and therefore conform to its standards of commodification (which was discussed in the previous chapter) for the sake of raising awareness and attention (Arthurs, 2012: 149). On the other hand, these campaigns steer away from potentially controversial topics such as the pro-sex-work argument⁵, which proposes the legalisation of prostitution as a way to more effectively make a distinction between trafficking and sex-work (Outshoorn, 2005). For example, scholars such as Siegel (2009; 2012) and Agustín (2005; 2007) who have performed participant observation and interviews with trafficked women have noted that, apart from forced trafficking, there are documented cases in which women who became the victims of trafficking are found to have sought the help of traffickers in order to migrate to a more developed state – sometimes for the purpose of prostitution – but were deceived regarding the working conditions and were exploited upon migration (Doezema, 2000; Jahic & Finckenauer, 2005; Munro, 2006; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Weitzer, 2007).

Research results such as these are not present in humanitarian campaigns. Instead, the representations are simplified and stereotypical in order to impose the viewer's perspective of power while failing to recognise the agency of trafficked women. Within the data there are five images that depict survivors, and even they are not entirely positive because they depict failed agency, while the rest of the photographs depict worst-case scenarios of trafficking (Milivojevic & Pickering, 2013) in order to

⁵ Within the discourse of trafficking, a feminist debate regarding its connection to prostitution has been debated by scholars, some arguing for the recognition of sex work as legitimate labour, and others promoting an abolitionist approach to prostitution. Some of the pro-sex-work scholars include Agustín (2005, 2007), Siegel, (see Oude Breuil et al., 2011), and Chapkiss (2003), while scholars who support an abolitionist argument include Hughes (2005) and Miriam (2005).

evoke public pity (Orgad, 2013). In her discussion of a more ethical representation of trafficking victims in humanitarian appeals, Arthurs (2012: 144) argues for a ‘cosmopolitan ethics’ whereby the viewers are invited to recognise the agency, desires, and experiences of the victims, which would “draw attention to the less frequently circulated migrant perspectives and a different interpretive frame”.

Only one of the studied photographs acknowledges a circumstance of trafficking that is not entirely based on deception. The girl in figure 9, who is identified as Maria, admits that she submitted herself to irregular migration into the U.S. However, her story is simplified and her actions justified thus her status as a victim remains untouched. Her story includes two sick parents, a friend who offered her a job abroad

The image shows a digital campaign interface. On the left, a dark photograph of a young woman with her hand near her face is overlaid with the text "I felt so powerless. Everything was taken from me." Below the photo is a pink button with a left-pointing arrow and the word "back". A small disclaimer reads: "The child in this photo is supporting our campaign and is not a victim of sex trafficking. Photographers: ADAM BROOMBERG & OLIVER CHANARIN". On the right, a bright yellow background contains a "BACK TO VALUES & CAMPAIGNS" button with a right-pointing arrow. Below this is a quote in pink: "“Maria” came from a very poor family. Both her parents were too ill to work so she was the main source of income for the family." This is followed by two paragraphs of black text describing her situation. At the bottom right is a pink button with a right-pointing arrow and the text "AI's story".

Figure 9: Maria’s story (The Body Shop campaign, image 2 in appendix)

as a maid, extreme economic hardship, inability to find work “at home”, and the fact that she was underage and therefore legally ineligible to emigrate for work. These circumstances illustrate the difficult situations some women come from, and in the case of Maria serve to justify her irregular migration. However, since she is underage, was promised a legitimate job abroad, and was acting in the best interest of her poverty-stricken family, her transgression of the U.S. border is forgiven and she retains her status as the victim of a vicious criminal organisation. Meanwhile, the

campaign fails to address irregular migration of adults, as well as for the purpose of sex work.

Finally, the discourse of survival and its focus on women's lack of agency is signified by the representation of victims as the other. For instance, otherness is exemplified by Maria, the young girl in figure 9, who tells the viewer that she was desperate for money so she paid to be smuggled into the U.S. to work as a maid, which resulted in her being trafficked. Her story tells us that Maria's parents are ill, but they apparently do not receive sufficient social benefits that would allow them to sustain their family financially, and there is no job Maria could get that would support them, both of which are traits of developing countries, and both of which are factors that drove naïve and young Maria into the hands of traffickers. Offering this information to the viewer serves to establish Maria as the other since she is an illegal migrant from Eastern Europe, violating the sovereign borders of a developed country.

Meanwhile, the otherness of the woman in figure 7 is established through her depiction as exotic. She speaks of resorting to voodoo in order to curse her trafficker, a trait associated with occult practices but not mainstream cultural traditions and religions. The image depicts a woman whose face is obscured by feathers, dagger blades, strands of cut hair, a chicken, and snakeskin, and although her complexion is indecipherable because she is behind a red curtain, her facial features indicate that she is black. The voodoo objects along with her skin colour are signifiers of the exotic, thus showing this woman as the other in relation to the Western viewer. She is no longer a passive victim; her agency is situated within her otherness, and the viewer therefore remains in possession of the 'real' power, which comes from the ability to offer aid to the distant sufferer that goes beyond the spiritual and irrational voodoo. Just as this woman needs the viewer's help, the girl in figure 9 tells us that she was rescued by the police, who are representatives of the Western society, and the woman in figure 8 has broken her legs and is therefore physically and metaphorically in need of humanitarian aid. The women's agency is, therefore downplayed by their otherness, an act necessitated by the humanitarian appeal, which

results in the spectators' inability to identify with the distant others (Vestergaard, 2008).

This discourse has the potential to give women back some of the agency that is taken from them by both the act of trafficking, and the act of being portrayed as a victim in an anti-trafficking campaign. It also has the power to bring into public debate the psychological repercussions of having been trafficked and the legal circumstances that stem from being in a state illegally. Survival is thus a discourse that – despite its potential to bring to the fore women's agency and address trafficking in a broader sense – serves instead to emphasise the survivors' victimhood. Although holding the potential to imbue the images of women with agency, the survival discourse instead offers failed agency to the viewer and maintains the dominant discourses of trafficking, which have been discussed so far. I therefore argue that, whether performing an active deed, or waiting passively to be rescued, the survivors are nonetheless stripped of agency.

4.4 Conclusions

The objective of this thesis has been to unpack the dominant discourses within anti-trafficking campaigns and answer the research question: *what discourses are present in the visual representation of the female victims of sex trafficking in anti-trafficking campaigns?* Throughout the analysis, the dominant discourses that appeared within the studied campaigns were innocence, imprisonment, and survival, all of which addressed women's agency in different forms.

Women's innocence is related to their youth, which is seen as the element that made them prey to the deception of traffickers. It is further present in campaigns through the use of urgency, which is stressed by eliminating the past and future from the images, thus suspending the humanitarian appeal in time and space. Meanwhile, the women depicted in campaigns offer their personal testimonials of suffering and deceit to viewers, drawing the attention of the spectator away from the social and political milieu in which the campaigns operate. Meanwhile, women's irregular migration is absent from the discussion, and the trafficking of women is blurred with that of children (Kempadoo, 2005), which is a serious crime deserving of its own legislation and humanitarian treatment.

The imprisonment of women is divided into mental and physical. In feminist terms women within this discourse are given the status of prisoners by being placed in a victim/aggressor binary with traffickers. From a further feminist angle, women are also represented as slaves to their traffickers, they are objectified and commodified for the fetishistic pleasure of their captors and the viewers of campaigns whose pity these humanitarian appeals aim to evoke (Doezema, 2000; Andrijasevic, 2007). As within the discourse of innocence the broader issues closely related – and sometimes almost indistinguishable from trafficking – such as irregular migration and the objectification of women, remain unaddressed.

The survival discourse, although not present in the majority of images, serves to demonstrate the failed agency of the victims. Women in these campaigns are established as the other by being depicted as exotic and non-Western, while their

escape from traffickers is represented as not enough to free her from the repercussions of trafficking – they are in need of legal and psychological help – therefore what little agency they have displayed has failed them.

Overall, the campaigns analysed in this study show a narrow focus on addressing only the needs of those women who are forcefully trafficked, victimising them for the sake of fulfilling campaign goals. In agreement with previous research on the victims of trafficking, this study indicates that women are often represented as naïve, deceived, innocent girls, who were lured into the trafficking industry and exploited (Kempadoo, 2005), despite empirical research, which has shown that cases of trafficking are often not as dramatic, but are more complex than this dominant discourses present them to be.

Although the aims of organisations that create anti-trafficking campaigns are usually to raise awareness of the issue, raise funds to assist the victims, and affect the change of anti-trafficking legislation, it is paradoxical that anti-trafficking campaigns make use of gender stereotypes and victimisation discourses to create effective humanitarian campaigns. The women represented in campaigns are victims whose status as such can and should not be underestimated and oversimplified. However, as this study has demonstrated, women are repeatedly shown as passive objects to be gazed at, as victims without the power of choice or agency, as goods to be prostituted by traffickers, forcibly exploited by customers, and consumed by the viewers of anti-trafficking campaigns. They are the helpless victims whose lives are psychologically and even literally lost without the help of the viewers.

Extending upon Andrijasevic's (2007) conclusion that the term 'woman' becomes limiting in the context of campaigns due to their reliance on stereotypical representations, I would argue that it is not only womanhood that becomes limiting. It is the status of victimhood as such that limits these women's ability to regain agency and free themselves from the stigma of victimhood. The scholars who have studied sex trafficking call for more ethical, less stereotypical representations of victims (Sharma, 2003; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Stiles, 2012), while those who have studied humanitarian appeals call for a focus on victims instead of

spectators (Moeller, 1999; Höijer, 2004; Vestergaard, 2008; Chouliaraki, 2011) seeing this as a necessity if we, as a society, wish to help the victims.

It is, therefore, essential to bring to the discussion and into visual representations the issue of trafficking in its convoluted entirety. If anti-trafficking campaigns can be targeted to more specific victims on the one hand, and become more inclusive towards the types of victims they address on the other, a wider scope of victims would be addressed. In a broader social sense, trafficking discourses would become more encompassing and we, as a society, could better address the needs of those victims whose needs are currently marginalised.

5. Discussion

Within the trafficking discourses discussed throughout the study, there appeared additional recurring discourses such as anti-migration, sex work, and deceit. The reasons for the repeated presence of these intertwining discourses are the blurred lines between sex trafficking and other social and legal problems. In the following discussion the dominant discourses of innocence, imprisonment, and survival are discussed within a wider framework that includes the abovementioned discourses, placing this study into a broader social context.

5.1 Difficulties with defining sex trafficking for campaign purposes

The extent of the human trafficking industry in general, and sex trafficking in particular is unknown (Weitzer, 2007: 455), and statistics are generally based on informed estimates (Doezema, 2000: 32) which vary in their assessments of both the numbers of trafficked persons and the monetary value of the trafficking industry (Kelly & Regan, 2000; Jones, Engstrom, Hillard & Diaz, 2007; Samarasinghe & Burton, 2007; King, 2008; Stiles, 2012). Moreover, these estimates cannot be empirically confirmed due to the illicit nature of trafficking (Segrave, Milivojevic & Pickering 2009: 11) and the imprecise legal and scholarly definition of what constitutes human trafficking (Choo et al. 2010; Skilbrei, 2010; Penttinen, 2008: 42). Additionally, I would question whether statistics that construct grand claims regarding the mass proliferation of sex trafficking worldwide take into account only those women who are trafficked forcefully or also include those who become exploited as a result of submitting themselves to traffickers thus engaging in irregular migration for the purpose of sex work.

Additionally, sex trafficking in practice is intertwined with, among other things, anti-migration and prostitution. Some of the reasons for ambiguity are the 'sliding definitions' (Chapkiss, 2003: 926) of what trafficking is, and who its victims are. In terms of law enforcement, obstacles include state law enforcement's lack of knowledge on how to handle trafficking cases and whether to treat trafficked people

as victims or criminals (Kelly & Regan, 2000, Hughes, 2005, King, 2008), as well as (narrow) legislation that requires proof that trafficking occurred under duress and deceit (Leidholdt, 2003: 177). Victims, in turn, distrust the police (Goodey, 2008: 428), are unwilling to testify due to fear of negative repercussions (Hughes, 2005: 18), or fear of compromising their business relationships with pimps (Oude Breuil et al., 2011).

Seeing as trafficking is legally and practically related to other matters, it is unsurprising that representing its victims is problematic. Although victimising women, and depicting them as lacking agency makes sense from the standpoint of a humanitarian appeal, the discourses this manner of representation relies on – such as innocence and imprisonment – disregard its interrelation with irregular migration and voluntary prostitution thus oversimplifying the issue.

5.2 Representation of suffering

This study is in agreement with the idea that suffering is aestheticised and commodified, while it is in partial agreement with the notion that the humanitarian campaigns studied here focus on the viewers and on Chouliaraki's (2011) imaginative mobility, concluding rather that some of the campaigns depict negative images of suffering.

Firstly, it was mentioned earlier in the study that images of suffering in the recent past have been less gruesome and more aestheticised (Campbell, 2007; Roth, 2007; Pantti, 2013). This study is in agreement with this notion, because as can be observed from the data, the images of women are eroticised, blurred, modified, and aestheticised, but none of them represent gory details of suffering.

Secondly, the representation of the suffering others was reflected upon with regard to Chouliaraki's (2011) notion of imaginative mobility, which proposes that humanitarian campaigns focus on the emotional account of the suffering of the distant other rather than focusing on the viewer. While this study is in partial

agreement with this notion, it departs from this idea in the sense that the accounts provided by women are removed from the greater socio-political climate in which the campaigns exist. Therefore, this study has shown that, although partially moving towards imaginative mobility, some campaigns still rely on negative portrayals of distant suffering.

5.3 Anti-trafficking as/and anti-migration

The discourses of innocence and imprisonment, which were unpacked during the analysis, demonstrably serve to evoke other discourses such as anti-migration and border protection. The problematics of amalgamating these discourses include the distraction from what should be – and is in the studied campaigns promoted to be – the focus of anti-trafficking campaigns: victim assistance.

Although undoubtedly related and intertwined, several studies have suggested that the indiscriminate consolidation of anti-trafficking and anti-migration discourses into a single campaign is problematic from the perspective of victim assistance (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Berman, 2010; Milivojevic & Pickering, 2013). As discussed in this study, victims' innocence is related to their domesticity and naiveté, which creates two problems. Firstly, the rescue of innocents is related to an anti-migration agenda inasmuch as it promotes the regulation of women's bodies and female domesticity (Andrijasevic, 2007) and the encouragement of women to stay at home (Sharma, 2003). The results of this study are in agreement with the argument that anti-trafficking campaigns make use of stereotypical representations of femininity and the discourse of domesticity in order to evoke victims' youth, innocence, and deception.

From the anti-migration message concentrated within the fact that the *Blue Campaign* is run by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency, to the discouragement of migration advocated by *The Body Shop* campaign, the goals of anti-trafficking campaigns become veiled in anti-migration and border protection discourses, resulting in a shift of focus from a victim-centred approach to a law

enforcement approach. Anti-immigration discourse affects the representation of women because it necessitates the representation of their innocence, wounded bodies, and broken dreams as a way to combat trafficking by preventing women's migration. Preventing irregular migration thus shifts focus to maintaining sovereign state borders in the face of globalisation, irregular migration, and the opening of international borders (Berman, 2010; Milivojevic & Pickering, 2013) such as those within the European Union (EU). However, they simultaneously place into the shadow the issue that should be at the forefront: assisting the victims who have already been trafficked.

Secondly, the representation of trafficking victims as innocent in anti-trafficking campaigns is related to the deception of naïve women into migration and prostitution. Namely, if all irregular migration for prostitution is considered trafficking, then the prostitutes are victims, but if some women migrate or enter the sex industry willingly, and become the victims of exploitation and violence as a result of their illegal status and debts of migration, they no longer fit into the category of trafficking victims because they display a degree of agency. This is problematic because punitive and law enforcement driven trafficking legislation (Milivojevic & Pickering, 2013: 594) necessitates proof that trafficking occurred under duress and deceit (Leidholdt, 2003: 177), thus excluding those migrants who willingly transgressed state borders in search of better work opportunities abroad from being treated as trafficked even in cases in which exploitation took place.

By attempting to discourage irregular migration, campaigns that do not distinguish between anti-trafficking and anti-migration discourses demonstrate their lack of ability to address the root causes of trafficking, which are based within the legislative structures of individual states and include issues such as border control, criminality of prostitution, organised crime, and globalisation (see Berman, 2010).

5.4 Sex work and sex trafficking as social and moral matters

The imprisonment and survival discourses are evoked through women's representation as slaves to their traffickers, commodities to be bought and sold, and their failed agency upon escape. However, within the discourse of trafficking and forced prostitution is a matter of irregular migration and prostitution. Due to the sliding definitions (Chapkiss, 2003) of what constitutes trafficking, its perception as exploitative or a stepping-stone on the way to a better life becomes a question of moral, legislative, and social norms (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007: 1688).

Representing trafficking victims in anti-trafficking campaigns is a moral issue deserving of some attention because the morality of trafficking influences representations. As Desyllas (2007: 59) argues in her critique of the discourses of trafficking, the Western world's fear of migration and women's sexuality has contributed to the development of the discourse of the social problem of sex trafficking as equal to prostitution. At the heart of this distinction is a debate among scholars regarding the legal status of prostitution. Namely, there are two discourses related to trafficking: the sexual domination discourse, which adopts an abolitionist approach and considers all prostitution to be forced, and the sex work discourse, where prostitution is treated as a legitimate profession into which women enter willingly, with working conditions being the differentiating factor between work and exploitation (Oude Breuil et al., 2011: 33).

Although there are cases of women being lured and deceived into the sex industry, there are likewise documented cases of women who willingly migrate in order to be sex workers (Doezema, 2000; Siegel, 2009). The results of this study have shown that, as regards the representation of women as victims of trafficking, the studied campaigns have not shown a particular support of neither the abolitionist nor the sex work argument.

However, that is not to say that the sex trafficking versus abolitionist argument does not have any influence on the representation of victims. As it relates to humanitarian appeals, what differentiates these two notions is the morality of prostitution and

irregular migration. It is much easier to make a humanitarian appeal if sex trafficking is represented as a victim/aggressor duality rather than raising a social and moral dilemma. Indeed, research has shown that women who willingly work as prostitutes are not perceived as innocent victims (Doezema, 2000; Jahic & Finckenauer, 2005; Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, 2007, Munro, 2006). The studied campaigns support this perception since the results show an emphasis on the innocence and lack of agency of trafficked women, and a failure to address those sex workers who illegally migrate and are exploited as a result, even though the exploitation factor could work to define them as victims of trafficking.

A moral problem of representing the victims of trafficking rests within the campaigners themselves. This study has demonstrated that the victims are represented without a future or a past, and that they are divorced from the greater social and political milieu in which the campaigns exist by being depicted as victims and narrating only personal testimonials. From the perspective of the rescue industry (Agustín, 2007: 174) the lack of background information on how trafficked women became victims, and more specifically, the omission of the notion that they were unaware of the fact that they would engage in prostitution, is related to personal views of the campaigning organisations (Agustín, 2007: 174). Although campaigners may be aware of the multiplicity of ways in which a woman can become a victims of sex trafficking, they seem to be reluctant to disclose the fact that trafficked women are often aware that they will work as prostitutes but unaware of the conditions under which they will work upon their arrival in a foreign country (Doezema, 2000; Jahic & Finckenauer, 2005; Munro, 2006; Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, 2007, Weitzer, 2007), despite the multitude of studies demonstrating that this is one of the most common ways in which women become victims of trafficking (Berman, 2003; Munro, 2006; Agustín, 2007, Andrijasevic, 2009).

For example, Davies (2009) has performed ethnographic research of Albanian women who migrated to France, revealing that these women chose to work in the sex industry and migrated illegally due to an inability to obtain Schengen visas. Additionally, Agustín's (2005, 2007) fieldwork and interviews of Latin American

and European women who migrated illegally to work in the sex industry showed that the “victim discourse” (Agustín, 2005: 107) does not correspond to the way migrant women see themselves. It is morally difficult even for people in the rescue industry to accept that women choose to be prostitutes, so the voices of those women are marginalised.

The results of this study are in partial agreement with this claim, since there are four images in two campaigns that explain victims’ trafficking as a result of deception, only one of which admits to migrating illegally. Nonetheless, the issues of voluntary prostitution and irregular migration – the morality of which has been a matter of debate – are avoided in all campaigns, and replaced with innocence and a lack of agency. The outcomes of this study uncover stereotypical representations within the dominant discourses of anti-trafficking campaigns, and therefore this study offers a similar proposal to that of other scholars who support a sex work argument and suggest that distinctions between sex trafficking and migration for sex work would be more easily made if prostitution were regulated and equated with other legitimate forms of labour (Agustín, 2005; Outshoorn, 2005; Oude Breuil et al., 2011; Siegel, 2012). This would address the needs of those women who choose to migrate for the purpose of sex work.

5.5 Limitations and challenges

In an attempt to perform a thorough analysis, it was important to take note of the effects of statements that were made, which forms of knowledge they favoured, what modes of arguments they used, and which speakers were considered to be authoritative (Tonkiss, 1998: 250). These issues were addressed by analysing photographs on the connotative level, and asking the questions outlined in *Chapter 3.5: Data analysis technique*.

Additionally, since this study was performed through the qualitative method of CDA – which is an interpretative method – I used a systematic approach to the data. As mentioned in *Chapter 3.5: Data analysis technique*, the data was analysed on three

levels, from the surface level to that of deeper symbolic meanings. In order to systematically approach the data, this method was applied to every image, the common signifiers were outlined through data analysis, and then placed into wider historical context with the aid of the contemporary scholarly discussions on the issue of trafficking, which related my results to the existing debate on sex trafficking. In particular, I placed the study into a broader theoretical context by analysing the data using photo-theory and the concepts of distant suffering, solidarity, and victimisation in order to move the discussion further and offer novel ways of thinking about the representation of the victims of sex trafficking.

Furthermore, as van Leeuwen notes, a semiotic approach “focuses on concepts and methods useful for contemporary studies of the visual representation of specific issues” (van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004: 104), which means that it focuses on the interpretation on a public level as opposed to the emotional interpretation on a personal level. Although interpretation on a personal level is always a concern in discourse analysis, semiotics offers a way to avoid this. Thus, I first analysed the data on a purely denotative level, describing the visual materials in detail to map out as many signifiers as possible using iconography and semiotics as outlined by Panofsky (1983), and van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2004). After this was completed, the data guided the connotative interpretation of the signifiers, which helped me to isolate the themes of the photographs, and finally, the existing scholarly research on trafficking was used to guide the discussion. Since the reporting style of the study is interpretative, which makes it important to recognise one’s previously held personal biases, Panofsky, and van Leeuwen and Jewitt’s methods hopefully added credibility to the study by requiring the researcher to let the data speak for itself.

This study attempts to interpret images in a systematic way, therefore all common elements in the campaign materials are interpreted in the same way. Nevertheless, the nature of semiotics is that it is temporally specific. This means that the results of the study are only applicable for the specific campaigns and the specific time period because signifiers and signifieds are fluid and tend to change over time and acquire new meanings. Therefore, the study cannot claim to have a grasp of the entirety of

anti-trafficking campaigns, but I have attempted to perform this study in a limited manner in order to analyse the signifiers and signifieds as they appear in the data.

Finally, the data consisted of six campaigns that included 18 photographs in total. Since some campaigns contained only one image, and some as many as six, I took this into consideration when making arguments about the prevalence of a certain theme or subject matter in the study as a whole by assessing the amount of campaigns, and not images, that contain a particular element. This process was not difficult to implement since most of the campaigns follow one theme and tend to depict women in the same manner.

5.6 Relevance of the study

This study hopes to contribute to the understanding of the representation of sex trafficking in two main ways: adding to the knowledge of how to represent the victims of this crime in a victim-centred manner, and adding to the study of the dominant discourses of trafficking.

This study has given an account of the main discourses present in the representation of the victims of trafficking, and more importantly, discussed the ways in which these discourses work against the broader communities of trafficked and exploited women. A further study focusing on audience research could be performed in order to dissect the audience groups that would be receptive to specific discourses. Since trafficking is related to prostitution and irregular migration – two issues that can be very controversial in legislation and social values – studying this is pertinent. For instance, Stiles (2012: 199-200) notes that young people are most likely to be receptive to shocking advertisements, therefore, depending on the goals of a campaign, testing specific demographics and specific audience responses might yield practical suggestions for creating effective PSAs and campaigns.

Additionally, the results of this study could be used to involve the victims of trafficking into the creative process of making an anti-trafficking campaign by

comparing their evaluations of how they perceive themselves as opposed to how they are represented in these campaigns. Namely, there are several challenges to studying the victims of sex trafficking and those who are involved in the sex industry, many of them caused by the victims' mistrust of the authorities and researchers. As documented by Bosworth et al. (2011), who attempted to perform a survey of the victims of sex trafficking who were in police custody in London, U.K., a rather modest number of trafficking victims responded to their survey, leading to the conclusion that lack of trust and skepticism caused the victims' low response. However, acknowledging the dominant discourses of trafficking, and asking victims for creative input on how to best represent them in campaigns, could lead to the development of more precise campaign goals that would more effectively address the practical needs of trafficking victims in a broader sense.

Additionally, this study revealed that the goals of many of the studied campaigns are multiple and rather vague, so outlining more specific goals and informing the viewers about specific action required of them could make the campaigns more effective at accomplishing what they set out to do. The results of this study could potentially be utilised to narrow down particular aims and the corresponding discourses that need to be addressed and representations that should be avoided.

Moreover, the international legal framework addressing trafficking has been criticised for its inability to help the victims due to the requirement of proof that victims were under duress when they migrated (Leidholdt, 2003), and the focus on law enforcement rather than the victims (Skilbrei, 2010). This study has performed a discourse analysis of visual materials, but a more encompassing, larger-scale discourse analysis of the representation of victims in court rulings could be modelled after this study. This would add to the understanding of the connections between the perception of victims in legal discourse as opposed to their representation in the media.

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Appendix



Image 4: Barcode (Bought & Sold campaign)

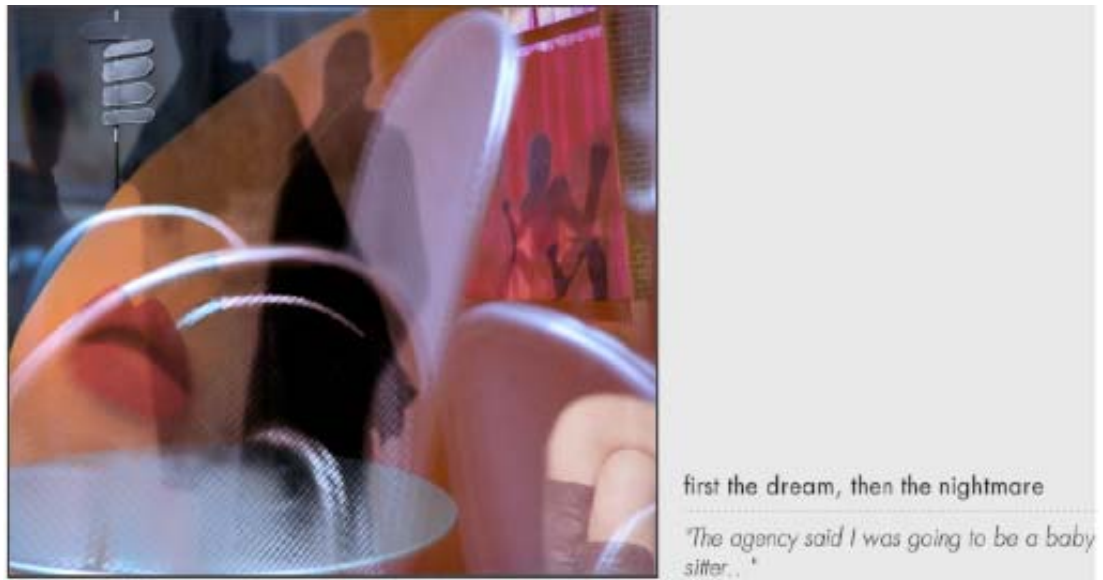


Image 4.1: First the dream (Bought & Sold campaign)



Image 6.1: Cow (Red Light Campaign)



Image 6.2: Cloth (Red Light Campaign)



Image 6.3: Dark (Red Light Campaign)

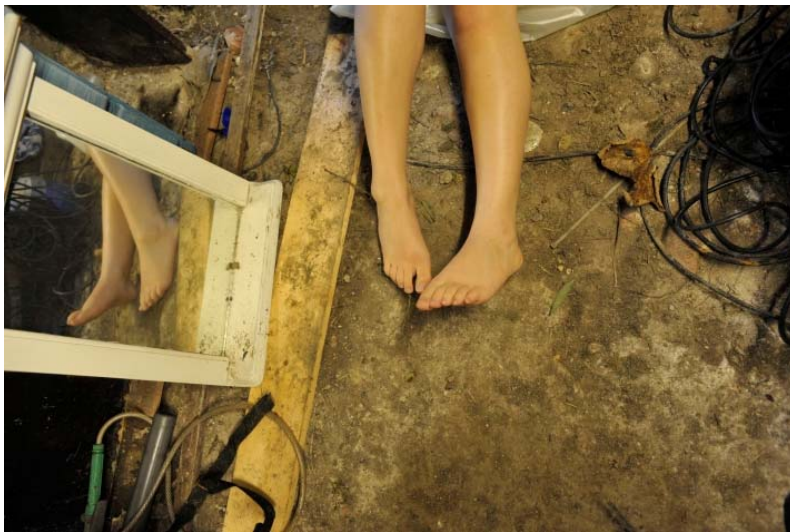


Image 6.4: Feet (Red Light Campaign)



Image 6.5: Knees cow (Red Light Campaign)

Table 1: Basic information on campaigns

Name of campaign	Organisation name	Year	Targeted region	Type of organisation
Some people are very attached to their work	Samilia Foundation (support from ECPAT)	2008	Online & Belgium	NGO, non-profit
The Body Shop campaign (Stop sex trafficking of children and young people)	The Body Shop and ECPAT international Thailand chapter	2009	45 countries worldwide. Europe, North America, South and East Asia, Pacific, Africa	NGO
Blue Campaign	US Customs and Border Protection Agency (CBA)	2010, ongoing	Online and potentially U.S.	U. S. government
Bought & Sold	ArtWorks for Freedom, Kay Chernush	2010	Online & exhibitions in Washington (2012), Netherlands (2012), Singapore (2009)	NGO, non-profit
The Blue Heart campaign	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC)	2010	Online	Helping Governments and NGOs
Red Light Campaign	Red Light Campaign	2011	Online	NGO

Table 2: List of figures and corresponding captions

Name of campaign	Image	Caption / description
Some people are very attached to their work	1	"Some people are very attached to their work. Human trafficking. Don't ignore it."
The Body Shop campaign (Stop sex trafficking of children and young people)	2	<p>"I felt so powerless. Everything was taken from me." (on photo).</p> <p>"Desperate for a higher wage she met a woman who knew people in the USA who needed a maid and would be willing to pay more than she could get at home. The woman told her there was just one problem, since she was very young with no work history it would be impossible for her to get a work visa for the U.S. Luckily, the woman knew someone that would smuggle her into the country but because of the rick involved she'd have to pay them a fee. They asked for a small deposit upfront and the rest when she was safely across the border. Not sure what to do but desperate to help her family, Maria consulted her parents and together they decided it was worth trying.</p> <p>When she got to the U.S. "Maria" was handed to her new employees who informed her that being a maid would not earn her enough money to pay her debt and she would have to sell her body. When she refused they threatened to harm her family and she was locked in a room without food or water until she begrudgingly agreed to have sex with strangers.</p> <p>"Maria" remained a prisoner for four months until the police raided the house and arrested her employers. Provided with care and medical attention, she was able to recover enough to help the police build a case against her traffickers before being returned home to the open arms of her beloved family." (caption)</p>

	<p>2,1 "I thought they were my friends. I trusted them." (on photo).</p> <p>"With a mixture of excitement and nervousness she answered an ad in her local paper and couldn't believe her luck when she was told to come and see them the next day. Her interview couldn't have gone better and to her delight she was offered the job there and then. It would be a fabulous opportunity as the shoot was in another country and she'd never been abroad. Scared her parents would stop her, she decided not to tell them until afterwards and made up a story that she was staying with a friend's family for a couple of days. The next day she arrived at the agency and was shown into a van with the other girls. Because they were all quite young they travelled with a chaperone who insisted on taking their passports for safekeeping. The long journey didn't dampen their excitement and when they eventually arrived at the location they were still too happy to notice that something was wrong. The photographer was waiting for them in the attic of a house and told them to strip. Confused, they thought there must have been a mistake but the chaperone became angry and started threatening them. What followed was a week long nightmare for the girls. Held against their will, they were forced to prostitute themselves and had a pornographic photography and film made of them.</p> <p>Back home "Sasha's" parents were frantically searching for her. None of her friends had any information to help trace her and as the days passed they grew more scared for her safety.</p> <p>"Sasha" eventually managed to escape her captors but alone and frightened in a strange city with no passport, had no idea how to get home. Too scared to go to the police in case they didn't believe her and arrested her instead and equally as scared they'd tell her parents the shameful things that had happened to her, she roamed the streets, trapped in a foreign country with no ID."</p> <p>(caption)</p>
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Blue Campaign	3	<p>Top: "Lured by fairy tale promises, she learned not every prince is charming".</p> <p>Bottom: "The commercial sex trade is thriving due to human traffickers. Innocent children, and even adults, are lured with empty promises, only to be exploited by the very people they trust. This is human trafficking, and it's a heinous crime. The Department of Homeland Security's <i>Blue Campaign</i> was created to give a unified voice to DHS agencies and their dedicated partners who combat trafficking. Learn what you can do by visiting dhs.gov/bluecampaign"</p>
Bought & Sold	4	"They sell you like a product. We girls were just part of the menu."
	4,1	"The agency said I was going to be a baby sitter [sic]..."
	4,2	"I jumped from the second floor and broke my legs. But I got free."
	4,3	"It's all about money. If I stop making the transfers, she will hire someone to harm my family."
	4,4	"It took me years to remove that mask. Finally I found myself again."
	4,5	"With this picture I reverse the voodoo onto my trafficker. I am not afraid anymore."
The Blue Heart campaign	5	Campaign materials consist of a 2-page pamphlet with 4 images of people. However, only one applies to my study since the other 3 relate to slavery and child trafficking. The pamphlet outlines the purpose of the campaign, meaning of the logo, and how to show support for the campaign.
Red Light Campaign	6	None.
	6,1	General description of images: "There are three photographs entitled 'Human Cattle'. Two of the photographs depict a young girl's body, beneath a red light, wearing a cattle mask. Cows are viewed in many cultures as sacred objects, but they are also a striking symbol of mass productivity and consumption. I made a cattle mask to be placed on a human's head to show the sacred subject that is dehumanised when productivity is valued over humanity."
	6,2	None.

	6,3	General description of images: “Another two photographs depict a young Asian face that looks inanimate, as if she were a puppet or a doll. She is swamped in white cloth that is defiled with red blotches. The cloth covers her mouth, demonstrating the painful silence of the trafficked victim. The photographs are highly symbolic, discussing ideas of censorship and entrapment that takes place in Human Trafficking.”
	6,4	None
	6,5	General description of images: “There are three photographs entitled ‘Human Cattle’. Two of the photographs depict a young girl’s body, beneath a red light, wearing a cattle mask. Cows are viewed in many cultures as sacred objects, but they are also a striking symbol of mass productivity and consumption. I made a cattle mask to be placed on a human’s head to show the sacred subject that is dehumanised when productivity is valued over humanity.”
	6,6	None.

Table 3: Semiotic analysis: signifiers

Figure. no.	Lighting	Colour	Camera angle	Shot ⁶	Editing techniques
1	Dark background, light on the subject.	Dark grey, and skin colour of legs and text.	Worm’s eye view	Medium	Woman’s shoes merged with her legs. Dark background.
2	Dark background, partial light on woman's face, hand, torso.	Black, grey background, big brown shirt, dark blue pants.	Straight angle, with body in profile, and head in 3/4 profile.	Medium	Space around body is black, around face is grey. High contrast.

⁶ The fields of view, or camera shots in a photograph are defined as follows: an extreme close-up is a shot in which the subject occupies the whole frame, a close-up is a shot in which only a modest portion of the background is visible but the subject occupies most of the frame, in a medium shot the subject is larger and dominates the frame but the background is visible, and in a wide shot, although the subject is visible, the background is much larger, and dominates over the subject (Halpin & Mansfield & Steffy, 1998).

2.1	Dark background, light on part of woman's face (partially in dark), hand, torso.	Black, grey background, blue striped, large shirt.	Straight on, but face looking down in 3/4 angle.	Medium	Space around body is black, around face is grey. High contrast.
3	Dark background, soft and even lighting.	Shades of brown, skin colour, and blue.	Straight on.	Medium	Most colours are shades of brown and blue.
4	Woman's face, man's face, illustration of a woman, money, all well lit.	Flesh coloured objects - face, head. Lively colours of illustration, money.	Straight on for all objects.	Collage, close-up of face	Barcode design on top of other images. Other images on top of each other, woman's head is largest.
4.1	Bright, all colours visible.	Hues of pink and skin colour, with black and grey silhouettes of men. Girl's boots grey, road signs grey.	Woman's legs in profile, men's silhouettes straight on, woman's lips straight on.	Collage, close-up of legs	Lips, legs, and silhouettes of men, and silhouette of a woman in a window, all merged.
4.2	Dark street and building, but light coming from the windows. Girl's naked body is well lit.	Flesh colour of the girl's body, green building, grey silhouettes of men in windows, grey chains, yellow light from windows.	Everything is straight on, both girl's body shown in profile, and men's silhouettes in windows, also in profile.	Long shot	Girl blurry, legs are broken off and in focus. Silhouettes of men and building are in focus, Girl, chains, added onto background.
4.3	Well-lit woman's middle body (torso and upper thighs).	Woman's flesh coloured body, gold shorts. Black,	Straight angle on her body.	Medium	Woman's body, with words horizontal, vertical, on

		grey, gold letters overlapping her body.			angles - on top of her image.
4.4	Overexposed woman's face in the centre, dark shadows around bright white/grey theatre masks, and light blue smoke.	White woman's face, white masks with green edges, light green and blue lines over the masks and face, dark grey shadows.	3/4 profile of woman's face, masks straight and in profile.	Collage, close-up of face	Woman's face in middle cropped tight, masks placed on top of it, and green and blue smoke on top of everything.
4.5	Woman's face in the shadow, and curtain over it. The close-up of her face is silhouette in foreground - also in shadow, but black.	Hues of red, on face, and grey and black hues on objects on the right and face on the left side.	Straight on both reflections of the face.	Close-up	Central face is overlaid with a red curtain, and face on the left is silhouette. Blades and feathers overlaid on the left face, and on the right of the image.
5	Middle range lighting, woman's face is visible but not much light. Background is dark grey and black.	Flesh colour of woman's face and man's hand on her neck, and grey and black background.	Straight on woman's face.	Close-up	Flowers below her face, that form from the white foreground of the pamphlet.
6	Dark, but daylight in the fore- and background. Men darker than the woman.	Flesh colours, but people in the shade covered with red light.	Straight shot on all three people. Girl in centre of the frame.	Long shot	None visible.
6.1	Everything in fore- and	Black fore- and	Straight on the woman.	Long shot	Fore- and background

	background black, and woman sitting in centre frame lit with yellow light.	background, yellow light on the woman.			completely black.
6.2	Everything in fore- and background black, and woman in centre frame lit with white light. High contrast.	Black fore- and background white light on the woman.	Straight on the woman, her face is tilted back (looking up), so her face is not totally visible. Also face obscured by cloth.	Medium	Fore- and background completely black.
6.3	Extremely dark, slight shade of dark yellow exposes the woman's body sitting in profile. Face obscured by black hair, arm, white shirt and bed visible.	Fore- and background black, dim yellow light on woman's head and torso, and the wall in the background on the left of the woman, and bed she is sitting on.	Straight on her upper body.	Medium	Fore- and background completely black.
6.4	Well lit, but yellow hue on the whole image.	Yellow hue on the whole image, similar to colour of woman's legs. White mirror, and black cables and tools.	Bird's eye view.	Medium	
6.5	Background very dark. Woman lit from the left,	Dark shadows everywhere, almost black.	Bird's eye view.	Medium shot	Fore - and background completely black.

	her right arm and knee lit. Her left hand almost invisible. Dark shadows on cow skull.	Woman's flesh colour, and grey of the skull.			
6.6	Well-lit, yellow hue over the whole image.	Flesh colour, and black and blue rope.	Straight on her body.	Extreme close-up	

Table 3a: Semiotic analysis: signifiers (continued)

Image	Background and setting	The body	The gaze	Active/passive
1	Dark street	Standing on street	Not visible	Passive
2	Dark room	Sitting	Straight, to the side	Passive
2,1	Dark room	Reclining	Downward	Passive
3	Dark room	Standing in front of mirror	Straight, at viewer	Passive
4	Collage	Only face visible	Straight, at viewer	Passive
4,1	Collage	Lips, legs, silhouette	Not visible	Passive
4,2	Dark, building windows	Falling from building	Not visible	Active
4,3	Collage	Neck to thighs	Not visible	Passive
4,4	Collage	Only face visible	Straight, to the side	Active
4,5	Collage	Only face visible	Not visible	Active
5	Not visible	Only face visible	Straight	Passive
6	Dark street	Standing against a wall	Straight	Passive
6,1	Dark room	Sitting on a chair	Not visible	Passive
6,2	Dark room	Only face visible	Upward	Passive
6,3	Dark room	Sitting on bed	Downward	Passive
6,4	Well-lit room	Laying, visible	Not visible	Passive

		from knees down		
6,5	Dark room	Crouching on the floor	Not visible	Passive
6,6	Not visible	Only shoulder visible	Not visible	Passive

Table 4: Iconographical symbols

Image	Background/ setting	Body (parts or whole)	Clothing
1	Dark street, night scene, shadows.	Parts. Nude legs from knee down.	Stiletto heels merged with woman's skin.
2	Dark room, chiaroscuro effect.	Whole. Sitting with legs against her chest.	Plain, big shirt and pants.
2.1	Dark room, chiaroscuro effect.	Woman sitting with her head resting on a chair.	Plain, big shirt and pants.
3	Darkened room.	Standing in front of mirror, reflection gazes at viewer	Blue tank top.
4	Foreground is a barcode. Illustration of a woman in underwear, 100e bill.	Parts. Eye and nose visible in close-up.	No visible clothing on close-up face. Illustration is wearing black underwear.
4.1	Dark street, red window. In forefront, a steel table.	Parts. Lips in centre left, and woman's legs in leather boots from thigh to calf.	Leather boots on legs, and nude window silhouette.
4.2	Apartment building with lights on in apartments. Night outside.	Nude body of woman falling from window. Hands and legs broken off.	Nude.
4.3	Blurry grey background.	Parts. Woman shown from neck to thighs.	Breasts exposed, wears tight gold shorts.
4.4	Blue smoke, 5 white theatre masks, black, green, blue rips.	Part. Close-up of woman's face, and 5 small masks around it.	None visible.
4.5	Red curtain and dark shadows	Part. Silhouette of a woman's face and shoulder, and doubled silhouette of face.	Beaded necklace and a strap of a dress on one shoulder.
5	Grey and black, blurry.	Part. Woman's face, and	None visible.

		man's hand around her neck.	
6	Dark alley lit red. Daylight in the street behind.	Woman standing in centre of frame, with 2 men on the left.	Tight white t-shirt, tight jeans, sneakers, mask over the face.
6.1	Completely black	Whole body shown, head covered by cow mask.	White underwear and white tank top.
6.2	Completely black	Part. Only upper part of the face is visible.	Cloth covering half of her face and torso
6.3	Dark with yellow reflection of light bulb.	Body in profile, visible until ankles.	White tank top visible.
6.4	Grey ground, appears to be a basement.	Part. Bare legs from knees up, laying on plastic cloth.	None visible.
6.5	Dark ground under the woman.	Parts. Her arms and part of one leg is visible.	Beige dress or skirt partially visible.
6.6	Grey	Part of upper arm and back	Black bra strap visible.

Table 4a: Iconographical symbols (continued)

Image	Men	Objects in image	Agency	Gaze
1	None	Cobblestone street, row of houses, heels.	No, her legs on display.	No visible face.
2	None	Concrete wall behind her.	No, she is afraid and alone.	Serious face, gazes into distance.
2.1	None	Concrete wall behind her, sofa.	No, she is afraid and alone.	Downward.
3	None	Bed, mirror, bathroom sink, toiletries.	Standing with hand over her belly. Protective stance.	Straight at the viewer. Sad, longing, desperate, hopeless.
4	Back of the head of 2 men, observing the illustration	100€bills, words "a gogo", illustration of a woman's body, no visible eyes.	No. Only close-up of face visible.	Face is looking at the viewer, illustration has no visible eyes, and men look at both women.

	and the close-up of the face.			
4.1	Three shadows of men, approaching the legs of the woman or the silhouette.	Street sign, steel table.	Trapped. Woman's legs in leather boots, large lips, and silhouette.	No visible faces. But men are whole, while only body parts of women are shown.
4.2	Yes, 8 silhouettes in windows.	Chains falling next to the woman, and windows.	On display. Woman's nude body in centre foreground.	None of the woman, and men are only silhouettes.
4.3	None	Only words on body: "bancomat", "international money transfer"	No. Woman's face is not visible, but her body is on display in centre of frame.	None. Woman's face is not shown.
4.4	None	5 white masks	Yes. She is taking control of her future by taking the mask off	Slightly to the right. Eyes wide open. Determined gaze.
4.5	None	2 knife blades, a rooster, feathers.	Yes. Woman's face obscured by shadow, curtain. She takes control of what the viewer sees	Face turned to the side, and eyes not visible.
5	Only man's hand around woman's neck.	None	Trapped. Woman's eye is bruised and man's hand clutches her neck.	Straight at the viewer, tears in her eyes. Pleading, sad.
6	Two. One holds her hand, handing it to the other man	Buildings between which the alley is located, and garbage bins.	No. Woman's face obscured by mask, objectified. Men hiding.	At the camera
6.1	None	Mask that covers woman's face in the shape of cow's head.	Objectification. Woman's body is on display, but we can't see her head.	None. Her head is covered.
6.2	None	Cloth covering	Trapped. Her	Upward. Looking

		woman's face.	mouth and nose is covered by cloth.	for something.
6.3	None	Bed that woman is sitting on, and wall behind her.	No. Viewer can see her, and she is in a dark room.	Face obscured by long hair. Sitting in profile.
6.4	None	Mirror, rope, wooden plank, electrical wires.	Trapped. Only bare legs shown, along with mirrored reflection.	No visible face.
6.5	None	Large cow mask covering her face.	Objectified. She is on her hands and knees, with her face down.	No visible face.
6.6	None	Rope around her arm and back, and black bra strap.	Trapped. Her arm is restrained by rope and she is wearing underwear.	No visible face.