

ALBERT, CONNIE S., Ph.D. Dark Side of Information Systems and Protection of Children Online: Examining Predatory Behavior and Victimization of Children Within Social Media. (2014)
Directed by Dr. A. F. Salam. 182 pp.

Protecting children online from sexual predators has been a focus of research in psychiatry, sociology, computer science, and information systems (IS) for many years. However, the anonymity afforded by social media has made finding a solution to the problem of child protection difficult. Pedophiles manipulate conversation (discourse) with children in social media in order to exercise power, control and coercion over children leading to their psychological and often physical victimization. Recent IS research points to “individuals, groups, and organizations that have been transformed – in intended and unintended ways – by technology” (Dang and Brown 2010, p. 2). This research examines a darker side of social media that demonstrates unintended consequences that are negatively transforming and affecting lives of children who fall victim to predatory coercion. There is a critical need for information systems research to investigate and understand how sexual predators victimize children online. The knowledge gained could help society as a whole to develop interventions to better protect children online, enabling them to use valuable online resources for education, social development and becoming better citizens in the future. In this context, this dissertation contributes to the larger research narrative of information systems and critical social issues.

This dissertation comprises three studies. Study 1 addresses how online sexual predators use social media, as a discursive system, to propagate their ideology of

acceptance of sexual acts between adults and children. Study 2 addresses how online sexual predators use and manipulate the text of institutional logics within negotiated cyber-social realities to victimize children. Study 3 examines how online sexual predators use text to construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities during the online victimization of children. Across these three studies we examined how online sexual predators used computer-mediated communications to coerce and victimize children within social media. This research introduces: (1) critical discourse analysis in information systems research to critically examine the role of social media in society, (2) an example of a mixed methods research combining critical discourse analysis, structured content analysis and grounded theory approach for the development of theory in social media and, (3) the use of institutional logics to examine social media phenomena.

The central contribution of this dissertation is the development of theoretical models that uncover ways in which power relations and effects of pedophilic ideology are manifested in language and discourse between pedophiles and children in social media. The resulting theoretical models of: (1) pedophilic ideology manifestation, coercion and victimization of children in social media, (2) cyber-victimization logic and, (3) negotiated cyber-social realities provide the foundation for further research, social intervention and policy formulation that lead to better protection of children in social media. Additionally, we present a matrix of predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media that aggregates the results of all three studies. This dissertation aims to contribute beyond the traditional focus of IS research on business and organizations, leveraging the wealth of knowledge from IS research to positively impact societal causes that affect the lives of

millions of our fellow citizens – in this particular research – millions of children that are the most vulnerable population in our society. These contributions aim to empower the powerless and expose power abuse as expressed in coercion of children leading to their victimization.

DARK SIDE OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN
ONLINE: EXAMINING PREDATORY BEHAVIOR AND
VICTIMIZATION OF CHILDREN
WITHIN SOCIAL MEDIA

by

Connie S. Albert

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
2014

Approved by

Committee Chair

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I dedicate this dissertation to Diane Barber, my heart and soul,
whose love and support made this dream attainable,
and to HollyJo and Keira, our children with paws,
for being the best companions during marathon hours of writing.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Connie S. Albert has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____
Dr. A.F. Salam

Committee Members _____
Dr. Rahul Singh

Dr. Silvia C. Bettez

Dr. Loreen Olson

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I give all glory and honor to my God. This dissertation would not exist but for His infinitely stocked storehouse of strength, perseverance and grace. This has been an incredible journey and He placed amazing individuals along the path to guarantee success.

I would like to express deep gratitude to my Dissertation Chair, Dr. A. F. Salam, for his willingness to share his research expertise as we ventured into this new realm of information systems research. His guidance, support and encouragement made this dissertation possible. I would also like to thank my three committee members, Dr. Silvia C. Bettez, Dr. Loreen Olson and Dr. Rahul Singh whose insights and suggestions were invaluable in the development of quality information systems research.

I would also like to acknowledge those individuals who provided non-scholarly but critical support during this endeavor. A special thank you goes out to: my big sister Roberta for always believing in me, my soul sister Amy for sharing her therapy skills free of charge, our friends Richard and James for giving us a place to call home during this temporary time period, and Jesse for helping me balance the scales of grad school, life and family. Lastly, a special thank you to Julie Fowlis and my friend Sara Evans whose voices provided the soundtrack to this dissertation during many hours of research and writing.

All of you had an important role in making this dissertation process a success – and I will be forever grateful.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The contents of this chapter include an overview of the three studies in this dissertation, the motivation, gap in the research, and the research questions targeted in each study.

1.1 Overview of Dissertation

In 2007, Alicia Kozakiewicz recounted, in front of the House Judiciary Committee, how she was kidnapped, tortured and raped in 2002 by an online sexual predator she had befriended in an Internet chatroom. Ten years later, the headline of a February 21, 2012 article at ArkansasOnline.com read “Body of teenager identified, apparently strangled”. Angela Allen, a sixteen year old Arkansas teen, disappeared on February 10, 2012 after meeting up with an individual whom she had chatted with online. Sadly, Angela was killed by this individual, a registered sex offender. A decade passed between these tragedies and yet Angela’s story points to the continued existence of a threat to children, rooted in the ability of individuals to utilize the Internet to hide the reality of who they are in an attempt to solicit children for illegal sexual purposes. Social media has significantly lowered barriers for interaction among individuals making it extremely easy for children to form virtual friendships with people around the world, including sexual predators. “The Internet is a particularly powerful tool for

sexual predators, giving them access to victims for extended periods of time, allowing ample opportunity to gain control of their victims or gain their victims' trust and possibly to arrange a meeting in the physical world" (McGrath & Casey, 2002, p. 87).

The ability to be unidentifiable or to remain anonymous on the Internet has been integral to the surfing experience for most Internet users. Anonymity is typically synonymous with strangers while intimacy is allocated to friends. Face-to-face interactions in physical settings provide a bridge by which anonymous strangers can transform into intimate friends (Zhao, 2006). "In the online world, however, people can get to know each other very well without ever seeing each other. Disembodied online contacts can therefore generate a relationship characterized by "anonymous intimacy" or "intimate anonymity"" (Zhao, 2006, p. 472). Although this anonymity has its benefits, specifically from a privacy protection perspective, the ability to falsify one's true intentions on the Internet has created a new public threat: a virtual world in which online predators can hide their true nature and prey on children and other vulnerable populations.

...the apparent anonymity combined with the lack of face-to-face (or even voice-to-voice) contact can easily lead to a loss of normal social inhibitions and constraints. By reducing disincentives such as embarrassment and apprehension, the Internet can encourage individuals to engage in dialogue and commit acts that they would otherwise only consider and allow the victim (and the offender) to become quickly "intimate" with someone he or she does not know. (McGrath & Casey, 2002, p. 85)

In 2006, the social networking site MySpace came under fire when the profiles of two girls, 14 and 16 years old, were used by predators to find their physical location for the purpose of perpetrating sexual assault (Williams, 2006). In a national survey of over 2,500 law enforcement agencies conducted in 2006 and 2009, the number of arrests made for “technology facilitated sex crimes against minors” (Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2012, p. 4) doubled from 1,493 to 3,007 in cases where investigators could identify the victim (Wolak et al., 2012).

Additionally, the Youth Internet Safety Survey polled youth in 2000, 2005, and 2010 regarding negative experiences on the Internet. While unwanted sexual solicitations declined across the three intervals, occurrences of aggressive solicitation remained high (Jones, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2012). Aggressive solicitations include “solicitors who established or attempted to establish offline contact by asking youth to meet them in person, calling them on the telephone, or sending them regular mail, money, or gifts” (Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak, 2007, pg. 534) and often lead to offline instances of illegal sexual contact between the solicitor and the youth (Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak, 2007). These statistics support the existence of the threat to the nation’s children and youth.

In recent years, IS researchers joined the conversation regarding children and the Internet toward the goal of protecting children online. Examples of IS research include those that examined laws and technologies regarding the protection of children’s online privacy, as well as the technologies and techniques used by parents to enact that protection (Albert & Salam, 2011; Hsiao, Belanger, Hiller, Aggarwal, Channakeshava,

Bian, & Park et al., 2007). Also, De Souza and Dick (2008) looked at what children are sharing on social networking sites and what their parents know about that information. Similar research proposed technological solutions to parental control over the information shared by children online (Xu, Irani, Zhu, and Wei, 2008). Eneman, Gillespie and Stahl (2010) added to the research through the examination of a high-profile case in Sweden, increasing the understanding of how individuals are using information and communication technologies to engage in grooming types of behavior. These examples demonstrate a research focus of protection mechanisms, as well as examination of the shared information involved in solicitation and predation of children.

There is a critical need for information systems (IS) researchers to investigate and understand how sexual predators solicit and victimize children online. The outcomes could aid society as a whole through the development of educational, behavioral and technological interventions toward improved protections of children online. Recent IS research points to “individuals, groups, and organizations that have been transformed – in intended and unintended ways – by technology” (Dang and Brown, 2010, p. 2). The darker side of social media presented in this dissertation demonstrates unintended consequences that are negatively affecting the lives of children who are victims of predatory solicitation. Social media, defined as web sites with structural and interactive features which “seem to foster ongoing discussions between their authors and their readers, making them more dialogic in nature than traditional Web sites” (Dickey and Lewis, 2010, p. 140), plays a critical role in connecting children with potential sexual predators.

Furthermore, organizations are not removed from this darker side of social media. As this new arena for citizen interaction continues to develop, corporations face increased pressure from activists through the medium of social media (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Bakker & Hellsten, 2013). Corporations must face the “increasing internal and external pressures on business organizations to fulfill broader social goals” (Aguilera et al., 2007, p. 836). These broader social goals, referred to as corporate social responsibility, are “actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law” (Bakker & Hellsten, 2013, p. 809). In addition, it can be considered “a firm’s commitment to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, local communities and society at large to improve the general quality of life” (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006, p. 113). Improving online protections for vulnerable citizen populations, such as children, can be considered a social good which could improve the general quality of life for many children. It has also been noted that “[f]irms with good social responsibility reputation may improve relations with external actors such as customers, investors, bankers, suppliers and competitors” (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006, p. 127). So, while it may initially appear as outside the interests of the firm, organizational involvement in the improvement of online protections for children could bolster corporate reputations, increase consumers’ approval, and thus create a ripple effect of improved revenue.

“At any given time, there are an estimated 750,000 child predators online” (Henry, 2011, p. 1) and the Internet is their access key to society’s children. There is significant concern that sex offenders use information divulged by children through

social media to identify potential victims (Quayle, 2002; Quayle and Taylor, 2003; Wolak, Finkelhor and Mitchell, 2004). However, a critical element has been missed in the extant IS literature. While it is accepted that predators do solicit children online, it is not clear how they identify vulnerable children through divulged information and then transform those children into victims within the text-based medium of social media.

This dissertation addresses this darker side of information systems, in relation to the larger social context, by examining how online sexual predators manipulate discourse within social media toward the goal of victimization of children. This dissertation is composed of six chapters. The topic of the dissertation is presented in this first chapter. The significance of this dissertation into the body of knowledge regarding the predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media is introduced. Additionally, the three studies within the dissertation are offered, inclusive of the motivation, research gap and research questions for each study.

Chapter 2 includes the presentation of the extant literature that is pertinent to the background for all three studies. Those topics include predator and child interaction in social media (Berson, 2003; Quayle and Taylor, 2011; Shannon, 2008), predator-victim discourse (Elliott, Beech, Mandeville-Norden, and Hayes, 2009; Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor, 2008; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008), detection of online sexual predators (Kontostathis, Edwards, Bayzick, Leatherman, & Moore, 2009; Kontostathis, Edwards, & Leatherman, 2010; Olson, Daggs, Ellevold, & Rogers, 2007; Thom, Kontostathis, & Edwards, 2011), coercion by the online predators (Anderson, 2008; Beynon-Davies, 2010), vulnerabilities displayed by potential victims (Selymes, 2011; Thacker, 1992) and

the negotiated cyber-social realities (Azad & Faraj, 2011) that are created through shared conversation between the online predators and the potential victims. Specifically, coercion is broken down into the acts of power, activity control and intention alteration as enacted by online sexual predators (Anderson, 2008). The vulnerabilities of the potential victims are social control (Selymes, 2011), reactance and learned helplessness (Thacker, 1992). In the studied phenomenon, the spaces of negotiated cyber-social reality (Azad & Faraj, 2011) are constructed through dyadic conversations in online social media (Mir, 2012; Rauniar, Rawski, Johnson, & Yang, 2013) and are carried out by online sexual predators and potential victims.

Chapter 3 is comprised of Study 1 titled Predatory Coercion and Victimization of Children in Social Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach. To the author's knowledge, this is the first information systems study to employ Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze discourse between online sexual predators and potential victims in social media. The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of how online sexual predators use social media, as a discursive system, to propagate their ideology of the acceptance of sexual acts between adults and children.

The extant literature for Study 1 is presented in Chapter 2. Thus, Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This approach was chosen as it enables the evaluation of chat transcripts through examination of the text itself, the relationship of the text to the sender and receiver as well as the connections between the message of the text and the larger society. These three perspectives make it a suitable choice for studying a social media phenomenon. The framework for the methodology,

along with a description of the data and the procedure are included in the chapter. In this context, IS research can contribute to larger social issues, beyond its traditional focus on business and organizations, leveraging the wealth of knowledge from IS research to positively impact societal causes that affect the lives of millions of our fellow citizens – in this particular research – millions of children that are the most vulnerable population in our society. “The arguably most important property of critical research is that it is based on a critical intention to make a difference. Critical research is never purely descriptive but wants to change social reality” (Stahl & Brooke, 2008, p. 52). Toward a goal of making a difference through increased online protection of children, in this chapter, we present a theoretical model of victimization of children, in social media, by sexual predators. The findings, implications and limitations of the study are also discussed.

In Chapter 4, we present Study 2 entitled Predatory Coercion and Victimization of Children in Social Media: An Institutional Logics View. Institutional logics are “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005). The findings of Study 1 indicate that social media is a virtual space in which online predators and children interact in negotiated cyber-social realities. In addition, social media is becoming embedded in the social lives of society’s children. “Young people everywhere link up through IM, Twitter, blogs, smartphones, and social networking sites that are proliferating at an accelerating rate” (Brown, 2011, p. 30). It is a platform where individuals can express institutional logics through text. Thus, an

institutional logics view provides another lens through which to analyze predators' methods of using and manipulating negotiated cyber-social realities to victimize children within social media. We use Structured Content Analysis (Backman & Hentinen, 2001; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Latvala, Janhonen, & Moring, 2000) in this study to identify how online sexual predators use and manipulate the text of institutional logics within negotiated cyber-social realities to victimize children. Literature regarding institutional logics is presented in the theoretical model section along with degrees of victimization developed by the author. The chapter wraps up with a discussion of the findings, implications and limitations of the study.

Chapter 5 includes Study 3, titled Examining the Construction of Social Realities During Predatory Coercion and Victimization of Children in Social Media: A Grounded Theory Approach. As previously stated, the theoretical findings from Study 1 indicate that online sexual predators do engage potential victims within negotiated cyber-social realities within social media conversations. The theoretical findings from Study 2 indicate that online sexual predators do use and manipulate institutional logics within negotiated cyber-social realities to victimize children. However, it cannot be assumed that institutional logics explain all text used and manipulated by online sexual predators in the victimization of children. Thus, the aim of Study 3 is the examination of the text of negotiated cyber-social realities within online child victimization to develop a model of *how* online sexual predators use text to construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities during the online victimization of children. As such, Grounded Theory is the appropriate methodology to fulfill that aim (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Olson, Daggs,

Ellevold, & Rogers, 2007; Strauss and Corbin, 2008). The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings, implications and limitations of the study.

The final chapter, Chapter 6, ties the three studies together. Using the concepts from all three studies a matrix of predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media is presented. Implications for the entire dissertation are discussed. The contributions for each study and the dissertation as a whole are offered. The dissertation then closes with a discussion of the limitations and possibilities for future research.

1.2 Research Motivation

The following three sections outline the motivations for each of the three studies presented in this dissertation.

1.2.1 Study 1 Research Motivation. A societal fear of sex offenders and their presence online has received much attention in sociology research over the past ten years. Generally, there is concern that sex offenders utilize the Internet to gain access to young victims, lurking in online locations typically accessed by children or young people. There is significant concern that the information divulged on social networking sites is being used by sex offenders to identify potential victims (Quayle, 2002; Quayle and Taylor, 2003; Wolak, et. al., 2004).

Research in sociology and psychology has addressed social aspects of these technology-facilitated crimes through the study of the vulnerabilities of children and youth to the threat of online sexual solicitation (Jones et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2007, 2008; Wolak et al., 2004, 2012), characteristics of online predators (Elliott, Beech, Mandeville-Norden, and Hayes, 2009; Quayle, 2002; Quayle and Taylor, 2003), and the

pervasiveness of sexual solicitations on particular types of websites (Mitchell, et. al., 2008; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008). As Dombrowski, LeMasney, Ahia, and Dickson, 2004 stated “[t]he cost to children and society of sexual perpetration is too great to overlook the hazards of online solicitation” (pg. 71). These studies not only affirm the existence of the phenomenon, they provide insight into the behavioral aspects of the predators: their characteristics as individuals and use of websites for solicitation of children. Although these social science and IS studies provide significant insight into predatory behavior and child victimization, most have ignored discourse mechanisms used by sexual predators to solicit and victimize children online. Discourse mechanisms include the linguistic features of text, the relationship of the sender and receiver to each other and the text as well as the impact of the chosen text (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2005) Acts of victimization inherently include power differences among social actors. Social media facilitates such enactment of power imbalances manifested through communication and language as expressed in the discourse between children and sexual predators.

There is also a belief system or ideology held by the sexual predators that justifies the enactment of power differences to implement predatory ideology-based social practices. Ideology can be defined as:

a system of collectively held normative and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of conduct, which its proponents seek to promote, realise, pursue or maintain. (Hamilton, 1987, p. 38)

In essence, predatory ideology maintains that it is normal to have sexual relationships among adults and children, even though the larger society vehemently opposes such ideology and social practices. For example, online pedophile communities often use the term child love to refer to their attraction to children (Durkin, 2009). Jenkins (2001) found a subculture of child pornography that expresses several beliefs and concepts to its members including justification of child love, ethical and political statements that expressed a desire to push for a social movement for child love to make pedophilic behavior more acceptable by the larger society. Holt, Blevins and Burkert (2010), analyzed and explored the presence of a pedophilic subculture online. The findings defined a pedophile identity as well as the boundaries of their subculture. These subcultures also affect the attitudes and beliefs of pedophiles and justify involvement in deviance through rejection of larger social norms (Becker, 1963).

IS literature, in particular, has remained largely silent on critical research related to how predatory ideology and power differences between adults and children manifest in communication and language in social media thus opening the door for victimization of children. “Due to the critical intention, critical research often centers on topics where the injustices of our current world are most visible and where critical research can make a difference” (Stahl & Brooke, 2008, p. 52). It is essential that such social practices, in social media, be critically examined as they have significant implications for the well-being of children and the larger society. Additionally, “[a]rchived text messages capture and preserve the flow of expressed subjectivity that can be retrieved later for careful

examination and reflection” (Zhao, 2006, p. 462), situating information systems researchers squarely in the domain of the phenomenon.

1.2.2 Study 2 Research Motivation. As previously noted, the findings and theoretical model in Study 1 exemplified that online sexual predators do construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities during predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media. However, those findings do not provide an explanation of how the construction and control is enacted by the online sexual predators. Study 2 takes a deeper look into the negotiated cyber-social realities through the lens of institutional logics.

Within this globally connected virtual world of social media “multiple worldviews coexist within processes of negotiated interaction” (Vasconcelos, 2007 p. 125). What is the origin of these multiple worldviews? One perspective is that they originate in the institutions of society defined as “the humanly devised schemas, norms, and regulations that enable and constrain the behavior of social actors and make social life predictable and meaningful” (Hargrave & Van De Ven, 2006, p. 866). In Western culture those are commonly known as family, community, state, profession, corporation, religion and market (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005). Individuals, referred to as actors, function within these institutions through the use of institutional logics. These logics are defined as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material

subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005, p. 101). For example, what do individuals say and do that allows them to be identified as a member of a family, a community, a religion?

It is important to note that memberships in institutions are not mutually exclusive. Every person’s behavior is regulated and constrained by multiple institutions (Lok, 2010; Thornton & Ocasio, 2005). For example, a man (actor) can be a father (family membership) who lives in a town (community membership) and works as a doctor (professional membership). At the same time, he is subject to the laws of the government in which he lives (state membership). Online sexual predators are these individuals. They live and work in communities. They coexist with society’s children and share an understanding of the logics of the institutions in which children live and learn (Elliott et al., 2009; Robertiello & Terry, 2007). Predators know that children “are dependent on adults for their perceptions of right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, ordinary or normal, and exceptional or deviant” (Young, 1997, p. 286).

The institutional logics known to predators and children are their worldviews, their social realities. These logics are how each predator and child defines and makes sense of the world in which he/she lives (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005; Vasconcelos, 2007). Social media provides an overlap platform where these social realities can be negotiated. It is a place where online sexual predators are afforded the opportunities to invoke and manipulate shared institutional logics to influence the perceptions of children toward the acceptance of sexual relations between adults and children. “Especially for young people, relationships made in virtual space can be just as powerful and meaningful as those

formed in the real world” (Brown, 2011, p. 30). Thus, understanding how online sexual predators are invoking and manipulating institutional logics in negotiated cyber-social realities with children is increasingly important. Identifying how online sexual predators construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities during predatory coercion and victimization of children can aid in educating children, parents/guardians, law enforcement, etc. and increasing the online protections for children.

1.2.3 Study 3 Research Motivation. An outcome of the first study was the identification of predators’ creation of negotiated cyber-social realities as a means to propagate their beliefs and victimize children. However, as a research approach, CDA focuses on uncovering “the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of our written text or oral speech in order to resist and overcome various forms of “power over” or to gain an appreciation that we are exercising power over, unbeknownst to us” (McGregor 2003, p. 15). The explicit objectives of CDA are “to effect change – the emancipation of participants in the discourse and the improvement of social affairs and relations” (Cukier, Ngwenyama, Bauer, & Middleton, 2009, p. 177). Thus, CDA does not include as a goal the understanding of how online sexual predators create and control the negotiated cyber-social realities used to deceive and victimize children within social media. Therefore, the purpose of Study 3 is to gain an understanding of how predators create those negotiated cyber-social realities. While it is informative to know that online sexual predators enact coercion to manipulate children, even more beneficial is knowing *how* they enact coercion. Thus, Study 3 goes further in analysis to reveal the techniques

employed by online sexual predators to develop negotiated cyber-social realities during the coercion and victimization of children within social media.

Study 1 revealed text that specifically denoted the use of coercion by online sexual predators and the display of vulnerabilities by children within social media conversations. Study 2 revealed text that exemplified online predators' use of institutional logics in the construction and control of negotiated cyber-social realities. However, a deeper understanding may be achieved by not assuming that all text within social media conversations between online sexual predators and potential victims are coercion, vulnerabilities or institutional logics. Thus, a methodology that allows for examination of the text to identify behaviors and constructs that fall outside of the purview of Studies 1 and 2 may define a more complete picture of predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media.

Therefore, Grounded Theory is the chosen approach because it is an interpretive paradigm. Rather than viewing the data via *a priori* theory and hypothesis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2008), Grounded Theory provides a mechanism to develop theory from the data. This method is used to uncover textual elements within negotiated cyber-social realities that may fall outside of the constructs of coercion and vulnerabilities in Study 1 or institutional logics in Study 2. Through utilization of data for theory development the constructs revealed in answer to the research question are obtained via evidentiary evolution of interpretive coding techniques. In Study 3, we utilize the theoretical model from Study 1 to group transcripts based upon predator behavior, along with a review of the literature on grooming/solicitation of children.

1.3 Research Gap and Research Questions

The following three sections include presentations of the research gap addressed by each of the three studies within this dissertation.

1.3.1 Study 1 Research Gap. Social media are defined as web sites with structural and interactive features which “seem to foster ongoing discussions between their authors and their readers making them more dialogic in nature than traditional Web sites” (Dickey and Lewis, 2010, p. 140). Within this globally connected virtual social world “multiple worldviews coexist within processes of negotiated interaction” (Vasconcelos, 2007, p. 125). Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, Ehrlich and Sabshin (1964) defined these multiple worldviews as universes of discourse. This universe of discourse is evident in the communications. Social systems and the links within and across them can be examined inside of social media, characterizing it as a discursive system.

Much of the discourse may involve struggles over power, representation, and access to resources, but it is no less discursive just because some actors have greater influence to begin with. The value of the discursive perspective is that it forces us to deal with the fluid nature of meaning and what falls in-between conceptual polarities rather than on reified concepts and the polar extremes themselves. (Story, 2000, p.115)

As a discursive system, online social media affords social construction of reality where actors negotiate shared realities through dialog, interpretation and communicative acts (Searle, 1995; 2010). As a discursive system, social media play an even more crucial role by allowing predators to construct a virtual environment of victimization through discourse. The interconnectivity of this discursive system at the outset or at the initial stage negates the need for physical contact in the emotional and psychological

victimization of children. However, many times this online victimization leads to physical victimization as described in the early part of this dissertation.

Researchers in sociology and psychology have investigated the identification and understanding of online predator characteristics. Studies affirmed differences between online and offline predators (Elliott, et al., 2009), the relevance of studying the Internet's impact within the phenomenon (Quayle 2002; Quayle and Taylor, 2003) as well as the types of websites predators frequent on the Internet (Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor, 2008; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008). While these studies identified important aspects of the phenomenon, they did not investigate the contextual discourse between predators and children in an online environment such as social media. As an information system, social media allows a unique look into the phenomenon of child sexual abuse. Prior to the advent of online victimization, research on child sexual abuse was conducted on the offline phenomenon. In this context it is often necessary to find other sources of evidence as most acts of child victimization are reported after the event occurs (McGrath & Casey, 2002) and the memories of the predators and children cannot capture every exact word and behavior in the abuse act. However, "by recording the interactions between offenders and victims, the Internet offers psychiatrists and other investigators a rare insight into offender-victim interaction and grooming, concealment, and power assertion behavior" (McGrath & Casey, 2002, p. 81).

Similarly, from the victims' perspective, researchers have studied how children are vulnerable to the threat of online predators. Studies revealed that children are sending personal information to people they meet online (Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak, 2007),

posting personal information in blogs (Mitchell et al., 2008) and meeting adult offenders in chat rooms (Wolak et al., 2004). These studies reveal the online behaviors of children and their susceptibility to aggressive online solicitation. In corroboration with the aforementioned studies on predators, the extant literature affirms the phenomenon with the facts that predators are seeking children in the online environment where information sharing inhibitions are lowered and children are reaching out to unknown individuals – thus creating natural dynamics where sexual predators can and do entice children for victimization.

The key underlying factor is the use of social media by predators to propagate the ideology of sex offenders: the acceptability of adults having sexual relations with children. Fairclough (2003) defined ideologies as “representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation. They may be enacted in ways of interacting (and therefore in *genres*) and inculcated in ways of being or identities (and therefore *styles*)” (p. 218). As previously noted, subcultures of pedophiles profess their belief in child love (Durkin, 2009; Jenkins, 2001) and organizations like the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) advocate the abolition of all age of consent laws (DeYoung, 1988). Online predators “have a greater investment in impression management because of the perceived seriousness of their offenses” (Blumenthal, Gudjonsson and Burns, 1999, p. 137). The impressions or identities that the predators choose to display within social media are guided by their beliefs and desires regarding adult engagement in sexual acts with children. However, research has found that sex offenders engage in thinking errors

referred to as cognitive distortions. Through those distortions, sex offenders are able to justify their sex acts with children even though society deems those acts unacceptable. One of those distortions is a belief that “they are in “love” with their victim” (McLaughlin, 2004, p. 2). Other distortions include the belief that not only did the sexual acts not harm the child, the child actually enjoyed the contact (Fisher, 1999; Lawson, 2003). Additionally, it was found that sex offenders take a position of passivity in the narrative of the offense, misrepresenting realities of the situation to rationalize their actions (DeLong, Durkin and Hundersmarck, 2010). This is their “vocabulary of motive” (Blumenthal et al. 1999, p. 140): a reinterpretation of their actions in which they use “attitudes and beliefs to justify an offending lifestyle” (Blumenthal et al. 1999, p. 140). These justifications allow them to live out an ideology that approves of sexual contact between adults and children.

The sex offender ideology can manifest within social media through the mechanics of the ‘text’ shared between predators and children. As previously noted, ideologies are “socially shared beliefs that are associated with the characteristic properties of a group” (van Dijk, 2004, p. 12). Discourse provides a mechanism by which those shared beliefs can be communicated. Word choice, intonation, choice of included and excluded information as well as selected font style, color and use of artifacts such as photos and videos can all be used to implicitly or explicitly communicate ideologies (Mumby, 1989; van Dijk, 2004). Predators may choose text rich in power words. These words serve to evoke feelings in the child such as fear, safety or security. Predators may also choose words that attempt to control the activities of the child. They may twist

information shared by children to convince them of the ‘rightness’ of a sexual relation between an adult and a child. At its base, the predator ideology is about the power an adult can wield over a child through coercion.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as a research approach and philosophy, includes a critical dimension integral and conducive to revealing and investigating the text and social practices involved in coercion and power differences between predators and children in online discourse. CDA may be defined as fundamentally interested in analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, coercion, discrimination, and control as manifested in language use or in discourse (Wodak, 1995). CDA views language as discourse, understood as an element of the social processes, which is dialectically related to others. Relations between language and other elements of social processes are dialectical. The epistemological interests in this form of critical research include explicating how these dialectical processes and relations are shaped by relations of power. Also, they focus on how the dialectics of discourse figures in the constitution and consolidation of forms of social life which lead to and perpetuate injustices and inequalities and are detrimental to the well-being of social actors (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2010).

Van Dijk (1993) essentially perceives discourse analysis as ideology analysis, because according to him, "ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies" (p. 17). Halliday (1970) proposed three interconnected meta-functions of language: (1) the ideational function through

which language lends structure to experience where the ideational structure has a dialectical relationship with the social structure simultaneously reflecting and influencing it, (2) the interpersonal function which accounts for relationships between the participants, and (3) the textual function which accounts for coherence and cohesion in text. Discourse between pedophiles and children often include, along with text, non-verbal semiotic elements such as pictures, photographs, videos, emoticons that following Van Dijk's (1995) conceptualization can be considered to represent or embody ideology of sexual predation. Pedophiles use language to create social structures through dialects as well as build relationships leading to coercion and victimization of children – an ultimate expression of their ideology that it is acceptable to have relationships between adults and children.

CDA aims to uncover ways in which social structure impinges on discourse patterns, relations, and models in the form of power relations or coercion, ideological effects and treats these relations as problematic. In the realm of CDA, it is not enough to lay bare the social dimensions of language use but that these dimensions are the object of moral evaluation and analyzing these should have effects in society: empowering the powerless, giving voice to the voiceless, exposing power abuse and mobilizing people to remedy social wrongs (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). As such, the spirit of CDA in this research is to find means to empower the weak (Wodak, 1995) – in this case children, parents and/or guardians or concerned citizens - through clarification of pedophilic discourse and manifestation of pedophilic ideology in social media. Exposing how pedophilic ideology is manifested in discourse can inform society and potentially enable

educated corrective action to improve protection of children online through social and technological interventions. In the absence of this knowledge, social and technological interventions are likely to be ineffective or under informed. Interestingly, IS research has remained relatively silent in this context.

Information systems researchers are uniquely situated to intervene and address these larger societal problems related to IS. It is critical that we step into this role, given the rapid and unending proliferation of social media technologies in all spheres of human lives. This study aims to contribute to this larger research context with the hope that further IS research will bring significant societal benefits in relation to better protections of children online. The use of Critical Discourse Analysis is proposed to examine how the discursive system of social media creates a platform on which online predators can manifest and propagate their ideology through discourse in order to manipulate and gain control of the discourse to coerce and victimize children online. The research question that focuses Study 1 is: *How do online sexual predators manifest and propagate their ideology through social media, as a discursive system, to coerce and victimize children?*

1.3.2 Study 2 Research Gap. Institutional logics offer generalized rules which dictate the degree of appropriateness of specific practices in particular circumstances or social context. Various institutional logics form the basis of identities, interests and actions for social actors. They generate value and provide vocabularies of motive (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005). However, not everyone operates with the same motives or agrees with the dictated definition of ‘appropriate practices’. Sexual predators are one such group. Pedophile organizations have been promoting an alternate logic of sexual

relations among adults and children for decades, one that espouses benefits to children who engage in sexual relations with adults. The Rene Guyon Society (1962), Pedophile Information Exchange (1974), Norwegian Pedophile Group, Amnesty for Child Sexuality, and the Netherlands Association for Sexual Reform are examples of these groups (DeYoung, 1988). The logics promoted by these groups are viewed as deviant by the society at large (Merton, 1959).

Deviance is considered a vagrant form of human activity, moving outside the more orderly currents in social life (Erikson, 1960). We can define institutional norms as the boundaries between prescribed behaviors and proscribed behaviors in a particular institutional setting. Institutional norms set the limits between which the institutional means are prescribed – the limits of legitimate behaviors in a particular institution. Beyond the norms lie illegitimate behaviors (Dubin, 1959). Merton (1957) proposed a typology of deviant behavior which included four modes of adaptation: innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. The discussion on innovation is most pertinent in the case of pedophiles who actively seek sexual relations with children which are considered illegitimate behaviors (Dubin, 1959) by the larger society. As previously stated, individuals in this subculture have membership across multiple Western culture institutions (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005). They coexist within these institutions with their potential victims, society's children. Yet, rather than conform to the institutional logics of their memberships, they distort the cognitive building blocks of those logics in order to mask their predatory identity, share their sexual interests and alter the actions of the victims (Blumenthal et al., 1999; DeLong et al., 2010; Durkin, 2009).

Philips, Lawrence, and Hardy (2004) described processes through which discourses provide the socially constituted, self-regulating mechanisms that enact institutions and shape individual behavior. Discourses are structured collections of meaningful texts (Parker, 1992). The term text refers to not just written transcriptions but to any kind of “symbolic expression requiring a physical medium and permitting storage” (Taylor and Van Every, 1993: pp. 109). Ideas and objects that comprise organizations, institutions, and the social world in general are created and maintained through the relationships among discourse, text and action, underscoring the importance of linguistic processes and language as fundamental to the construction of social reality (Chia, 1996; Gergen, 1999; Phillips and Hardy, 2002).

Words are conventional linguistic expressions - the written, oral, or signed symbols or language (Murphy, 2003). Vocabularies are systems of words, and the meaning of these words used by collectives - groups, organizations, communities of practice, and institutional fields-in communication, thought and action (Loewenstein et al., 2012). Institutional logics are expressed through the use, evolution and manipulation of these vocabularies. Burke (1935) noted that although culturally and socially constructed, a vocabulary can be altered and innovated: “We invent new terms, or apply old vocabulary in new ways, attempting to socialize our position by so manipulating the linguistic equipment of our group...we invent new accounts of motive” (pp. 52-53). By learning the vocabularies of groups and subcultures, individuals learn the values, beliefs, and practices of the collective, shaping how they think and communicate (Loewenstein et al., 2012). Berger and Luckmann (1967) linked vocabularies to legitimation and social

construction. Pedophiles, being part of the pedophilic subculture and using deviant institutional logics, learn the vocabularies of the pedophilic social collective which then shape their values, beliefs and practices as reported in both psychological and subcultural studies of pedophilia (Blumenthal et al., 1999; DeLong et al., 2010; T Ward et al., 1997; Rosenmann and Safir, 2006; Holt, Blevins and Burkert, 2010). These studies highlight the psychological distortions that lead to the justification that sexual relationships between adults and children are acceptable behaviors and expressions of “child love”.

In this research, we conceptualize online sexual predators as institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana, 2006) with deviant behavior (Dubin, 1959; Merton, 1957). Institutional entrepreneurs can be either organizations or groups of organizations or individuals or groups of individuals (Battilana, 2006). The notion of institutional entrepreneur originates from the concept of human agency, which refers to individuals' ability to intentionally pursue interests and to have some effect on the social world, altering the rules or the distribution of resources (Scott, 2001). Online sexual predators qualify as institutional entrepreneurs, albeit with deviant behavior, because they break the accepted institutional logics of the larger society - that it is not acceptable to have sexual relationship between adults and children - and because this deviant behavior is harmful to children. Social actors exposed to contradictory institutional arrangements are thus less likely to take existing arrangements for granted and more likely to question, and possibly diverge from them (Battilana, Leca and Boxenbaum, 2009). This can be seen in the case of pedophiles who forgo the institutional logics of the larger society in favor of the deviant institutional logics of the pedophilic subculture and pedophilic organizations.

Pedophiles as institutional entrepreneurs make use of specific “institutional vocabularies”, including structures of words, expressions, and meanings, which are used by these institutional entrepreneurs to articulate, manipulate and recombine institutional logics (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005 p. 43).

The question then remains, how do online sexual predators, as institutional entrepreneurs, use and manipulate institutional logics to construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities and thus victimize children through discourse in social media? Given the rapid and unending proliferation of social media technologies in the lives of society’s children, it is critical that we step up to investigate social media’s propagation of ideologies through the use of institutional logics within social media. In Study 1 we utilized Critical Discourse Analysis to study the discourse structure of social media conversations between online sexual predators and potential victims. Though the use of logics was evident within the discourse, we did not specifically address how online sexual predators invoked and manipulated institutional logics within negotiated cyber-social realities. In Study 2 we focus our investigation on how pedophiles, as institutional entrepreneurs, invoke and manipulate institutional logics in pursuit of their deviant behavior. To date, no IS study examines the use of institutional logics by individuals within social media. The current study does so within the context of predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media. The research question that focuses Study 2 is: *How do online sexual predators use embedded institutional logics to dominate and manipulate online interpersonal relationships with children?*

1.3.3. Study 3 Research Gap. A commonly understood aspect of child sexual abuse is the sexual grooming of children by predators. Grooming is referred to as “the subtle communication strategies that child sexual abusers use to prepare their potential victims to accept the sexual contact” (Olson et al., 2007, p. 241). These communication strategies are the discourse of predators and the vocabularies they use as described in Study 2. Prior research on the offline phenomenon of child sexual abuse has found grooming to be an integral part of the child sexual abuse process (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006; Lang & Frenzel, 1988; Olson, Daggs, Ellevold, & Rogers, 2007; Singer, Hussey, & Strom, 1992; Young, 1997). However, research has not solidly established grooming as an integral part of online predatory coercion and victimization of children in social media. Two prior studies attempt to identify themes of grooming in online interaction between sexual predators and potential victims. O’Connell (2003) employed participant observation and conversation analysis to explore online grooming. Williams et al. (2013) utilized a thematic analysis method. Both studies examined transcripts of conversations between online sexual predators and potential victims. However, O’Connell’s (2003) study involved the author posing as a potential victim ages 8, 10 or 12. Research has found that online sexual predators most often target youth in the early teens as opposed to young children (Jones et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2007; Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2006). Williams et al. (2013) examined only eight transcripts, all of which met two criteria: (1) grooming appears in the initial hour of conversation, and (2) there was no immediate sexual contact or demonstrated aggression.

The age limit of the decoy in O'Connell (2003) and the limited number of transcripts in William et al. (2013) are problematic in establishing grooming as an integral part of online predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media. The aim of Study 3 is to move the research on grooming forward and improve its definition as part of online predatory coercion and victimization of children. Findings from both Study 1 and Study 2 indicate that the online predatory behaviors of the convicted adults spanned the conversation and that not all conversations included grooming within the first hour. Specifically, the findings of Study 1 showed that some online predators do not invoke grooming behaviors at all, and that the point at which sexual content was introduced varied across groups of conversations. Additionally, while situated in the setting of social media, the aforementioned studies do not include the notion of negotiated cyber-social realities. These gaps paint a larger picture of online predatory coercion that may not be explained with the current vocabulary of online sexual grooming. Also, to address the extant literature findings that online sexual predators typically target teens (Jones et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2007; Wolak et al., 2006) Study 3 includes the use of a dataset in which the potential victims are an average age of 13-14 years old.

Study 1 offers a view of the structure of the discourse of online social media conversations between predators and potential victims, resulting in a theoretical model based upon predator coercion and victim vulnerabilities. This study establishes predator construction and control of negotiated cyber-social realities. Study 2 deepens this resultant understanding through identification of institutional logics utilized and

manipulated by predators in discourse with potential victims. Broadening the examination further, Study 3 provides a view of online predatory coercion and victimization of children that is not bound by a priori theory or hypotheses. Vocabularies of predatory discourse emerge from the data to address the question: *How do sex offenders construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Predator and Child Interaction in Social Media

Sex offenders, also referred to as sexual predators, have been operating within society for generations. In 1937, J. Edgar Hoover's *War on the Sex Criminal* was published in the New York Herald-Tribune. He was quoted as saying, “[t]he sex fiend, most loathsome of all the vast army of crime, has become a sinister threat to the safety of American childhood and womanhood” (Frosch & Bromberg, 1939, p. 761). This statement opened the door for expanded research into sex crimes and the individuals who perpetuate them. Research has found that sex offenses are both criminal and public health problems and that sexual victimization can have both long-term and traumatic effects (Robertiello & Terry, 2007). Within the online environment, sexual predators are typically adult sex offenders, their predatory behaviors revolve around seduction, and the victims are underage teenagers (Wolak et al., 2008).

The Internet “provides a new context where curious and rebellious minors can be seduced and manipulated” (Berson 2003, p. 13) through the predators skills at establishing trust with a child and then deceiving him/her “with charm and feigned affection” (Berson 2003,p.12). This view of the Internet paints a picture of a virtual world ripe with the affordances for predators to groom children. Grooming is referred to as the reduction of a child’s inhibitions “through active engagement, desensitization, power and

control” (Berson 2003, p. 11). Shannon (2008) examined police reports to garner an understanding of the specific methods used by adults to groom children for sexual contact both online and offline. Elements of online contact such as persuading the “victim to send sexual pictures” (Shannon, 2008, p. 170) or using “blackmail against the victim” (Shannon, 2008, p. 170) give evidence to the notion that some type of coercion exists within these types of interactions.

While Berson (2003) and Shannon (2008) discussed the acts of individuals, Quayle and Taylor (2011) supported the importance of examining the environment in which the crimes are taking place. They presented the social elements of online social networking that affect sexual predators. Through online social interaction with other predators they are able to justify their ideology through “involvement in deviance through a rejection of larger social norms” (Quayle and Taylor, 2011, p. 47). So, while predators reject the social norm of boundaries between children and adults, children are making themselves potential targets for those predators by posting personal information online, talking with strangers and adding those strangers to their buddy lists (Wolak & Ybarra, 2008).

2.2 Predator-Victim Discourse

The Internet is an open context in which children can be sexually exploited and victimized. “Without much effort, a child may inadvertently or deliberately be exposed to on-line content that is obscene, pornographic, violent, racist, or otherwise offensive” (Berson, 2003, p. 10). Online sexual predators take advantage of the mechanism of social media and the vulnerability of children, as evidenced by Angela Allen and Alicia

Kozakiewicz's stories. A commonly presented method used by online sexual predators is grooming, defined as "a process that commences with sex offenders choosing a target area that is likely to attract children, and then developing a bond as a precursor to abuse" (Quayle & Taylor, 2011, p. 46). This sets the stage for a definition of an online groomer as "someone who has initiated online contact with a child with the intention of establishing a sexual relationship involving cybersex or sex with physical contact" (Quayle & Taylor, 2011, p. 46).

In a study of 315 Swedish police reports of "sexual offences against persons under 18 years of age where the perpetrator and the victim had been in contact with one another online" (Shannon, 2008, p. 164) four categories of cases were identified: (a) predator/victim online contact only, (b) predator/victim online contact with proof that an offline illegal sex act was committed, (c) predator/victim online and offline contact with no proof of an illegal sex act, (d) instances when the predator/victim knew each other offline and the Internet was used to exploit the child for sex. These categories give insight into the types of interactions that occur between online sexual predators and potential child victims. For the cases when an illegal sex act was committed, the authors did identify that some predators made promises to get the child modeling work or offered to pay for sexual services (Shannon, 2008).

Researchers have also investigated the identification and understanding of online predator characteristics. One study affirmed differences between online and offline (contact) predators. It revealed that Internet offenders are less likely to be repeat offenders or escalate to offline sexual abuse. Also, they scored higher on empathic

concerns than contact sex offenders and are able to relate to fictional characters which lends to potential success in psychotherapy (Elliott et al., 2009). Another aspect of online predator behavior manifests in the types of websites predators frequent (Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor, 2008; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008). The studies conducted by Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor and Ybarra (2008) found that instant messaging services, dyadic and dialogic by design, were the choice online medium for predator use in aggressive solicitations of children rather than online journals, blogs and social networking sites. The current study expands upon this finding through the choice to examine dyadic instant message conversations between online sexual predators and potential victims.

Viewing from the victims' perspective, researchers have studied how children are vulnerable to the threat of online predators. Studies revealed that children are sending personal information to people they meet online (Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak, 2007), posting personal information in blogs (Mitchell et al., 2008) and meeting adult offenders in chat rooms (Wolak et al., 2004). These studies reveal online behaviors of children that make them susceptible to aggressive online solicitation. So, while predators reject the social norm of boundaries between children and adults, children are engaging in behaviors that make them potential targets of predators.

While these studies present evidence on predator and potential victim online behaviors, Quayle and Taylor (2011) note that empirical research regarding online grooming and/or solicitation is sparse and most existing research has focused on the behaviors of youth, not on the adult sex offenders. The current study addresses this gap through a focus on the behaviors of online sexual predators within the predator-victim

discourse. We examine how predators are able to dominate and manipulate children through interpersonal relationships within social media.

2.3 Detection of Online Sexual Predators

Studies have been conducted to determine the most effective means by which to identify acts of predation in an online setting, with the goal of preventing the occurrence of offline acts of victimization. The theory of luring communication (Olson et al., 2007) was applied to improve the software called ChatCoder (Kontostathis, Edwards, Bayzick, Leatherman and Moore, 2009), which integrates theories of communication with computer science algorithms. The use of this theory allowed the researchers to improve the systems detection capabilities by a maximum of 13%, from a range of [24.29% - 56.56%] to [31.94% - 58.74%]. While similar to the current research, the Kontostathis et al's (2009) study applies a theory based on an offline phenomenon to an online phenomenon. Additionally, Luring Communication Theory does not include the construct of institutional logics. In similar research, Thom, Kontostathis and Edwards (2011) developed an accessory for the open source software called Pidgin, an instant messaging tool. Their plugin, called SafeChat, keeps track of user interactions, detects age, and categorizes texts as potentially predacious based on established system rules. They achieved a 68% accuracy rate (Thom et al., 2011). Taking a different approach, Laorden, Galan-Garcia, Santos, Sanz, Maria, Hidalgo and Bringas (2012) developed a system called Negobot that applies Natural Language Processing methods, chatter-box technologies and game theory to create a strategic decision making situation.

The goal of the system is to collect the maximum amount of information possible from the conversation for post-conversation analysis (Laorden et al., 2012).

2.4 Coercion: Power, Activities Control, Intention Alteration

The traditional understanding of coercion dates back to an edition of Thomas Aquinas' work published in 1920, *The Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Aquinas asserted that coercion "is a kind of necessity in which the activities of one agent – the coercer – make something necessary for another agent" (Anderson, 2011, p.4). As Anderson (2011) stated, the common understanding of coercion is "use of a certain kind of power for the purpose of gaining advantages over others, punishing non-compliance with demands, and imposing one's will on the will of other agents" (p. 3). Over the centuries, the discussion of coercion has focused on issues where a power difference is visible: law enforcement, business, and international as well as domestic issues. While these fields, at first pass, seem to vary extensively in terms of context, the point made by this diversity is that coercion is a human behavior, which can take place in various contexts, throughout various aspects of one's life. Robert Nozick wrote of coercion as "techniques that influence or alter the will of the coerced, by altering the intentions or dispositions of the coerced" (Anderson, 2008, p.16). This view of coercion removes the necessity of typical influencers such as force, violence or deprivation and broadens the view of coercion to include examination of how the coercer's techniques influence the coerced's reason for acting (Anderson, 2008).

In summary, coercion consists of three main constructs: power, activity control and intention alteration. Coercers exert power over individuals to control the activities of

the individuals and alter individuals' intentions to result in the coercer's desired outcomes. Online predators' propagate their ideology through the exertion of power to control children's activities and manipulate them into thinking the predators' intentions are acceptable. This ideology manifests within social media through the mechanics of discourse and social practice. The use of text to display dominance is an example of power enactment. Convincing children to send pictures of themselves is an example of activity control. Persuading a child to agree that meeting in person is a good idea demonstrates intention alteration as it moves the child from their original intention of chatting online to agreement with the predator's intention of an offline meeting. This manifestation can be accomplished through what Beynon-Davies (2010) refers to as enactment through three communicative acts: formative, informative and performative. Formative acts refer to the representation of data, which in the case of predators and children are the structural nature of the social media conversation such as common language and the use of emoticons. Informative acts consist of message generation and interpretation; in this study it is the predator's substantial acts of coercion through text to move the child toward the desired outcome. Lastly, performative acts are the coordinated actions that result in the fulfillment of the predator's intentions, a face-to-face meeting with the child and subsequent physical and emotional victimization (Beynon-Davies, 2010, 2012). Situated within the discursive system of social media, this study examines predators' use of communicative acts as the means to alter the targeted children's choice of actions.

2.5 Vulnerabilities: Reactance, Learned Helplessness and Social Control

The nature of discourse within social media requires engagement by individuals within the system. Children are frequent participants in social media. Propagation of predator ideology necessitates interaction of a predator with a child. As coercees, children are enticed by the prospect of getting what they do not have. In this case, children have identified behaviors in which they should have the freedom to engage but which others in their reality do not allow. Feeling restricted, they seek out realities in which they have the freedom to engage in those behaviors. This is referred to as reactance theory (Thacker, 1992). Reactance within the current study is often the normal struggle of children seeking more independence. Parents may restrict computer time, monitor chats, and prohibit the child from having a webcam or even grounding the child from real life activities. It is natural for a child to push against those restrictions. The child may experience a decrease in self-esteem if he/she views his reality as restrictive and/or perceives him/herself as having no control over the environment. In these cases, they live with the acceptance that no matter their effort to change their reality, they cannot avoid negative outcomes. This state is coined learned helplessness (Thacker, 1992). Learned helplessness within the current study is increased willingness to accept restrictions without resistance. For example, children may refuse to ask their parents for things, such as a webcam, because they believe that nothing they say or do will change their parents' minds about them having one. Yet, as children grow, they search for ways in which to circumvent those restrictions. They look outside of their current reality for ways to be happy, satisfied. They engage in social control through activities, in this case online communications,

seeking fairness as compared to others and a desire to feel connected (Selymes, 2011). These longings make children vulnerable to the power exerted by predators through coercion. Through discourse, the predators create a space for negotiated realities in which the children see a chance to move beyond restrictions within their environments and fulfill those longings. These negotiated realities are the means by which predators enact their ideology within social media discourse.

2.6 Negotiated Cyber-social Realities

The rise of online communication has done more than change the way individuals within a society communicate (Zhao, 2006). It “transforms the spatial and temporal organization of social life,” producing “new kinds of social relationships” and “new modes of exercising power” (Thompson, 1995, p. 4 in Zhao, 2006, p. 471). Individuals are born predisposed to sociality and become members of society through internalization of the norms and values of that society (Zhao, 2006). These new organizations of social life provide space for members of society to gain information that may alter their current social realities. The meaning of information may be derived “from interactive interpretation by multiple persons, not simply from the cognition of a single individual” (Miranda & Saunders, 2002, p. 2). Thus a person’s meaning of societal norms and values may be socially constructed through interactions with others and as impacted by the social situation in which they occur (Miranda & Saunders, 2002). Gotved (2006) used the term cyber-social reality to describe this online space and the interactions therein. It “is constructed by the individual as well as by the collective, in close cooperation with

advanced communication technology and the possibility of computer-mediated interactions” (Gotved, 2006, p. 472).

We use the phrase ‘negotiated cyber-social realities’ to describe frames of communication in which online sexual predators exert influence on potential victims’ meanings of social events. Frames are defined as “relatively stable interpretive schemes through which actors makes sense of events and situations they come across” (Azad and Faraj, 2011, p. 37). The act of framing “involves the virtual drawing of a boundary, much like a picture frame, emphasizing what is inside vs. outside and thereby making the former more salient” (Azad and Faraj, 2011, p37). The frames within the current phenomenon are the social media interactions between children and online predators. The concept of negotiated cyber-social reality creation and manipulation can be seen within framing. The act of framing requires the coercer to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p.52). Perceived realities can be defined as “determined by the observer, and may be identical with objective reality, or an illusion, or a mix” (Bell, 2003, p. 247). In the case of online predators, the child shares the ‘perceived reality’ with the predator through text. The predator then negotiates the meaning of that perceived reality within the frame, creating a reality that differs from the child’s originally understood reality and is appealing.

This negotiation may be viewed as deception used by the online sexual predators. “Deception is the conscious, planned intrusion of an illusion seeking to alter a target’s

perception of reality, replacing objective reality with perceived reality” (Bell, 2003, p. 244). Similar to the intention alteration construct of coercion, the planning of deception begins with the goal of changing the existing reality so it aligns with the aim of the planner (Bell, 2003). Because the online sexual predators premeditated these deceptions of children in social media they cannot be viewed as accidental inappropriate communication or mistook for unintended lies (Buller & Burgoon, 1996). Additionally, “[d]eceivers must strategically manipulate information to craft plausible messages “online” all the while attending to partner reactions for information about success or failure” (Buller & Burgoon, 1996, p. 210). So, while invoking the deception within the negotiated cyber-social reality, online sexual predators must also monitor the actions and reactions of the children in order to effectively maintain the deception and move the negotiated cyber-social reality toward his/her own agenda.

“When the costs of being deceived are high, the benefits of detecting deception are correspondingly high. The costs for both deceivers and detectives can be ethical, psychological, social, or political, as well as simply economic” (Whaley & Busby, 2000, p. 76). The deception and victimization of children by online sexual predators within social media carries high costs for the deceived. Children face potential psychological, social, and physical costs at the words and hands of online sexual predators. The three studies that follow aim to improve methods for detecting that deception and decreasing the costs faced by society’s children.

CHAPTER III

STUDY 1: PREDATORY COERCION AND VICTIMIZATION OF CHILDREN IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH

Summarizing extant literature, prior research into the phenomenon has examined predator and child interaction in social media (Berson, 2003; Robertiello & Terry, 2007; Shannon, 2008), predator-child discourse (Elliott et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2012; Quayle & Taylor, 2011; Wolak et al., 2008) and detection of online sexual predators (Kontostathis et al., 2010a; Laorden et al., 2012; McGhee, Bayzick, Kontostathis, Edwards, McBride, & Jakubowski, 2011; Thom et al., 2011). Yet, as noted in section 1.3.1 Study 1 Research Gap, extant literature has not addressed how pedophiles use language to create social structures through dialects as well as build relationships leading to coercion and victimization of children – an ultimate expression of their ideology that it is acceptable to have relationships between adults and children.

In Study I, we draw upon the theoretical foundations of coercion (Anderson, 2011), reactance, learned helplessness (Thacker, 1992), social control (Selymes, 2011) and negotiated cyber-social realities (Gotved, 2006; Miranda & Saunders, 2002; Zhao, 2006) discussed in Chapter 2. This existing literature provides the base knowledge for addressing the research question: *How do online sexual predators manifest and propagate their ideology through social media, as a discursive system, to coerce and victimize children?*

3.1 Research Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis

Social networking sites are discursive environments. By their very nature, they are social, allowing for dialogic interaction among individuals as well as the evolution and expression of social and cultural practices. Individuals can engage discursively through the production and consumption of text conversations and sharing of communicative artifacts such as pictures, videos and links to websites. Similarly, the acts of discourse are identified as both creating and being created by social phenomena (Carvalho, 2008). The processes of discourse are the transformations of text during its production and consumption. Language and society are not separate entities, but rather “language is an integral part of social process” (Fowler, 1979, p. 189). Fairclough saw discourse practices as straddling the division between social and cultural practices and text production/consumption (Sheyholislami, 2001). Thus critical discourse analysis aims to make transparent “the connections between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures, connections that might be opaque to the layperson” (Sheyholislami, 2001, p. 1). Variations of this method of research have been used in such areas as gender inequality, ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism, nationalism, racism, media discourse, political discourse, medicine, legal systems, education, science and organizations (van Dijk, 1998).

3.1.1 Framework for Critical Discourse Analysis. During CDA text is interrogated to “expose deep structures, systematic communicative distortions and power relations that underlie discourse” (Cukier, Ngwenyama, Bauer and Middleton, 2008, p. 177). Within the field of information systems, Myers and Klein (2011), recommend three

inter-related elements of critical research which aid in framing the use of CDA for the current study. The first element, insight, requires the provision of “a broad insightful understanding of the current situation” (Myers and Klein, 2011, p. 23). This study will examine and explain the interactions between predators and children in social media. This is the story that brings the study into focus and includes the first technical stage of CDA: systematic analysis of the communicative acts between predators and children, the choices and patterns in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure. The next element is the critique, which refers to the “conditions of power, constraint, social asymmetries, ideological domination, cultural inertia that give privilege to certain ways of understanding and ordering the word” (Myers and Klein, 2011, p. 23-24). This includes the second stage of CDA that consists of discourse and institutional processes. Discourse processes refer to the “changes that text go through in production and consumption” (Sheyholislami, 2001, p.7) while institutional processes refer to the aspects and properties of the examined institution which affect the production and consumption of the text. Within the current study, this includes revelation of how, through communicative acts, predators exert coercive power over children through the creation of negotiated cyber-social realities, an aspect of which is the manipulation of discourse surrounding children’s behaviors of reactance, learned helplessness and social control. Additionally, it includes the evaluation of social networking sites and their role in the communicative acts. Lastly, the element of transformation refers to suggested improvements for “human existence, existing social arrangements and social theories” (Myers and Klein, 2011, p. 24). Aligned with the third dimension of CDA, this step

includes both the power group (predators) and the way in which their exertion of power changes in relation to discursive interaction.

The focus of this methodology within the context of online predator interaction with children is to bring transparency to the discourse practices within social media. Specifically, this study applies CDA to investigate how the predatory coercive discourse acts of power, activity control and intention alteration are used by sexual predators in social media to create negotiated cyber-social realities through manipulation of discourse. The negotiated cyber-social realities lead to the social structure of victimization of children. The following sub-sections outline the chosen data set and steps utilized to analyze the data.

3.1.2 The Corpus. The full data set for this research is comprised of over 500 chat transcripts between adult online predators and adult volunteers of the group Perverted Justice. Although the adult volunteers were posing as youth, the adult predators were under the impression that they were in fact interacting with a child. These transcripts have been used in previous research to examine the conversational techniques of online predators (Kontostathis, Edwards and Leatherman 2010; Marcum 2007; Martin et al. 2010; McGhee et al., 2011; Poelmans, Elzinga, Neznanov, Dedene, Viaene and Kuznetsov 2012; Thom et al. 2011).

Additionally, individuals identified through the actions of Perverted Justice were brought to trial and, upon searching the National Sex Offender Registry, it was observed that the charges were upheld in a court of law. Acknowledgement and upholding by U.S. Courts of the unlawfulness of the context of these transcripts and actions of the predatory

individuals provides additional validation for their use within the current research. Table 1 shows demographic as well as other information related to pedophiles, who participated in these 500 chats. These pedophiles had an average age of 30.5. They were on average in contact with “children” for 3.3 days. They were from many locations in the U.S. including Wisconsin, Arkansas, Ohio, Washington, etc. Table 1 also exhibits sample age disclosures between the pedophile and the volunteers. It is important to note that disclosure of the age by the volunteers that they are 13 or 14 year old girls (or boys) should clearly indicate to any adult that it is illegal and socially unacceptable to solicit any sexually oriented relationship in the U.S. Despite this disclosure of age as a minor, these pedophiles persisted in victimizing these children (pedophiles clearly believed that they were interacting with children) and were subsequently convicted in a court of law. Table 1 also exhibits sample of exchange between predators and children and the use of non-standard English in these conversations in social media.

Table 1. Sample Demographic and Related Information from the Predator Transcripts Data Set	
Demographic	Sample
Total number of Transcripts	500
Predator Average Age	30.5
Average Transcript Length in Printed Pages	14.7
Average Transcript Length in Printed Lines	775
Average Number of Contact Days between Predators and Children	3.3
Sample Pseudonyms Used by Predators	daddieforu Daveeatsyou

	hotplushung changeforthebetter2006 funindia31
Sample Locations of Predators	Milwaukee, WI Fayetteville, AR Dayton, OH Puyallup, WA
Age Exchanges Between Predators and Children	Arthinice: hi, 51/guy/fayetteville, wanna talk? sadlilgrrl: sure--r u okay with me bein almost 14? arthinice: sure changeforthebetter2006: Im doing ok coryndestiny4ever: kewl changeforthebetter2006: just lonely coryndestiny4ever: o ic coryndestiny4ever: 13 f oh u? changeforthebetter2006: 27/m/Dayton daveeatsyou: like to play? constantconstance92: play? constantconstance92: age? daveeatsyou: nasty? daveeatsyou: 32 constantconstance92: im 13 constantconstance92: that ok? daveeatsyou: sure
Non-standard English Used by Predator	abraxisreborn: (l) lol (<i>where the () represents a girl's genitals</i>)
Standard English Used by Predator	arthinice: did you know that you can "shake" too? sadlilgrrl: not really arthinice: do you know what it is called? sadlilgrrl : coming? arthinice: yes - but there is another name for it too arthinice: it is usually talked about happening to girls - but the same name applies to guys too sadlilgrrl: oh sadlilgrrl: what is it? arthinice: it is called orgasm

3.1.3 The Procedure. It is important to understand that critical discourse analysis does not provide a unitary theoretical framework. Rather, it should be considered a shared perspective which allows a range of approaches (McGregor, 2003; Sheyholislami, 2001). The current approach begins with *discourse*, a first step involving the systematic analysis of choices and patterns in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure. Within the current study this involved analyzing the text, at face value, of the social media conversations between predators and children. Text created by the predator was examined for representations of power, intentions, and activities and the creation of negotiated cyber-social realities. It included only face value identification of the use of vocabulary choices and patterns, grammar, cohesion, and text structure in the production of the text. Similarly, text created by the child decoys were examined for acts of reactance, learned helplessness, social control and the buy-in to the predators' negotiated cyber-social reality. Even though volunteers were posing as children, from the pedophiles' perspective they believed themselves to be communicating with a child. The CDA approach is described as oscillating "between theory and data analysis in retroductive ways" (Wodak and Meyer, 2008, p. 19). This allows for the identification of the mechanics of the theoretical constructs while assessing the discourse for social implications. Table 2 outlines those constructs and principles for analysis within this first step. As previously noted, each construct comes from extant literature and is employed as a critical assessment point regarding the propagation of predatory ideology through coercion within social media.

Table 2. Categories and Principles for CDA Step 1 - Discourse

Theoretical Constructs	Principle	Validity Test
Power (Anderson, 2011)	Aspect of coercion: coercer's exercise of dominance over coercee	Does the text express perception of dominance by the predator?
Intention alteration (Anderson, 2011)	Aspect of coercion: coercer's reduction of eligibility of some actions, making other actions more attractive to coercee	Does the text express predator drawn boundaries of child's actions?
Activity control (Anderson, 2011)	Aspect of coercion: coercer's constraint of coercee's actions	Does the text express predator's control over child's actions?
Negotiated cyber-social reality (Eneman et al., 2010)	Coercee: act of sharing current social reality Coercer: alteration of perceived reality Coercee: acceptance of new reality	Does the text express child's sharing of current real life situation? Does the text express predator's manipulation of child's shared reality? Does the text express child's agreement with predator's created reality?
Reactance (Thacker, 1992)	Coercee: engagement in behaviors which authority figures attempt to restrict	Does the text express actions by child which go against what others have said are appropriate?
Learned helplessness (Thacker, 1992)	Coercee: resignation to a reality that will not change no matter their actions	Does the text express child's belief that his/her actions will not change the current social reality?
Social control (Selymes, 2011)	Coercee: engagement in activities seeking happiness, fairness and/or satisfaction	Does the text express child's engagement in actions that he/she views as bringing about positive outcomes?

Adapted from Cukier et al.'s (2009)

Transcripts were manually coded and repetitive words and emoticons/symbols were highlighted. An insider and outsider approach (Goia and Chitiedpeddi, 1991) was used in verifying the coding and research process. Verification is the process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain. In qualitative research, verification refers to the mechanisms used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity and, thus, the rigor of a study. These mechanisms are woven into every step of the inquiry to construct a solid product (Creswell, 1997) by identifying and correcting errors before they are built into the developed model and before they subvert the analysis. Qualitative research is iterative rather than linear, so that a good qualitative researcher moves back and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis. Data are systematically checked, focus is maintained, and the fit of data and the conceptual work of analysis and interpretation are monitored and confirmed constantly (Kvale, 1989). Thus, a method of verification inherent to this research methodology was employed to achieve rigor in the investigation and subsequent theory building.

Codes were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to aid in identifying patterns. Additionally, the ages of the sex offender and child, length of chat in hours and days, the line number of the first act of textual victimization and a notation of whether the predator assessed the risk of getting caught were included in the spreadsheet. The purpose of the additional information was to aid in evaluating the text to establish patterns and frames of interactions, structuring the data for step 2 of the Critical Discourse Analysis.

Excerpts of text identification for three of the aspects of coercion in Table 3 demonstrate how the principles and validities from Table 2 were applied to the data. So, for example, in the first excerpt, the predator, daddywants2playnokc, exudes confidence in his ability to give the child an orgasm. Recalling that predatory ideology includes the use of sexual dominance, this action is categorized as the construct of power. The text that is the identifier for the action are the words ‘u will get off with me trust me’. This line of reasoning was applied to each transcript for each construct in Table 2.

Table 3. Textual Examples of CDA Step 1 - Discourse

Excerpts from Chat Transcripts	Identified Actions	Discourse Acts	Identifying Text
daddywants2playnokc: u cum fast? chelss_wut_elss: ya no chelss_wut_elss: i dunno if i did r not chelss_wut_elss: whats that like? daddywants2playnokc: well u will get off with me trust me daddywants2playnokc: uummm way good	Predator expresses sexual dominance in text	Coercion: Power	u will get off with me trust me
daveeatsyou: will you do something for me constantconstance92: what daveeatsyou: rub your breasts daveeatsyou: nips constantconstance92: now? daveeatsyou: make your self horny daveeatsyou: yes daveeatsyou: kinda secretly daveeatsyou: ok daveeatsyou: because i'm going to go home and stroke my dick daveeatsyou: thinkig about what	Predator uses text to control child's activities	Coercion: Activities	do something for me, rub your breasts, make your self horny

i told you			
bendix632: im on my way Willow: awesome Willow: u so cool bendix632: im driving Willow: oh drivin right now? bendix632: yea later Willow: awesome Willow: what time u think u get here? bendix632: 1230 Willow: cool can u get me some fast food or no? bendix632: ok love	Predator uses text to express control over child's intentions	Coercion: Intentions	on my way, driving, see u soon

According to Fairclough, each sentence can be analyzed from a multifunctional perspective. Because the textual exchange occurs within a social context the representations of social practice, construction of the identities of the reader and writer as well as the relationship between the two should be a concern of the analyst (Fairclough, 1995). This concept of relationship within the current context aligns with previous work on the acts of grooming children in which predators engage online. There are two levels of relationships identified: friendship and relationship. Friendship refers to the discourse of ‘getting to know’ the child through conversations about demographic information, sharing of pictures, etc. These interactions form superficial connections, providing the predator a means to get introduced to the child. Relationship refers to the extraction of more intimate details from the child such as hobbies, family, school, etc. These interactions provide the predator with more intimate information that can be used in deceptive acts (Gupta, Kumaraguru, & Sureka, 2012). The pieces of information gained through the friendship and relationship grooming stages take place within the social

practices of critical discourse analysis. The categories in Table 2 provide the definitions for determining pertinent representations of the social practices of coercion, reactance, learned helplessness, social control and the construction of negotiated cyber-social realities. Within those identified social practices, the text was evaluated for expressions of predators and children's identities as well as their shared relationship.

The second step of CDA, *discourse as practice*, extends the first, giving attention to three aspects of text that link it to its context: speech acts, coherence and intertextuality (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). The framed communicative acts, which are the result of the first stage of analysis, become the data set for this second step. The language structures used within social networking sites add a level of difficulty to this stage of analysis. As a real-time synchronous medium, this platform of interaction “tends to be more unpredictable, due to the fact that it more frequently illustrates features of oral language” (Chiluwa, 2012. p. 226). Characteristics of this text include features of oral and written communication, slang, obscenity and the use of emoticons (e.g. a smiling face) and textual combinations to represent non-language sounds (Crystal, 2011).

Fairclough recommended examining both the discourse (text) and the chosen institution within this step. The discourse process refers to the use of intertextuality with regard to the text production and consumption. It is the examination of chosen text, specifically manifest intertextuality, the use of text which explicitly comes from another source (indicated by quotation marks) and constitutive intertextuality, the restructuration of text which is taken from another source (rewording, paraphrasing, etc.). While few instances of manifest intertextuality appear within the current context, constitutive

intertextuality is evident in the creation of negotiated cyber-social realities, when the predator manipulates the child's shared reality, in essence restructuring the truth as presented by the child. The institutional process hinges on Fairclough's perspective that a complete textual analysis should not exclude the aspects of the chosen institution which impact the production and consumption of that text (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Sheyholislami, 2001). The 'institution' of the current study is social networking sites. Aspects of social networking sites that have attracted attention with regard to the studied phenomenon include access to SNS, anonymity on SNS, information sharing capabilities on SNS, and inappropriate use of SNS (Choo, 2009, 2011; Eneman et al., 2010; Gupta et al., 2012). Table 4 lists the categories and principles used to analyze and validate the textual frames identified in step one. The categories are directly derived from Fairclough's recommendations for this step of CDA. Speech acts, coherence manifest intertextuality and constitutive intertextuality are discourse processes. Institution processes are the aspects of the institution that affect the phenomenon. In this study, it is comprised of the aspects of social media that afford predators' the ability to propagate their ideology through coercion. While the children, predators, and the social media technological artifact are separate entities, "possibilities for action emerge from the reciprocal interaction between actor and artifact" (Faraj, Jarvenpaa and Majchrzak, 2011, p. 1233). Thus, it is necessary to examine the enabled behaviors.

Table 4. Categories and Principles for CDA Step 2 - Discourse as Practice

Category	Principle	Validity Test
Speech act (Cukier et al., 2009)	Coercer and coercee: Use of emotionally charged adjectives and nouns, hyperbole, metaphors, jargon*	Does the text seek to elicit an emotional response from the child?
Coherence (Cukier et al., 2009)	Coercer: Use of biased assertions and incomplete statements which cannot be argued against*	Does the text correctly correspond to the objective world?
Manifest intertextuality (Sheyholislami, 2001)	Coercer: Use of direct quotations within communication**	Does the text include quotation marks?
Constitutive intertextuality (Sheyholislami, 2001)	Coercer: Demarcation, assimilation, contradiction and/or ironic echoing of child's words within own text**	Does the text utilize the child's words?
Institution process	Access: degree of availability of SNS to coercer and coercee Anonymity: degree of sharing of demographic information on SNS Information sharing capabilities: technological capabilities available for sharing of information Inappropriate use: use of SNS for reasons outside of its intended use	Is the SNS medium accessible to create the text? Is demographic information shared through the text within the SNS? Does textual construction facilitate other means of information sharing within the SNS? Does textual construction facilitate inappropriate use of the SNS?

A tenant of CDA is the notion of one group exerting social power over another (van Dijk, 1998). This second step in the CDA process identifies the connections between the linguistics within step one and the social practices entwined in the speech acts,

coherence, textualities and institutional aspects, which are relevant to the production and consumption of the text. The identification of these connections provides the means to analyze the power struggle between predators and children. It provides the scaffolding to view online predators as a social group in which its members exert power over the vulnerable social group of children.

Excerpts of text identification for the three aspects of coercion in Table 5 demonstrate how the principles and validities from Table 4 were applied to the data. So, for example, in the first excerpt the identified action is the steady stream of compliments shared by the predator, arthinice. The use of emotionally charged adjectives and nouns is a speech act employed to elicit an emotional response from another individual. In this example, the identifying text includes words like ‘sweet’, ‘love’ and ‘pretty’. This line of analysis was applied to each transcript for each construct in Table 3. Additional data identified in this manner is included in the Appendix.

Table 5. Textual Examples of CDA Step 2 – Discourse as Practice

Excerpts from Chat Transcripts	Identified Actions	Discourse Acts	Identifying Text
arthinice: you look sooo sweet sadlilgrrl: i am. sadlilgrrl: (emoti) arthinice: i love your smile arthinice: the one in the pic is prettier than the smiley on here! arthinice: do you have any more pix? sadlilgrrl: yeah sadlilgrrl: a couple arthinice: the only one i have is on my profile arthinice: but i'd love to see	Predator's use of a steady stream of compliments to draw child in emotionally	Speech Acts	Sweet, love, pretty

yours - if you don't mine arthinice: is your name kristen? sadlilgrrl: yeah arthinice: very pretty name			
daddieforu: u like talkin to older guys briana_jade14: ya its kewl briana_jade14: lots of guyz my age r stoopid daddieforu: i hear ya hun daddieforu: lots of women my age are stupid lol briana_jade14: hehe briana_jade14: y wut do they do daddieforu: thier just hung up on dumb shit briana_jade14: oic daddieforu: they dont like havin fun briana_jade14: aaawwww i like fun things daddieforu: i love ridin my harley most women think thats childish	Predator makes assertions about women which a child would not be able to argue against, relates them to teenage boys in an attempt to connect with child	Coherence	Older guys, women my age, dumb shit

The final dimension of CDA, *sociocultural practice*, examines hegemonies and how they change in relation to discursive change. Hegemony is “[t]he imposition of dominant group ideology onto everyone in society” (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012, p. 184). The presence of adult predators online and their influence over children in the online environment begs the question of who is controlling the social power within the virtual society of social media. Today’s children are growing up in a virtual society where predators are attempting to propagate their ideology through social media: an ideology that would normalize the engagement of adults and children in sexual activities.

This imposition of ideology is an example of how social dominance is achieved through manipulation as opposed to intimidation or physical force (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012).

Applied to the current study, this dimension involves the examination of the online predators as a social group and the propagation of their ideology onto children through the institution of social media. This is operationalized through further examination of the results of step two of the CDA analysis. Table 6 outlines the principles and categories for analyzing the imposition of ideology through the social media text. The validity tests of this step of CDA require analysis of the text as a whole. Therefore, no table of sample text is included; rather, deeper discussion is presented in the results and discussion sections that follow.

Table 6. Categories and Principles for CDA Step 3 - Sociocultural Practice		
Category	Principle	Validity Test
Ideology	Coercer: imposition of ideology on child	When viewed as a whole, does the text impose the predatory ideology?
	Coercee: acquiescence to predatory ideology	When viewed as a whole, does the text reveal acceptance of the predatory ideology?

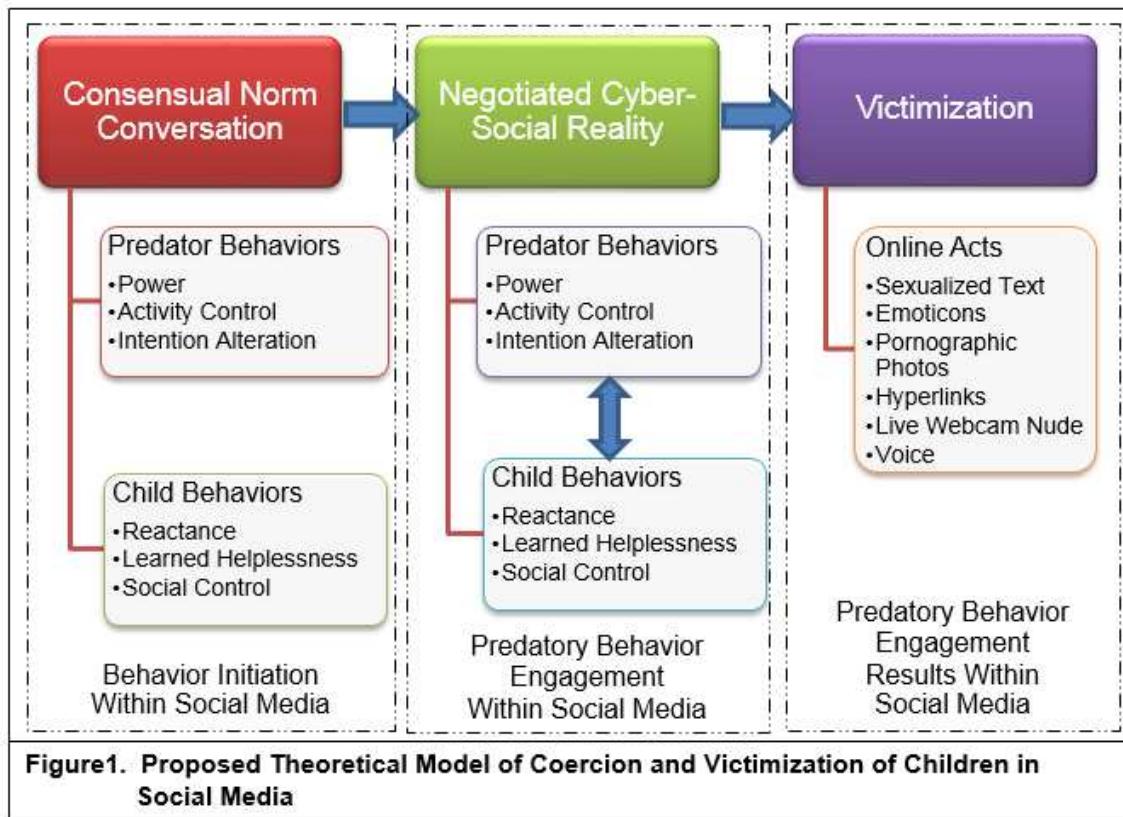
Adapted from Cukier et al.'s (2009)

3.2 Theoretical Model

3.2.1 Theoretical Model of Pedophilic Ideology Manifestation, Coercion and Victimization of Children in Social Media. The theoretical model, developed through the application of the three steps of critical discourse analysis in the previous section, proposes the propagation of predatory ideology through the instantiation of three

components: consensual norm conversations, negotiated cyber-social realities, and victimization. Online predators share an ideology that sexual contact between adults and children is acceptable. They redefine “their behavior as an expression of love and mutuality” (Lawson, 2003, p. 697). However, the propagation of that ideology through the discursive system of social media can involve coercion of children, resulting in their victimization (McLaughlin, 2004). Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the proposed theoretical model of the propagation of predator ideology through the enactment of coercion and victimization of children inside social media. In this mode, initiation of the predatory ideology takes place within *consensual norm conversations*.

These aspects of the conversations seemingly pose no threat to the children.



In reality, during consensual norm conversations, predators are assessing the children with whom they chat to identify potential victims. They initiate the constructs of predatory coercion (power, activity control and intention alteration). However, success is dependent upon the engagement of children – convincing them to buy into the coercive acts enmeshed with their behaviors of reactance, learned helplessness and social control. If the predators successfully engage children, the discourse moves into *negotiated cyber-social realities* where the predators impose their ideology on the children, convincing them of the ‘rightness’ of a relationship between them. The result, the propagation of the ideology succeeds in the *victimization* of the children within social media.

The next sections outline the utilization of the three steps of Critical Discourse Analysis - Discourse, Discourse as Practice and Sociocultural Practice - to reveal the three major components of the theoretical model. The following sections include process models that focus on the sequence of events in predatory ideology propagation, inclusive of “theorizing about how and why the process evolves in a certain way” (Mähring and Keil 2008, p. 240).

3.2.2 Discourse. Examination of the text within step 1 of CDA revealed three predatory communicative techniques (PCT) utilized by online sexual predators. These techniques refer to the degree of threat with which the predator initiates the interaction with the child. The first predatory communicative technique is referred to as *camouflage*. “Camouflage is meant to hide and, if it does not fail, be a ruse of dissimulation” (Bell, 2003, p.264). Thus, this technique appears when the predator adopts the persona of being just another online friend to the child, hiding his/her true nature as an online sexual

predator. They hold back acts of coercion and victimization, allowing the child to display reactance, learned helplessness and/or social control prior to exerting textual coercion over the child. Table 7 includes an example of camouflage PCT as shown in the beginning of this conversation between heather_sk8s, child/volunteer and corazon23456partio23456, online predator.

Table 7. Excerpt from Transcript – Camouflage PCT

Line Number	Transcript Excerpt
1	heather_sk8s: hey there asl
2	corazon23456partio23456: 23 male from jackson ms
3	heather_sk8s: 13/f/MS
4	corazon23456partio23456: ok
5	corazon23456partio23456: so whats up
6	heather_sk8s: nothing
7	heather_sk8s: just hangin
8	corazon23456partio23456: yeah
9	corazon23456partio23456: sounds fun
10	heather_sk8s: u?
11	corazon23456partio23456: not a lot
12	corazon23456partio23456: just chillin
13	heather_sk8s: cool cool
14	corazon23456partio23456: so what do you do for fun
15	heather_sk8s: i just moved here from NH
16	heather_sk8s: not a lot
17	corazon23456partio23456: yeah
18	corazon23456partio23456: cool
19	corazon23456partio23456: what make you move here to ms
20	heather_sk8s: mom
21	corazon23456partio23456: ok
22	corazon23456partio23456: how long you have been here in ms
23	heather_sk8s: about 2 weeks
24	heather_sk8s: lol
25	heather_sk8s: my mom wanted to be with her bfriend
26	corazon23456partio23456: not too long ago
27	corazon23456partio23456: i see
28	corazon23456partio23456: you like here?
29	heather_sk8s: eh
30	corazon23456partio23456: how you like ms

31	heather_sk8s: it's hot!!
32	corazon23456partio23456: yeah i know
33	corazon23456partio23456: wait till summer come
34	heather_sk8s: yucky
35	heather_sk8s: i relly dont no any 1
36	corazon23456partio23456: what part of ms you live
37	heather_sk8s: jackson
38	heather_sk8s: area
39	corazon23456partio23456: kool
40	corazon23456partio23456: i live in clinton
41	heather_sk8s: what do u do for fun in cltn?
42	corazon23456partio23456: not a lot
43	corazon23456partio23456: go to the movies
44	corazon23456partio23456: hang out with friends
45	corazon23456partio23456: listening music
46	heather_sk8s: kewl
47	corazon23456partio23456: work in the summer
48	corazon23456partio23456: lol
49	heather_sk8s: what do u do?
50	corazon23456partio23456: i work in a restaurant
51	corazon23456partio23456: with my friends
52	heather_sk8s: kewl
53	corazon23456partio23456: so what you do in you free time
54	heather_sk8s: unpack
55	heather_sk8s: fix my room
56	corazon23456partio23456: yeah
57	heather_sk8s: fight wit my moms bfriend
58	heather_sk8s: lol
59	corazon23456partio23456: lol
60	corazon23456partio23456: you have a pic
61	heather_sk8s: just in my profile
62	corazon23456partio23456: pretty pic
63	heather_sk8s: ty
64	corazon23456partio23456: yw
65	corazon23456partio23456: you have more family here in ms

In lines 25 and 29 heather_sk8s displays learned helplessness in a simple expression of being moved by her mother, a reality in her life over which she has no control and a grudging acceptance of that move. Prior to line 25 the predator engaged

heather_sk8s in what appears to be a benign consensual norm conversation. There is nothing provocative or victimizing in lines 1-24 of the conversation or immediately following line 25. The content is simple sharing of demographics. However, the conversation begins to turn at line 60 when the self-identified 23-year-old male knowingly asks what he believes to be a 13-year-old girl for a picture and in line 62 tells her she is pretty. By asking her for a picture, he begins to control her actions toward his intentions. The compliment is the starting framework for the creation of the first frame of negotiated cyber-social reality. He follows this compliment with the initiation of his risk assessment by inquiring about others who may be looking out for the child besides her mother.

This conversation demonstrates a camouflage predatory communicative technique instantiation of the proposed theoretical model shown in Figure 1. It begins with an online predator engaging a child in conversations about consensual norm topics such as sports, video games, or school. In this stage of the conversation the predator refrains from enacting coercion or victimization text. Instead, the predator waits for the child to display a vulnerability and follows it with a coercive act. As the discourse plays out, the child then has two choices. One choice is not to engage which results in an attempt to return the discourse to a consensual norm topic of conversation. The second choice is to engage with the predators' act of coercion resulting in the creation of negotiated cyber-social realities, which include online victimization.

The online communications between heather_sk8s and corazon23456partio23456 took place in 15 contacts over a 21-day period. During that time

corazon23456partio23456 looped through the cycle of consensual norm conversation until heather_sk8s was engaged in the negotiated cyber-social reality frames. In the final conversation, corazon23456partio23456 crossed the line into victimization. Table 8 includes the excerpt in which that transition occurred along with notation of behaviors:

Table 8. Camouflage PCT Transcript Excerpt	
Excerpt from Transcript	Behavior
corazon23456partio23456: so we going to meet ? we can go to the movies heather_sk8s: i cant leave house heather_sk8s: nevermind corazon23456partio23456: we can watch a movie at you house. what you say? heather_sk8s: maybe heather_sk8s: depends what else you want to do..... lol heather_sk8s: tell me what else corazon23456partio23456: so what you want to do then? heather_sk8s: i'm asking U corazon23456partio23456: what we can do? what you want to do? heather_sk8s: its up to do heather_sk8s: if you could do anything - heather_sk8s: what would it be heather_sk8s: i'll be back in a little bit -- taking a walk - i'm bord corazon23456partio23456: drink ? and whatever you want me to do heather_sk8s: mm drink sounds good heather_sk8s: yes heather_sk8s: what else heather_sk8s: ill be back later -- u better think of something good corazon23456partio23456: we can drink and ? will see what happend . ..	Intentions Learned helplessness Intentions Power Power Intentions Intentions
corazon23456partio23456: i can make you have some fun, and a good time. heather_sk8s: tell me how specifically and ill think abou tit corazon23456partio23456: ok ill be here corazon23456partio23456: drink and have sex?	Victimization Victimization

In this excerpt, corazon23456partio23456 led with intentions through asking if he and heather_sk8s were going to meet. She followed with learned helplessness in an acceptance of her inability to leave the house. corazon23456partio23456 pushed on with his intentions, exerting power through a reverse move of leading heather_sk8s to think that what they would do when they met was about what she wanted. He ended this frame with a direct statement of victimization by presenting the idea of drinking and having sex with a 13-year-old girl.

With regard to the identities of the readers and writers of this discourse, as well as their relationship, predators who operate within the camouflage PCT potentially allow more time for the development of a personal relationship with the child. They engage in more consensual norm conversations, extracting intimate details from the children regarding their lives. Additionally, this technique can increase the amount of time it takes for online victimization to occur as the child has the opportunity to return the discourse to consensual norm topics. In the transcripts examined for this study, the average line in which victimization occurred was 89. Victimization within the interaction between heather_sk8s and corazon23456partio23456 occurred at chat line 443, demonstrating how camouflage predatory communicative techniques can delay the state of victimization in online communications between predators and children.

The second category, referred to as *bait* PCT, differs from camouflage PCT in that predators move from the benign consensual norm conversation topics to textual coercion without waiting for the child to display a vulnerability. Table 9 includes an

example of bait PCT shown in the beginning of this conversation between wild_janna_92, child/volunteer and green_eye_latino669, online predator.

Table 9. Excerpt from Transcript – Bait PCT

Line Number	Transcript Excerpt
1	green_eye_latino669: hi
2	wi1d_janna_92: hi 2 u
3	green_eye_latino669: how u doing ?
4	wi1d_janna_92: ok u
5	green_eye_latino669: i'm cool thanks
6	green_eye_latino669: how old are u ?
7	wi1d_janna_92: 13/f/ca
8	green_eye_latino669: i'm 26 from LA
9	green_eye_latino669: where in cali ?
10	wi1d_janna_92: riverside
11	green_eye_latino669: cool
12	green_eye_latino669: whats ur name ?
13	wi1d_janna_92: Janna whats urs
14	green_eye_latino669: george
15	green_eye_latino669: nice meeting u
16	green_eye_latino669: are u white ?
17	wi1d_janna_92: yeah
18	green_eye_latino669: i'm mexican
19	green_eye_latino669: do u like mexican guys ?
20	wi1d_janna_92: it dont matter as long as they r nice
21	green_eye_latino669: cool
22	green_eye_latino669: who do u live with ?
23	wi1d_janna_92: my mom
24	green_eye_latino669: do u have a pic ?
25	wi1d_janna_92: not yet
26	green_eye_latino669: how do u look like ?
27	wi1d_janna_92: like my avatar pretty mcuch
28	green_eye_latino669: hahaha
29	wi1d_janna_92: lol yeah its kinda lame
30	wi1d_janna_92: but i dont got any pics on here yet
31	green_eye_latino669: its cool
32	green_eye_latino669: u got a boyfriend ?
33	wi1d_janna_92: i wish
34	green_eye_latino669: wanna be my girlfriend ?

In contrast to the camouflage PCT example, where the conversation began to turn to coercion at line 60, the conversation between wild_janna_92 and green_eye_latino669 begins to turn at line 19 when the predator begins to ask about the child's preference for dating. By line 34 he is asking her to be his girlfriend. This not only implies intent, but also demonstrates how the predator subtly begins to control the child's actions. This conversation demonstrates a bait predatory communicative technique instantiation of the proposed theoretical model shown in Figure 1. It begins with a consensual norm conversation topic that is followed by a predator's enactment of power, activities control and/or intention alteration. The child can choose not to engage, returning the conversation to a benign consensual norm topic. If the child engages with the predator's coercive behaviors, however, he/she is then drawn into the predator created negotiated cyber-social reality, which includes victimization of the child within social media.

The online communication between wild_janna_92 and green_eye_latino669 took place in 5 contacts over a 16-day period. During that time green_eye_latino669 looped through a cycle of coercive acts and negotiated cyber-social frames. green_eye_latino crossed the line into victimization during the second chat session. Table 10 includes the excerpt in which that transition occurred along with notation of behaviors:

Table 10. Bait PCT Transcript Excerpt	
Excerpt from Transcript	Behavior
green_eye_latino669: hey wassup wild_janna_92: heey how r u green_eye_latino669: i'm good green_eye_latino669: u ? wild_janna_92: bored	

wi1d_janna_92: lol green_eye_latino669: why are u bored ? wi1d_janna_92: dunno just am i guess green_eye_latino669: are u alone ? wi1d_janna_92: i got resident evil 4 for my ps2 and its really effing hard wi1d_janna_92: :(green_eye_latino669: it'll get easier wi1d_janna_92: my moms got the day today wi1d_janna_92: and my aunt is visiting still wi1d_janna_92: im hiding in my room lol wi1d_janna_92: did u have a good christamas? green_eye_latino669: it was ok green_eye_latino669: little boring green_eye_latino669: how was urs green_eye_latino669: ? wi1d_janna_92: ok i guess green_eye_latino669: what did u do ? wi1d_janna_92: my aunt is here from oregon and my moms bf came over christmas eve wi1d_janna_92: we ate and opened some presents green_eye_latino669: same here wi1d_janna_92: it was pretty boring. lol green_eye_latino669: what did u get ? wi1d_janna_92: clothes resident evil 4, everquest for my ps2 and a stuffed animal wi1d_janna_92: nemo. lol hes cute did u ever watch finding nemo? wi1d_janna_92: what did u get green_eye_latino669: yeah i love it green_eye_latino669: hey santa left some things under my tree for u wi1d_janna_92: lol he did? green_eye_latino669: yes wi1d_janna_92: like what wi1d_janna_92: tell me tell me green_eye_latino669: some thongs	Intention
	Learned helplessness
	Intentions
	Victimization

In this excerpt, green_eye_latino669 led with intentions by asking wild_janna_92 if she was alone implying that he would say/do things that others shouldn't witness. She followed with learned helplessness in an admittance of a boring Christmas.

green_eye_latino669 moved forward with his intentions, exiting the frame with a direct

state of victimization by joking that santa left a pair of thongs under his Christmas tree for a 13-year-old girl.

“Friendship” building occurs in bait PCT as the predator ‘gets to know’ the child and is introduced through the sharing of pictures and demographic type of information. This process begins with a benign consensual norm conversation topic and moves directly to predatory coercive acts. The child then decides if he/she will engage with the predator in that discourse or attempt to return the conversation to a benign consensual norm topic. If the child engages with the predator he/she enters into frames of negotiated cyber-social reality which include online victimization. If the child successfully turns the discourse back to consensual norm topics, he/she could potentially increase the amount of time it takes for online victimization to occur. However, victimization occurred at line 135 in the conversation between green_eye_latino669 and wild_janna_92. This is 44 lines longer than the study average of 89 lines, but less than one-third the amount of lines demonstrated in the previous example for camouflage PCT. Thus, the delay to victimization in bait PCT could actually be less than that of camouflage PCT.

Predators engaging in the final category, referred to as the *trap* predatory communicative technique, bypass child behaviors and employ minimal acts of coercion. They move almost immediately to victimization. Table 11 includes an example of trap PCT shown in the beginning of this conversation between constantconstance92, child/volunteer and daveeatsyou, online predator.

Table 11. Excerpt from Transcript – Trap PCT

Line Number	Transcript Excerpt
1	constantconstance92: hi 2 u
2	daveeatsyou: mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm
3	daveeatsyou: what city are you i?
4	constantconstance92: lakewood u
5	daveeatsyou: tacoma
6	daveeatsyou: like to play?
7	constantconstance92: play?
8	constantconstance92: age?
9	daveeatsyou: nasty?
10	daveeatsyou: 32
11	constantconstance92: im 13
12	constantconstance92: that ok?
13	daveeatsyou: sure
14	daveeatsyou: is it ok with you
15	constantconstance92: yes
16	constantconstance92: u got pic
17	daveeatsyou: no
18	daveeatsyou: how big are your tits
19	constantconstance92: 32a
20	daveeatsyou: mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm
21	daveeatsyou: can i suck them
22	constantconstance92: mebee
23	constantconstance92: u come c me?
24	daveeatsyou: now
25	daveeatsyou: are you alone?
26	constantconstance92: no not now silly
27	constantconstance92: no moms home
28	daveeatsyou: when
29	constantconstance92: i could sneak out sometime
30	daveeatsyou: kool
31	daveeatsyou: are you a virgin?

While the previous two categories of PCT demonstrated an attempt at consensual norm conversations prior to victimization, this example does not. By lines 8-10 of the conversation, the predator explicitly outlined his intent through the words ‘play nasty’. By line 18 the 32-year-old man had asked a 13-year-old girl the size of her breasts and at

line 21 to perform a sex act on her. This conversation demonstrates a trap predatory communicative technique instantiation of the proposed theoretical model presented in Figure 1. Benign consensual norm conversation topics do not exist and therefore the child has no safe discourse to which he/she can return. If the child engages with the predator's coercive behaviors he/she is then drawn into the predator created negotiated cyber-social reality, which includes victimization of the child within social media. The only other alternative for the child is to exit the conversation completely prior to engaging with the predator's coercive behaviors.

The online communication between contantconstance92 and daveeatsyou took place in 6 contacts over a 6-day period. During that time daveeatsyou looped through a cycle of negotiated cyber-social frames and victimization. daveeatsyou crossed the line into victimization during the first chat session. Table 12 includes the excerpt in which that transition occurred along with notation of behaviors:

Table 12. Trap PCT Transcript Excerpt

Excerpt from Transcript	Behavior
<p>1. First contact was "hi" 2. constantconstance92: hi 2 u 3. daveeatsyou: mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm 4. daveeatsyou: what city are you i? 5. constantconstance92: lakewood u 6. daveeatsyou: tacoma 7. daveeatsyou: like to play? 8. constantconstance92: play? 9. constantconstance92: age? 10. daveeatsyou: nasty? 11. daveeatsyou: 32 12. constantconstance92: im 13 13. constantconstance92: that ok? 14. daveeatsyou: sure 15. daveeatsyou: is it ok with you</p>	Intentions

16. constantconstance92: yes 17. constantconstance92: u got pic 18. daveeatsyou: no 19. daveeatsyou: how big are your tits 20. constantconstance92: 32a 21. daveeatsyou: mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm 22. daveeatsyou: can i suck them	Victimization Victimization
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In this excerpt, daveeatsyou led with intentions by asking constantconstance92 if she likes to play nasty. He then exited the frame with a direct state of victimization by asking a 13-year-old girl the size of her breasts.

No relationship building occurs in trap PCT as the predator focuses on victimization of the child. This process differs from the first two in that the predator moves the discourse to online victimization almost immediately. Also, while a child could potentially exit the discourse prior to victimization in both camouflage and bait PCT, due to the swiftness of the predators' sexually explicit words in trap PCT the child has very little time to avoid being an online victim of a predatory act. Victimization occurred at line 10 in the conversation between daveeatsyou and constantconstance92. This is 79 lines less than the study average of 89 lines and significantly fewer than the amount of lines demonstrated in the previous examples for camouflage and bait PCT. This reveals that no delay to victimization exists in trap PCT.

3.2.3 Discourse as Practice. Examination of the three categories of predatory communicative techniques provides insight into the speech acts, coherence, intertextuality and institution process of the phenomenon. Table 13 outlines findings from the comparison of camouflage, bait and trap communicative techniques. As noted previously, different categories of PCT allow for the varying delays between the initial

contact of predator/child and the first act of victimization. This current step of analysis provides further information regarding how predators move children to victimization online and social media's role in that victimization.

Camouflage PCT includes more appeals to the emotions of the child by predators than the other two types of PCT, creating the longest delay between the initial contact and the first act of victimization. This relationship building occurs through a large amount of demographic sharing, multiple benign consensual norm conversation topics and use of the child's own words for manipulation. Within this type of PCT the distortion of reality is so subtle that children are drawn into negotiated cyber-social reality frames with minimal awareness. In bait PCT the directive is friendship building which requires fewer emotional appeals, less demographic sharing, less use of benign consensual norm conversation topics and scarcer instances of the manipulation of the child's own words. The distortion of reality is more identifiable in bait PCT providing the opportunity for children to be aware of coercion. Lastly, trap PCT requires minimal emotional connection with the child. The child's reality is highly distorted by the predator. There is no need for demographic information beyond where a child lives and if he/she can get away to meet and no time is taken to reconstruct the child's words. In this category, victimization is almost immediate.

One's ability to access social media is dependent upon variables outside of the institution of social media itself. Technical capabilities, privacy, school and work schedules are examples of variables that can affect an individual's access to the information sharing system. Additionally, the type of PCT employed by the predator does

not restrict one's method for sharing information. Emoticons, video links and even live webcams are examples of information sharing methods used in all three categories of PCT within transcripts examined in this study.

Table 13 Comparison of Categories of Predatory Communicative Techniques (PCT)

Category	Camouflage PCT	Bait PCT	Trap PCT
Speech Act	Seeks high emotional response	Seeks moderate emotional response	Seeks minimal emotional response
Coherence	Text is subtly distorted in relation to the objective world	Text is moderately distorted in relation to the objective world	Text is highly distorted in relation to the objective world
Manifest Intertextuality	None	None	None
Constitutive Intertextuality	Maximum amount of restructuration of child's words by predator	Moderate amount of restructuration of child's words by predator	Minimal amount of restructuration of child's words by predator

Social Media's Institution Process:

Access	←→ Dependent upon non-behavioral variables such as household situation, parental/guardian monitoring, work situation/schedule, school situation/schedule, type of technology at home, work and or school, etc.		
Anonymity	Maximum amount of demographic information shared	Moderate amount of demographic information shared	Minimum amount of demographic information shared
Information sharing capabilities	←→ Text, emoticons, pictures, hyperlinks, live webcam, voice		
Inappropriate use	Maximum delay in inappropriate use	Moderate delay in inappropriate use	Immediate inappropriate use

3.2.4 Sociocultural Practice. As previously noted, the predatory ideology revolves around the *acceptability of adults engaging in sexual encounters with children* (Blumenthal et al., 1999; DeLong et al., 2010; Ward et al., 1997; Rosenmann and Safir, 2006; Holt, Blevins and Burkert, 2010). When examined as a whole, the text within all three categories of predatory communicative techniques imposed the predatory ideology. Predators use consensual norm conversational topics as hunting grounds for potential child victims. Depending upon their degree of initiation, predators may or may not wait for the child to display vulnerabilities before enacting coercion through power, activity control and/or intention alteration. Children convinced of the rightness of the ideology become entangled in negotiated cyber-social realities created by the predator, moving the child closer to the intentions within the predator ideology. As evidenced, some predators manipulated the discourse with the allure of a relationship with an older man, while others rely on the appeal of a friendship with sexual benefits and others nothing but the promise of sexual pleasure. However, no matter the PCT type or the type of relationship feigned, every transcript examined was a part of the data set due to its inclusion of online victimization. The attributes of social media enable the propagation of this ideology to spread from non-virtual to virtual worlds with the potential to result in emotional, psychological and physical victimization of children. Thus, when examined as a whole, not only did the text impose the predatory ideology, it also demonstrated an acceptance of that ideology.

3.2.5 Theoretical Sequitur from Critical Discourse Analysis. The steps of Critical Discourse Analysis, as applied within this study, provide a means for

understanding how online sexual predators propagate their ideology within social media. Following the proposed theoretical model in Figure 1, the act of propagation was demonstrated as beginning with consensual norm conversations between children and, initially unbeknownst to them, online predators. Variance in those conversations can be attributed to the speed with which predators initiate acts of coercion and how children exhibit reactance, learned helplessness and/or social control. This part of the phenomenon is analyzed through the Discourse step of CDA. The methods in which text is manipulated, as well as the aspects of social media that impact the discourse are examined through the Discourse as Practice step of CDA. This step provided insight into how online sexual predators use the children's own words to lure them into engagement in online behaviors that lead to victimization. Additionally, the examined aspects of social media reveal an institutional structure that supports the propagation of online sexual predator ideology. The propagation itself is affirmed through validation in the third step of CDA, Sociocultural Practice. Together these steps uphold the proposed theoretical model and answer the research question.

3.3. Discussion of Findings, Implications, and Limitations

3.3.1 Findings. From this research was extracted an understanding of the sex offender ideology. This ideology includes the ideas that there is nothing 'wrong' with adults having sexual relations with children, that sex offenders are entitled to have their sexual needs fulfilled and that the intimacy replaces personal feelings of isolation (DeYoung, 1982; Lawson, 2003). In fact, in 1977 the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) developed which promoted the dismissal of age of consent laws

that criminalize sexual relations between adults and children. The organization claimed there was nothing unseemly about men and boys acting in “mutually consensual relationships” (www.nambla.org).

Predator ideology is an analytic that informs the theoretic model in this study. Significant in this study is the understanding that, within social media, online sexual predators are able to propagate their ideology during coercion and victimization of children. With coercive acts, the sex offenders draw the children out of harmless online discourse and into negotiated cyber-social realities that result in victimization. The model suggests that the ideology is enacted through categories of predatory communicative techniques that differ according to the degree of threat the predator uses in the initiation of communication with the child.

The first category, camouflage predatory communicative techniques, is closely aligned with extant literature on sex offender methods of grooming children in cyberspace (Berson, 2003; Choo, 20; Gupta et al., 2012; McGhee et al., 2011) as well as Olson, Daggs, Ellevold, and Rogers' (2007) luring communication theory utilized in the study of offline predatory behaviors. Camouflage predatory communicative techniques, grooming and luring communication all involve the building of a relationship by the predator with the child. However, camouflage predatory communicative techniques explicitly include acts of coercion not directly identified in grooming and luring communication. This type of cyber-sex offender can be referred to as the traveler, engaging in a high degree of grooming in comparison to other sex offenders (Robertello

and Terry, 2007). In this category, the threat is less obvious in the beginning of the conversation.

The second category, bait predatory communicative technique, reveals an increase in the threat level at the initiation of contact with the child. Less similar to grooming and luring, the bait predatory communicative technique involves developing a friendship with the child. The friendship requires less intimacy than the relationship established in the camouflage predatory communicative technique. This type of cyber-sex offender can be referred to as the chatter, communicating online and enticing the child to an offline meeting without the use of grooming techniques (Robertello and Terry, 2007). The chatter does share the idea of trust building with luring communication theory (Olson et al., 2007). This category of PCTs removes the need for the child to display vulnerabilities prior to the initial acts of coercion by the predator. It also demonstrates a decrease in the use of grooming techniques in the propagation of the sex offender ideology.

The last category, the trap predatory communicative technique, lacks grooming and luring activities and represents a direct appeal to the victim. In this category, there is no relationship or friendship building. The predator moves directly to coercion and online victimization of the child. While both travelers and chatters engage victims in online chat, they also develop a relationship/friendship with the child (Robertello and Terry, 2007). The online aggression noted in the trap predatory communicative technique does not fall into either of these categories for cyber-sex offenders. The FBI does have a preferential typology of a sex offender, labeled sadistic, which identifies a predator as “aggressive, sexually excited by violence, target stranger victims, and are extremely

dangerous” (Robertiello and Terry 2007, p. 512). While it is not certain if the predators identified in the current study were sexually excited by violence, they did act aggressively, targeted strangers online and were dangerous in that they moved through initiation, coercion, and online victimization to an offline meeting with expedience. Existing literature on grooming and luring, and extant sexual offender typologies each represent important conceptualizations. The theorizing in this paper leverages those conceptualizations and incorporates theory on child behaviors, coercion and negotiated cyber-social realities to produce a theoretical model of how online sexual offenders enact their predatory ideology. The proposed theoretical model advances those understandings through suggested incorporation of child behaviors, coercion and negotiated cyber-social realities through which online sex offenders enact their ideology.

Also observed was social media’s integral role in the propagation of sex offender ideology online. As previously noted, aspects of social media identified as impacting this phenomenon are access to SNS, anonymity on SNS, information sharing capabilities on SNS, and appropriate use of SNS (Choo, 2009; Choo, 2011; Eneman et al., 2010; Gupta et al., 2012). Access to and anonymity on SNS minimizes the risks and barriers that predators face when attempting to make contact with children. While both online and offline predators must strategically place themselves in places where children gather, social media creates an “online public domain” that “provides individuals with a gathering place for establishing acquaintanceship with others outside of face-to-face situations” (Zhao, 2006, p. 463). This space affords predators the opportunity to make contact with children without being spotted. In contrast, offline predators hang out in

public places such as shopping malls, arcades, public restrooms and parks seeking opportunities for immediate gratification or they try to build relationships with the children and their parents building trust (Olson et al., 2007b). By placing themselves in front of others while making contact with the child, the predator must manage more risk and barriers than when chatting up a child in social media. Additionally, social media reduces the need for grooming. As evidenced in the category of the trap predatory communicative technique, social media provides a means by which predators can victimize children almost immediately via text, photo, web cam and/or coercion to an offline meeting. Children can become a victim of online sexual predation without meeting the predator and/or being groomed by him/her. This expedites the emotional and psychological victimization of children in comparison to offline grooming, luring and victimization of children. Within moments of starting a conversation, a child can be exposed to sexually explicit text, pictures and/or video. Social media increases the speed at which online sex offenders can propagate the ideology that sexual encounters between adults and children are acceptable.

The steps of CDA allow for three levels of analysis, each with its own revelations. The first step revealed the enactment of predatory coercion within negotiated cyber-social realities. The second step revealed the relationships between the text and actions of the participants as well as the role of social media, as an institution, in the phenomenon. The third step revealed social media as an enabler of propagation of sex offender ideology. Taken in part and as a whole, these three revelations increase the knowledge base and understanding of the phenomenon of predation of children online.

3.3.2 Implications. Study 1 has implications for the academic community as well as parents/guardians, educators, law enforcement and mental health practitioners. These implications are presented in the following sections.

3.3.2.1 Research Implications. This study holds potential contributions for both academia and practice. The contributions to academia are methodological and contextual. Methodologically, Study 1 is, to the researcher's best knowledge, the first study within the information systems literature that proposes the use of Critical Discourse Analysis as a means for evaluating social media's role in society. In combination with methodologies used in Studies 2 and 3, a methodological contribution is made to the IS field in demonstration of how to build social media theory through employment of these techniques. Recent IS literature has pointed out that "there has been a growing concern, among social media IS scholars that the IS community has not yet been sufficiently engaged in reflecting upon the methodological aspects of researching social media, and subsequent implications for theory building" (Urquhart & Vaast, 2012, p. 2). This dissertation adds to the conversations of methodology and theory building for social media.

Contextually, this study examines a darker side of social media: predatory behaviors. Typically viewed as a social issue, attention to sexual victimization of children using online systems has been mostly confined to computer science and social science literature. While IS researchers have reached utilized behavioral theories for organizational research, they have remained mostly silent regarding larger social issues.

This study puts forth the notion that IS researchers can benefit the larger society through study of interaction points between online systems and human behavior in social issues.

3.3.2.2 Practical Implications. Regarding practitioners, both the identification of online predators and the education of parents/guardians are future goals of this researcher. The next steps include implementation of automated detection strategies in software artifacts to then investigate the information cue threshold of adults (parents/guardians) to identify sexual predatory conversation. The notion is to close the loop of a theoretical model (as developed in this research) → predator identification using machine learning algorithms → experimental design → calibrate cue threshold of parents/guardians to identify predatory coercion in social media. Parents/guardians have to be in the closed loop to intervene in a timely manner to protect children from predatory victimization both online and offline. Extant research is completely silent on the topic of closing the loop by bringing in the parents/guardians to protect children online. There is a critical need for theory development and empirical validation in this context. The hope is that this research provides a theoretical foundation to develop further behavioral and technological research in the information systems discipline to better protect children online.

3.3.3 Limitations. The findings in Study 1 are based upon transcripts between convicted online sexual predators and potential victims – who, in this case, are adults posing as youth. Thus, the findings may differ should Critical Discourse Analysis be applied to transcripts of social media conversations between online sexual predators and actual children. However, as previously noted, all transcripts utilized in this study were

also used to convict the individuals of online child solicitation in a United States court of law. This provides support to the fact that the online sexual predators in these transcripts believed that they were talking with actual children.

The Critical Discourse Analysis method is new to the phenomenon of dyadic conversations within social media and to IS research. As such, no examples of its application could be referred to for the context of study. Therefore, refinement of the methodology could potentially improve upon the findings. As previously noted, CDA is a linguistic approach which allows for critical examination of a phenomenon. Within the study presented here, this approach enabled the identification of the construction of negotiated cyber-social realities by predators for the purpose of victimization of children. However, CDA does not include interpretation of the context of the discourse in order to determine how predators create those negotiated cyber-social realities or propagate their ideology. In Study 2, a Structured Content Analysis method is utilized for additional examination of the ideology propagation using Institutional Logics. In Study 3, a Grounded Theory approach is used to reveal how online sexual predators develop negotiated cyber-social realities. Both of these studies serve to deepen the understanding initiated by Study 1.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY 2: PREDATORY COERCION AND VICTIMIZATION OF CHILDREN IN SOCIAL MEDIA: AN INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS VIEW

As previously noted, the findings and theoretical model in Study 1 exemplified that online sexual predators do construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities during predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media. However, those findings do not provide an explanation of how the construction and control is enacted by the online sexual predators. Study 2 takes a deeper look into the negotiated cyber-social realities through the lens of institutional logics.

4.1 Theoretical Framework

Research has found that “child sex offending...allows some men to express a type of sexuality that is characterized by dominance and control” (Cossins 2000, p. 4). Predators express this dominance and control through the use of institutional logics. The following sections discuss how predators could utilize institutional logics embedded in social media conversations to enact coercion and sense the vulnerabilities displayed by children. Manipulation of these institutional logics could result in a negotiated cyber-social reality in which cyber-victimization of children occurs. Study 2 is focused by the research question: *How do online sexual predators utilize institutional logics to sense children’s vulnerabilities and enact coercion to commit varying degrees of child sexual victimization within social media?* Answering the research question begins with a discussion on institutional logics, and degrees of victimization within social media.

4.1.1 Institutional Logics. As previously noted, institutional logics are “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005, p. 101). An example of this is the institutional logics that create and perpetuate the institution of family. The view of the traditional family that has remained most common in the United States is the ‘nuclear family’. The logics that create this view include “a heterosexual married couple, living with their children in a household headed by the husband” (Beauregard, Ozbilgin, & Bell, 2009, p. 49). However, with the movement to legalize same-sex marriage, the logics perpetuating the institution of family are beginning to change. New logics are being introduced, such as the idea of a ‘custom’ family which “might be formed by any small group of adults, of any sex or gender combination, irrespective of their sexual affiliation” (Bell, 2009, p. 290). The outcomes of the introduction of new logics to the institution of family have yet to be realized, but demonstrate the fluidity of institutions and the role of actors as catalysts of change to institutional structures.

Institutions and thus institutional logics do not function in silos, but rather overlap in society. Families, for example, deal in the market institutions through such ways as employment in organizations, the purchase and sale of goods, and influencing organizations to be environmentally friendly in their processes. They act within state institutions through employment, voting, and paying taxes. Thus the demonstrated behaviors of a family can be enabled and constrained by the logics of market, state,

religion, etc., in addition to the logics of family. The actors must then manage identities within those institutions using institutional logics. Fathers, for example, are leaders and caretakers for their wives and children. They work in a market and bring home money. In contrast, a father may stay at home with the children and the wife operate within market or state institutions through a career in business or law.

It is a fact that online sexual predators are actors who also operate within these institutions. Their behavior is enabled and constrained by the institutional logics in which they engage. Problematic, however, is the conflict that exists between an individual's identity of say, a high school teacher and his identity as an online sexual predator. This is where the fluidity of institutional logics may become a factor in online sexual predators' dominance and manipulation of interpersonal relationships with children in social media. McPherson and Sauder (2013) found that "logics are tools that can be wielded with a surprising degree of discretion by local actors, both in terms of which logics they employ and the purposes for which they employ them" (p. 186). So, while chatting in social media with a child, an online sexual predator may choose to employ logics of family or community to draw the child into conversation, repressing the language of his predatory intent until he believes the child is successfully dominated and/or manipulated. This wielding of institutional logics, this control over the conversation, creates a space in which online sexual predators can coerce children and negotiate cyber-social realities within social media.

4.1.2. Degrees of Victimization. Victimization, within the current study, refers to a range of sexually deviant online behaviors displayed by online sexual predators during

dyadic conversations with children inside of social media. The least aggressive behaviors in the range manifest in the use of emoticons to represent emotions in text. Often referred to as ‘smileys’ (Chiluwa, 2012; Kock, 2008), emoticons are used to communicate feelings such as happiness and sadness as well as actions like flirting and kissing. For example, one might use :-) to indicate happiness or :-(to indicate sadness. The most aggressive behaviors in the range include the use of a webcam by the online sexual predator to expose his/her genitalia and/or engage in sexual acts to be seen by children live online.

Prior research has referred to these behaviors as unwanted sexual solicitations and defined them as “online requests to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or give personal sexual information that were unwanted or, whether wanted or not, were made by an adult” (Mitchell et al., 2007, p. 532) and that most “were relatively mild events limited to online interactions, not likely to develop into face-to-face sexual victimizations” (Mitchell et al., 2007, p. 532). Still other literature has referred to these online behaviors as communicative desensitization, defined as “purposefully and frequently using vulgar sexual language in an attempt to desensitize the victim to its use” (McGhee et al., 2011, p. 5). The eventual goal of this behavior is noted as the perpetration of future abuse (Kontostathis et al., 2009; McGhee et al., 2011).

In contrast, we propose that these behaviors are, in themselves, a type of psychological abuse. “*Traumatic sexualization* refers to a process in which a child’s sexuality (including both sexual feelings and sexual attitudes) is shaped in a developmentally inappropriate and interpersonally dysfunctional fashion as a result of sexual abuse”

(Finkelhor & Browne, 1985, p. 2). The use of sexually explicit symbols, language, photos and/or videos by adults when communicating with children ages 17 or younger can be considered traumatic sexualization. Children are “unprepared to interpret cues which signal danger of risk” (Berson, 2003, p. 9).

Whether abuse of a child is physical, psychological, or sexual, it sets off a ripple of hormonal changes that wire the child’s brain to cope with a malevolent world. It predisposes the child to have a biological basis for fear, though he may act and pretend otherwise. Early abuse molds the brain to be more irritable, impulsive, suspicious, and prone to be swamped by fight-or-flight reactions that the rational mind may be unable to control. (Teicher, 2000, p. 14)

Most children learn, through the language of institutional logics, that it is not acceptable for adults to talk with children about sex and/or engage in sexual activities with children. What the child understands as a norm through their offline socialized institutional logics is then in conflict with what is presented in the social media conversations with online sexual predators. Adult sexual predators are aware of these tensions and use the conflict to turn children into victims within social media, negating the need for face-to-face meetings for victimization.

4.1.3 Conceptual Model. Figure 2 presents a visualization of the proposed conceptual model of cyber-victimization logic as it manifests in social media. This model brings forward from Study 1 what is known about predator coercion and potential victim vulnerabilities. Study 1 established that online sexual predators engage in coercion during the online victimization of children. They enact power over potential victims, attempt to control the activities of those individuals and take steps to alter the intentions of their

potential victims to align with their own (Anderson, 2011). In the case of online sexual predators, they may enact power through displays of dominance such as emphasizing that they are more experienced than the child, know more than the child or have a powerful job that makes loads of money. They may attempt to control a child's activities by convincing the child to send risqué pictures of him/herself or watch the predator masturbate live on webcam. Altering the child's intentions can involve convincing the child that he/she doesn't want to just talk online, but that meeting in person would be even more fun.

Additionally, Study 1 findings exemplified the display of vulnerabilities by children within social media. Those vulnerabilities included social control (Selymes, 2011), reactance and learned helplessness (Thacker, 1992). Children display social control when they look outside of their current situation to find happiness (Selymes, 2011). If a child's friends are chatting online with strangers and nothing bad has happened, then he/she may feel that this behavior is acceptable and may bring happiness not recognized in their current life situations. Seeking what is seen as fairness, the child may engage in conversations with strangers in social media despite their parents opinions. Reactance is a deliberate act of defiance by a child in response to a behavior in which he/she is not allowed to engage and for which he/she feels the rules are not fair (Thacker, 1992). Examples of reactance in social media can include children going into online chat rooms of which their parents disapprove or staying online past their bed time. Learned helplessness occurs when a child is resigned to his/her state of affairs and accepts that no matter his/her words or actions the present circumstances will not change (Thacker,

1992). Within the context of this study, children may display learned helplessness through resignation that their parents took the webcam and no amount of begging, pleading or hard work on their part will get it back. Another example may be a child sharing that she has accepted that her dad cares more about his girlfriend than her and that nothing she does will change his attitude.

The findings from Study 1 also established interaction between predatory acts of coercion and potential victim vulnerabilities. The current study adds to this concept through the inclusion of institutional logics and degrees of victimization. As previously noted, institutions of Western culture include family, community, state, market, religion, profession, and corporation. These institutions constitute and are constituted by logics. The behaviors of social actors are enabled and constrained by these institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005). While these logics were observed in the discourse examined in Study 1, how they are utilized and manipulated by online sexual predators was not explored. Within the current study we explore how predators' uses of institutional logics may influence and be influenced by children's displays of vulnerabilities, and their own choice of coercive acts. This interaction is reflected with bi-directional arrows in the conceptual model.

Study 1 findings indicated that acts of victimization did occur within the discourse between online sexual predators and potential victims. Specifically, these occurrences of victimization were entwined in the interactions between predator enacted coercion and potential victim displayed vulnerabilities. The degrees of victimization, previously noted as a range of sexually deviant online behaviors, are represented by a gradient arrow in the

model. Their appearance within the interactions of predators and potential victims is also represented by a bi-directional arrow. This is indicative of exploration of how degrees of victimization committed by the online predators may influence and be influenced by the conversational engagement of the predators with the children. In the next sections we present the methodology chosen to study this model and the results of that investigation.

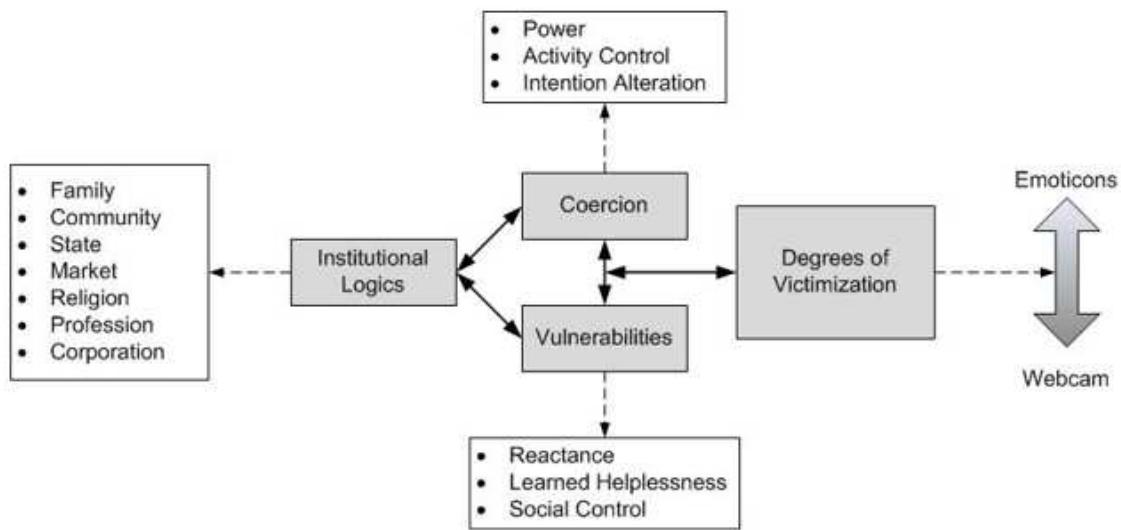


Figure 2. Proposed Conceptual Model of Cyber-victimization Logic

4.2 Research Methodology: Structured Content Analysis

Social networking sites are discursive environments. By their very nature, they are social, allowing for dialogic interaction among individuals as well as the evolution and expression of social and cultural practices. Individuals can engage discursively through the production and consumption of text conversations and sharing of communicative artifacts such as pictures, videos and links to websites. Similarly, the acts of discourse are identified as both creating and being created by social phenomena

(Carvalho, 2008). It is accepted that “communication is a central aspect of social interaction” (Weber, 1992, p. 10). As such, content analysis is a fitting methodology by which to study the current phenomenon because it operates “directly on text or transcripts of human communications” (Weber, 1992, p. 10).

Specifically, we employed deductive content analysis. “Deductive content analysis is used when the structure of analysis is operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109). Because the analysis is founded on extant literature and previous findings, deductive content analysis provides a mechanism to move from a general conceptual understanding to specific operationalization of the concepts studied (Backman & Hentinen, 2001; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Latvala et al., 2000). Thus we are able to address the research question proposed for this study through the exploration of how online sexual predators invoke and manipulate institutional logics in the sensing of vulnerabilities and enacting of coercion to commit varying degrees of child sexual victimization within social media. To conduct this exploration, structured categorization matrices were created for each of the four constructs shown in Figure 2: institutional logics, coercion, vulnerabilities and degrees of victimization. These were based on previously mentioned literature and are outlined in the coding schema section. Only those instances of text that fit the analysis matrices were chosen from the data. Instances that fell outside of the categories were not coded (Backman & Hentinen, 2001; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Latvala et al., 2000).

4.2.1 The Corpus. The full data set for this research is comprised of over 500 chat transcripts between adult online predators and adult volunteers of the group

Perverted Justice. Although the adult volunteers were posing as youth, the adult predators were under the impression that they were in fact interacting with a child. These transcripts have been used in previous research to examine the conversational techniques of online predators (Kontostathis, Edwards and Leatherman, 2010; Marcum, 2007; Martin et al., 2010; McGhee et al., 2011; Poelmans, Elzinga, Neznanov, Dedene, Viaene and Kuznetsov, 2012; Thom et al., 2011). Additionally, individuals identified through the actions of Perverted Justice were brought to trial and, upon searching the National Sex Offender Registry, it was observed that the charges were upheld in a court of law. Acknowledgement and upholding by U.S. Courts of the unlawfulness of the context of these transcripts and actions of the predatory individuals provides additional validation for their use within the current research. The sample analyzed for this study consisted of 23,238 lines of text. Table 14 contains demographic information for the analyzed data set.

Table 14. Demographics from Data Set	
Demographic	Sample
Predator Average Age	30.5
Average Transcript Length in Printed Pages	14.7
Average Transcript Length in Printed Lines	775
Average Number of Contact Hours between Predators and Children	4.5
Average Number of Contact Days between Predators and Children	3.3
Pseudonyms Used by Predators	daddieforu Daveeatsyou hotplushung changeforthebetter2006

	funindia31
Locations of Predators	Milwaukee, WI Fayetteville, AR Dayton, OH Puyallup, WA
Age Exchanges Between Predators and Children	Arthinice: hi, 51/guy/fayetteville, wanna talk? sadlilgrrl: sure--r u okay with me bein almost 14? arthinice: sure changeforthebetter2006: Im doing ok coryndestiny4ever: kewl changeforthebetter2006: just lonely coryndestiny4ever: o ic coryndestiny4ever: 13 f oh u? changeforthebetter2006: 27/m/Dayton daveeatsyou: like to play? constantconstance92: play? constantconstance92: age? daveeatsyou: nasty? daveeatsyou: 32 constantconstance92: im 13 constantconstance92: that ok? daveeatsyou: sure
Non-standard English Used by Predator	abraxisreborn: (l) lol (<i>where the (l) represents a girl's genitals</i>)
Standard English Used by Predator	arthinice: did you know that you can "shake" too? sadlilgrrl: not really arthinice: do you know what it is called? sadlilgrrl : coming? arthinice: yes - but there is another name for it too arthinice: it is usually talked about happening to girls - but the same name applies to guys too sadlilgrrl: oh sadlilgrrl: what is it? arthinice: it is called orgasm

4.2.2 Coding Schema. The content of dyadic conversations between online sexual predators and potential victims were analyzed across four constructs with sub-constructs as demonstrated in Figure 2. The chosen recording unit was by sentence. In the case of dyadic conversations in social media a ‘sentence’ refers to each line of text that directly follows the message sender’s screenname. For example, for “Arthinice: hi, 51/guy/fayetteville, wanna talk?” the screenname is “Arthinice” and the sentence is “hi, 51/guy/fayetteville, wanna talk?” The coding schema for the institutional logics of western culture as they were adapted from Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012) is outlined in Table 15.

Table 15. Coding Schema for Institutional Logics

Institution	Logic	Sample words/phrases
Family	Regarding the structure and function of a family unit	Mom, dad, grandma, brother, sister, boyfriend, grounded, get in trouble, vacation, dinner, parents wouldn’t like
Community	Regarding the structure and function of a community both geographically and personally, as well as group membership	The mall, movies, school, soccer team, convenience store on the corner, friends, hang out, skate park
State	Regarding the bureaucratic rules of society	Police, go to jail, get caught
Profession	Regarding employment, careers	Job, what do you do, work, fired, promoted
Corporation	Regarding businesses	Bank, merger, acquisition
Religion	Regarding beliefs in a higher power and organization around those beliefs	Church, God, prayer
Market	Regarding the supply and demand of goods and/or services	Get a hotel room, pick up drinks, rent a car

Table 16 outlines the coding schema for online sexual predator coercion and potential victim vulnerabilities. These categories are based on definitions from literature previously discussed in this dissertation.

Table 16. Coding Schema for Constructs of Coercion and Vulnerabilities		
Sub-constructs	Logic	Sample words/phrases
Coercion		
Power (Anderson, 2011)	Coercer's exercise of dominance over coercee	u will get off with me trust me; because I'm older
Intention alteration (Anderson, 2011)	Coercer's reduction of eligibility of some actions, making other actions more attractive to coercee	on my way; driving; see u soon
Activity control (Anderson, 2011)	Coercer's constraint of coercee's actions	do something for me; rub your breasts; make yourself horny
Vulnerabilities		
Reactance (Thacker, 1992)	Engagement in behaviors which authority figures attempt to restrict	i sneak out; i just wait until mom's gone then i do it
Learned helplessness (Thacker, 1992)	Resignation to a reality that will not change no matter their actions	mom took my cam, I ain't gettin it back; dad always picks his girlfriend over me
Social control (Selymes, 2011)	Engagement in activities seeking happiness, fairness and/or satisfaction	I'm gonna get a job and move out; having a party while mom is gone

Finally, Table 17 outlines the coding schema for the degrees of victimization. These degrees of victimization were derived from a previous study that utilized the same data set (Albert & Salam, 2012).

Table 17. Coding Schema for Degrees of Victimization		
Degree of Victimization	Logic	Sample words/phrases/non-linguistic symbols
D1	Use of emoticons to express emotions/affections in text	Crying :*(Wink ;-)
D2	Sexually explicit content in text in which an individual talks about genitalia or sexual experience	How far did you go with your boyfriend sexually?
D3	Sharing of pictures and/or hyperlinks to static porn sites through social media	u want me to send u a pic of a woman now with no clothes on
D4	Cybersex: sexually explicit content in text in which an individual describes sex acts to another and/or prompts another to engage in sex acts	I'll lick your pussy – would you like that?
D5	Display of genitalia on a webcam and/or hyperlinks to video porn sites through social media, establish offline contact via phone	would you wanna see my cock? tell me what you thought... be honest

4.3. Results

There was a large diversity in the length of the conversations within the sample.

The conversations ranged in length from 369 lines to 1423 lines. In order to conduct meaningful content analysis, the conversations were divided into quartiles and the frequencies totaled accordingly. A visual representation of the frequency counts of the four constructs is shown in Figure 3. The data shows an increase in coercive behaviors over the course of the sample conversations. Vulnerabilities increased in the second and fourth quartiles of the sample conversations. The instances of victimization spike in the second and third quartiles with a decrease in the fourth. Interestingly, institutional logics are used less as the conversations progress. So, online sexual predators enact coercive behaviors in greater numbers as they converse with children online. During that time, their use of institutional logics as a tool for manipulation decreases. As the conversations

come to a close, moving into the planning of a face-to-face meeting, fewer online victimization acts are committed by the predators. Synchronously, the exposed vulnerabilities of the children increase as they strive to display independence. More detailed frequency counts are presented in Table 18.

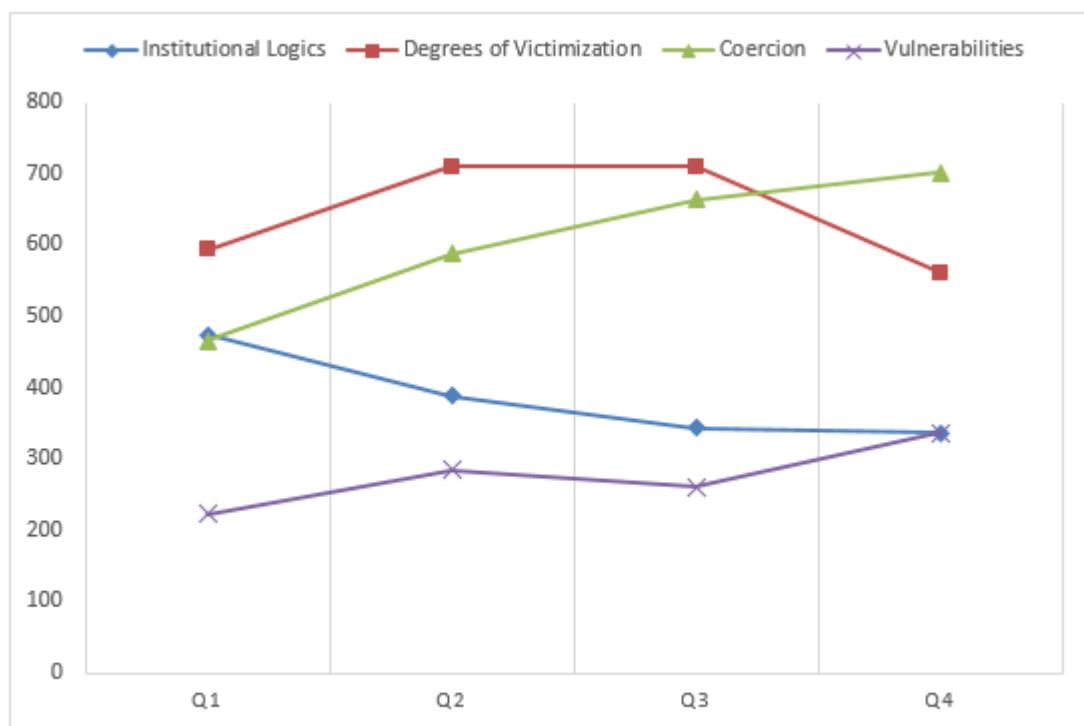


Figure 3. Frequency of Online Predation Behavior Constructs

4.3.1. Institutional Logics. Examining the frequency counts for the sub-constructs of institutional logics, we see the use of family logics by online sexual predators as the most common. Interestingly, their use decreases by 47% between the beginning and the end of the conversations. In the early quartiles of the conversation, online predators are interested in assessing the children's living arrangements and

familial relationships. This is a mechanism for assessing the risk involved in communicating with the child and attempting to entice him/her to meet face-to-face. By the last quartile, when we see the significant reduction in the use of familial logics, the online predator has either convinced the child to meet and the conversation shifts to planning or the predator has given up and the logics are no longer needed. In the case of a shift to planning a face-to-face meeting, the increase in community logics in the fourth quartile is important. The predator is assessing where he/she can meet the child, what's close in proximity to the child's house or where the child can go to meet. Also, the predator may inquire about the neighborhood, relationships with the neighbors and where it is safe to park a car so no one will see a strange vehicle at the house.

The logics of state used in this phenomenon involve subjects such as law enforcement, the fact that it is illegal for someone who is over 18 years of age to engage in a sex act with a child, how much time the predator would spend in jail if caught and trying to assess if the 'child' in the conversation is actually a police officer. The spike in state logics occurs in the third quartile as predators strongly stress sentences like 'are you sure you're not a cop?' and 'I could get in a lot of trouble just for having this conversation' – and yet many move on to planning a meeting with the children in the last quartile of the conversations.

Profession logics are used by the predator in two main ways. The first is to talk about his job situation. He shares if he has a job, occasionally what that job is and, if not employed, that he is looking for work. At times it is a bragging moment like 'I'm an air traffic controller. I work for the government.' Other times it is self-protection, as in the

case of the high school teacher who feared losing his career if he got caught. For those unemployed it became a bonus to be free to meet any time the child was available. Of course, transportation when one has no income can be a problem and resulted in predators asking the child for financial assistance to make the meeting happen.

Lastly, the logic least utilized by the predators was market logic. The only use they had for this logic was focused on offering to buy items or pay for a motel room. The items predators most often offered to purchase were lingerie, beer, condoms and marijuana. When an online conversation between an adult and child includes the offer to purchase the aforementioned items, it is a strong indicator that predation is taking place. Understanding this, we begin to see a picture of cyber-victimization logic.

Table 18. Frequency Counts of Coded Sub-constructs					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
Institutional Logics					
Family	188	188	137	99	612
Community	187	111	106	141	545
State	55	36	67	57	215
Market	8	16	16	16	56
Profession	36	37	18	24	115
Totals	474	388	344	337	1543
Degree of Social Media Victimization					
D1	153	96	89	84	422
D2	254	239	159	92	744
D3	13	14	17	1	45
D4	126	285	336	295	1042
D5	48	76	109	89	322
Totals	594	710	710	561	2575
Coercion					
Power	148	115	151	143	557
Activity Control	161	215	174	216	766
Intention Alteration	156	258	338	343	1095
Totals	465	588	663	702	2418
Vulnerabilities					
Social Control	136	195	185	265	781
Learned Helplessness	41	48	35	40	164
Reactance	45	42	40	32	159
Totals	222	285	260	337	1104

4.3.2. Degree of Victimization. The first two degrees of victimization peak in the first quartile of the conversations. Degree 1 is the use of emoticons to express emotions and affection. Online predators commit this type of victimization for the purpose of flirting with children. They smile, wink, cry, stick out their tongues, kiss, etc. using emoticons. This serves to draw the child into a flirty situation. Meanwhile, they commit Degree 2 of victimization to assess the level of sexual experience of the children. A predator may ask if the child has a boyfriend or girlfriend, how far he/she has gone with a

guy/girl and even bluntly inquire if the child is a virgin. This sets the direction for progression of the victimization. If a child states that yes, he/she is a virgin, the predator may take a more instructive approach, teaching the child what it means to have oral sex or describing different sexual positions. However, the more experience the child claims to have, the less the predator expresses a ‘teaching’ persona. Instead, the predators move to the next degrees of victimization.

Referring to Table 5, the total decrease of Degrees 1 and 2 from Q2 to Q3 equals 87. Interestingly, the increase of Degrees 4 and 5 from Q2 to Q3 equals 84. This implies that more time and text is devoted to aggressive victimization. Predators spend less time flirting and assessing children’s sexual experience and more time engaging children in cybersex, exposing their genitalia to children via webcam and sharing links to video porn sites in the third quarter of conversations. In the fourth quartile all Degrees of Victimization decrease. Combined with the aforementioned increase in community logics, this could indicate that time and texts are being expended on moving the children from cybersex to a face-to-face illegal sexual encounter.

4.3.3. Coercion. The three sub-constructs of coercion are interesting in that they display at a frequency spread of only 13 in the first quartile. Power, activity control, and intention alteration are enacted almost equally by online sexual predators within the first quartile of conversations with potential victims. Also interesting to note is that there were 465 instances of coercion noted in the first quartile and 474 instances of institutional logics. The relationship between these constructs is explored further in the discussion section.

While the three sub-constructs are used in similar frequency in the first quartile, their use over the course of the conversations is very different. The largest frequency change across quartiles is evident in intention alteration with a progressive increase of 120% between the first and fourth quartiles. This aligns with the previously mentioned shifts in institutional logics and degrees of victimization. In the fourth quartile of the conversations predators utilize more community logic and less online victimization as they work to finalize the act of altering the children's intentions to their own – the intent of a face-to-face meeting in order to engage in an illegal sex act. As part of this final conversational act, predators enact increased activity control to influence the children's sharing of their phone number, revealing their address or arranging a place to meet. An increase in power is not seen because the predators do not want the children to feel threatened. If the children feel threatened they will not meet. Instead, the predators want the intentions of the children to be altered so they agree that meeting and engaging in sexual intercourse is also their desire.

4.3.4. Vulnerabilities. The vulnerability sub-construct most frequently displayed by the potential victims in the conversations with online predators in social control. A 94% increase occurred in instances of social control between the first and fourth quartiles of the conversations. This fits with the increased intention alteration noted in the coercion construct. The goal of the online predators is to convince children that it is not only okay to meet face-to-face, but that the children really want to meet. Expressions of social control by children demonstrate independence. Thus, in the fourth quartile of the conversations children are agreeing that meeting is a good idea, that they are mature

enough to make their own decisions and that they are ready to engage in sex acts with an adult.

In contrast, instances of learned helplessness and reactance are less frequent. The reason for this may be two-fold. First, the display of these behaviors in text requires discussion of a child's offline reality. They must share about the people and situations happening when they are not online. Often times, children get online to avoid the face-to-face world. They do not want to talk to or about their parents, their siblings, school, etc. Secondly, the goal of the predators requires the children to detach from their offline reality. The predators desire to become who the children want to interact with more than anyone else. They want their intention to be what the children desire – to meet face-to-face for the purpose of engaging in sexual acts.

The data analyzed in this set of transcripts revealed the presence of institutional logics, coercion and vulnerabilities in social media conversations between online sexual predators and potential victims. The distribution of frequencies demonstrated patterns of usage of institutional logics and coercion in relation to the committed degrees of victimization acts by the predators. Through the explication of cases from the sample, we can further examine how online sexual predators use institutional logics as a tool to enact coercion on and identify vulnerabilities in potential victims.

Table 19 contains excerpts from the first case, a conversation between Dave, screen name daveeatsyou, and PVJ volunteer constantconstance92. Dave believed he was talking to a 13 year old girl. Dave leads the conversation with community logic in order to determine where the child is physically located in relationship to himself. He then

immediately attempts to assess the child's willingness to engage in sexual activity and move the conversation toward his own intentions. This assessment is second degree victimization as defined by our categories. The conversation continues with the predator asking the size of the child's breasts with a quick move to cybersex when he asks if he can engage in a sex act with constantconstance92. When she responds with an act of social control through an invitation to visit her, the predator follows up with family logic to assess the availability of the child and risk to himself through the simple inquiry: 'are you alone?' The excerpt ends with the predator attempting to get the child to call him on the phone in order to set up a face-to-face meeting, which is a fifth degree victimization act.

The entire conversation was 1002 lines in length and resulted in Dave leaving his home to meet a 13 year old girl for the intent of engaging in illegal sexual acts. The last use of logics occurs at line 972 of the conversation when Dave employs state logic to ask "are you sure you're not going to get me busted". With simple reassurance at line 978 from constantconstance92 that "im no cop" he returned to committing cyber-victimization at line 985 with the sentence "I want to be naked with you".

Table 19. Case 1: Dave and constantconstance92

Line #	Screen name	Sentence	Inst. Logic	Coer	Vul	Deg of Vict.
1	constant	hi 2 u				
2	dave	mmmmmmmmmm mmmmmmmmmm				
3	dave	what city are you i?	Comm			
4	constant	lakewood u				
5	dave	tacoma	Comm			
6	dave	like to play?		Int Alt		2
7	constant	play?				
8	constant	age?				
9	dave	nasty?		Int Alt		2
10	dave	32				
11	constant	im 13				
12	constant	that ok?				
13	dave	sure				
14	dave	is it ok with you				
15	constant	yes				
16	constant	u got pic				
17	dave	no				
18	dave	how big are your tits				2
19	constant	32a				
20	dave	mmmmmmmmmm mmmmmmmm				
21	dave	can i suck them		Int Alt		4
22	constant	mebee				
23	constant	u come c me?			Soc Con	
24	dave	now				
25	dave	are you alone?	Fam			

26	constant	no not now silly				
27	constant	no moms home				
28	dave	when	Comm			
29	constant	i could sneak out sometime			Soc Con	
30	dave	kool				
31	dave	are you a virgin?				2
32	constant	yes				
33	constant	r u				
34	dave	no				
35	constant	kewl				
36	constant	i was jk				
37	dave	can you call me		Act Con		5

The second case involves a conversation between Benjamin Brown, screen name [jim_garvin56](#), and PVJ volunteer camiizbored. Benjamin believed he was talking to a 13 year old girl. Table 20 contains the first 35 lines of their conversation. Benjamin initially leads with the power sub-construct of coercion, with the sentences “sorry 25 here bye” and “well most people in the chat rooms r older” implying dominance due to age. In reality, Benjamin was 58 years old, so he intentionally misled camiizbored from the beginning of the conversation. Camiizbored responds with reactance to this condescension through stating “im not a baby”. Sensing sensitivity to the age comments and latching onto the word ‘baby’, Benjamin slides easily into family logic with the sentence “but your parents could cause trouble”. He continues to use family logic to assess the camiizbored’s living arrangements and thus her availability for victimization and the degree of risk involved. Benjamin also employed state logic when he talked of the possibility of camiizbored getting “hurt in these chat rooms” and the fact that “there r a lot of pervrts in them”.

The conversation between Benjamin Brown and camiizbored is 1445 lines. The conversation progressed to Benjamin exposing himself to camiizbored using a webcam and masturbating on camera as he encouraged her to do the same in lines 1118 - 1162. These constituted fourth and fifth degrees of victimization. After that they finalized plans to meet. Benjamin employed state logic in sentences like “yes but if the cops see me pull in there they will check it out” and “don’t tell your friends”. After a little market logic with the offering “maybe we can have a beer together” the 58 year old online sexual predator wrapped up their conversation with more victimization by instructing a 13 year old girl to “make sure my sweet pussy is fresh and ready to go”.

Table 20. Case 2: Benjamin Brown and camiizbored

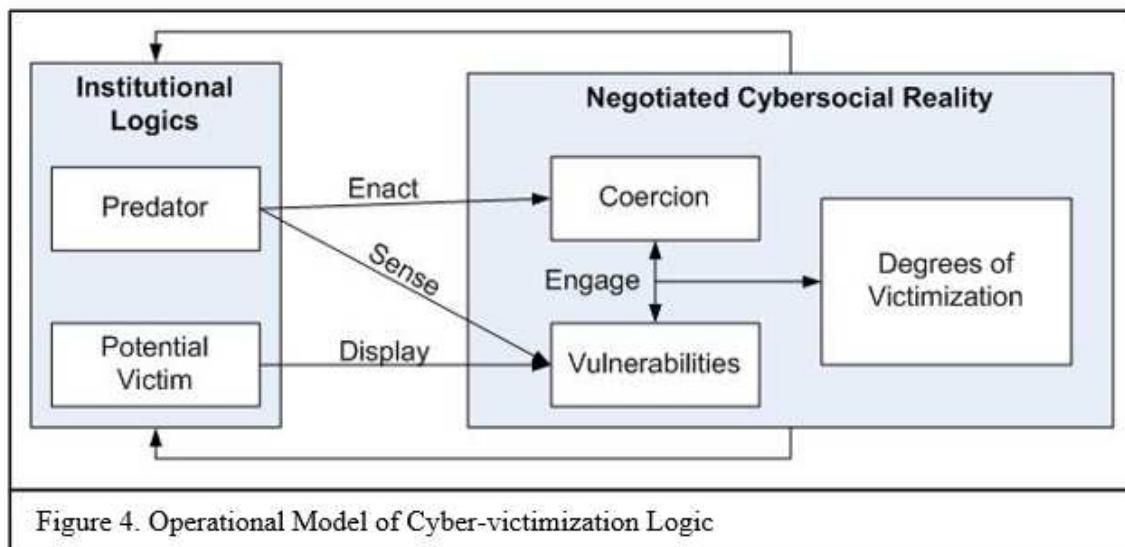
Line #	Screen name	Sentence	Inst. Logic	Coer	Vul	Deg of Vict.
1	cami	13/f/lex u?				
2	jim	sorry 25 here bye		Power		
3	cami	ok i hear that alot byez				
4	jim	well most people in the chat rooms r older		Power		
5	cami	i guess. but im not a baby			React	
6	jim	no guess not				
7	jim	but your parents could cause yrouble	Fam			
8	jim	trouble				
9	cami	hows that?				
10	cami	momz never home!			Lear Help	
11	jim	what about your dad	Fam			
12	cami	i dont kno my dad				

13	jim	sorry				
14	cami	its ok momz said he was mean				
15	jim	must have been				
16	jim	so where is your mom	Fam			
17	cami	shez at work				
18	jim	oh				
19	jim	u ever try to download paltalk				1
20	cami	no whats that?				
21	jim	its another place where u can go and talk				1
22	cami	do u need a mike?				
23	jim	they even have teen rooms there				
24	jim	no they type to				
25	cami	ok cuz momz wont let me have a mike or cam			Lear Help	
26	jim	u r a very lovely girl dont want u to get hurt in these chat rooms	State			
27	jim	there r a lot of pervrts in them	State			
28	cami	i kno there r creeps in here im carefull				
29	jim	ok				
30	cami	i just iggy them whn they IM me and ask me 2 do somthin 2 them!				
31	jim	good				
32	jim	if they ask u to view them dont ok		Activit y Contr ol		2
33	cami	ok i wont but noone has asked me2				

34	jim	if they do			
35	jim	most of them r showing themselves			2

4.4 Discussion of Findings, Implications and Limitations

4.4.1. Findings. These two examples demonstrate how online sexual predators utilize institutional logics in the coercion and victimization of children within social media. Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the operationalization of institutional logics in the cyber-victimization of children. As noted in the cases provided previously, the conversation can begin at any point in the operation cycle.



However, through coding and study of the transcripts, the basic tenets of cyber-victimization logic were identified and are represented in the model. These tenets are:

- Online sexual predators and potential victims have a baseline of institutional logics derived from their life situations: e.g. family, job, school, team

memberships, church memberships, laws of the townships, states, countries in which they reside, etc.

- Enacting: online predators enact coercion toward the goal of victimizing children within social media. Examples:
 - Power: “jim_garvin56: so u r my girl now”
 - Activity control: “junglemania: so can you sneak out for a blow job”
 - Intention alteration: “arthinice: i wish i could be the one to show you how good all this feels”
- Displaying: potential victims display vulnerabilities during self-expression within social media. Examples:
 - Social control: “im_taryn_it_up: i mean i do things mom dont know about sometimes and i keep my mouth shut cuz im not an idot”
 - Learned Helplessness: “scooperstart13: nobody ever talks about this stuff to me only u”
 - Reactance: “wild_janna_92: im not a baby”
- Sensing: online predators sense potential victims’ displayed vulnerabilities through the use of institutional logics and/or coercion. Example:

Table 21. Sensing: Transcript Excerpt

Speaker	Text	Behavior
antonio69_929	u parents know u be chatting to older guys	Family Logic
funlovinrachel	my mom dont care	Learned helplessness
antonio69_929	u dad	Family Logic
antonio69_929	ur	
funlovinrachel	i dont got a dad	
antonio69_929	ok srry	
antonio69_929	just asking cause there are alot if sick older guys	State Logic Intention Alteration
antonio69_929	of	
funlovinrachel	im not a baby	Reactance
antonio69_929	thats right u dont look like one lol	Family Logic

- Engagement: occurs when the conversation between an online sexual predator and a potential victim moves beyond general demographics to an exchange of coercive behaviors and vulnerabilities and the text is entwined with degrees of cyber-victimization. Example:

Table 22. Engagement: Transcript Excerpt

Speaker	Text	Behavior
daddywants2playnokc	well u gotta fuck me 1st to get u open	Intention Alteration Deg of Vict. 4
daddywants2playnokc	u know	
chelss_wut_elss	dang	
chelss_wut_elss	u no	
chelss_wut_elss	wud it b ok if it was just us this time	Social control
chelss_wut_elss	just u n me	
daddywants2playnokc	oh thats the only way it willgo	Power
chelss_wut_elss	ok	
chelss_wut_elss	but then u mean later?	
chelss_wut_elss	another time maybe...	

daddywants2playnokc	yes	
chelss_wut_elss	3sum	Social control
chelss_wut_elss	ok	Social control
daddywants2playnokc	sweet	
daddywants2playnokc	i so want 2 taste u girl	Intention Alteration Deg of Vict. 4

As demonstrated through frequency counts and text samples, online predators engage children in social media discourse by utilizing the constructs of coercion and institutional logics. Once the engagement occurs, the conversation between the online predator and potential victim becomes frames of negotiated cyber-social reality. Frames are defined as “relatively stable interpretive schemes through which actors makes sense of events and situations they come across” (Azad and Faraj 2011, p. 37). The authors go on to state that the act of framing “involves the virtual drawing of a boundary, much like a picture frame, emphasizing what is inside vs. outside and thereby making the former more salient” (Azad and Faraj 2011, p37). The frames within the current phenomenon are the social media interactions between children and online sexual predators. Within these frames of discourse predators sense children’s vulnerabilities in order to determine appropriate enactment of coercion and use of institutional logics. A successfully negotiated cyber-social reality includes the transformation of a child from potential victim to actualized victim.

The concept of negotiated cyber-social reality can be seen within framing. The act of framing requires the coercer to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment

recommendation” (Entman 1993, p.52). In the case of online predators, the child shares the ‘perceived reality’ with the predators through textual expression of vulnerabilities and the use of institutional logics. The predators then work to negotiate that reality within the frame, creating a reality that differs from the child’s true reality but that is thus appealing. The shift in realities provides a space for the coercer and coerced to engage in shared meaning, embodied by the framed negotiated cyber-social reality.

4.4.2 Implications. Study 2 has implications for the academic community as well as parents/guardians, educators, law enforcement and mental health practitioners. These implications are presented in the following sections.

4.4.2.1. Research Implications. To date, this is the first information systems research to examine how individuals employ and manipulate institutional logics within social media toward their own personal interests. Specifically, it is the only IS study to examine online sexual predators’ use and manipulation of institutional logics within social media to victimize children. Thus, the current study is a starting block for a new perspective from which to study social media interactions. This perspective could be transferred to other unintended consequences of social media usage such as cyberbullying, sex trafficking and the propagation of one’s chosen agenda. Study 2 provides a glimpse into how the beliefs, values and norms people hold are inserted into the social media that is proliferating the daily lives of society’s children.

Secondly, this is the first study to develop degrees of cyber-victimization of children within social media. Prior research regarding online solicitation/grooming of children positions the online conversations as precursors to child sexual abuse, focusing

on the face-to-face meeting as the victimization outcome (O'Connell, 2003; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Beech, & Collings, 2013; Williams, Elliott, & Beech, 2013). However, this study demonstrates that the sexual content within social media conversations between sexual predators and children are acts of psychological victimization.

4.4.2.2. Practical Implications. This study examined the use of institutional logics specifically within cyber-victimization of children in social media. Understanding the uses of institutional logics can aid in educating parents/guardians, law enforcement and professionals who work with children regarding warning signs within social media conversations. As evidenced in the study, not all online sexual predators move directly to degrees of victimization. Therefore, being able to identify a potential online sexual predator via the non-sexual content of a conversation would not only be beneficial to the well-being of children, but could, in fact, prevent conversations from moving into cyber-victimization.

Additionally, viewing the sexual content within social media conversations between sexual predators and children as acts of psychological victimization has practical implications for mental health providers. This view offers a mechanism for understanding the experiences of children who have been engaged in cyber-victimization acts by online sexual predators. Not only could this improve the counseling services provided to those children, but also set a precedence to begin studying the longitudinal effects of this type of victimization.

4.4.3. Limitations. The findings in Study 2 are based upon the definitions of Western culture institutions and an online victimization view of the sexual content of social media conversations between online predators and potential victims. Thus, it may be difficult to generalize the findings to other social media phenomenon. However, researchers have begun to examine the relationship between cybergrooming and cyberbullying with the results indicating a strong association between being cybergroomed and being cyberbullied (Wachs, Wolf, & Pan, 2012).

As with Study 1, the findings in Study 2 are based upon transcripts between convicted on line sexual predators and potential victims – who, in this case, are adults posing as youth. Thus, the findings may differ should Structured Content Analysis be applied to transcripts of social media conversations between online sexual predators and actual children. Additionally, this study examines the propagation of predator ideology via the definitions of institutional logics and degrees of victimization. This *a priori* approach could potentially exclude additional methods of ideology propagation from the findings as all mechanisms outside the use of institutional logics and degrees of victimization are not considered. This leaves room for more examination into the phenomenon.

A third study in this dissertation extends both the Critical Discourse Analysis and Structured Content Analysis findings from Study 1 and Study 2 by applying a Grounded Theory approach to the analysis of the negotiated cyber-social realities utilized by online sexual predators to victimize children within social media.

CHAPTER V

STUDY 3: EXAMINING THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITIES DURING PREDATORY COERCION AND VICTIMIZATION OF CHILDREN IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

As previously stated, the theoretical findings from Study 1 indicate that online sexual predators do engage potential victims through negotiated cyber-social realities within social media conversations. Those negotiated cyber-social realities were “relatively stable interpretive schemes through which actors make sense of events and situations they come across” (Azad and Faraj, 2011, p. 37). These were the frames of conversation between online predators and potential victims in social media during which victimization occurred. Further investigation into the discourse of negotiated cyber-social realities between online sexual predators and potential victims was undertaken in Study 2 through the lens of institutional logics: “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005, p. 101). The theoretical findings from Study 2 indicated that online sexual predators used and manipulated institutional logics within negotiated cyber-social realities to victimize children. The institutional logics, as defined by Thornton and Ocasio (2005), that were identified as most frequently used by predators in the discourse of negotiated cyber-social realities were family, community and state.

However, in both Study 1 and Study 2 the discourses between online sexual predators and potential victims were examined through a priori lenses. Study 1 utilized coercion (Anderson, 2011), social control (Selymes, 2011), reactance and learned helplessness (Thacker, 1992). Study 2 utilized institutions and institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005). In contest, it should not be assumed that the results of these studies explained all text used and manipulated by online sexual predators in the victimization of children as they included only the text that met defined criteria. Therefore, the aim of Study 3 is the examination of the discourses between online sexual predators and potential victims without a priori theories or hypotheses. The goal of the study is to develop a model of *how* online sexual predators use text to construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities during the online victimization of children.

Findings from Study 1 resulted in the identification of three categories of predatory communicative acts (PCT): camouflage, bait and trap. These categories are differentiated by the degree of threat with which the predator initiates the interaction with the child. Camouflage PCTs occur when the predator allows the child to display vulnerabilities prior to exerting textual coercion over the child. Bait PCTs occur when the predator leads with acts of coercion without waiting for the child to display vulnerabilities. Trap PCTs occur when the predator moves the conversation immediately to a degree of victimization without enacting coercion or waiting for the child to display vulnerabilities. Logic follows that if there are differences in the manner in which online sexual predators initiate communication with children, there may also be differences in their construction and control of the negotiated cyber-social realities within those

communications. These differences may fall outside of the boundaries drawn by the constructs in Studies 1 and 2.

Therefore, the current study proposes the examination of three sets of Perverted Justice transcripts. Each set is a representative sample of one category of predatory communicative techniques. Dividing the data set into the three categories affords the ability to compare and contrast the communicative techniques used by these groups of online sexual predators. The proposed result is a more complete picture of techniques utilized by predators to construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities toward victimization of children. To achieve this result, the large research question addressed within this study is: *How do sex offenders construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?* This question is further subdivided to focus on the three categories of PCT:

- *How do sex offenders employing camouflage predatory communicative techniques construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*
- *How do sex offenders employing bait predatory communicative techniques construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*
- *How do sex offenders employing trap predatory communicative techniques construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*

Answering the research questions begins with a base understanding of the theoretical foundation for the study.

5.1 Theoretical Foundation

As previously noted, negotiated cyber-social realities are spaces where predators engage children in discourse in order to gauge the vulnerabilities of the children and exert coercive acts in order to enact cyber-victimization. This type of behavior appears to be related to grooming mentioned in Olson, Daggs, Ellevold, and Rogers (2007) Luring Communication Theory. Thus a foundational understanding of grooming within child sexual abuse is necessary. In this section a background on grooming as it has been studied in both offline and online child sexual abuse is provided. The section concludes with a discussion outlining the factors that differentiate the current study from the extant research.

5.1.1 Grooming in Offline Child Sexual Abuse. Definitions of grooming in the context of child sexual abuse have their origins in the offline phenomenon, face-to-face grooming. Table 23 provides a snapshot of those definitions. Through interviews of fifty-two incest and fifty pedophilic offenders Lang and Frenzel (1988) found that sex offenders use both verbal and non-verbal strategies to sexually seduce children. For two-thirds of the men in both groups, a prominent factor was feeling in control and powerful. Of the fifty pedophilic interviewees, forty-eight percent claimed to have misrepresented moral standards, seventy-eight percent misused authority and adult sophistication while sixty-two percent frightened the child in some way (Lang and Frenzel, 1988). In the evaluation of a letter from a sex offender to a child, Singer, Hussey and Strom (1992) found that “[c]ontrary to popular belief, sexual offenders are not often unskilled and inept, rather they are frequently quite sophisticated, calculating and patient” (p. 884).

Table 23. Definitions of Offline Sexual Grooming of Children

Author(s)	Definition
Lang and Frenzel (1988)	“slow courtship to seduce children with gifts, attention and affection” (p. 314)
Singer, Hussey, and Strom (1992)	“the adult learns the child’s likes and dislikes, concerns and fears, and uses this knowledge to entice him/her into the sexual contact” (p. 880)
Young (1997)	“process during which interactions with the child progressed from “Innocent” affection and acceptable forms of touching to contact that fit what is defined as criminal sexual contact” (p. 4)
Craven, Brown, and Gilchrist (2006)	“A process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of this child. Specific goals include gaining access to the child, gaining the child’s compliance and maintaining the child’s secrecy to avoid disclosure. This process serves to strengthen the offender’s abusive pattern, as it may be used as a means of justifying or denying their actions” (p. 297)
Olson, Daggs, Ellevold, and Rogers (2007)	“the subtle communication strategies that child sexual abusers use to prepare their potential victims to accept the sexual contact” (p. 241)

Young (1997) applied criminal events theory to examine how the sexual exploitation of children occurs and continues undetected. This theory is twofold: convergence of people and settings driven by the structures of society and at least one intentional actor who manages the impressions of the other participants successfully. Through application of this theory to 132 sexual assault cases from the Victim-Witness Assistance Programme in Ontario, Canada, Young (1997) identified ten means used by sexual predators to perpetrate and perpetuate child sexual exploitation. They present themselves as someone who should be brought into a close relationship and take on a role like ‘daddy figure’ or ‘best friend’. Additionally, they make themselves fun to be with and project themselves as a caretaker and socializer, often using these moments to educate the child about body parts. Also, they make sure the child knows his/her duties and what is expected, which includes playing a part in family privacy and keeping family

secrets (namely the occurring abuse). They act as mentors, bringing something unique into the child's life, and present the early physical contact as accidental. Lastly, the presentation of the sexual abuse acts (what the author refers to as grooming) occurs on a continuum from non-sexual to sexual. This "blurs the line between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, gradually moving what a child might identify as inappropriate if grooming had not occurred into the realm of appropriate" (Young, 1997).

Taking a literature review and theoretical approach, Craven et al. (2006) examined extant research on child sexual abuse, specifically discussions of sexual grooming, and developed what they considered to be a more complete definition, shown in Table 23. Based upon the literature review they identified three types of sexual grooming: "self-grooming, grooming the environment and significant others and grooming the child" (Craven et al., 2006). Self-grooming refers to the process the sexual predator goes through with regard to his/her own implicit theories regarding adult sexual contact with a children and the "justification or denial of their offending behaviour" (Craven et al., 2006). During the self-grooming process sexual predators may experience cognitive deconstruction in which he/she "has much more focus on feelings of pleasure and less awareness of the consequences of his behaviour" (Craven et al., 2006). Grooming the environment and significant others refers to how the sexual predator inserts him/herself into places where children are accessible and gains the trust of the adults in that arena. Lastly, grooming the child, noted as "the most commonly recognized form of sexual grooming" (Craven et al., 2006) was broken down into physical grooming and psychological grooming. Simply stated, physical grooming occurs when a sex offender

gradually sexualizes his/her relationship with a child. Psychological grooming, however, has a more involved description. According to the authors it involves the predator building trust with the child, starting to violate boundaries such as teaching about sex education and potentially threatening, bribing and enacting violence against the child. Additionally the predators press the need to avoid disclosure, working to isolate and alienate the child while stressing the importance of secret keeping (Craven et al., 2006).

Yet another approach for studying the phenomenon of child sexual abuse that included grooming was Olson et al's (2007) Luring Communication Theory. Within this theory, the authors consider grooming one of the key elements of the cycle of entrapment in which sexual predators develop deceptive trust with their victims. The authors explain two communication strategies employed in the grooming stage: communicative desensitization and reframing. Communicative desensitization includes acts by the predators to place themselves in intimate proximity to, having private consultations with and escalating sexual contact with the potential victim. Reframing involves "implicit sexual suggestions" (Olson et al., 2007, p. 242) that paint sexual relations between adults and children in a positive light.

Each of these studies added valuable information to the knowledge base regarding grooming within offline child sexual abuse and provided a foundation for understanding the grooming process for the current study. However, we do not have a complete picture of how grooming within offline child sexual abuse is comparable to instances of online sexual solicitation of children. While being able to apply theories of offline phenomena to

similar phenomena in cyberspace is a logical place to start, there is no guarantee that those theories will hold true in a virtual setting.

5.1.2. Grooming in Online Child Sexual Abuse. Logically, the starting place for research regarding online child sexual abuse was in the knowledge base regarding offline child sexual abuse. Offline CSA was the most closely related phenomenon from which to initiate the study of the online phenomenon. As more data has become available for study, researchers have turned the focus to specifically studying online sexual solicitation. It has been examined both in isolation and in relation to the grooming process. A snapshot of the definitions developed for online sexual grooming is provided in Table 24.

O'Connell (2003) studied online sexual predation through the engagement of a participant observation method, spending over 50 hours over the course of five years in chat rooms posing as an 8, 10 or 12 year old child. Through this method she was able to identify six patterns of sex offender behavior. The friendship forming stage involves non-threatening conversations with a 'get to know you' message. This extends into the relationship forming stage with a predator working to become a child's best friend, learn about his/her family life, school, etc. The risk assessment stage involves the predator trying to determine the likelihood of his/her inappropriate engagement with the child being detected by parents, guardians, etc. Typically following risk assessment is the exclusivity stage in which the predator brings in trust, the idea of secrecy and mutual respect. Once trust is established the predator moves into the sexual stage, amplifying the intensity of the conversation and bringing sexual content into the conversation. The

author notes that “the most distinctive differences in conversational patterns occur” (O’Connell, 2003, p. 7) in this stage.

For those adults who intend to maintain a relationship with a child and for whom it seems to be important to maintain the child’s perception of a sense of trust and ‘love’ having been created between child and adult, the sexual stage will be entered gently and the relational framing orchestrated by the adult is for the child to perceive the adult as a mentor or possible future lover. Certainly a child’s boundaries may be pressed but often gentle pressure is applied and the sense of mutuality is maintained intact, or if the child signifies that they are uncomfortable in some way, which implicitly suggests a risk of some sort of breach in the relationship precipitated by the adult pushing too hard for information, typically there is a profound expression of regret by the adult which prompts expressions of forgiveness by the child which tends to re-establish an even deeper sense of mutuality. (O’Connell, 2003, pp. 7–8)

The final stage presented by the author is the cybersexploitation or fantasy enactment stage, in which the ultimate goal is sexual gratification. She outlines three variations of cybersexploitation: fantasy enactment based on perception of mutuality, fantasy enactment using overt coercion counterbalanced with intimacy and a cyber-rape fantasy enactment involving overt coercion, control and aggression (O’Connell, 2003).

Table 24. Definitions of Online Sexual Grooming of Children

Author(s)	Definition
O'Connell (2003)	"A course of conduct enacted by a suspected paedophile, which would give a reasonable person cause for concern that any meeting with a child arising from the conduct would be for unlawful purposes" (p. 4)
Davidson and Martellozzo (2008)	"a process of socialisation during which an offender seeks to interact with a child (a young person under 18 in Scotland, England and Wales), possibly sharing their hobbies and interests in an attempt to gain trust in order to prepare them for sexual abuse" (p. 4)
Wachs, Wolf, and Pan (2012)	(referred to as cybergrooming) "establishing a trust-based relationship between minors and usually adults using ICTs [information communication technologies] to systematically solicit and exploit the minors for sexual purposes" (p. 628)
Williams, Elliott, and Beech (2013)	"a process by which an individual prepares the child and their environment for abuse to take place, including gaining access to the child, creating compliance and trust, and ensuring secrecy to avoid disclosure" (p. 135)

Davidson and Martellozzo (2008) agree with the idea of Internet predators seeking immediate gratification. They break online sexual predators into two categories: those who use the Internet to target and groom children, and those who produce and/or download indecent images of children and distribute them. Referring to Krone's (2005) typology of Internet child sex offenders, they define online groomers as "[o]ffenders who have initiated online contact with a child with the intention of establishing a sexual relationship involving cyber sex or physical sex. These offenders may send indecent images to children as a part of the grooming process" (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2008, pp. 7–8).

Wachs et al. (2012) note three components of online grooming (which they refer to as cybergrooming): repetition, misuse of trust and the specificity of the relationship between the victim and the cybergroomer. Repetition refers to the reoccurrence of the

grooming behaviors with the same child. Misuse of trust refers to the deception used by cybergroomers. The relationship specificity refers to how the predator and child know each other, whether it is purely online, an anonymous type of stranger or it is an offline relationship with an online component (Wachs et al., 2012).

Lastly, Williams et al. (2013) used thematic analysis to identify three main themes/strategies used by Internet sex offenders within the grooming process that takes place within the initial hour of conversation between an online sexual predator and a potential victim. Those three themes included: rapport-building, sexual content and assessment. Similar to O'Connell (2003), rapport-building involves the sexual predator attempting to develop a friendship/relationship with a child. Sub-themes within rapport-building are identified as coordination, mutuality and positivity. Coordination refers to an offenders attempts to "synchronize their behaviors with the child's" (William et al., 2013, p. 140). Mutuality occurs when a predator attempts to align his/her interests, attitudes and/or personal circumstances with those of the child. Positivity involves a predator presenting him/herself to the child as someone who does not pose a threat, but rather is friendly and trustworthy.

The second theme, sexual content, is broken into two sub-themes: the introduction and the maintenance/escalation of sexual content in the conversation. Four means of introduction were identified: sexual content as a game, through offering advice, engaging in a mutual fantasy and through force. Maintenance/escalation occurs through repetition of sexual content and/or the use of force. The third and final theme, assessment, includes the sub-themes of assessment of the child and assessment of the environment.

Assessment of the child encompasses analysis of the child's trust level, vulnerability and receptiveness to interaction. Assessment of the environment involves analysis of obstacles, opportunities and information that could impact the grooming process and hinder secrecy (Williams et al., 2013).

5.1.3. Differentiation. The current study continues a stream of research aimed at improving recognition of patterns within predatory coercion and victimization of children in social media. That being said, with relation to offline child sexual abuse, this study will increase the knowledge of similarities and differences between grooming in online and offline child sexual abuse. Regarding existing studies focused on online solicitation of children with the intent of child abuse, the current study takes a deeper look at how that solicitation takes place and compares it across categories of communicative techniques. Table 25 outlines the major studies of online sexual grooming/solicitation and how the current study differs from each existing study.

Additionally, the current study differs from extant literature in depth and breadth of data analyzed, purpose for analysis and type of data analyzed. While each one of the studies listed informs the current study through theoretical invocation and results, a Grounded Theory approach applied to a larger number of online transcripts between sexual predators and potential victims could reveal an even clearer picture of how online sexual predators negotiate cyber-social realities and are thus able to groom and victimize children in social media. In Whittle et al.'s (2013) literature review they included all of the articles from Table 25 except Wachs et al., 2012. After their review of all of the literature they stated, “[t]he review concludes that research concerning the online

grooming of young people is limited and calls for further study in this field” (Whittle et al., 2013, p.2). The current study furthers the conversation surrounding online grooming.

Table 25. Comparison of Current Study to Extant Literature	
Extant Literature	Current Study
Author: O'Connell (2003) Title: A Typology of Cybersexploitation and On-line Grooming Practices Focus: An exploration of both cybersexploitation and grooming practices employed by adults and adolescents with a sexual interest in children Method: Participant Observation, Conversation Analytic Data Set: 50 hours of chat transcripts Data Set Parameters: Single individual presenting to potential predators as child decoy aged 8, 10 or 12; Chat rooms for children/teenagers	682 hours of chat transcripts; Multiple decoys presenting to potential predators as children aged 12-14; adult predators only
Author: Malesky (2007) Title: Predatory Online Behavior: Modus Operandi of Convicted Sex Offenders in Identifying Potential Victims and Contacting Minors Over the Internet Focus: Expand the knowledge base regarding sex offenders' predatory online behaviors Method: Qualitative analysis Data Set: Questionnaire responses Data Set Parameters: 31 male inmates in Federal Bureau of Prisons' Sex Offender Treatment Program; Questionnaire developed by author	Analysis of direct online behavior
Author: Davidson and Martellozzo (2008) Title: Protecting Children in Cyberspace Focus: Explore the online grooming and sexual abuse of children and the legislative and institutional measures being developed to prevent it Method: Case study Data Set: Three case studies provided by London Metropolitan Police Data Set Parameters: Case one: online grooming; Case two: overlapping of online sexually abusive behaviors; Case three: roles that the Internet plays in child sexual abuse	Online child sexual exploitation only
Author: Wachs, Wolf, and Pan (2012) Title: Cybergrooming: Risk factors, coping strategies and associations with cyberbullying Focus: Investigate which factors shape risk to become	Analysis of direct online behavior targeting predator behavior

<p>cybergrooming victim, association between cybergrooming and cyberbullying, identify coping strategies and their effectiveness</p> <p>Method: Quantitative analysis</p> <p>Data Set: Questionnaire responses</p> <p>Data Set Parameters: Self-reports from students at four schools, grades 5-10</p>	
<p>Author: Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Beech and Collings (2013)</p> <p>Title: A Review of Online Grooming: Characteristics and Concerns</p> <p>Focus: Explores the research surrounding how young people are targeted by offenders on the internet</p> <p>Method: Literature Review</p> <p>Data Set: Extant literature</p> <p>Data Set Parameters: Literature containing definitions, prevalence, characteristics of online grooming, child sexual abuse theories and internet behaviours</p>	Analysis of direct online behavior
<p>Author: Williams, Elliott, and Beech (2013)</p> <p>Title: Identifying Sexual Grooming Themes Used by Internet Sex Offenders</p> <p>Focus: Establish possible strategies that Internet sex offenders use within the grooming process</p> <p>Method: Thematic analysis</p> <p>Data Set: Eight transcripts from Perverted Justice website</p> <p>Data Set Parameters: Initial communication in transcript lasts for 1-2 hours; no immediate sexual contact or demonstrated aggression</p>	90 transcripts from Perverted Justice website; no time or content communication restrictions

5.2. Research Methodology: Grounded Theory

Within Study 1, Chapter 3, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis provided a mechanism for examination of the phenomenon through a critical lens. The data was analyzed against the constructs of coercion, learned helplessness, social control, reactance, and negotiated cyber-social realities. This examination resulted in the development of a proposed theory of predatory communicative acts. It provided a means to study the linguistics, languages, and communication styles of predators within social

media. Also, it included the sociocultural aspect which revealed the propagation of sex offender ideology within social media. However, the CDA approach does not include interpreting the content of the conversations to determine how the predators constructed negotiated cyber-social realities in order to entrap and victimize children. Study 2, Chapter 4 included employment of Structured Content Analysis, a look into the content of the conversations through the lens of Institutional Logics and the development of degrees of victimization. This structured interpretive technique allowed for identification of cyber-victimization logic and the development of a representative conceptual model.

The current study goes one step deeper with the utilization of a more open interpretive technique to break down the shared meaning created by predators and children within the negotiated cyber-social realities. Both the predators and the children bring perceptions to the discourse. Those perceptions originate in the individuals' orientations to aspects of the phenomenon such as themselves and each other. Deetz (1982) posited that "every perception is dependent on the conceptual apparatus which makes it possible and meaningful, and this conceptual apparatus is inscribed in language" (p. 135). Thus, within the institution of social media, language, in the form of text, connects the perceptions of the predators and children to the system of shared meaning within the negotiated cyber-social realities.

Critical Discourse Analysis provided a mechanism to determine that the discursive practices of online predators within social media are ideological and derived coercively. Structured Content Analysis revealed the use of logics, including a cyber-victimization logic. However, the critical interpretive perspective proposed in this chapter

will go a step further through examination of how, within the institution of social media, a “system of discursive practices serves to produce and reproduce the configuration of meaning that constitutes and represents the structure of power formation and dominance relations” (Mumby, 1989, p. 303) through the construction of negotiated cyber-social realities. Ideology propagated within the discursive practices can be viewed as functioning as “a force that governs human activity and regulates this activity as routinized social practice” (Wright & Hailu, 1988, p. 178). Additionally, regarding the use of coercion, a critical interpretive perspective provides a mechanism to determine how predators manipulate information within negotiated cyber-social realities to victimize children. “By thinking of verbal deception as something that can be accomplished by manipulating information in various ways, we can begin to isolate the particular features of messages that potentially influence deceptiveness” (McCornack, 1992, p. 14). Interpretation of the language used within discourse will allow for the development of knowledge regarding how the predatory ideology and negotiated cyber-social realities are reciprocally manifested social practices within the institution of social media.

A Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2008) approach is proposed as the method to critically examine conversations in which predators engaged in either camouflage, bait or trap predatory communicative techniques. Grounded Theory is the chosen approach because it provides a mechanism to study the elements of the phenomenon via the interpretation of text. The aim of Grounded Theory research is to derive theory from actual data rather than force-fitting data to *a priori*

theory and hypotheses (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2008). Through utilization of data for theory development the constructs revealed in answer to the research question are obtained via evidentiary evolution of interpretive coding techniques. By formulating theory within this approach, the theory is so intimately tied to the data, the resultant theory is likely consistent with empirical observation (Eisenhardt, 1989). Following Glaser and Strauss' (1967) and Strauss and Corbin's (1990; 2008) recommendations, attention was paid to theoretical relevance, purpose, similarities and differences across data sources with regard to appropriateness of the data sources. Data analysis included three coding processes: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Orlikowski, 1993). Data analysis was conducted on all 90 transcripts even if theoretical saturation was reached, in order to also discuss pervasiveness of observed behaviors (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2008). All emergent concepts were then combined into categories and constructs that were integrated (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2008) to build a proposed theoretical model of negotiated cyber-social realities within communicative techniques. Demographics of the data and details of the coding steps are discussed in the remainder of this section.

5.2.1. The Corpus. For this study 90 transcripts were selected from the Perverted Justice data, excluding transcripts utilized in the Study 1. Thirty transcripts were identified for each of the three predatory communicative acts. The transcripts were analyzed using the prescribed Grounded Theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2008; Locke, 2001). The unit of analysis in this study is the construction of negotiated cyber-social realities in dyadic conversations between online predators and Perverted

Justice volunteers. Table 26 contains demographics of the data across the three categories of predatory communicative acts.

	Table 26. Demographic Data for Sample Transcripts					
	Camouflage		Bait		Trap	
	Totals	Averages	Totals	Averages	Totals	Averages
Sex Offender Age		31		29		45
Child Age		13		14		13
Contact Hours	196	7	347	12	139	5
Contact Days	167	6	299	10	138	5
# of lines	27326	911	52976	1766	21634	721

The demographic data for the three groups presents an interesting finding that is in contrast to the results of Step 2 in the Critical Discourse Analysis method in Study 1. From that initial study we found that online predators who employed the camouflage PCT had the largest number of contact days, followed by the bait group and then the trap group. However, as you can see in Table 26, the bait group is significantly larger in contact hours, contact days and total number of lines than the other two groups. This will be addressed further in the discussion section.

5.2.2. Open Coding. The step of open coding revealed forty-one distinct codes across the three categories of predatory communicative acts. Those codes were:

- advice
- age
- assess alcohol use
- assess availability
- assess cigarette use
- assess drug use
- assess physical appearance
- assess race
- assess sexual desire
- assess sexual experience
- assess sexual willingness
- assess willingness
- bait and release
- bargain
- challenge
- compliment
- control
- dare
- ego
- family assessment
- fantasy
- gay slur
- insecurity
- insensitive
- location
- make self-desirable
- peer pressure
- praying
- racial slurs
- relationship assessment
- religion
- remorse
- rethinking
- reverse power
- sadness
- self-deprecating
- self-pity
- self-preservation
- sympathy
- teach
- threat

As previously noted, all 30 transcripts for each of the three predatory communicative techniques were coded completely. Doing so allowed for observations of commonality and differentiation between the groups as addressed in the discussion section.

5.2.3. Axial Coding. In this step of the Grounded Theory process all codes were arranged into categories based upon their relation to each other under a common theme (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The categories created and codes mapped to the categories are shown in Table 27.

Table 27. Open and Axial Coding Results	
Axial Code Categories	Open Codes
Assess Meeting Potential	location
	assess availability
	assess willingness
Assess PV Relationships	family assessment
	relationship assessment
Attractiveness Assessment of PV	assess physical appearance
	age
	assess race
Domination	control
	self-preservation
	bargain
	peer pressure
	challenge
	dare
Enticement	comp
	reverse power
Fantasizing	fantasy
Random Negativity	threat
	gay slur
	insensitive
	racial slurs
Negative Increased P-Attractiveness	ego
	insecurity
	self-deprecating
	self-pity
	religion
	bait and release
	remorse
	praying
	rethinking
	sadness
Positive Increased P-Attractiveness	make self-desirable
	teach
	advice
	sympathy

Substance Use Assessment of PV	assess alcohol use
	assess drug use
	assess cigarette use
	assess sexual desire
Sexuality Assessment of PV	assess sexual experience
	assess sexual willingness

5.2.4. Selective Coding. Further refinement of the categories took place in the selective coding process. In this step of Grounded Theory we looked for gaps in the logic of the categories and relationships. Weak categories were strengthened and excessive categories reconstructed. This process served to validate the scheme (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The final breakdown of categories and subcategories of online sexual predator behaviors inside of negotiated cyber-social realities during victimization of children is:

- Assessments
 - Environment: location, family, relationship
 - Personal attributes: physical appearance, willingness to meet, availability to meet
 - Sexuality: experience, desires, willingness
- Enticements
 - Potential victim: illusion of power
 - Predator: vulnerabilities, strengths
- Fantasy
 - In text cybersex
 - Live webcam (live)
- Control
 - relationship claim
 - feigned affection
 - age difference
 - child's actions: sexual, non-sexual
- Self-preservation
 - Concern for potential victim
 - Concern for self

These categories extend the negotiated cyber-social realities section of the theoretical model presented in Chapter 3, Study 1. The new model is presented in the next section. The narrative for the new categories and subcategories and their relation to O'Connell (2003) and Williams et al.'s (2013) findings are presented in the results section. The relation of those results to the previous model of negotiated cyber-social realities is addressed in the theoretical model section. Similarities and differences of these categories across the three predatory communicative acts are presented in the discussion section.

5.3 Results

The application of Grounded Theory to the selected set of transcripts resulted in the identification of five categories of online predator behavior inside of negotiated cyber-social realities during victimization of children. Those categories are: assessment, enticements, fantasy, control and self-preservation. Each of those categories are subsequently broken down into subcategories for depth of understanding, as outlined in Section 5.2.4. Selective Codes.

5.3.1. Assessment. The act of assessment involves the scanning of one's situation in order to draw conclusions regarding a point of interest. Three subcategories of assessment emerged from the data: environment, personal attributes and sexuality. Environment is further broken down into location, family and relationships. As noted by O'Connell (2003) and Williams et al. (2013), an online sexual predator may engage in different levels and contents of risk assessment when determining if a child is a good choice for grooming and victimization. In alignment with Williams et al. (2013) we found that the online sexual predators whose transcripts we studied did engage in the

assessment of the children's location, family and relationships. Examples are shown in Table 28. When assessing the child's environment the online predators were not only curious about where the children lived, but also who they lived with, if they were ever allowed out on their own, if their parents/grandparents were strict, etc. They also established early on in the conversations whether or not the children had a boyfriend or girlfriend. This was very important to some, as we will discuss later.

Regarding the personal attributes, online sexual predators asked about the children's physical appearance. This inquiry ranged from a discussion of height and weight to eye and hair color as well as breast size and the amount and location of pubic hair on the children. Availability and willingness refer to the children's inclination to meet in person an individual who they initially met online. On one level the online predator is curious as to whether the child is even willing to meet. If it is established that yes, in fact, the child would meet in person then the predator questions the child about his/her availability. It should be noted that this is coded as a non-sexual inquiry. In these cases the online predators suggested meeting to grab a bite to eat, go to a movie and/or just hang out.

Table 28. Assessment: Transcript Samples

Subcategory	Group	Examples
Environment	Location	welfare_isforwhitefolks: so where in nc r u zavior01: what part of town are you in
	Family	yankees_9ers_dad: your mom would kill you if she knew you were talking to me chrispy967: wheres your parents?
	Relationships	your_lil_nene: ok where is your boyfriend

		rn_buzzkiller2003: u dating yet?
Personal Attributes	Physical appearance	bud44800: do you have big tits clitlicker42303: do you shave
	Availability	working_loving_goodman: so you free this weekend va_breitling: so home alone tomorrow?
	Willingness	solepleaser: want to hang out? ben_taul2000: if u want to meet me i do
Sexuality	Experience	tattooedman73: you ever been with a older guy yp_anthony_louisville_284: have you ever been with a guy sexually before?
	Desire	mikeman7828: r u gonna want to fuck? justinawashcock: what do u like to be done to you
	Willingness	fuddster88: how far u let me go with u notjustanotherncguy: would you mind a guy touching you there if he did it the right way and all?

The last subcategory in assessment is sexuality. Williams et al., (2013) refer to this as the assessment of a child's receptiveness to the predator's "instruction of sexual themes" (p. 147), attempting to desensitize the child. O'Connell (2003) rolls this into what she calls the "sexual stage" (p. 4) and presents it as a progression in conversation which is impacted by the online predator's desire to maintain a longer term relationship with the child. While both authors present a feasible view of the content, our results differ in two ways. First, we remove the word desensitization from the discussion of online child sexual abuse. Rather, if an adult is talking online with a child and in any way broaches the topic of sex, the child has been psychologically victimized. Therefore, we

define the sexuality assessments as victimization. Secondly, we were able to break those victimizations into three groups: experience, desire and willingness. Online sexual predators who ask children about their sexual experience are assessing the child's potential to engage in sex acts based upon what they have done. Experience assessment includes the idea of 'have you ever'. Asking a child about his/her sexual desires gives the online predator an idea into what sex acts the child might be persuaded. Desire assessment includes the idea of 'would you like to'. Lastly, willingness refers to the sex acts in which a child has already decided that he/she will engage. Willingness assessment includes the idea of 'would you'.

5.3.2. Enticements. The objects of enticement used by online sexual predators within negotiated cyber-social realities refers to the inducements put forth to tempt the children into a sexual relationship. Both O'Connell (2003) and Williams et al. (2013) mention the negative use of force as a tool for motivating the children. "Adult: do as I fucking say right now bitch or you will be in big fucking trouble!" (p. 9). However, little force was found to be used in the observed cases. There were only thirty-eight combined notations of bargaining, peer pressure, challenging, daring, threatening, and/or using insensitivity across all 90 transcripts. Additionally, only 68 mentions of alcohol, cigarettes or drugs occurred. What did happen was that the predators chose to shine the spotlight on themselves or the children in order to connect with them. Table 29 provides examples from the transcripts for these subcategories and their groups.

Table 29. Enticements: Transcript Samples

Subcategory	Group	Examples
Potential Victim	Compliments	netbuckeye: you're beautiful without any makeup badboyssweetheart: youll be a little heart breaker when your older
	Reverse Power	burtoncanyon1732002: if you want to Shelly: yep burtoncanyon1732002: im not forcing u ProtegeES2002: if you are ready yes, you don't ever have to do anything you are not ready for
Predator	Vulnerabilities	ericthebig2005: cause im fat, n most chicks doint dig that notjustanotherncguy: i'm getting lonely now, :(
	Strengths	davekruz2003: I can move my tongue really fast majordude200: hey i am a kid at heart

Some predators enticed their victims by focusing on them. They gave the victims illusions of power through compliments – flirting with them and telling them such things as they were smart, pretty, or mature for their age. Additionally, this illusion of power included the idea of reverse power – presenting a false security for the child through indication that the child was in charge. Predators portrayed themselves as being willing to be controlled by the child when they met, only engaging in sex acts of which the child approved. They also offered a willingness to stop if asked to do so by the child. These behaviors could serve to draw the child deeper into an online relationship. Building up a child's self-esteem through the language of positive reinforcement and being trusted to know what he/she wants sexually brings the child, figuratively, up to the adult level,

closer to the online predator. The child could then feel a stronger sense of belonging with that individual and be more inclined to follow his/her lead.

In contrast, pointing out their own strengths or exposing their own vulnerabilities was another tactic used by online predators to entice children. Some enacted self-deprecating, self-pitying and insecure behaviors. Others expressed remorse after engaging in cybersex with the child online. These behaviors were meant to play on the child's emotions, get him/her to feel sorry for the predator, for the natural nurturing feelings within the child to arise. These predators positioned themselves in need of self-care, hoping the children would want to fill the role of a caretaker. Interestingly, another behavior perceived negatively by adults but displayed by predators to entice children was being egotistical. Some predators talked about how great they were at their job, that no one was better than them. Others bragged about their bedroom skills and the size of their genitals. Borderline obnoxious at times, it was obvious that the predators thought these types of overt arrogance should be appealing to children.

Dissimilarly, another method used by online predators to entice children was through highlighting their own strengths. Part of the strategy for some predators is to make themselves desirable to children. For some predators this was accomplished through showing kindness and generosity as strengths. Specific examples include offering relationship advice with boyfriends or parents, and offering to 'teach' children about sexual acts so they will know more than their friends. These techniques positioned the predators as desirable through a positive lens. They became people the children could turn, look up to and trust.

5.3.3. Fantasy. The acts of fantasy are played out in two main ways: cybersex via text, and the use of webcam to expose the child to the predator's genitals and/or sex acts by the predator. These are overt acts of child sexual victimization inside of social media. O'Connell (2003) refers to this as cyberexploitation or fantasy enactment. According to her research, predators "will fluctuate between inviting and emotionally black-mailing a child into engaging in cyber sex" (O'Connell, 2003, p. 9). Williams et al. (2103) refer to this as the 'sexual content' of the conversation. In their discussion of both the introduction and maintenance/escalation of sexual content they mention force as a finding.

The findings from our data set did not support predators' use of black-mail or aggression when attempting to persuade a child to engage in online sexual activities. If the predator pushed a child who did not want to engage, often the predator would just leave the conversation. He may try again another day, but anger was not a go-to behavior when attempting to entice a child into cyber-sex. Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Ybarra (2008) noted that "[t]he research about Internet-initiated sex crimes makes it clear that the stereotype of the Internet child molester who uses trickery and violence to assault children is largely inaccurate" (p. 112). The results from this Grounded Theory analysis support Wolak et al.'s (2008) findings. Examples of the two groups of fantasy enactment revealed in this analysis are shown in Table 30.

Table 30. Fantasy: Transcript Samples

Category	Subcategory	Examples
Fantasy	Text-based cybersex	kfrankhouse350z: well so am i, i am thinking about kissing you naked and feeling you against me banditcap71: I went to bed [sic] with a woody thinking about you
	Live webcam	wolfknight30: you like watching me play daniel_pulido78: u want to see my cum

5.3.4. Control. Both O’Connell (2003) and Williams et al. (2013) roll control into the descriptions of other behaviors. For O’Connell (2003) there is an implication of control in what she refers to as the ‘exclusivity stage’ in which the predator tries to get the child to a place in the relationship where he/she professes to “trust the adult implicitly” (p. 7). Similarly, Williams et al. (2013) address control within the coordination effort of the online predator and described it as what I previously defined reverse power. Additionally, O’Connell (2003) mentions control in the cyber-rape fantasy enactment of cybersexploitation. Supporting this idea, Williams et al. (2013) discuss forceful techniques in the online predators’ attempts to maintain and escalate the sexual content of the conversations.

However, the results of this application of the Grounded Theory methodology revealed more about online predators’ use of control. Control is not always a direct act of sexual content. Online sexual predators use control as part of the manipulative techniques employed to move children toward sexual content. Some online predators use feigned affection to give the appearance of being enamored with children, to relinquish a bit of control to them. They claim deep love, affection and missing the children when they are

absent from chat inside of social media. This technique is used to tighten the trust link between the online predator and the child. Similarly, some online sexual predators work to get the children to agree to be in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship with the predator. By getting the child to agree, the predator can then impose rules and sanctions regarding what boyfriends and girlfriends do and don't do. Another display of control is in the form of being at the mercy of the age difference between the online predator and the potential victim. They present themselves and the children as being unable to be close due to the age difference. This tests the child to see if he/she is willing to step up and take control of the situation. Lastly, online predators attempt to control the actions of the children, both sexual and non-sexual. Non-sexual actions may include calling the predator on the phone, deleting archives of their messages, and sneaking out of the house. Sexual actions instruct the child to behave sexually. These differ from fantasizing in that the predator is typically giving instructions for the child to masturbate rather than talking of what the two would or could do together. The sexual actions referred to in this section are directly related to the child acting upon him/herself sexually. Table 31 includes examples of the subcategories of behaviors identified within the category of control.

Table 31. Control: Transcript Samples

Category	Subcategory	Examples
Control	Feigned affection	deaf1_one: miss you teakadai_pandi: i love you so much..
	Age difference	Chicago_naperville: If u were 23, that wud be great
	Relationship claim	wolfknight30: and you are too young to see me nekkid trianglelover: I wish I was your bf....really

		needafriendtotalkto2005: you want to be come bf and gf
	Non-sexual actions	gmoney301981: then steal his money greeneyed121: Please leave your messenger running so I can contact more easily.
	Sexual actions	zavior01: I want you to see how tight your p....y is deirules83: rub your clit

5.3.5. Self-preservation. Both O'Connell (2003) and Williams et al. (2013) refer to acts of self-preservation as assessing the risk of detection. From their perspective they tie in with the online predators learning about children's environment, family situations, etc. However, our analysis revealed that there is a more direct side to the notion of self-preservation. Online sexual predators engage in acts of self-preservation through two methods: concern for the child and, concern for themselves. Concern for the child included expressions of protection, of not wanting the child to get caught and/or get in trouble. In contrast, concern for self-included instructions for the children to delete online messages, directly asking the children if they are with law enforcement, and explicitly stating how much trouble he/she could get into if law enforcement found out they were soliciting a child. Each of these techniques provided the online predators with a way to determine their level of safety. Table 32 includes examples of the subcategories of behaviors identified within the category of self-preservation.

Table 32. Self-preservation: Transcript Samples

Category	Subcategory	Examples
Self-preservation	Concern for child	samr125: u know what...call me when ur mom is not at home samr125: i don't' want u to get into trouble teakadai_pandi: emi.. don't get yourself into trouble.. i think i can wait till you get a chance..
	Concern for self	hardenedsteel2003: it woudnt be cool if your mom got in here and seen my phone # toddb39: yeah, but who is to say there aren't cops there waiting for me

5.4 Theoretical Model of Negotiated Cyber-social Realities

Each of the five categories defined in the results section provide insights into the details of how online predator behaviors construct and control negotiated cyber-social realities within social media discourse toward the goal of child victimization. Because these negotiated cyber-social realities are constructed within discourse, the movement between the categories and subcategories is not linear. Neither do all online sexual predators engage all of the categories and subcategories. A predator may engage all of the behaviors at some point in interaction with a child in social media. Another may traverse back and forth between two or three. The details provided by these five categories help bridge the connection between the coercive behaviors of the predators (power, activities control and intention alteration), the vulnerabilities of the children (learned helplessness, social control and reactance) outlined in Study 1, Chapter 3 and the degrees of victimization presented in Study 2, Chapter 4. Figure 5 is a visual representation of the

theoretical model of negotiated cyber-social realities in online predatory coercion and victimization of children.

Assessments operationalize intention alterations, gathering the information necessary to move the child toward victimization. Specifically, the sexuality assessment is the operationalization of degrees 1-3 of victimization. Enticements operationalize activities control, directing the child toward victimization through the use of compliments and reverse power. Fantasy is the operationalization of the degrees 4 and 5 of victimization. Control operationalizes activities control, directing the child's actions both inside and outside of social media. Self-preservation operationalizes all three aspects of coercion – exerting power over a child to control that child's activities resulting in the alteration of the child's intentions to match the online predators – with the assurance of law enforcement not becoming involved. Additionally, the chosen categories of use and the content therein are both adaptable in response to the vulnerabilities portrayed by the child. Because no two children are exactly the same, living in the same environment/situation, online sexual predators must be able to adjust their employed techniques accordingly.

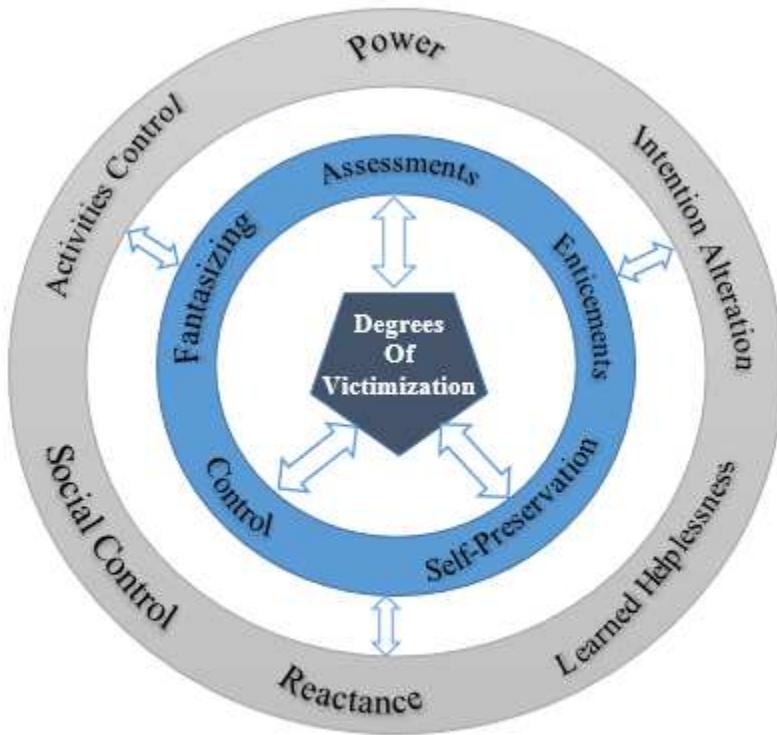


Figure 5. Theoretical Model of Negotiated Cyber-social Realities in Online Predatory Coercion and Victimization of Children

5.5 Discussion of Findings and Implications

5.5.1 Findings. The focus of this study was to address the question: *How do sex offenders construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?* The question is further subdivided to focus on the three categories of predatory communicative acts identified in Study 1, Chapter 3:

- *How do sex offenders employing camouflage predatory communicative techniques construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*

Online sex offenders who employed camouflage predatory communicative acts were more concerned with assessment than the other categories of negotiated cyber-social reality behaviors. They spent more time on assessing the children's availability,

willingness, family and location, as well as self-preservation, than those in the bait and trap groups. This differs from the findings in Study 1 that indicated online sexual predators who engage in camouflage PCT spend more time in relationship development than their counterparts. Based on the current study, camouflage PCT online sex offenders actually spend more time determining victim potential and personal safety than relationship building.

- *How do sex offenders employing bait predatory communicative techniques construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*

Online sex offenders who fell into the bait PCT group were very active in conversations with children, as noted in Table 26 that displayed the time these individuals spent in conversation. This large amount of time in conversation included their high volume of sexuality and relationship assessment, potential victim and predator enticements, control and fantasy. While the findings in Study 1 showed that online sexual predators who engaged in bait PCT showed fewer proclivities to build a relationship with children, the current study has shown otherwise. The willingness of the online sexual predator to engage the child on topics of sexuality and relationships, as well as building trust and closeness through enticements, indicates a strong sense of relationship building.

- *How do sex offenders employing trap predatory communicative techniques construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*

Lastly, online sex offenders who engaged in trap PCT scored highest on only one negotiated cyber-social realities behavior: physical appearance assessment. This is consistent with the findings in Study 1. These individuals have no desire to build a

friendship or relationship with a child. They focus only on the outcome: face-to-face sexual gratification experienced through meeting a child in an offline setting in order to engage in illegal sex acts with that child. Thus it makes sense that their biggest concern is the children's physical attractiveness, coded in this study as physical appearance. Almost a polar opposite of the other two PCT groups, the individuals in the trap group showed the lowest volume in control, fantasy, enticements, and self-preservation.

5.5.2. Implications. Study 3 has implications for the academic community as well as parents/guardians, educators, law enforcement and mental health practitioners. These implications are presented in the following sections.

5.5.2.1 Research Implications. Quayle and Taylor (2011) noted that “the empirical research in relation to grooming or online solicitation is still sparse, and has largely focussed on the behaviour of the young person as opposed to the offending adult” (p. 46). This study helps to fill that gap and is the first study within information systems to apply a Grounded Theory approach to the discourse between online sexual predators and potential victims within social media. The application of Grounded Theory to transcripts between convicted online sexual predators and potential victims resulted in an advanced understanding of how online sexual predators engage children in negotiated cyber-social realities toward a goal of victimization. The successful application of the methodology and the resulting view of the spaces of negotiated cyber-social realities of online sexual predators and potential victims demonstrates for other information systems researchers the value in exploring solutions to the unintended consequences of social media usage.

Due to the aforementioned pervasiveness of social media in the everyday lives of society's children, increased focus needs to be placed on the unintended consequences of its use. Unfortunately, there are few theories of social media that can be applied to these types of phenomenon. Urquhart and Vaast (2012) spoke of the urgency with which the IS community needs "to develop ways of building theory for social media because many IS researchers have embraced these environments as contexts for their research (e.g. Ransbotham and Kane, 2011; Wattal et al., 2010), and many more have been thinking about doing so" (p. 2). The current study successfully presents the Grounded Theory approach as one method for building theories for social media.

5.5.2.2 Practical Implications. Research that delves into the specific text used by online sexual predators to victimize children in social media is sparse (O'Connell, 2003; Quayle & Taylor, 2011; Williams et al., 2013). However, recognition of patterns in the text that they use could inform parents/guardians and educators regarding the conversations that need to be had with children regarding online communications. They would be able to tell children what to look out for and improve their understanding of risky conversations. Additionally, law enforcement officials who patrol the online environments could be afforded an increased understanding of the techniques utilized by online predators that may or may not appear as the traditional methods of grooming previously addressed in the literature. Also, mental health professionals' knowledge of the manipulative techniques used by online predators would be expanded. They could provide improved research-based services to children who have been victims of online cyber-victimization.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH OF DISSERTATION

The aim of this dissertation is to improve the understanding and thus increase the knowledge regarding predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media. This dissertation is the first set of information systems research to address this critical social issue. Although researchers in computer science (Quayle & Taylor, 2011) have attempted to develop mechanisms to detect online sexual predators, they have done so absent theories of social media behavior. Studies have been conducted to determine the most effective means by which to identify acts of predation in an online setting, with the goal of preventing the occurrence of offline acts of victimization. The theory of luring communication (Olson et al., 2007) was applied to improve the software (Kontostathis et al., 2009), called ChatCoder, which integrates theories of communication with computer science algorithms. The use of this theory allowed the researchers to improve the systems detection capabilities by 13%. Likewise, Thom, Kontostathis and Edwards (2011) developed an accessory for the open source software called Pidgin, an instant messaging tool. Their plugin, called SafeChat keeps track of user interactions, detects age, and categorizes texts as potentially predacious based on established system rules. They achieved a 68% accuracy rate (Thom et al., 2011). Taking a different approach, Laorden, Galan-Garcia, Santos, Sanz, Maria, Hidalgo and Bringas (2012) applied a game theory methodology to the detection of predation online. They developed a system called

Negobot that applies Natural Language Processing (NLP) methods, chatter-box technologies and game theory to create a strategic decision making situation. The goal of the system is to collect the maximum amount of information possible from the conversation for post-conversation analysis (Laorden et al., 2012). While these studies have made great strides toward developing systems to detect online sexual predation, the models do not account for the manifestation of predator beliefs or how they propagate those beliefs inside social media. The use of NLP in this phenomenon provides a means to identify the actions of predators and children. However, absent theories of predator behavior inside social media, this mechanism doesn't capture the intricacies of communication techniques used by predators to leverage the power imbalances between themselves and children toward their intentions or social media's role in those imbalances.

In contrast, this dissertation steps back from software development and proposes the examination of the data being used to create those systems. The Internet is a "veritable behavioral archive containing significant data of what people have said and done" (McGrath & Casey, 2002, p. 92). Through three interrelated studies, a data-based foundation for the creation of behavioral-based online detection software has been laid. Those three interrelated studies addressed independent research questions. Study 1 addressed the question: *How do online sexual predators manifest and propagate their ideology through social media, as a discursive system, to coerce and victimize children?* The results of the study did recognize the manifestation of an online sexual predator ideology and its propagation within social media conversations between the predators and

potential victims. However, Critical Discourse Analysis did not afford the in depth examination necessary to identify how the predators propagate that ideology within social media conversations with children. This gap led to the development the research question addressed in Study 2: *How do online sexual predators use embedded institutional logics to dominate and manipulate online interpersonal relationships with children?* The results of Study 2 outlined a mechanism by which online sexual predators propagate their ideology within social media conversations with children. However, Structured Content Analysis took an a priori look at the transcripts, potentially excluding additional information contained within the data. Thus, a Grounded Theory approach was employed in Study 3 and the following research question addressed: *How do sex offenders construct negotiated cyber-social realities within social media to victimize children?*

6.1. Implications of Dissertation

The studies within this dissertation make a unique contribution to the narrative of child sexual predation. Offline, sexual predators face more barriers and increased risk in their efforts to engage in predatory behaviors than when enacting predation through the Internet. A great deal of time, planning and effort is required for a sexual predator to integrate into the environment of the targeted child, become a familiar and trusted known individual to the child and his/her family, and secure the secrecy of the child (Craven et al., 2006; Olson et al., 2007). A high-profile example of this is the Gerald Sandusky case at Pennsylvania State University. Sandusky was a previous football coach at the university. Additionally, he started an organization called The Second Mile that targeted at-risk boys and aided them in achieving a successful future. Through his work with the

organization, Sandusky had access to male youth who were in positions of vulnerability, needing male role models and adults in whom they could trust. However, Sandusky used his position with the university and The Second Mile to enact and abuse his power over the boys, subjecting them to child sexual abuse, some of which was long term. His time, planning and effort is evidenced in his founding of The Second Mile and exertion of his dominance through his position (Pennsylvania Grand Jury, 2011).

The proliferation of the Internet into private homes pushed against those barriers faced by offline sexual predators. It afforded them greater access to sexually explicit content, specifically child pornography. Through most of the 1900s child pornography was restricted with images being difficult to obtain and expensive because they were produced locally (Wortley & Smallbone, 2012). However, the Internet “escalated the problem of child pornography by increasing the amount of material available, the efficiency of its distribution, and the ease of its accessibility” (Wortley & Smallbone, 2012, p. 9). Computers became the conduit for “production, viewing, storage and distribution of child pornography” (Quayle & Taylor, 2002, p. 332).

Furthermore, the advent of interactive online tools, such as forums, chat rooms and dungeons afforded sexual predators spaces to communicate with one another and share images easily (Wortley & Smallbone, 2012). Additionally, combined with the aforementioned anonymity, these interactive tools provided broader access to potential victims. “Electronic text chat, which combines the permanence of writing and the synchronicity of speaking, is an entirely new mode of human contact created by the Internet” (Zhao, 2006, p. 462). This dialogic nature of social media permits a level of

comfort in communicating in online public spaces while simultaneously creating a need for caution. “Plain electronic text, retractable screen names, and noninstitutional email addresses all contribute to the masking of a user’s true identity, allowing individuals to be in contact and in hiding at the same time” (Zhao, 2006, p. 463). Online sexual predators are not only able to mask their true identities, they can create and project to others any identity they wish through text, picture and video. “Now, and increasingly in the future, technology will let you make and remake your identity at will—virtually. This extraordinary, even revolutionary, development will profoundly affect fundamental societal values such as trust and reliability” (Brown, 2011, p. 34). The ability to make and remake one’s identity in social media opens the door for online sexual predators to deceive and victimize children. The studies within this dissertation address this phenomenon. Across three studies we examined how online sexual predators used computer-mediated communications in social media to coerce and victimize children within social media.

Study 1 of this dissertation contributes to understanding (a) how online sexual predators engage in discourse with potential child victims inside of social media, (b) how those interactions are affordances of the social media utilized for their creation and, (c) how, within those afforded discourses, online sexual predators propagate the ideology. When online sexual predators engage in discourse with potential child victims within social media they attempt to impress upon those children that sex acts between adults and children are natural, acceptable behaviors. This ideology runs in contrast to common Western societal beliefs. This drastic difference between the ideologies of online sexual

predators and Western society and the impact this difference can have on society's children merits further investigation of the mechanisms that online sexual predators use to propagate their ideology.

The second study in this dissertation picks up the discussion of the propagation of an online sexual predator ideology within social media. This study employed the view of institutional logics and degrees of victimization of children inside of social media. The findings of this study indicate that online sexual predators do use and manipulate Western culture institutional logics within social media discourse with potential child victims. Additionally, they employ their own logic to move between their own acts of coercion, degrees of cyber-victimization, children's displayed vulnerabilities, and the institutional logics utilized by both. These results provide (a) a more in-depth analysis of how online sexual predators engage children in discourse within social media and, (b) through the language of institutional logics and victimization propagate the ideology that sexual acts between adults and children are both enjoyable and acceptable.

In the third study of this dissertation, findings indicate that online sexual predators do engage different language techniques within discourse to navigate the spaces of negotiated cyber-social realities within social media conversations with potential child victims. The results culminated in five categories of language techniques employed by online sexual predators within the spaces of negotiated cyber-social realities. Looking across the groups of predatory communicative techniques reveals differences between the online predators who (a) lead with a coercive act, (b) wait for the potential child victim to display a vulnerability or, (c) move the conversation to a degree of victimization almost

immediately. The choices and use of language mechanisms are fluid and dependent upon the predators' own acts of coercion, degrees of cyber-victimization, children's displayed vulnerabilities, and the institutional logics utilized by both.

6.2 Contributions

The three studies contained within this dissertation all aim to deepen the understanding of how online sexual predators coerce and victimize children within social media. While each study contributes to the aim via a different level of analysis, synthesized as a whole, the findings resulted in Figure 6, a Matrix of Predatory Coercion and Victimization of Children within Social Media. As previously noted, social media is a discursive system, dialogic in nature (Dickey & Lewis, 2010; Vasconcelos, 2007) in which online sexual predators engage potential victims. As such, institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2005), predatory coercion (Anderson, 2011), child vulnerabilities (Selymes, 2011; Thacker, 1992) and the identified degrees of victimization (Study 2) and negotiated cyber-social realities schema (Study 3) are embedded in the text utilized by the predators and children within social media.

The dialogic nature of online social media allow for predators and children to utilize a variety of elements from the matrix during communication. For example in Study 1, predators who engaged in the predatory communicative technique of camouflage relied on children's displays of vulnerabilities while those who engaged in the predatory communicative technique of trapping moved the discourse immediately to a degree of victimization. An example from Study 2 was the increased use of state institutional logics by some online predators in an attempt to ensure that law enforcement did not catch them

engaging in illegal sexual solicitation of children within social media, while others devoted more text to the institutional logics of family to secure the children's trust and move them toward agreeing to a face-to-face meeting. Lastly, Study 3 revealed how online sex offenders who employed the predatory communicative technique of camouflage were more concerned with assessment than the other categories of the negotiated cyber-social realities schema.

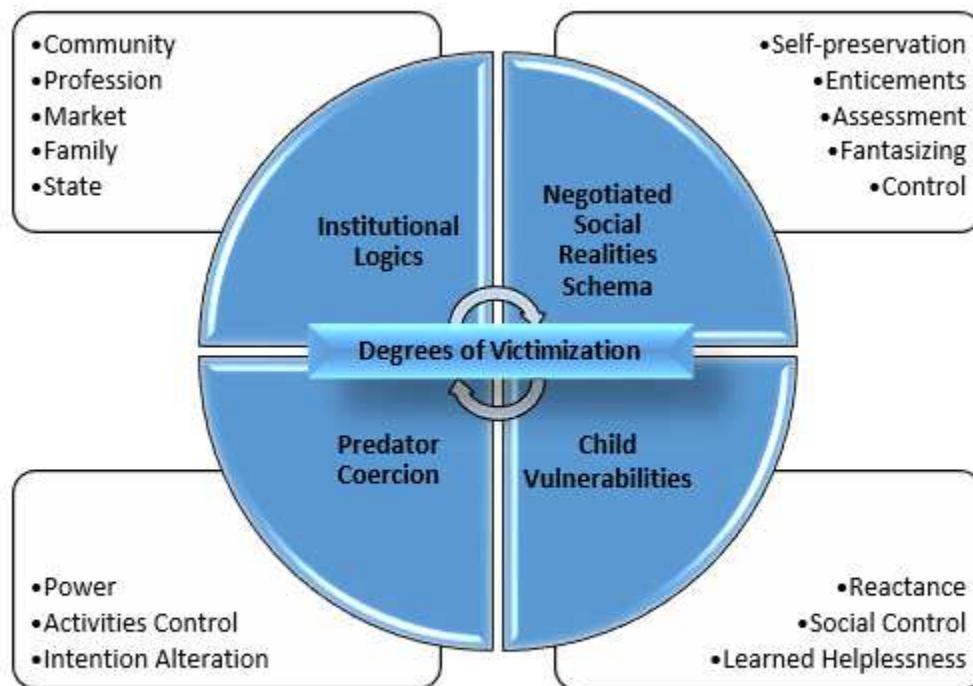


Figure 6. Matrix of Predatory Coercion and Victimization of Children within Social Media

The matrix shown in Figure 6 provides a more descriptive picture of predatory coercion and victimization of children in social media than currently exists within extant literature. It demonstrates how online sexual predators integrate multiple vocabularies

(Burke, 1935; Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Loewenstein et al, 2012) in the online victimization of children. Identification of these vocabularies could serve to strengthen pattern recognition for algorithms in software geared toward early detection of online sexual predation and potential prevention of victimization of children through social media. The following sections describe the specific contributions of each study represented within the matrix.

6.2.1 Study 1 Contributions. The research in Study 1 makes three significant contributions to existing literature. First, the use of Critical Discourse Analysis to examine predatory coercion and victimization of children within social media is unique. The notion of social media being a tool that online predators can use to propagate their ideology lends a fresh perspective to the online predation literature. Online predators are viewed as individuals seeking self-gratification. However, this study provides evidence that not only do these individuals espouse similar beliefs, values and norms regarding the acceptability of sexual acts between adults and children, but they also propagate those through discourse within social media. Secondly, being the first Critical Discourse Analysis study to be conducted on this phenomenon within the IS literature offers value in utilizing critical methodologies to break down complex social phenomena in which information systems play a role. The third contribution of this study is the development of three categories of predatory communicative techniques. While previous research has attempted to develop typologies of online sex offenders, none have examined transcripts of conversations between online sexual predators and potential child victims toward that end. Thus, the actual observed behaviors in which online sexual predators engaged within

social media to coerce and victimize children provide a much richer data set and strengthen these findings.

6.2.2 Study 2 Contributions. The research in Study 2 makes four significant contributions to the existing literature. First, this is the first study to view online sexual predation through the use and manipulation of institutional logics. A common understanding of predator coercion is that they find topics in common with potential child victims and use those to connect with the children. The findings of this study show that those common topics may be the institutional logics familiar to both the online predator and the potential child victim. Secondly, this is the first information systems study to use institutional logics as a mechanism to analyze online predatory coercion and victimization of children. The results successfully demonstrate how mechanisms such as institutional logics that have previously been used to study organizational behavior may also be applicable to study behaviors inside of social media. Thirdly, this is the first study to propose the use of degrees of victimization to examine the sexual content employed by online sexual predators within conversations with children. This expands the definition of victimization to include the sexual content to which children are exposed within social media as well as the offline sexual interaction that occurs as result of a social media conversation. Lastly, this study presents an operational model of cyber-victimization logic. This model is a visual representation of (1) how potential child victims employ institutional logics when displaying vulnerabilities through text in social media conversations, and (2) how online sexual predators engage institutional logics to sense those vulnerabilities and then use/manipulate institutional logics to enact coercion.

6.2.3. Study 3 Contributions. The research in Study 3 makes two significant contributions to the existing literature. First, this is the first information systems study to apply a Grounded Theory approach to the phenomenon of negotiated social realities within online predatory coercion and victimization of children. As previously noted, two studies applied qualitative methods (O'Connell, 2003; Williams et al., 2013) but neither were Grounded Theory or in the information systems literature. Also, these studies had very limited data sets and narrow project scopes. Therefore, this study provides the most in-depth analysis of predatory coercion and victimization of children in social media within the IS literature to date. Secondly, the results of this study produced a unique set of categories and subcategories of language techniques employed by online sexual predators within the spaces of negotiated cyber-social realities during the coercion and victimization of children within social media.

6.3. Limitations

As previously noted, Critical Discourse Analysis is a methodology that is new to the examination of dyadic conversations within social media and to the information systems literature. Thus, while the theoretical model presented in Study 1 was valid for the results of the employed method, further validation of its concepts and relationships is needed. Study 2 was conducted as a method of further investigation, but is based upon a limited number of institutional logics, rooted in Western culture. Because online sexual predation is a global problem, more knowledge may be acquired through use of additional and/or different institutional logics. To move beyond the constraints of Western culture institutional logics, Study 3 utilized a Grounded Theory methodology to

allow the data to reveal the categories of language techniques used by online sexual predators in the coercion and victimization of children. This provided a richer and more in-depth perspective of the language used by online predators. However, as social media technologies continue to evolve and laws regarding online sexual predators fight to keep up, further evaluation of the phenomenon will be necessary.

Additionally, while the data used for all three studies was validated by online predator convictions in courts of law, the online sexual predators were talking with adults acting as children. Though those volunteers were trained decoys who did their best to act at the age they presented to the online sexual predator, differences may be evident and enough to impact the results. The application of the resultant theories and models within this dissertation to data sets of online sexual predator conversations with actual children would significantly improve the findings.

6.4. Future Research

The breadth of this phenomenon, as well as the methods and results presented in this dissertation, point to multiple areas of further research. One item that is particularly interesting across all three groups is the online sexual predators' willingness to believe that the individual with whom they are chatting is not being deceitful. Throughout the conversations with children, online sexual predators are acting out deceit. They manipulate truths, coerce and victimize children within social media. Yet, they are so desperate for an offline meeting in which to satisfy their sexual cravings for a child, they risk jobs, families, reputation, etc. Within the self-preservation category, across all three groups of PCTs there are cases when the online sexual predator asked if he was 'being set

up', if the conversation 'is a sting' or even if the child was really 'a cop'. Even after all of that, after the caution and expressed concern, the potential victim need only say 'I'm not a cop' or 'I don't want to get in trouble' a few times and the online sexual predator was back on track to try and realize the outcome of sexual gratification with a child. It would be interesting to study online sexual predators trust regarding the Internet and the individuals with whom they choose to engage. This behavior goes beyond identification of a victim to the ability of the online sexual predator to be the deceived.

A technological and important avenue of study is the automated detection of online sexual predators. The purpose of this line of research is to develop detection software that could identify online sexual predation early in dyadic conversations, potentially preventing severe degrees of victimization and offline meetings between online sexual predators and potential child victims. However, absent theories of predator behavior inside social media, these types of mechanisms don't capture the intricacies of communication techniques used by predators to leverage the power imbalances between themselves and children toward their intentions or social media's role in those imbalances. Another perspective that could improve pattern recognition of online sexual predator behavior would be to study multiple conversation transcripts of the same predator with different Perverted Justice decoys. This would shed light on how individual online sexual predators adapt their behaviors dependent upon those of the children with whom they converse. There may be some predators who stick to a script and others who modify their text based upon the child's text. Identifying patterns of particular individuals and comparing across individuals could help improve algorithms for pattern recognition.

Understanding how predatory coercion takes place within social media could aid in treatment of victims and rehabilitation of predators, as well as improved educational programs for children and parents/caregivers. Computer programmers have the challenge of not only creating systems which can identify this type of coercion within the discursive system of social media, but also to alert potential victims and adults/caregivers when the discourse has been recognized as predatory.

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