Confronting Human Trafficking: Nongovernmental Organizations and the U.S Anti-Human Trafficking Approach

Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the contemporary anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement seek to inform AHT public policies in ways that reflect their frames of human trafficking. They also play a central role in executing the U.S. AHT approach. Little is known about how different NGOs frame human trafficking broadly, the process by which they influence policy, and their general insights on the AHT movement and the U.S. AHT approach. Comparing successful and negative cases, and the viewpoints of movement elites and nonelites provides the best assessment of a social movement, its framing dynamics and outcomes, and the process by which it meets its objectives.

This research examines: 1) how a diversity of NGOs frame human trafficking and the factors informing their frame construction; 2) the process by which NGOs achieved success, measured by access to institutionalized channels of policymaking and the reflection of their frames in AHT policies; and 3) NGOs’ views on the U.S. AHT approach and the successes of and obstacles faced by the AHT movement. I employ an instrumental, collective case study approach and utilize primary data collected through in-depth interviews with sixty-one NGO representatives located in ten U.S. metropolitan areas. This sample includes movement elites and nonelites that experienced varying
levels of success in different policy settings throughout the U.S. Supplementary data was collected through in-depth interviews with eleven governmental representatives and participant observation at six AHT events.

Results demonstrate that numerous multifaceted frames are relevant to this movement and ideologies on gender, available resources, and political context largely influence NGOs’ frame construction. The process by which NGOs influenced AHT policies in ways that reflected their frames supports an integrative theoretical approach to social movements. Successful NGOs' ability to take advantage of available resources political opportunities enabled them to communicate their frames to important governmental actors. While governmental representatives report that successful NGOs conveyed compelling frames, the intersection of resources and political context fashioned the vehicle by which NGOs could accomplish this. NGO representatives also offer common perspectives on the successes of the AHT movement, including increased public awareness of human trafficking, greater collaboration between representatives of NGOs and government, government funding for AHT work, and services and benefits for victims of human trafficking. However, certain obstacles exist. Awareness is imperfect, collaborative work can be unproductive, funding for AHT work is restrictive, and victims face barriers to accessing services and benefits. Results further suggest that the U.S. AHT approach is primarily guided by a “law and order” frame in which prosecuting human traffickers is a key strategy for ending human trafficking. I conclude by discussing the policy implications of these results and avenues for future scholarship.
DEDICATION

To Ronnie
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the activities and insights of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within the contemporary anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement. It pays particular attention to NGO representatives’ framing activities and the role of framing within this movement. Defined by Benford and Snow as the “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meaning that inspire and legitimate the acts and campaigns of a [social movement organization]” (Benford and Snow 2000: 614), collective action frames reflect the meaning work activists engage in as they construct some social phenomenon as problematic and requiring change, the solutions for remedying it, and the reasons why collective action is necessary to address it (Benford and Snow 2000; Benford 1997; Noakes and Johnston 2005). From a social constructionist perspective, social movement actors’ frames are not a given, but rather a product of the struggle over meaning and ideas that occur among movement actors and between them and their antagonists (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1992; Benford 1997).

Scholarly work exemplifies the importance of framing and meaning work in the contemporary AHT movement. Specifically, social movement actors struggle over how to frame human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, also known as sex trafficking, as a key dynamic within this movement (McDonnell 2007; Soderlund 2005;
Hughes 2005; Miriam 2005; Raymond 2004; Bertone 2003; Crago 2003; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; Colimoro 2008). This scholarship highlights two distinct and competing collective action frames characterizing the AHT movement, and the consequences of these frames for AHT policies, popular discourse on human trafficking, and for the victims of human trafficking themselves. One frame constructs sex trafficking as a significant gendered social problem, particularly affecting women and children, facilitated by the demand for a commercial sex industry. The second frame constructs sex trafficking as a direct result of structural economic conditions that support the exploitation of vulnerable peoples. SMOs purporting either one of these frames attempt to have their understanding of the problem reflected in intergovernmental and state AHT policies, including within the U.S. This literature demonstrates the central role of framing within the AHT movement and the significance of these frames for shaping SMOs’ strategies and actions, including their concrete suggestions to policymakers on how to directly tackle the problem.

While this literature provides important, critical analysis of these particular frames and their implications for U.S. AHT policies, its primary focus on SMOs’ frames of sex trafficking may fail to reflect the collective action frames characterizing the AHT movement as a whole. NGOs, recognized for calling attention to human trafficking and galvanizing the contemporary AHT movement, not only work to combat sex trafficking, but are engaged in efforts to combat human trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation, also known as labor trafficking (Perkins 2005). Further, the U.S. criminalizes human trafficking broadly and the U.S. AHT approach aims at combating
both sex trafficking and labor trafficking (U.S. Department of State 2010). The U.S. also relies on NGOs, focused on different types of human trafficking, to execute aspects of the U.S. AHT approach and provides funding in support of NGOs’ AHT work (U.S. Department of State 2010).

NGOs’ frames of human trafficking are important not only because they illustrate how framing matters for this particular social movement, but also because NGOs actively attempt to inform different audiences’ frame of the problem, including that of policymakers (Weitzer 2007). If adopted by policymakers, NGOs’ frames potentially stand to impact governments’ institutionalized response to human trafficking. Further, many NGOs advocate for and provide victim services. Their frames of human trafficking have implications for the character of the services they endorse and utilize, and, in turn, directly impact victims. The importance of NGOs’ frames of human trafficking coupled with a lack of understanding of these frames necessitates an investigation into how a diversity of NGOs frame human trafficking.

Investigating framing activities within the contemporary AHT movement also allows scholars to extend knowledge on the process by which these frames inform social movement outcomes. Scholars are critical of social movement research on framing for overemphasizing the role of meaning work within movements, deemphasizing the process by which framing informs movement dynamics and outcomes, and neglecting how resources and political context mediate this process (McVeigh 2004; Benford 1997; McAdam 1996; Valocchi 1996). Literature on the AHT movement suffers from this. Scholars clearly attend to frames of sex trafficking, what these frames convey, how they
are reflected in AHT policies, and disputes among SMOs over how to frame sex trafficking. However, limited attention is given to how resources and political context inform the process by which NGOs are able to inform AHT policy in ways that reflect their frames and their impact on subnational or state-level AHT policies.

Lacking knowledge on these processes raises the question if social movement actors’ success is fundamentally due to the compelling nature of their frame or if this success is facilitated by other factors deemed significant within the social movement literature, such as the resources available to social movement actors and the political context in which they are embedded (Benford 1997). Scholars argue that research on the relationship between framing and contextual factors is needed to expand knowledge on how exactly framing matters in and for social movements (McVeigh 2004; Benford 1997; McAdam 1996; Valocchi 1996). Addressing this process through an examination of the contemporary AHT movement not only provides insight into this movement specifically, but also social movement dynamics and processes generally.

Further, while the literature on the AHT movement overwhelmingly focuses on how meanings of sex trafficking divide movement adherents into two camps, less attention is given to what issues, if any, these movement actors coalesce. Essentially, members of the AHT movement share a common objective of ending human trafficking, even though their constructions of human trafficking differ (Bertone 2003). Do these NGOs, informed by their experiences, provide common insight on the successes of the AHT movement, the obstacles that exist to effectively addressing human trafficking, and
the U.S. AHT approach? Or do their diverse ideologies and frames of human trafficking facilitate completely divergent insights?

To address existing gaps in knowledge, this research attends to the questions raised above. Guided by literature on the AHT movement and social movement scholarship, and drawing primarily on data collected through in-depth interviews with NGO representatives engaged in AHT efforts, this dissertation specifically examines: 1) a diversity of NGOs’ frames of human trafficking; 2) the relationship between framing and contextual factors and how this relationship informs movement dynamics, processes and outcomes; and 3) if NGOs offer common perspectives on the achievements of the U.S. AHT movement, the barriers that exist to effectively addressing human trafficking in the U.S., and the U.S. AHT approach.

Before presenting the results of this research, I first review the literature on the contemporary AHT movement in Chapter Two. I then delve into social movement scholarship on framing, resources, political context, and an integrative theoretical approach in Chapter Three, which shapes the theoretical framework from which to address these research questions. Chapter Four details the data and methodology I employ for this investigation.

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven present the results of research. Chapter Five describes NGOs’ frames of human trafficking and the ideologies underpinning these frames. Chapter Six demonstrates the process by which NGOs impact policy, and how the relationship between framing and other contextual factors shape movement dynamics
and outcomes. Chapter Seven identifies NGOs’ common insights on the successes of the AHT movement, current obstacles to overcome, and the U.S. AHT approach.

After presenting these results, I conclude in Chapter Eight with a discussion of how these results add to our understanding of the contemporary AHT movement and extend knowledge on framing within social movements generally. Chapter Eight also identifies avenues for future research on social movements and on human trafficking, and discusses the policy implications of these results.
CHAPTER 2
HUMAN TRAFFICKING, FRAMING, AND THE U.S. ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESPONSE

The collective action frames NGOs employ as part of the AHT movement are an important area of study. These frames reflect causes of human trafficking and shape the solutions to human trafficking NGOs propose. In order to understand the importance of framing within the AHT movement and its impact on U.S. AHT policy, I first discuss the context in which this contemporary movement emerged, key framing debates within the movement highlighted in prior scholarship, and the U.S. response to human trafficking. I further address the importance of NGOs and framing generally and within the U.S. AHT context specifically.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is widely characterized as “contemporary slavery” and a severe violation of human rights. Although not a new phenomenon, human trafficking gained increased international attention throughout the 1990s (Chuang 2006; Bertone 2003). During this time, intergovernmental organizations, nation-states, and nongovernmental organizations recognized human trafficking as a growing, global social problem. These different stakeholders identified human trafficking as a gross violation of human rights,
particularly of women and girls. Further, victims of human trafficking faced physical, psychological, and sexual violence throughout the trafficking process and sex trafficking victims were particularly vulnerable to sexually transmitted disease and death (Gushulak and MacPherson 2000). Victims of international human trafficking were vulnerable to arrest and detainment because of the perception that they voluntarily entered a country “illegally” (Kligman and Limoncelli 2005). Victims of sex trafficking also could risk criminal sanctions if they were perceived as voluntarily and illegally engaged in the commercial sex industry.

Certain factors hindered the identification of victims and a full understanding of its character and scope (Kligman and Limoncelli 2005). For one, it often occurs “underground,” making it difficult to identify. Second, not all nation states had legal instruments to address it and there existed a general lack of awareness of the problem. Further, many nation-states and law enforcement organizations do not possess the means to address human trafficking or are not strongly committed to combating it and, in some cases, evidence suggested the involvement of government representatives in facilitating and profiting from human trafficking.

Stakeholders also identified globalization and transitioning state economic structures as key factors exacerbating the problem (Turner and Kelly 2009; Chuang 2006; Stoecker and Shelley 2005; Orlova 2004; Mameli 2002). Specifically, globalization and transitions in state and economic structures can have a disabling effect on society and facilitate wars, armed conflicts, and social and economic crises. This leads to greater population flows, both in scope and irregularity, which in turn increases already
vulnerable people’s susceptibility to exploitation in the process of migration. Human trafficking is at the extreme end of a broader continuum of exploitation these people are vulnerable to. Human traffickers capitalize on people’s increased vulnerability in times of political, economic, and social instability, often offering vulnerable people job opportunities and/or a means of migrating with the intent of exploiting them for profit. Further, as argued by Turner and Kelly (2009: 187), “[i]f globalization can be characterized as the free movement of capital, goods and services across the world, aided by advanced systems of communication and transportation, human traffickers can, and certainly do, corrupt those systems to aid in the movement of ‘unfree’ people” (2009: 187).

The nature of human trafficking demands a concerted effort on the part of nation-states in order to address it (Bertone 2003; UN 2000). While trafficking occurs within national borders, also known as domestic trafficking, and does not require movement of peoples, different stakeholders in the 1990s emphasized the growing problem of international human trafficking, in which people are trafficked across national borders. Scholarship on international human trafficking argues that the most marginalized people from “source” or “supplier” nations, characterized by political, economic, and social instability, are vulnerable to being trafficked to what are often times more affluent “demand” or “destination” countries, in which there is a demand for services or labor that trafficking victims are expected to fulfill (Chuang 2006; Miko 2003; Aronowitz 2001). Further, people can be trafficked through other countries, also known as “transit” countries, as they are transported from source to demand countries, and can be trafficked
to more than one country. Given that human trafficking is a crime that can spill over national borders, any effective AHT approach to combat human trafficking requires nation-states to collaborate their efforts.

While members of the international community were increasingly alarmed by this seemingly growing human rights abuse, there existed a lack of agreement on or understanding of what human trafficking entailed (UN 2000). Further, while many states had laws against aspects of what we identify today as human trafficking, these laws varied and no universal legal instrument to address all types of human trafficking existed across nation-states. Due to this, in part, the UN General Assembly adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2000. The UN Protocol identified “trafficking in persons” as entailing the act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring, or receiving of persons through the means of threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception and other coercive means for the purpose of exploitation. At minimum, exploitation includes the exploitation of prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, slavery-like practices, servitude, or the removal of organs. Children, under the age of eighteen, are considered victims of human trafficking if they were subjected to these acts for the purpose of exploitation, even if the means identified in the UN Protocol are not employed.

The UN Protocol served as “the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons” (UN 2000). Its aim was to “facilitate
convergence in national approaches with regard to the establishment of domestic criminal
offences that would support efficient international cooperation in investigating and
prosecuting trafficking in persons cases and assist the victims of trafficking in persons
with full respect for their human rights” (UNODC 2003).

Further, the UN called for every state to adopt legislation and other measures to
criminalize human trafficking (2000). The United States has been at the forefront of
developing AHT policies and monitoring the AHT efforts of other nations. The U.S.
criminalizes human trafficking through The Victims of Trafficking and Violence
Protection Act of 2000 and the subsequent Trafficking Victims Protection
Reauthorization Act of 2003, 2005, and 2008 (U.S. Department of State 2010), all of
which are more commonly referred to as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act or
TVPA. NGOs are credited with playing a critical role in pressuring the U.S. to adopt this
legislation (Weitzer 2007; McDonnell 2007; Soderlund 2005; Crago 2003). The TVPA
entitles individuals certified as victims of “severe forms of trafficking in persons” to
certain protections, services, and benefits. Section 103(8) of the TVPA defines “severe
forms of trafficking” as:

A) Sex trafficking [defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation,
provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act] in
which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or which
the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or

B) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person
for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the
purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or
slavery.

Through the TVPA, victims are eligible for the Federal Witness Protection Program and
eligible for benefits, similar to refugees, including education programs, health care, and
job training. The TVPA also made available a special visa for foreign national victims of human trafficking called the T-1 nonimmigrant visa, more commonly referred to as the T visa. The T visa provides temporary (4 year) non-immigrant status to victims who are in the U.S. because of human trafficking and would face extreme hardship if they left the U.S., and grants individuals employment authorization. After the expiration of the T visa, individuals can apply for permanent residence in the U.S., also known as a “green card.”

In additional to providing services and benefits to victims, the TVPA requires the U.S. Department of State to annually submit the *Trafficking in Persons Report* (TIP), which provides an assessment of other nations’ AHT efforts. Nations characterized as not complying with minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking, as outlined in the U.S. TVPA, risk losing non-humanitarian and non-trade related foreign assistance provided by the U.S. (U.S. Department of State 2008).

Further, the U.S. developed an institutional “3P” approach to human trafficking, which focuses on *preventing* human trafficking, *protecting* victims of human trafficking, and *prosecuting* human traffickers (U.S. Department of State 2008). NGOs are charged with executing aspects of the U.S. “3P” approach, including raising awareness to help prevent human trafficking, protecting victims through helping them access the complex of protections, benefits, and services available, and working with victims to help them aid in the prosecution of their traffickers.
NGOs and the Contemporary AHT Movement

NGOs’ role in pressuring the government to adopt AHT legislation, in attempting to impact the substance of that legislation, and in aiding victims is an example of NGOs broader role in civil society. As part of civil society, NGOs address human rights violations and assist marginalized communities (Dolhinow 2005; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004). NGOs are important actors within the international human rights movement because, in part, they identify human rights abuses when they occur and pressure nation-states to address these abuses (Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004). They also work with, attempt to empower, and provide services to marginalized communities in ways that the state is unable or unwilling to do (Dolhinow 2005). NGOs engaged in AHT efforts illustrate these characteristics. As previously noted, NGOs are recognized as playing a critical part in bringing the problem of human trafficking to the attention of the international community, galvanizing the contemporary AHT movement, and pressuring intergovernmental organizations and state governments to address the problem (Lagdon 2010; UNODC 2007, 2005; Perkins 2005; Bertone 2003). According to Perkins (2005:1):

From grass-roots organizations which identify victims and provide direct services to advocacy organizations that lobby for anti-trafficking laws and build civil society capacity through networking, training, information-sharing and public awareness campaigns, NGOs are driving the global anti-trafficking movement.

Increased feminist political activism around “female sexual slavery” developed in the 1970s and early 1980s (Bertone 2003). However, the contemporary AHT movement gained momentum in the early to mid 1990s. This contemporary movement developed, in part, out of NGOs’ direct experiences working in the field and recognizing sex
trafficking as a growing problem. NGOs spearheaded this movement, and primarily focused their attention on international sex trafficking and sex tourism. NGOs from across the globe engaged in “transnational activism” and organized campaigns for the purpose of pressuring governments to adopt AHT laws, to enforce existing ones, and to change their approach to victims of human trafficking (Bertone 2003).

Through their activism, these NGOs raised global and domestic awareness of human trafficking, particularly of sex trafficking. This transnational NGO activity, though, lacked a coherent strategy to address sex trafficking. This, in large part, was due to NGOs’ divergent constructions of the problem, which primarily centered on the issue of prostitution. As Bertone argues:

Women’s groups, activist NGOs, and now governments separate into two camps. One camp believes that all forms of prostitution, whether voluntary or involuntary, constitute violence against women, and must be abolished…The other camp has taken the position that…domestic and foreign women who choose to be sex workers in a particular country afford certain rights, and they advocate that prostitution should be legalized and regulated by the government. (2003: 15)

Additional literature on the AHT movement largely presents a similar picture and emphasizes the constructions of prostitution that underpin frames of sex trafficking and presents the actors involved as polarized around this issue. (Weitzer 2007; McDonnell 2007; Soderlund 2005; Crago 2003).

One side, which identifies prostitution as inherently violent, is primarily comprised of radical feminist and faith-based NGOs. Activists and scholars with this perspective contend that trafficking into the commercial sex industry, and forced prostitution in particular, is the most prominent form of human trafficking (Raymond 2004; Hughes 2005; Miriam 2005). Since prostitution is understood as a form of
violence against women, this camp rejects the notion of sex as work, and thus rejects terms like “sex work” or “prostitute” that they identify as legitimating or normalizing the idea of sex as work. In line with this, adherents to this frame argue that constructing prostitution as a legitimate form of labor that women choose to engage in trivializes the intrinsically dangerous, exploitive, and violent character of prostitution.

Those with this perspective argue that decriminalization of and/or tolerant attitudes toward prostitution validate men’s demand for the commodification of women’s bodies. This demand facilitates sex trafficking, because its purpose is to “supply” women to meet men’s demand. They further link decriminalization to increased rates of human trafficking and they support stricter penalties for people that profit from or use the commercial sex industry. Since prostitution is constructed as violence against women, they also argue that women used in prostitution should not be treated as criminals, but rather as victims, and thus they support the decriminalization of people used in prostitution. Scholars, as well as the activists themselves, often describe activists with this perspective as “abolitionists” (Raymond 2004; Hughes 2005; Miriam 2005). Those that challenge this perspective characterize them as “anti-prostitution” or “anti-sex” (Weitzer 2007; Chapkis 2003).

Movement adherents conveying an opposing perspective argue that adults are capable of voluntarily engaging in sex work, and many NGOs’ contend that forced prostitution and voluntary prostitution are distinct and should be treated as such in any international and state AHT law (Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; Colimoro 2008; Soderlund 2005). Members of this camp often refer to themselves as “human rights
activists” or “sex worker advocates,” while their adversaries often call them the “pro-prostitution” group. Advocates of this perspective argue that human trafficking occurs because people who lack labor protections and opportunities to sustain themselves are left vulnerable to exploitation, including within the context of migration (Kempadoo and Doezema 1998). This is particularly relevant for understanding sex work. People with limited options may choose sex work as a means to sustain themselves and their families given their limited employment options (Kempadoo and Doezema 1998). Further, sex workers are generally marginalized and often excluded from legal protections. A lack of opportunity serves as a factor to push people to migrate for both “legal” and “illegal” work. Restrictive immigration policies leave people vulnerable to relying on unlawful channels to migrate and secure work abroad, which increases the likelihood of exploitation. Thus, according to proponents of this view, it is not demand that causes sex trafficking, but rather structural and institutional conditions that leave people vulnerable to exploitation.

Further, the criminalization of prostitution makes sex workers vulnerable to violence and exploitation, for they often do not have any recourse when they face abuse (Colimoro 2008; Soderlund 2005; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998). By legalizing prostitution and legitimating it as a rightful form of labor, sex workers could demand protection and fair labor practices under the law, and form labor unions that could help ensure their rights and protection. In addition, sex worker advocates, who often include people engaged in sex work, argue that anti-prostitution groups are negating sex workers’ agency, and dismissing sex workers’ own insights and goals.
Adherents of this perspective also argue that exploitation in any setting is problematic, but some claim that radical feminists and faith based NGOs exaggerate the issue of sex trafficking in order to forward their actual agenda of criminalizing and marginalizing the commercial sex industry (Weitzer 2007; Murray 1998). Scholars contend that these groups conflate prostitution and sex trafficking, and use the rhetoric of “sexual slavery” to create a moral panic that human trafficking is a significant problem primarily involving sexual exploitation, and use this as justification for attacking the commercial sex industry (Weitzer 2007; Chapkis 2003).

Clearly, despite NGOs sharing a similar objective of ending human trafficking, they vary in how they frame the problem, as well as prostitution, and thus these NGOs are divided on how legal instruments should define human trafficking. Scholars argue that “anti-prostitution” groups were particularly successful in having their frame of human trafficking reflected in the U.S. TVPA and in government actors’ discourse on human trafficking, and having the policies they endorsed implemented (Weitzer 2007; McDonnell 2007; Soderlund 2005; Crago 2003).

**Framing and the AHT Movement**

Literature on NGOs’ disputes over how to frame sex trafficking illustrates the role of meaning work within the AHT movement. Social constructionists stress the significance of “meaning work,” defined as the “struggle over the production of ideas and meaning,” for understanding social movement dynamics generally (Benford and Snow 2000). Meaning work encompasses social movement actors’ efforts to strategically (re)construct social phenomenon as social problems to themselves and others, and do so
in a way that resonates with target audiences, garners their support, and mobilizes their involvement within the movement (Noakes and Johnston 2005; Valocchi 2005; Benford and Snow 2000; Benford 1997). Frames are a product of this meaning work. According to Goffman (1974), frames refer to “schemata of interpretation,” through which individuals interpret and organize events, and give these events meaning. These frames, in turn, guide individuals’ actions in different situations in ways deemed appropriate given their frames.

In terms of framing in social movements, scholars generally focus on “collective action frames.” According to Benford and Snow (2000), collective action frames reflect a process by which movement actors identify some social phenomenon as problematic and attribute blame for the problem (diagnostic framing), offer solutions to the problem and strategies for reaching these solutions (prognostic framing), and provide a reasoning for why collective action is necessary to remedy it (motivational framing). Scholars employ the verb “framing” to emphasize that social movement actors actively engage in the production and dissemination of collective action frames (Snow and Benford 1988).

As previously noted, scholarship on the AHT movement suggests that one camp’s frame of sex trafficking, which identifies demand for a commercial sex industry as the cause of sex trafficking, as particularly impactful on U.S. AHT policy (Weitzer 2007). According to prior scholarship, the solution to ending sex trafficking requires dismantling the demand. The other camp’s frame identifies poor economic conditions, which give people limited opportunity to support themselves, coupled with restrictive immigration policies as increasing people’s vulnerability to exploitation. Ending the exploitation,
including sex trafficking, requires empowering sex workers, through expanding their protection and rights to organize, the legalization of prostitution, and facilitating their ability to legally migrate for work. Scholars argue that this frame was essentially dismissed by policymakers while the former was embraced (Weitzer 2007; Soderlund 2005; Chapkis 2003). These frames matter because they suggest how we should understand and solve social problems, and thus they have policy implications if adopted by policymakers. Further, frames are an important cultural resource that movement actors draw on as they mobilize adherents, gain support for their cause, destabilize their antagonists, and reach their movement objectives (Noakes and Johnston 2005; Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988).

It is important that movement adherents’ frames resonate with target audiences, also referred to as frame resonance (Benford and Snow 2000). Frame resonance is determined by the creditability and salience of the frame. If the frame is not believable or reasonable to target audiences, then movement adherents face obstacles in gaining new recruits and broad support for their cause. Frame resonance is determined, in part, by the frame’s empirical credibility, or how well the frame fits with people’s perception of “reality,” and if these frame can be empirically verified. Frame resonance is also determined by the perceived credibility of the frame articulators. Conveyers of frames that are regarded as credible are more likely to be persuasive.

Frame resonance is facilitated by the master frames that movement actors draw on. Swart defines master frames as “general symbolic frames,” which “provide a diversity of movements with powerful symbolic resources that can be reshaped around
their specific grievances and goals” (1995: 466). How much these frames resonate with target audiences depends on the historical and cultural context in which they are embedded. Master frames are similar to movement-specific collective action frames in that they both offer movement actors an interpretive framework from which to understand social phenomenon, to identify the necessity for collective action, and to shape the objectives of the movement (Snow and Benford 1992). However, unlike movement-specific collective action frames, master frames are generic and much broader in-scale. Movements derive their movement-specific collective action frames from master frames. Master frames are available for different social movements to draw on and use and they shape and constrain movements’ specific collective action frames.

Activists’ own ideologies inform their constructions of collective action frames (Oliver and Johnston 2000; Snow and Benford 2000; Valocchi 1996). Oliver and Johnston (2000: 194) conceptualize “ideology” as “the content of whole systems of belief.” Snow and Benford (2000) contend that ideologies are cultural resources activists draw on as they engage in framing. They argue, the “[f]raming process involves, among other things, the articulation and accenting or amplification of elements of existing beliefs and values, most of which are associated with existing ideologies” (209). Ideologies inform movement actors’ construction of collective action frames. Differences in ideology may in large part explain divergences in movement adherents’ frames (Valocchi 1996).

It is reasonable to expect that individuals that are concerned with similar problems, such as sex trafficking, can frame those problems in different ways because
they are informed by their diverse ideologies. The resultant variations in framing can lead to “framing contests” or “frame disputes,” which refer to disagreements over how to portray reality (Benford and Snow 2000; Benford 1993; Ryan 1991). Framing contests are a key feature in social movements. Movement actors’ framings are affected by alternative and competing frames proposed externally by antagonists, as well as internally by movement adherents. This further illustrates why the frames deployed by social movements are not given, but rather products of the dynamic struggle over meaning and ideas (Benford 1997; Snow and Benford 1992). As Benford (1997: 410) argues:

> Meanings are derived (and transformed) via social interaction and are subject to differential interpretations. Hence meaning is problematic; it does not spring from the object of attention into the actor’s head, because objects have no intrinsic meaning. Rather meaning is negotiated, contested, modified, articulated, and rearticulated. In short, meaning is socially constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed.

Bertone’s analysis of the contemporary AHT movement suggests that debates over how to frame sex trafficking reflects a framing contest internal to the movement (2003). Individuals come to movements with a repertoire of socially constructed frames and they must negotiate with one another in order to come to a shared understanding of a social phenomenon (Benford and Snow 2000; Benford 1997). These negotiations are not always successful, but are important to the development of a cohesive social movement. According to Lehrner and Allen, “[i]f one understands the goal of a social movement as in part to contest received interpretations of social phenomena and to offer competing analyses, then the importance of shared narratives in constructing the phenomenon of interest and in shaping a response must be seen as central” (2008: 221). Thus, divergence in how to frame human trafficking among AHT movement adherents
challenges the ability of this movement to convey a unified frame and cohesive analyses of counter-frames proffered by antagonists.

**NGOs and the U.S. AHT Approach**

As previously noted, scholarship identifies NGOs that emphasize the relationship between demand and sex trafficking as particularly influential on U.S. AHT policies (Weitzer 2007; Soderlund 2005). Specifically, faith based and radical feminist NGOs collaborated and successfully pressured the U.S. to implement an AHT approach that reflected their particular frame of human trafficking (Weitzer 2007). In what has been described as “an amazing, somewhat vulnerable, but remarkably cohesive coalition…” (Horowitz in Carnes 2000), these NGOs came together and lobbied the U.S. government to adopt AHT polices that primarily focused on sex trafficking and its link to the demand for prostitution (Weitzer 2007).

This coalition faced a hurdle in having their perspective reflected in the TVPA under the Clinton administration (Weitzer 2007; Chapkis 2003). However, faith based organizations received a more favorable hearing under the following Bush administration, thus facilitating this coalition’s ability to reach certain objectives. As Weitzer (2007) notes, “The inauguration of President George W. Bush in 2001 significantly altered the ‘political opportunity structure’ for anti-prostitution forces…” (449). The Bush administration abandoned the Clinton administration’s approach to human trafficking and “replaced it with a model that is virtually identical to what was being advocated by the anti-prostitution crusade” (461). Weitzer further contends that this coalition’s perspective on prostitution and sex trafficking became institutionalized
into policy, was incorporated in the reauthorizations of the TVPA in 2003 and 2005, and informed agency practices. Further, scholars identify these groups as the primary beneficiaries of government grants for the purpose of researching and raising awareness of human trafficking, as well as for identifying and serving victims (Weitzer 2007; Soderlund 2005; Chapkis 2003).

Scholars also assert that the TVPA relies on a moral panic concerning “sexual slavery” (Weitzer 2007; Chapkis 2003). To bolster this moral panic, U.S. policy on human trafficking is based on unstable definitions of “human trafficking” and unreliable statistics, both points acknowledged by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2006). These statistics present human trafficking, particularly sex trafficking, as immense in scope (Chapkis 2003). Further, the actual number of victims identified in the U.S. since the initial passage of the TVPA are grossly below the CIA’s 1999 estimate that 45,000 to 50,000 women and children are trafficked into the U.S. annually (Richard 2000). The estimate has dropped overtime, with the U.S. now estimating that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficking into the U.S. annually (U.S. State Department 2008). However, these variations in estimates and the lack of victims found, despite the over 150 million dollars spent to identify victims within the U.S., has led scholars and members of the media to question if human trafficking is actually a problem in the U.S. warranting so much funding to address (Weitzer 2007; Markon 2007; Chapkis 2003).

Chapkis (2003) also argues that the TVPA complements other U.S. anti-sex and anti-immigrant policies by making “strategic use of anxieties over sexuality, gender, and immigration to further curtail migration and support immigration control.” By granting
protection to “innocent” migrant victims of human trafficking, it legitimates punishing and not offering protection to “ordinary” abused and exploited migrants that may not constitute “severe” victims of human trafficking, as defined the TVPA. Further, the TVPA differentiates “deserving” and “undeserving” victims by making victims that seemingly consented to being trafficked ineligible for assistance. In an “unusual consensus,” both feminists and sex worker activists advocated that consent to being trafficked should not be a factor in determining eligibility as a victim, because one cannot consent to being a victim of a crime (2003:929). However, feminists failed to see this reflected in the TVPA because of their collaboration with political and religious conservative groups, suggesting that not all members of the “anti-prostitution” coalition saw their frame realized in the TVPA. Further emphasizing that the TVPA is less about helping victims and more about supporting restrictive immigration policies, Chapkis (2003) points out that services and benefits for victims guaranteed by the TVPA are contingent on victims’ willingness to assist law enforcement in prosecuting traffickers. Indeed, most victims’ compliance with any reasonable request from law enforcement to investigate and prosecute human traffickers is necessary for them to be eligible for a T visa (U.S. Congress 2000). Children and victims who can provide proof they were extremely traumatized are exempt from this requirement.

While the literature presents discrepancies concerning the extent to which U.S. AHT policies reflect the frame proffered by “anti-prostitution” groups, there is a general consensus that these groups were more influential than sex worker advocates. However, the TVPA criminalizes not only sex trafficking, but human trafficking broadly, which, by
definition, constitutes acts of forced and coerced labor. The TVPA further allotted AHT funds for domestic programs focused on preventing both sex trafficking and labor trafficking, protecting and providing services to victims of both sex trafficking and labor trafficking, and prosecuting perpetrators of both sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

As previously noted, NGOs played and continue to play a critical role in the U.S. “3P” approach to combating human trafficking (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2008). Service providers also receive funding to provide direct services to victims and NGOs receive grants to implement awareness-raising campaigns. In addition, the U.S. allots funding for the formation of AHT coalitions comprising of NGOs, law enforcement, and other community stakeholders with the purpose of devising effective AHT strategies.

Through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the federal government also provides funding for Rescue and Restore coalitions, made up in large part of NGOs and law enforcement, to expand the scope and capacity of local AHT networks and facilitate collaboration among coalition members to identify victims, provide victims protection and services, and prosecute human traffickers. A NGO is responsible for operating the U.S. human trafficking hotline, and NGOs often conduct human trafficking trainings for government agencies and provide technical assistance to other NGOs. All in all, NGOs play an integral part in the U.S. strategy to identify victims, provide victim services, prevent human trafficking, prosecute human traffickers, and raise awareness of human trafficking. Further, NGOs are recognized as essential in
identifying when government’s efforts fall short and pressuring government to improve (Lagdon 2010).

Scholarship on the division among anti-prostitution and sex worker advocates on how to frame sex trafficking and their efforts to shape AHT policy in a way that reflects their frame of the problem illustrates the relevancy of framing within the U.S. AHT movement. However, while scholarship attends to the division between “anti-prostitution” and sex worker advocates over how to frame sex trafficking and their efforts to shape AHT policy, an analysis of NGOs’ frames of human trafficking, inclusively defined, is overwhelmingly absent. This absence is striking given that NGOs play such a central role in the overall U.S. AHT approach to address both sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

The above reflects an issue relevant to social movement scholarship on framing. While scholars argue that framing is a dynamic process, Benford argues that there is “a general tendency to oversimplify, to treat movement frames or framing processes as monolithic” (1997: 422). This leads to neglecting the multilayered and complex character of collective action frames. Benford (1997) argues that this stems, in part, from researchers’ focusing on the framings of movement elites and key activists identified in media reports. Researchers need to consider a diversity of frames espoused by movement members, including movement elites and non-elites, in order to garner a more complete understanding of the variation in frame construction that occurs within social movements, the repertoire of socially constructed frames that activists bring to any social movement,
and the multifaceted complexity inherent within the collective action frames movement actors communicate (Benford 1997).

The scholarly focus on sex trafficking is important given the origins of the contemporary AHT movement, internal dynamics within it, and the impact of NGOs asserting a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking on U.S. policy. However, this literature may inadvertently reify the idea that the AHT movement is primarily comprised of sex worker advocates and “anti-prostitution” groups who are clearly polarized into one of two camps based on their frame of sex trafficking. This analysis may neglect the variation in framing within these two camps, as well as alternative discourses on human trafficking conveyed by NGOs.

It is important to consider the framings of a diversity of NGOs that focus on different aspects of human trafficking, given their important role in mobilizing the AHT movement, raising awareness of the problem, providing direct services to victims, and in the overall U.S. approach to combating human trafficking. Further, U.S. states are increasingly adopting state-level AHT legislation in which NGOs are actively attempting to shape. What exactly are these diverse NGOs saying about human trafficking to target audiences, including policymakers?

U.S. NGOs working on human trafficking today may offer less social movement oriented frames of human trafficking given their relationship with the state. Dolhinow (2005) argues that NGOs that rely on the government for support, as do many U.S. NGOs engaged in AHT efforts, enter into a paradoxical relationship with the communities in which they work. NGOs’ dependence on government funding can lead to a situation in
which NGOs are the conduit by which neoliberal state policies, which encourage self-help projects and projects focused on meeting individual needs, enter marginalized communities. While NGOs have an objective of empowering and bringing long term social change to these communities, they must also comply with their funders’ priorities and propose projects that have the greatest possibility of receiving external funding. Further, competitiveness of funding pushes NGOs to contend with one another and may discourage their collaboration. All these factors can pressure NGOs to support individual level remedies to the problems they work on. These factors also subvert NGOs’ ability to make demands of the state to improve conditions that negatively impact communities and to communicate alternative discourses that reference economic, political, and social transformation as necessary to bring upon long-term change that empowers their constituents.

Berns (2004) argues that frames of social problems that rest on an individual level analysis locate the cause of social problems within individuals, and primarily support individual level interventions as solutions rather than emphasizing prevention. In contrast, institutional frames of responsibility locate the cause of and solutions to social problems within social institutions. Further, a cultural and structural frame of social problems, also known as a socio-cultural frame, links the root of social problems with socialization, prevailing belief systems, social inequality, and social structures. Within this frame, social forces affect individual behavior and preventing and ending social problems requires addressing these forces. NGOs’ need for external funding and support
may present a barrier for their organizations to proffer institutional or socio-cultural frames of human trafficking that may challenge their funders in some way.

Certain factors may hinder direct service providers, in particular, from applying a “social movement analysis” to the issues they work on. According to Lehrner and Allen (2008), a social movement analysis recognizes broader structural and cultural factors as facilitating identified problems and proposing solutions that address these structural and cultural factors. An emphasis on individual-level service provision, in addition to professionalization and formalization, may influence service providers to depoliticize issues in order to gain funding and shape policy, particularly in an atmosphere where social service providers may compete with other service providers for limited resources.

Further, the character of direct service work may also shape service providers’ frames of issues. In their work on collective action frames employed by direct service providers engaged in domestic violence work, Lehrner and Allen (2008) find that the character of social service providers’ work, which overwhelmingly encompasses individual level interventions with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, shapes how service providers frame domestic violence. They find that an emphasis on individual level interventions may lead service providers to identify individual level interventions as the solutions to domestic violence, which in turn reshapes what the service providers themselves identify as the cause of domestic violence. In their study, service providers often failed to apply a social movement analysis to domestic violence. These service providers often depoliticized domestic violence, constructed it as an
individual, psychological problem and located the cause of domestic violence within the individual victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Research Questions to Pursue

The above literature raises several questions for an investigation into the framing activities of NGOs engaged in the AHT movement. First, while previous research provides critical analysis of the frames communicated by NGOs focusing on sex trafficking, it does not attend to NGOs’ framing of labor trafficking and human trafficking inclusively defined. This is necessary to consider because many NGOs provide direct services to victims of both sex trafficking and labor trafficking, work to raise awareness of all forms of human trafficking, and advocate for policies on human trafficking broadly, not just sex trafficking. Further, through their part in the overall U.S. approach to human trafficking, NGOs are in a position to communicate their frames to different government actors at different levels, including the federal level and subnational level or U.S. state level. What are NGOs conveying about human trafficking during these interactions? What are the different causes of and solutions to human trafficking that they propose? How integral are constructions of prostitution inherent across their frames of human trafficking? What ideologies underpin these framings?

Second, research suggests that dependence on government support and the character of NGOs’ work can pressure NGOs to depoliticize the issues they work on. While earlier scholarship emphasizes NGOs influence on and involvement within the AHT movement, almost a decade has passed since the initial adoption of the TVPA. Within this decade, NGOs have clearly worked with government to address human
trafficking and many depend on government funding to conduct their AHT activities. Further, direct service providers, along with policy advocates and other NGOs, have played a central part in the U.S. AHT approach. They provide direct services, engage in awareness-raising campaigns, and work with law enforcement to identify and offer protection to victims, and to prosecute human traffickers. Has this relationship between NGOs, particularly service providers, and government caused NGOs to depoliticize human trafficking? Do NGOs still identify themselves as part of a social movement? Further, do their frames fail to identify socio-cultural causes of and solutions to human trafficking and collective action as necessary to remedy it? I address these questions in Chapter Five in order to expand knowledge on the contemporary U.S. AHT movement and the frames and framing activities relevant to it.

Further, while prior research highlights the framing contests among NGOs engaged in AHT efforts, less attention is given to what perspectives they may share. Given their role in the AHT movement and in executing the U.S. AHT approach, do these NGOs possess similar views on the achievements of the AHT movement and their AHT efforts, the barriers to achieving their movement objectives and effectively addressing human trafficking, and the U.S. approach to human trafficking? Or are their perspectives completely divergent based on their different frames of human trafficking? Attending to these questions also extends knowledge on the U.S. AHT movement, and possibly offers rich insight into the existing obstacles to addressing human trafficking and the U.S. AHT approach. I examine these questions in Chapter Seven.
CHAPTER 3
AN INTEGRATIVE THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING MOVEMENT

Overwhelmingly, scholarship on the anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement is not approached through a social movement theoretical framework.\(^1\) However, this literature on the AHT movement suggests the importance of framing for understanding its internal conflicts over the causes of and solutions to human trafficking. It further illustrates the relevance of these framings for understanding U.S. AHT policy. Social movement research on framing can expand our understanding of the AHT movement, including framing dynamics and outcomes and the cultural resources available to its adherents.

**Framing**

Framing scholarship directs our attention to the relationship between culture and social movements. Movement actors draw on their cultural “tool kits,” including their ideologies and broader cultural values, beliefs, and symbols, when constructing collective action frames (Noakes and Johnston 2005; Benford and Snow 2000; Oliver and Johnston

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\(^1\) Scholarship on the human trafficking that illustrates the importance of definitional issues among NGOs largely fits in with feminist, international security studies, legal studies or crime and deviance theoretical perspectives. While this literature demonstrates the importance of framing within the AHT movement, it is overwhelmingly not guided by social movement theoretical approach specifically.
These frames not only confirm movement adherents’ commitment to the causes they work on, but movement actors mobilize these frames in order to persuade target audiences that some social phenomenon is an injustice requiring collective action to remedy it. These frames identify causes of the injustice and solutions for overcoming it and are employed to recruit new members and gain support for the social movement’s cause.

In large part, framing is strategic within social movements. Movement actors construct and utilize collective action frames to accomplish specific goals, including enlisting new members, mobilizing movement supporters, and attaining resources (Benford and Snow 2000). In order to meet these goals, social movement actors construct some social phenomenon as problematic in a way that successfully resonates with target audiences. Further, movement actors make strategic decisions on what aspects of an identified problem to highlight or dismiss, how to present the problem, the solutions they propose to remedy the problem, and the steps necessary to reach those solutions (Zald 1996).

While framing scholarship emphasizes the importance of cultural resources available to movement adherents in shaping movement dynamics and outcomes, this literature faces criticism for overemphasizing the cultural content of frames and the cultural forces that inform these frames. McAdam (1996) argues that the framing literature suffers from an “ideational bias,” referring to “an almost exclusive concern with ideas and their formal expression without close attention to movement tactics, mobilizing structures, and changing political opportunities that shape and mediate the ‘signifying
work’ of movements.” Further, Kubal (1998) contends that social movement framing analyses are characterized by a tautological reasoning, in that particular frames are assessed as successful because they resonate, and frame resonance is assumed given the success of the frames. According to Benford (1997), these weaknesses in the framing literature are partly attributable to framing scholars often focusing on a single case study and the framing of successful movement elites within the case. By only focusing on a successful case, scholars may conclude that the frames conveyed by the social movement successfully resonated without considering other factors that may have facilitated this success. In addition, scholars attribute activists’ successes to their framings without doing comparative research and considering negative cases in which these framings fail to resonate.

These critiques of the framing literature can be extended to scholarship on the AHT movement. Literature on the AHT movement largely relies on an analysis of statements made by elites within this movement that are identified as successfully impacting U.S. AHT policy (Weitzer 2007). Assessments of “anti-prostitution” groups’ success are based on the reflection of their construction of sex trafficking within U.S. AHT policy and government actors’ discourse on human trafficking. As Weitzer (2007) notes, the Bush administration, who was open to discussing policy with faith-based groups given his own religious orientation, marked a political opportunity for faith-based groups. This political opportunity allowed faith-based groups and their partners to achieve greater access to this administration and other federal agencies. This, in turn, provided them an opportunity to shape government actors’ understanding of human
trafficking as primarily a problem of sex trafficking in which the demand for a commercial sex industry was the cause.

Identifying the Bush administration as a political opportunity adds a level of complexity to our understanding of why these particular groups were able to successfully transmit their frame. However, scholars note that SMOs have to interpret, or frame, that a meaningful political opportunity exists in order to exploit it (Gamson and Meyer 1996). Is this relevant for understanding faith-based groups’ and their allies’ success in shaping U.S. AHT policy? Why were faith-based groups and their partners granted this increased political access? Is it simply due to the fact that these groups proffered a frame that resonated with government leaders receptive to faith-based groups’ interpretation of social problems and policy issues?

In addition, this literature on the successes of faith-based groups and their partners is primarily based on the narratives of elites within this movement and neglects the framings of nonelites (Weitzer 2007). It also coalesces elites by their frame (demand leads to sex trafficking), and largely does not consider the possible variation within this frame. Neglecting a consideration of nonelites' framings, and not investigating additional information communicated through the frames of both elites and nonelites raises questions if the “anti-prostitution” groups’ frame was indeed fully institutionalized into U.S. AHT policy and if their frame alone or faith-based character of their organizations wholly explains their success.

Benford (1997) offers several suggestions for research on framing that can add to knowledge on framing in the AHT movement specifically, and expand our understanding
of framing dynamics, processes, and outcomes in social movements generally. First, we need more research on comparative case studies and on negative cases to illustrate the conditions under which framings resonate or fail to resonate with target audiences. In addition, scholars need to focus more on the framing of both movement elites and nonelites. Benford further contends that scholars specify the cultural and structural conditions underscoring movement actors’ frame construction, and how these conditions influence frame resonance.

These critiques of the framing literature encourage an examination of how structural conditions found important in social movement scholarship shape frames and frame resonance. A breadth of scholarly research demonstrates the significance of mobilizing structures and political processes for understanding social movement dynamics generally (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). In contrast to a social constructionist approach that emphasizes framing processes and the importance of culture and meaning work within social movements, resource mobilization and political process theorists direct our attention to the structural context in which movements emerge and develop (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). While scholars often illustrate the combined effect of resources and political opportunities on social movements, it is important to first delineate the theoretical contributions of both. In the following, I first discuss resource mobilization theory and political process theory respectively. I then address an integrative theoretical approach that combines the insights of scholarship on framing, resource mobilization, and political opportunities and argue why this approach
is well-suited for analyzing the relevance of framing in the AHT movement and its effects on AHT policy.

**Resource Mobilization Theory and Mobilizing Structures**

Resource mobilization theorists stress the significance of available resources in shaping movement dynamics, processes, and outcomes. Collective action is shaped by mobilizing structures, referring to the formal and informal groups, organizations, and networks that facilitate movement mobilization and engagement (McAdam et al. 1996; Tarrow 1998). These mobilizing structures are comprised of and offer tangible and intangible resources that actors must mobilize in order to meet their movement objectives (Freeman 1977). Tangible resources include money, means to communicate the movement’s existence and ideas, and facilities in which movement actors can work. Intangible resources primarily encompass people. Movements heavily rely on people for their specialized skills, such as expertise in different fields, access to networks which offer additional resources, and access to decision makers pertinent to the movement. Movements also depend upon “unspecialized” people who offer their time, efforts, and commitment to the movement. Both tangible and intangible resources are critical for social movements to reach their goals.

Resource mobilization theorists further emphasize the importance of professionalization and formalized organizational structures for social movements, in order to garner and mobilize resources and reach movement objectives (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Oberschall 1993; Staggenborg 1991, 1988; McCarthy and Zald 1977). A SMO, or a complex or formal organization, provides the vehicle by which
social movements influence social change (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1218). Formalized and professionalized SMOs are characterized by established, bureaucratic procedures, and a clear division of labor in which individuals occupy different positions to work on different tasks (Staggenborg 1988).

As noted in Chapter Two, research finds that professionalization and formalization may subvert NGOs’ ability to effectively work on meeting the objectives of the social movements to which they belong (Lehrner and Allen 2008; Dolhinow 2005). Dolhinow (2005) argues that NGOs, characterized by a professionalized organizational structure and dependence on government funding, may be in a contradictory relationship with members of the broader community. While they have an objective of empowering and bringing long term social change to these communities, they must also comply with their funders’ priorities, propose projects that have the greatest possibility of receiving external funding, and compete with other like-minded NGOs for this funding. This, in turn, may limit NGOs’ ability to advocate for structural change and challenge the state on practices and policies that disempower the communities in which they work.

However, Staggenborg (1991) argues that the acquisition of formalized organizational structures and professional leadership by social movements allows for movements to maintain themselves and grow in power. Foundations and elites prefer funding professionalized and formalized SMOs due to their perceived stability. Funding allows these SMOs to pay salaries, hire staff, develop organizing skills and expand, which helps to maintain these SMOs over longer time periods. Further, professional SMOs facilitate grassroots participation in movements and they also continue to work
toward movement objectives when grassroots participation within the movement is low. Formalization also facilitates lasting coalitions with other SMOs, and these coalitions are more effective than coalitions comprised of informal SMOs (Staggenborg 1988). In all, professionalization and formalization facilitates SMOs’ ability to achieve, maintain, and mobilize both tangible and intangible resources and meet movement objectives.

Oberschall (1993) further contends that once a SMO is socially accepted and institutionalized, it no longer needs to consistently struggle to secure material resources. SMOs’ ability to reach their goals depends on the amount of resources at their disposable and their ability to effectively manage and mobilize these resources, which further allows them to overcome barriers posed by their antagonists.

This scholarship raises points to consider when investigating NGOs engaged in the AHT movement. Dependence on government funding may hinder some professionalized and formalized NGOs from challenging the government on policies it opposes. However, a professional and formalized organizational structure coupled with an availability of secure material resources may facilitate NGOs’ ability to work toward meeting movement objectives. This encourages questioning the role resources play in enabling NGOs to garner success in terms of seeing their frames reflected in government policy, a common measure of success for SMOs generally (Oberschall 1993). This literature also promotes examining how NGOs’ possible dependence on government funding may hinder them from challenging government on policies they disagree with.
Political Process Theory

Political process theory emphasizes the broader political structure in both facilitating and limiting opportunities for social movements, as well as shaping the forms those social movements take (Meyer 2004; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1992, 1998). Political process theorists direct our attention to the linkages between social movements and the institutionalized politics distinctive to the national context in which social movements are entrenched. Political process theorists highlight the importance of political opportunity, which generally refers to dimensions of a specific political context that encourage movement emergence (Tarrow 1998). These dimensions shape activists’ perceptions of the likelihood of success of collective action. According to Tarrow (1998), these political opportunities include access to political participation, shifts in political alignments within the state, division among political elites, the presence of influential political allies, and state repression and facilitation. Social movements may emerge as a result of new or expanded opportunities, and take advantage of these opportunities in pursuit of movement objectives. As noted by Weitzer (1997), expanded political opportunities in the form of influential political allies explain why NGOs emphasizing the link between demand and sex trafficking successfully saw their frame institutionalized within AHT federal policy.

Social movements that grow out of the expansion of political opportunities signal to other groups the possibility of collective action (Tarrow 1998; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Staggenborg 1991). Thus, the presence of a social movement expands the opportunities for later movements to emerge. Moreover, existing social movements can
provide resources to newer movements to grow and maintain themselves. In addition to encouraging the emergence of new social movements, a social movement’s success can also encourage the emergence of challenging countermovements, which present alternative frames contrary to those proposed by the “original” social movement (Staggenborg 1991; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

In a nation-state like the U.S., political authority is partitioned among branches of government, and among national and subnational governments. Because of this, movement members, varying in their policy objectives, are likely to confront a combination of support and opposition from different levels and branches of government (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). A mixture of support and opposition often leads to uneven success for SMOs. Successful framing for SMOs in a particular arena compels SMOs conveying alternative frames to attempt success in other venues that offer greater opportunities for success (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Thus, the political context in which SMOs operate shapes their movement activities and those of their antagonists.

This scholarship raises questions to pursue when examining NGOs’ framing activities and their effects within the AHT movement. Prior research argues that “anti-prostitution” groups were successful and sex worker advocates were unsuccessful in shaping U.S. AHT policy (Weitzer 2007; Soderlund 2005; Chapkis 2003). Further, political opportunities help explain why “anti-prostitution” groups were successful (Weitzer 2007). Yet has the success of NGOs encouraged unsuccessful NGOs to try and achieve success in other venues? Have political opportunities expanded in other arenas for groups not possessing the same frame? While NGOs possessing a demand-centered
frame of sex trafficking were successful at informing federal policy, have NGOs conveying this frame also garnered full support from other branches of federal government? Further, have they reached success in seeing their frame institutionalized into subnational policies? This last point is particularly critical given that most U.S. states have enacted subnational AHT legislation and other states are in the process of doing so.

**An Integrative Theoretical Approach**

The above discussion of resource mobilization and political process theories illustrates how these theories can be employed in gauging NGOs’ successful framing efforts. Given that the institutionalization of a particular frame is of critical importance to many NGOs, it is important to consider how resources and the broader political context facilitates and hinders them from meeting this objective. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996) argue that social movement scholars, varying in their theoretical approach, consistently provide support for the significance of framing processes, mobilizing structures, and the structure of political opportunities and constraints for explaining social movement dynamics and outcomes. However, research traditionally focuses on only one of these aspects within movements. This encourages scholarly research into the intersection of these factors. Thus, they propose an integrative theoretical approach to studying social movements, which emphasizes the intersection of and relationship between framing processes, political opportunities, and mobilizing structures or a combination of these factors in explanations for the formation, development, and outcomes of social movements (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). Demonstrating how these factors relate to one another within social movements yields a
richer and more comprehensive understanding of social movements generally. In line with this, an integrative theoretical approach to understanding framing in social movements can provide greater insight into Benford’s (1997) questions concerning the process by which framings resonate, and the cultural and structural factors, including resources and political context, that shape these frames.

A growing body of research supports an integrative theoretical approach to social movements (McCammon, Hewitt, and Smith 2004; Sell and Prakash 2004; Gamson and Meyer 1996; Gotham 1998; Valocchi 1996). As previously noted, Gamson and Meyer (1996) argue that social movement actors frame political opportunities, and movement adherents may disagree with one another on whether an expansion of opportunities for collective action has occurred and where opportunities exist. Frames of political opportunities shape when and how movement members engage in collective action. McCammon, Hewitt and Smith (2004) find that members of the suffrage movement tailored their frame according to the audience they were addressing, in order to maximize the most amount of support for their cause. Valocchi (1996) demonstrates that the result of framing disputes within the civil rights movement, in which members of the movement disagreed over integration as the means to achieve “rights” for African Americans, was shaped by both material and political factors. The success of the “rights” frame, coupled with an integrationist ideology, did not come into dominance because it was the most culturally appealing. Rather, its success was determined by the fact that groups adhering to that frame and ideology controlled important resources, had access to and were favored
by political elites, and because political elites aggressively repressed organizations proposing alternative ideologies.

Research Questions to Pursue

Such research directs framing scholarship to consider the relationship between cultural and structural conditions in shaping social movement dynamics, processes and outcomes. However, this scholarship is underdeveloped (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). In order to expand knowledge on the AHT movement and its impact on policy specifically and on the intersection of framing, resources, and political opportunities in social movements generally, Chapter Six investigates certain important questions. I first examine the process by which a diversity of NGOs, varying in their framing and elite status, achieved success, as measured by the reflection of their frame in AHT policy at the federal and subnational levels. In addressing this, I pay particular attention to the material and political context in which these NGOs are embedded. Second, I investigate if any common themes emerge in NGOs’ narratives that provide additional insight into the relationship between framing and political and material conditions for understanding other dynamics inherent within the AHT movement.
CHAPTER FOUR
METHODOLOGY

Current Study

This research critically examines the framing activities of NGOs within the anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement, the effects of these framing activities, and what NGOs’ narratives reveal about the successes of the movement as well as existing barriers to effectively addressing human trafficking. In order to accomplish this, I utilize the sample, data, and methodology described in the preceding.

Sample and Data

This research primarily entails interviews with sixty-one NGO representatives engaged in AHT efforts at the federal level and in four additional U.S. state-level or subnational sites characterized by significant AHT movement activity according to NGO and government documents, media reports, and activists’ accounts. Further, these sites are identified as hubs for human trafficking within the U.S. In sum, these sites are comprised of ten metropolitan areas, five of which are regionally located in the West, two in the East, two in the Midwest, and one in the South.

With the goal of identifying the universe of NGOs working on human trafficking within each of these sites, I generated a list of seventy-nine NGOs through multiple means, including: 1) city, state, federal, and international government documents; 2)
NGO documents; 3) anti-human trafficking coalition and task force membership lists and meeting notes; 4) newspaper reports on human trafficking; 5) referrals made by NGO representatives and activists; and 6) a broad internet search. This method allowed me to identify a diversity of NGOs varying in their elite state, with some NGOs being heavily cited and quoted in media, research, and government documents to NGOs that are not recognized in such documents. It further allowed me to identify NGOs varying in their focus (measured by whether they focus on sex trafficking, labor trafficking or human trafficking broadly), the character of their work (measure by whether engage primarily in direct services, policy advocacy, or some other type of work), and in the character of their organization (measure by how an organization characterizes itself, such as “faith-based,” “feminist,” human rights,” etc.). These NGOs further varied in their organizational structures, ranging from highly formalized organizational and bureaucratic organizational structures to and highly informal and less bureaucratic organizational structures.

After generating this list of seventy-nine NGOs, I contacted NGO representatives through e-mail and/or telephone, requesting an interview to learn more about their organization’s AHT efforts. In order to garner the most comprehensive and honest information, I assured these organizations that I would maintain their anonymity and that written research results would not indicate their involvement in the study. Through this process, I secured interviews with sixty-one NGO representatives. These NGOs worked

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While my goal was to identify and contact the whole population of NGOs working on human trafficking within each of these sites, it is unlikely that I achieved this. Through the process of identifying which NGOs worked on human trafficking, I came across NGOs that had no easily accessible contact information or means to publicize their AHT efforts. However, through my overall sampling design, I believe I captured, at the very least, the majority of NGOs engaged in AHT efforts in each research site.
in four U.S. states, which I refer to as “Eastern State” (n=15), “Midwestern State” (n=8), “Southern State” (n=6), and “Western State” (n=16), and almost exclusively at the “federal level” (n=16). It is important to note that NGOs that center their AHT efforts at the federal level are located throughout the U.S. Thirty-three of these NGOs focus on human trafficking exclusively or human trafficking is one two or three issues they address. For the remaining twenty-eight, human trafficking is one of many issues the organizations tackle.

Table 4.1 presents the number of these respondents based on their focus and the character of their work. Nineteen respondents focus on sex trafficking, three on labor trafficking, and thirty-nine on human trafficking inclusively, meaning both sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trafficking Focus</th>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Policy Advocacy</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex Trafficking</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Trafficking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking Inclusively</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 also indicates that the sample is comprised of twenty-eight service providers, twenty-four policy advocates, and nine respondents that primarily engage in another form of work, including movement mobilization, awareness-raising, research, and building relationships between civil society and government. Within this study, twenty-two service providers also engaged in policy advocacy work. However, given the special issues service providers may face as found in previous research (Lehrner and Allen 2008), I count them as service providers within this study.

Of these NGO representatives, thirty-nine are “elites.” They or their organizations are considered leaders in their field. They are very well-known in the national and/or subnational context, regularly cited in media reports on human trafficking, and several have garnered well-publicized celebrity support for their work and organizations. Further, these elites are perceived as experts on human trafficking and are called on to discuss human trafficking as keynote speakers at major AHT events and with government bodies in different contexts, including through presentations for the UN, for the U.S. Congress and other federal agencies, and for legislative bodies at the subnational level. Twenty-two NGO representatives lack the above characteristics and are identified as “nonelites” within this study.

These respondents vary in terms of the character of their organizations. This ranges from abolitionists or AHT NGOs, children advocacy NGOs, domestic violence NGOs, faith-based NGOs, feminist and women’s rights NGOs, human rights NGOs, immigrant and refugee NGOs, immigrant and refugee women NGOs, labor advocacy NGOs, sex work advocacy NGOs, commercial sexual exploitation NGOs, and NGOs that
focus strengthening civil society, and general community based organizations. Further, these categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, within this study, there are faith-based NGOs that focus on immigrants and refugees, women’s rights organizations that also characterize themselves as human rights organizations, or AHT organizations that solely focus on children.

This current study relies on qualitative data in the form of interview transcripts, field notes, and documents. The interview transcripts garnered through interviews with these seventy-one NGO representatives serve as the primary data for this study. I refer to interview data as “narratives” throughout the remainder of this study.

The principal focus of this study is on NGOs’ framing activities and outcomes, and on NGOs’ experiences and insights. However, to gain a greater understanding of the local AHT context, the relationship between NGOs and government, and NGOs’ framing activities, framing outcomes, and insights, I draw on additional supplementary data. First, I supplement the primary data with interview transcripts acquired through interviews with eleven government representatives, including local and federal law enforcement, representatives of specific government agencies, and government actors involved in creating policy in each of the sites in which I interviewed NGO representatives. I also supplement the primary data with in-depth notes taken through participant observation at six AHT events in which NGOs were involved, including AHT task force meetings, coalition meetings, strategy meetings, and conferences. Finally, I draw on supplementary data in the form of NGO and movement related documents and government documents.
Interview Procedures

I traveled to ten metropolitan areas and conducted qualitative, in-depth interviews in person from 2006 to 2009 in locations of the respondents’ choosing. Interviews ranged in time from 45 minutes to 3 ½ hours, with a median time of 1 ½ hours. Interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents’ permission.

As previously noted, I assured respondents that I would maintain their anonymity and that written research results would not indicate their involvement in the study. However, some respondents throughout interviews expressed concern that their responses could be associated with the cities and states in which they worked, and in turn expose their specific participation within the study. Their particular concern was based on the on-going and often vulnerable relationships and interactions between NGOs and other NGOs, law enforcement, and other government actors and agencies. This is particularly relevant given that at the time of these interviews, respondents were actively advocating for the creation of or changes in governmental AHT policies and practices. Further, if NGOs were facing specific difficulties in working with law enforcement or with coalition members in a particular city, they were concerned that details of this conflict in written results could lead others to possibly identify them or their NGO as the source of the information. This, in turn, could potentially exacerbate existing conflicts and further strain collaboration. In order to respect these concerns and to garner the most candid information possible, I do not identity the cities and states in which I conducted this study. Instead, I make reference to NGOs engaged in AHT efforts in Eastern State, Midwestern State, Southern State, Western State, and at the federal level.
Measures

Throughout interviews, I purposely attended to certain themes. These themes include: 1) how respondents frame human trafficking; 2) if these frames reflect a social movement analysis; 3) the ideologies underpinning these frames; 4) the factors facilitating NGOs’ success, paying special attention to the role of frames, resources, and political opportunities; 5) respondents’ perspectives on the successes and obstacles they have encountered, the barriers to effectively combating human trafficking, and the U.S. AHT approach. In the following, I detail how I measured the variables present within each of these themes.

Employing Benford’s and Snow’s (2000) definition of frame, I measure “frame” here by what NGOs’ narratives indicate about the causes of and solutions to human trafficking.

Informed by Lehrner and Allen (2008), I measure “social movement analysis” by respondents’ identification of social and cultural factors as the causes of human trafficking and if the solutions they propose center on social and cultural change. This is in contrast to an “individual-level analysis” in which the causes of human trafficking lie within individuals and the solutions center on addressing individual behavior.

Further, Lehrner and Allen (2008) argue that a social movement analysis indicates the vibrancy of a social movement. I further contend that a NGO representative explicitly identifying herself or himself as part of a social movement is also an important measure for assessing the vibrancy of the movement and if NGOs involved in AHT efforts characterize themselves as contributing to social movement objectives. Thus, in
addition to assessing if NGOs offer a social movement analysis to human trafficking, I also specifically consider if through their narratives, respondents identify their participation within a social movement without asking them directly if they were involved in a social movement.³

Informed by scholarly insights on ideology and framing (Oliver and Johnston 2000; Snow and Benford 2000; Valocchi 1996), I measure “ideology” as the beliefs and values articulated by respondents when explaining their perspectives on the causes of and solutions to human trafficking.

Prior literature on the AHT movement measures NGOs’ “success” by their meaningful access to institutionalized channels of policy discussions and reaching their stated goal in the form of the institutionalization of their frame into government policy (Weitzer 2007). This measure of “success” is commonly used in the social movement literature (Oberschall 1993; Staggenborg 1989; Gamson 1975; Freeman 1979; Zald and McCarthy 1979). Guided by these insights and Oberschall’s (1993: 31-32) definition of success, I measure “success” here by the government recognizing particular NGOs as the “legitimate voice of a constituency” by including them in policy discussions and drawing on their expertise, and by the institutionalization of these NGOs’ frames within AHT government policy.

³ According to Lehrner and Allen (2008), asking respondents direct questions meant to gauge their social movement involvement (i.e. “Are you in a social movement?”) can potentially influence respondents to situate themselves within a social movement or offer a social movement analysis (Lehrner and Allen 2008). Thus, I did not directly ask respondents if they were in a social movement or if they saw their efforts as part of a broader social movement.
Interested in the process by which NGOs achieve success, I asked respondents what factors helped them achieve success and, in instances in which they argued they were unsuccessful, what factors they attribute to their lack of success. During interviews and analysis of their narratives, I particularly attended to the role frames, resources, and political opportunities played in these processes.

In terms of resources, I specifically considered the role of tangible resources (i.e. money, a means to communicate the movements existence and ideas, facilities, and funding sources) and intangible resources (i.e. specialized people/”experts,” unspecialized people who offer time and commitment, networks and coalitions), and the professional and formalized organizational structure (Staggenborg 1998; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Oberschall 1993; Freeman 1977) in the process by which NGOs achieved or failed to achieve success.

When examining the role of political opportunities, I attended to what respondents indicated about their access to institutionalized channels of policy discussions, presence of influential political allies, the division among political elites, shifts in political alignments within the federal and subnational government, and state repression and facilitation (Tarrow 1998). I also consider if NGOs faced a combination of support and opposition from different levels and branches of government (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

I also openly analyze NGOs’ narratives to see what they reveal about the intersection of framing and structural conditions. For instance, prior research finds that SMOs frame political opportunities (Gamson and Meyer 1996). Is this prevalent among
respondents in this study? What else do their narratives suggest about the relationship between framing, resources, and political opportunities?

Finally, while previous research focuses on the divisions between SMOs engaged in AHT efforts, the success of NGOs possessing a particular frame as measured by its reflection in U.S. AHT policy, and finds that NGOs were instrumental in bringing awareness of human trafficking to the international community, less attention has been given to the successes of and obstacles faced by the U.S. AHT movement as a whole since the initial adoption of the U.S. Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act in 2000. I openly analyze NGOs’ narratives to see what, if any, common successes and obstacles respondents identify. Further, given their experiences and role in implementing the U.S. approach to human trafficking, NGOs are a rich source of knowledge on the U.S. AHT approach and on the existent barriers to effectively combating human trafficking. I investigate their narratives for emergent themes concerning the U.S. AHT approach and common barriers to effectively addressing human trafficking.

**Methodology**

This qualitative study employs an instrumental, collective case study approach. Instrumental case studies allow researchers to gain insight into a particular case for the purpose of addressing broader theoretical questions, and collective case studies entail extensive research into several instrumental cases (Stake 1994). Through this approach, we gain greater insight into activities, dynamics, and outcomes characteristic of social movements.
In-depth interviews are an excellent method from which to investigate NGOs’ framing activities, the process by which they reach their objectives, and their experiences and insights. In-depth interviews allow researchers to benefit from respondents’ special knowledge, insights and experiences, and when compared to telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews generally garner more complete and complex answers from respondents, and more easily allow researchers to establish trust and rapport with interviewees (Singleton, Jr. and Straits 1999: 242).

I interviewed the participants using a semi-structured protocol, which incorporates a semi-standardized interview structure. The semi-standardized interview entails the implementation of predetermined questions and topics, and allows the interviewer to probe beyond the answers to these prepared questions (Berg 2004). Appendix A illustrates the interview guide I utilized that includes a general set of predetermined questions I asked respondents. However, given the semi-standardized interview structure, this set of questions should be looked at as the orienting framework by which I approach interviews and not as an exclusive list of questions I asked each respondent. I designed the interviews to be directed conversations and posed open-ended questions concerning their organizations’ understanding of human trafficking, their AHT efforts, the local AHT context, their insights into local, state, and federal government AHT activities, and the barriers and successes they have faced in doing their work and reaching their objectives. This research design enabled me to address a set of predetermined topics, while allowing flexibility to attend to additional topics brought up by respondents.
This resulted in additional themes not previously considered that I pursued in future interviews.  

**Data Analysis**

In order to gain greater insight into NGOs’ frames and framing activities, I approach the interview transcripts as a holistic text. This entails analyzing dialogue “within the larger interview context in order to preserve the meaning of the data” rather than coding “thematically by abstracting text from the interviews” (Lehrner and Allen 2008: 223). This approach is an important methodology for frame analysis, as information needed to make sense of these frames and themes is prevalent throughout interview transcripts. The analysis entailed reviewing the transcripts multiple times and taking extensive notes on each transcript, which yielded information pertaining to my research questions.

The weakness of this sample and methodological approach is that research results cannot be generalized to explain NGOs’ movement activities broadly or be extended to understand the AHT political context in sites beyond the scope of this study. The strengths include the study’s comparative approach, results from which can bolster or challenge previous theoretical propositions and scholarly assertions, and can be pursued in future research to assess the generalizability of these results. Further, the purposive sampling of NGO representatives and the methodological approach employed in this

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4 These additional themes largely pertain to the successes and obstacles NGOs have faced relating to obtaining resources, the implementation of certain policies, the functioning of task forces and coalitions, bureaucratic inefficiencies in accessing services and benefits for clients, and biased attitudes toward trafficking victims. When I learned through earlier interviews about these particular issues, like, for example, the specific barriers for trafficking victims to receiving a T visa, I asked respondents in future interviews if they had encountered similar issues if they did not bring these issues up themselves while discussing the successes and obstacles they have faced.
study yields rich insight into these NGOs’ framing activities, the factors that explain their success or lack of thereof, and their perspectives on the achievements of the movement and existing barriers to effectively ending human trafficking. These insights raise additional questions to be pursued in future research.
CHAPTER 5
FRAMING IN THE CONTEMPORARY ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Examining NGOs’ frames of human trafficking and the ideologies underpinning these frames is imperative to garner a more robust understanding of what NGOs, as the experts, communicate about human trafficking to target audiences and the cultural resources NGOs draw on to construct these frames. These framings have implications for governmental policies on human trafficking, public understanding of the problem, and directly for the victims themselves. While prior literature provides critical insight into two dominant frames of sex trafficking relevant to the anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement, little is known on how a diversity of NGOs frame human trafficking broadly. This reflects a general weakness in the social movement literature on framing, which tends to oversimplify the range and content of frames available to and utilized by movement adherents (Benford and Snow 2000; Benford 1997; Valocchi 1996).

Gaps in knowledge on the AHT movement and on framing within social movements encourage certain research questions to pursue. First, prior research finds that certain factors can pressure NGOs to be apolitical and identify individual-level causes of and solutions to the issues they work on (Lehrner and Allen 2008; Dolhinow
Is this evident among service providers that focus on human trafficking? Second, how does a diversity of NGOs frame human trafficking? What master frames do they draw on? Does the issue of the commercial sex industry take a central role across their frames? What are the ideologies that inform their frame construction?

This chapter seeks to expand knowledge on framing within the AHT movement specifically and within social movements generally by addressing these research questions. In the following, I first discuss the extent to which NGOs within this sample situate their efforts within a broader social movement and apply a socio-cultural analysis to human trafficking. Second, I identify the master frames NGOs employ. Third, I address the relevancy of prostitution and demand across NGOs’ frames of human trafficking. Fourth, I identify the ideologies that inform NGOs’ frames of human trafficking. I conclude with a discussion of these results.

RESULTS

Applying a Socio-Cultural and Social Movement Analysis

Virtually all NGO representatives within this study expressed concerns over resources, funding, and support. However, an analysis of respondents’ discourse suggests that these concerns do not prohibit most NGOs, including direct service providers, from applying a socio-cultural analysis to human trafficking. Table 5.1 demonstrates that fifty-five of the sixty-one respondents apply a socio-cultural analysis to human trafficking, including twenty-seven service providers, twenty-three policy advocates, and five respondents that engage in another form of work.
Table 5.1 Socio-Cultural Analysis and Social Movement Membership by Character of NGOs’ Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character of Work</th>
<th>Socio-Cultural Analysis</th>
<th>Social Movement Adherent</th>
<th>AHT Movement Adherent</th>
<th>Other Social Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Provider</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Advocacy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (n=9)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents that apply a socio-cultural analysis do so in different ways, which I later detail when presenting their movement-specific frames. However, examples of a socio-cultural analysis arise when respondents identify cultural belief systems, social inequality, economic systems and state structures as causes of human trafficking that must be addressed in order to eradicate human trafficking.

In addition to applying a socio-cultural analysis to human trafficking, most representatives identify themselves as part of a broader social movement that tackles human trafficking. As illustrated in Table 5.1, forty-nine of these respondents explicitly identified themselves or their organizations as part of a social movement, including twenty-two direct service providers, twenty-two policy advocates, and five respondents that engage in other forms of work.
Table 5.1 also demonstrates that thirty-four respondents identified their involvement within the AHT movement specifically, commonly referred to by respondents as the “abolition movement.” They include seventeen direct service providers, thirteen policy advocates, and four respondents involved in other forms of work. Fifteen respondents recognized them themselves as part of a social movement, but not the AHT movement specifically, including five service providers, nine policy advocates, and one individual engaged in other types of work. The movements they are involved in include the children rights movement, civil rights movement, feminist or women’s rights movement, human rights movement, sex workers’ rights movement, movement to end domestic violence, and movement to end commercial sexual exploitation. NGOs involved in these other social movements recognized human trafficking as an issue well-suited to their social movements For example, human rights activists characterized human trafficking as a human rights abuse and seek to end human trafficking, which complements their overarching human rights movement objective.

In sum, respondents, varying in the character of their work, commonly communicated socio-cultural causes of and solutions to human trafficking and recognized themselves as part of a social movement. Another similarity respondents share is the master frame they employ that encourages and justifies their own AHT efforts.

Master Frame

Respondents commonly utilized a master frame that Gamson and colleagues characterize as an “injustice frame,” in which some social condition is defined as a severe injustice (1982; 1995). The injustice frame is emotionally laden and not simply an
intellectual judgment about what constitutes justice. Through this injustice frame, actors express moral indignation over some issue. Within this study, respondents often discussed how their initial awareness of the injustice of human trafficking motivated them to do something about it, and often conveyed emotionally laden stories to exemplify this injustice and the necessity of their AHT efforts. This is evident in the following account made by an advocate combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children:

I met [the founders of the NGO]...and they...started talking about what they were doing. And immediately I was convicted that I needed to get involved somehow...they would tell me...their experiences as humanitarians and what they’ve seen overseas and how they got involved...they had this same passion because they had witnessed it and said it was the most black and white issue and something had to be done about it...I...completely dove into the issue and immersed myself in it and then we took our first trip...and that is where I witnessed a three year old at the brothel and that was right across from the police station...I would see that first time just American men...chasing after six year olds around blocks, around blocks, around blocks...just stuff that you would never really think would be...and then knowing that it happens here...

In another section of the interview, the respondent remarked:

...the nonprofits are created by people that see an atrocity and want to work their ass off for it and...it’s that desperation, that desire, that mission...the mere desperation...To me true justice prevails. It does and it speaks loud and clears...and truth does speak... (Interviewed 2006)

The above demonstrates the emotional reaction the respondent had to the injustice of human trafficking. Respondents highlighted this injustice, often through specific stories of human trafficking that, arguably, many people would find troubling or disturbing. For the above respondent, human trafficking severely violated her own idea of what is right, compelling her to do something about it until “justice prevails.” This reflects a common sentiment expressed by respondents that the injustice committed through human trafficking is severe and their exposure to the issue sparked some emotion within them
that called them to action. They learned about this injustice when someone else raised their awareness, through their direct encounters with victims of human trafficking, or through their organizational work. Other respondents were further compelled to act by the injustice they recognized the state committing against trafficking victims by initially treating victims as criminals (i.e. “prostitute” or “illegal immigrant”) or by not providing victims services and protections. Such injustices solidified respondents resolve to combat human trafficking and pressure the state to address the problem.

Respondents commonly argued that raising awareness of this injustice is imperative because through exposure to human trafficking, others will be compelled to engage in AHT efforts. Others, though, emphasized the barriers to accomplishing this. As noted by an AHT activist:

People don’t want to believe, you know? ‘Cause that would mean that they would have to do something… (Interviewed 2006)

While the above indicates difficulties in achieving frame resonance, it still demonstrates a perspective that if target audiences would allow themselves to believe human trafficking exists, they would “…have to do something.” The injustice is that compelling.

While NGOs commonly employed the master frame of injustice frame, they varied in their specific frames of human trafficking. This is clearly evident when examining the role the commercial sex industry, particularly prostitution, takes within their diagnostic and prognostic framings of human trafficking.

The Commercial Sex Industry and AHT Movement-Specific Frames

Previous scholarship emphasizes the role of the commercial sex industry, particularly prostitution, in activists’ frames of sex trafficking (Bertone 2003). One side asserts that
the commercial sex industry is inherently harmful and demand for it causes sex trafficking. The other side argues that the social and legal marginalization of sex workers is the cause of their vulnerability to exploitation, including sex trafficking. Both of these frames are conveyed by respondents within this study. However, there are also respondents who take a neutral position on the commercial sex industry and on its relationship to sex trafficking. Table 5.2 illustrates respondents’ positions on prostitution and the relationship between demand and sex trafficking by their human trafficking focus. In the following section, I attend to each of the above perspectives.

Table 5.2 Respondents’ Positions on Prostitution and the Relationship between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking by Trafficking Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trafficking Focus</th>
<th>Position on Prostitution and the Relationship between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking (ST)</th>
<th>Prostitution Inherently Harmful: Demand Leads to Sex Trafficking</th>
<th>Prostitution Inherently Harmful: Undecided on Relationship between Demand and Sex Trafficking</th>
<th>Sex Worker Advocacy: Demand Does Not Lead to Sex Trafficking</th>
<th>Neutral on Prostitution and the Relationship between Demand and Sex Trafficking</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex Trafficking</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Trafficking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking Inclusively</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2 illustrates that twenty-five respondents proffered a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking in which demand for a commercial sex industry is recognized as a central cause of sex trafficking. These respondents all characterized the commercial sex industry as inherently harmful. Seventeen of these respondents focus on sex trafficking and eight focus on human trafficking inclusively.

Respondents that link demand and sex trafficking argued that sex trafficking exist to meet the demand for a commercial sex industry created by “Johns,” who use the commercial sex industry. This demand is also created by traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners and managers who are invested in maintaining, expanding, and meeting this demand for their own profit. According to this perspective, the solution to ending sex trafficking is, in part, through dismantling the demand for the commercial sex industry.

To illustrate why an effective strategy to address sex trafficking requires dismantling the demand, one children’s advocate related the following case involving a pedophile:

…here was this guy who had been caught…in 1977, got out of jail…and… twenty-six years later finally gets put in jail for the rest of his life. Yet if you take the calculation, I mean bare minimum calculation, that he had confessed to going on three sex tours a year for three months each…and just going after all of these girls…four and five year olds. Bare minimum, you’re talking about 100,000 children that would have been saved. And that’s just by stopping one guy…So it truly is by stopping one ounce of the demand, you’re saving countless. (Interviewed 2006)

Several respondents with a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking argued that focusing AHT efforts on the demand is more productive than addressing the supply, in the form of people, which will always exist. As noted by this advocate combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children:
… [S]o often people say we need to get the girls out of brothels…and that is very true, but the biggest thing…is we have to stop the demand because the supply will always be there. It’s not your drug war…The supply will always be there so the only thing that can stop it is by stopping the demand. (Interviewed 2006)

According to this respondent, sex trafficking, in which people comprise the supply, is different than drug trafficking, in which drugs make up the supply because the number of people that could be trafficked cannot be eliminated or curtailed like drugs. Any child, then, can be vulnerable to sex trafficking as long as the demand continues to thrive.

“Saving” victims from brothels neglects the role of the demand, and thus does nothing to end the phenomenon of sex trafficking. When victims are removed from a brothel, they will simply be replaced by new victims in order to meet the demand.

While these respondents share a similar perspective on prostitution, there exists variation in how they construct demand. Eight of the twenty-five respondents that identified demand as the cause of sex trafficking argued that demand encourages both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. In the context of labor trafficking, these respondents identify corporate and business demand for exploitable labor in order to maximize profits and consumer demand for inexpensive goods as factors facilitating labor trafficking. For these NGOs, any effective solution for ending human trafficking requires addressing the demand that encourages all forms of human trafficking, not only sex trafficking.

Prostitution Inherently Harmful: Undecided on the Relationship between Demand and Sex Trafficking

Not all respondents that share a similar perspective on prostitution frame sex trafficking in the same way. Table 5.2 demonstrates that four respondents recognized prostitution as inherently harmful, but undecided on the relationship between demand and
sex trafficking. Their discourse on prostitution mirrors that of the respondents described above. As one faith-based policy advocate asserted:

Prostitution is intrinsically harmful, degrading, and dehumanizing to the individuals involved. Through our work, we see exactly the damage prostitution does…It is not a victimless crime. (Interviewed 2008)

While taking a strong stance against prostitution, these respondents hesitated to declare a position on the relationship between demand and sex trafficking. As another faith-based policy advocate argued:

There are other NGOs in places we work on both sides of the issue. We try and stay out of those debates. I mean some [NGOs] are adamant that demand causes trafficking and other NGOs are adamant that it doesn’t. We need objective research on this by people who don’t take a strident view either way. So that’s what we’re gonna do. We got the funding [recently]…But we have to settle this matter and move on…I think its dividing groups who fundamentally want to do the best thing and end trafficking…We need objective people to do this work and resolve [this debate] and figure this out if we’re really going to prevent trafficking… (Interviewed 2008)

All four of these respondents argued for objective research on the causes of sex trafficking in order to develop and assess strategies to prevent human trafficking. While they all recognized prostitution as dehumanizing, a lack of objective research on the relationship between demand and prostitution precluded them from taking a stance on this issue. They further believed that debating the issue without objective research was a hindrance to stopping human trafficking. Thus, at the time of these interviews, all four were actively involved in efforts to research the causes of sex trafficking.

None of these respondents believed that their perspective on prostitution as inherently harmful would preclude them from conducting objective research on the relationship between demand and sex trafficking. Further, they also made it clear that they could not work with NGOs that want to legalize prostitution because, as one respondent stated, “Prostitution is inherently demeaning to human life…” (Interviewed 2007).
Sex Worker Advocacy: Demand Does Not Lead to Sex Trafficking

In this study, the sex worker advocacy frame was conveyed by two NGO representatives, who primarily discussed human trafficking within the international context. Both of these NGOs argued for a differentiation between “forced” and “voluntary” prostitution, and were very critical of the demand-centered frame of sex trafficking and characterizations of prostitution as inherently exploitive and coercive.

These respondents argued that demand for a commercial sex industry does not lead to human trafficking. One respondent explicitly specified that ending or curtailing the demand can harm sex workers by limiting their opportunities to support themselves and their families. According to these respondents, the marginalization of sex workers, which is exacerbated by the criminalization of prostitution and stigma of sex work, makes sex workers vulnerable to a range of abuses, including slavery and slave-like practices in the context of sex work.6 Further, not recognizing sex work as a valid form of labor legitimates denying sex workers protections and rights.

Both of these respondents highlighted that broader structural inequalities and disparities in wealth across nations encourage people to migrate for work, including sex work, which is hindered by restrictive immigration policies. Structural inequalities and restrictive immigration policies make individuals attempting to migrate for any type of work vulnerable to exploitation, including human trafficking. They argued that NGOs conveying a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking neglect this critical point. Further,

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6 One respondent would not use the word sex trafficking because of the way its been used and employed to undermine sex workers rights. Instead, the referenced “slavery and slave-like conditions” in the sex-industry when discussing sex trafficking. The second respondent consistently referred to “human trafficking,” not “sex trafficking,” when discussing human trafficking for the purpose of exploitation within the commercial sex industry.
this sex worker advocacy frame of sex trafficking likens sex work to other forms of labor, bolstering the perspective of sex work as a valid form of labor. Thus, all forms of human trafficking involve similar processes and are encouraged by similar structural conditions.

These respondents argued that any solution to ending all types of exploitation that sex workers experience necessitates addressing the conditions that make them vulnerable to exploitation. Both NGOs supported empowering and granting full legal protection to sex workers, altering cultural belief systems that stigmatize sex workers and legitimize their abuse, and addressing restrictive immigration policies that make it difficult for individuals to migrate for work.

While both representatives were passionate about ending the abuses toward sex workers, they were highly suspicious of the current rhetoric on human trafficking. As one sex worker advocate noted:

I mean basically the sex workers’ rights activists and those who are working on issues around trafficking around the world are up in arms about the way that the framework has been applied against voluntary participation in their industry. I mean it’s a huge issue in the prostitution rights movement and historically the ways that, for instance in the last “white slave” panic in the 1900s, many of the...laws to criminalize prostitution were developed. So rightly so, we feel and we observe that indeed prostitution prohibitions are escalating in the context of this recent trafficking discourse and attention. (Interviewed 2007)

The above reflects a question raised by both respondents: are demand-centered NGOs working on sex trafficking and current U.S. AHT efforts primarily about attacking prostitution under the guise of helping victims? They pointed out that these NGOs and the government emphasize sex trafficking over labor trafficking. They also argued that demand-centered perspectives on prostitution create and contribute to a moral panic around “sexual slavery,” which further justifies marginalizing sex work as a valid form of
labor. This further asserted that “anti-prostitution” perspectives overlook that sex work is possibly an option for people with limited opportunities to sustain themselves and their families. As noted by one sex worker advocate:

…sometimes it’s about survival strategies for people who are poor or working class. It’s like sometimes if you’re not one of these privileged people who can….have anything they want…it’s like you’re not necessarily gonna have the best life or doing everything, you know go to college and make a million dollars and have a great life. Sometimes there’s compromises [sic]…and sex work is a compromise and it can be a dangerous thing and you get diseases. Sometimes you do it to get by and you do it as the best opportunity around you. So it’s a double edge sword…sometimes it’s the only possibility and sometimes that’s how one does manage to survive when one is struggling and I just think that there’s a lot of complexities and it’s just not fair for someone with privileges who’s managing to get by to then say…that people who are struggling and making compromises, even jeopardizing their own health, are somehow….duped or doing something wrong. (Interviewed 2007)

Both respondents clearly identified the exploitation and abuse of sex workers as an injustice, but they more strongly emphasized what they argued was the injustice committed against sex workers by government and “anti-prostitution” activists who conflate voluntary and involuntary prostitution and characterize all forms of prostitution as violent. This construction of prostitution justifies criminalizing prostitution as a means to end sex trafficking, and also negates individuals’ agency to choose sex work as a way to support themselves and their families. Further, both respondents questioned if the state and demand-centered NGOs are exaggerating the rate of “involuntary” sex work in order to further their objective of undermining prostitution as a form of labor.

While the sex worker advocacy frame is presented in prior research as one of two main frames circulating within the global AHT movement, both of these NGO
representatives identified it as clearly marginalized in the much of the U.S. and by other members of the AHT movement. As one sex worker advocate remarked:

… The anti-trafficking policies have been developed from the beginning to exclude sex workers and to exclude sex worker organizations, certainly officially to exclude anyone who won’t condemn prostitution. So my own involvement with [the] trafficking context has been very limited and frustrated due to the fact that my perspectives are specifically excluded. So they’re basically excluded which makes it problematic and then there’s also just having to survive in a context where those who are dealing with trafficking are calling people from my perspective “pimps” and insulting us, so… in cases where maybe I’m not necessarily specifically prohibited from dealing with trafficking, it’s certainly inhibiting to be working in a context where those others who are actually empowered and funded through the work are insulting and are actually trying to limit my participation. The whole thing makes it very difficult to really get involved in trafficking and certainly one could say that would be an impediment to dealing with trafficking issues. (Interviewed 2007)

The above demonstrates that policies and movement dynamics in which some groups attempt to discredit sex worker advocates’ perspectives because they are sex worker advocates can serve to marginalize sex worker advocates and deter their full engagement within the AHT movement. However, this does not indicate that NGOs conveying a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking are the only force within the U.S. AHT movement. Indeed, these research results indicate that NGOs taking a neutral stance on prostitution have a strong presence within the U.S. AHT context and AHT movement.

Neutral on Prostitution and the Relationship between Demand and Sex Trafficking

Not fully investigated in previous research is the prevalence of NGOs that take an institutional neutral stance on the commercial sex industry and on the relationship between the commercial sex industry and sex trafficking. As illustrated in Table 5.2, thirty respondents assert this position. Of these, twenty-seven respondents focus on human trafficking broadly, and three respondents focus solely on labor trafficking.
Reflecting a perspective commonly conveyed by “neutral” groups, one representative of a NGO providing direct services to immigrants and refugees argued:

…prostitution…it’s not our issue. I mean if somebody is working in that field and if they’re being coerced by somebody else, they’re a victim. It’s that simple. And so that’s how we want to view it. We’re not gonna get obsessed with the debate about what should be done about prostitution. We just want to know if somebody’s a victim. The general prostitution issue is somebody else’s issue as far as I’m concerned. (Interviewed 2009)

These NGOs do not promote the criminalization or decriminalization of prostitution, yet they all asserted a distinction between “forced” and “voluntary” prostitution. They argued that this distinction is necessary, in part, to discern what constitutes victims of “severe forms of human trafficking” as defined by the TVPA, given that individuals must meet this definition to be eligible for benefits and services granted through the TVPA.

Many of these respondents asserted that common discourse on NGOs as polarized around the issue of prostitution fails to capture their own perspective on human trafficking and presents a false dichotomizes the AHT field. Several respondents expressed frustration over this debate and how it put their NGOs in a position to continually reassert and defend their neutral position, a position they did not see as meaningful to their AHT approach.7 Indeed, all of these respondents asserted that a position on prostitution was irrelevant or harmful to their AHT work. However, the prevalence of this debate within the AHT field encourages them to take an institutionalized stance on prostitution: neutral.

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7 When I contacted respondents to request an interview, several questioned if I was doing research on prostitution and not human trafficking and clearly stated that they were not part of that debate.
Although their neutral stance on prostitution may suggest a depoliticized frame of human trafficking, this is hardly the case. Twenty-four respondents representing NGOs taking a neutral stance on prostitution offered a socio-cultural analysis of human trafficking, and eighteen respondents explicitly identified themselves as part of a social movement. While these NGOs share a neutral perspective on prostitution, they communicated different diagnostic and prognostic frames of human trafficking to target audiences. Thus, grouping these NGOs by their neutral stance is not very meaningful for understanding how they frame human trafficking.

In sum, beliefs or ideologies on prostitution clearly inform many NGOs’ frames of sex trafficking. However, organizing NGOs’ frames simply around their perspectives on prostitution fails to capture how NGOs that share a common view on prostitution are framing human trafficking in different ways. Through an analysis of the data, I find that this variation is largely due to the ideologies that inform these frames, particularly ideologies on gender and how gender matters.
Ideologies Underlying Frames

Table 5.3 Frequencies of Ideologies Based on Gender by the Focus of Respondents’ Anti-Human Trafficking Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Gendered</th>
<th>Matrix of Domination</th>
<th>Degendered</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking Focus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Trafficking</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Trafficking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A theme that emerged through an analysis of the data is that respondents’ frames of human trafficking are largely based on ideologies on gender and how gender informs human trafficking. Specifically, respondents’ narratives illustrate a belief that: 1) human trafficking is a gendered problem (n=9); 2) human trafficking is embedded in a “matrix of domination” (n=34); or 3) human trafficking is a “degendered” problem (n=18). Table 5.3 illustrates the number of respondents reflecting these ideologies by the focus of their AHT work.

Organizing respondents’ frames of human trafficking around their underlying ideologies sheds important insight into the ideological forces that inform the different causes of and solutions to human trafficking NGOs communicate. It also adds to our understanding of the multi-layered complexity inherent within these frames. It further provides conceptual clarity to the types of frames AHT NGOs communicate. In the
following, I use these NGOs’ diverse ideologies on how gender matters to organize their specific frames of human trafficking.

*Human Trafficking: A Gendered Problem*

As illustrated in Table 5.3, nine respondents communicated a frame of human trafficking that is clearly shaped by a “gendered ideology” in which gender is central to their analysis of human trafficking. Eight of these respondents exclusively focus on sex trafficking and one focuses on human trafficking inclusively. All of these respondents identify demand as a cause of sex trafficking. These respondents engage in a variety of work, including direct services, policy advocacy, awareness-raising, coalition building, and movement mobilization. They include abolitionist, children advocacy, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic violence, faith-based, and feminist NGOs. Table 5.4 details the types of diagnostic and prognostic frames communicated by respondents drawing on a gendered ideology by their corresponding perspective on prostitution. In the following, I detail this gendered ideology and the ways in which it informs respondents’ specific diagnostic and prognostic frames.
Table 5.4 Types of Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames Communicated by Respondents Reflecting a Gendered Ideology by Their Corresponding Perspective on Prostitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Perspective on Prostitution</th>
<th>Diagnostic Frames</th>
<th>Prognostic Frames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gendered (n=9)</td>
<td>Prostitution Inherently Exploitive</td>
<td>Gender Inequality (Macro-Cause)</td>
<td>End Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demand for a Commercial Sex Industry</td>
<td>Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Beliefs about Women and Men</td>
<td>Enforcing Human Rights of Women and Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic and Social Marginalization of Women and Girls</td>
<td>Criminal Penalties for Human Traffickers and Other Individuals Comprising the Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise Awareness of Sex Trafficking and the Relationship between Demand and Sex Trafficking</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Movement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A Gendered Ideology

Informed by a gendered ideology, nine respondents represent NGOs that characterize human trafficking as a gendered social problem. One way they do this is by highlighting findings in government reports asserting that human trafficking is largely a problem of sex trafficking in which women and children are the primary victims. Another way in which these NGOs present human trafficking as a gendered social problem is by identifying women and girls as vulnerable to sex trafficking across all other statuses, including age, class, ethnicity and race, and nationality. They point out the
harm in narrow perceptions that recognize only certain kinds of women and girls as vulnerable to human trafficking. As noted by one advocate for children’s rights:

…it has been easier to make the case that international victims are victims and the American kids are not. You know, they’re just bad kids who need to be arrested…law enforcement just treats them as prostitutes and they don’t care if they’re twelve or eighteen or twenty-five. They’re a prostitute and they have to be locked up. And that’s…a continuing problem. They don’t see them as victims…there’s no system in place to protect them. (Interviewed 2006)

From this perspective, a narrow view of what constitutes “victim” can lead victims of sex trafficking going overlooked and possibly treated as criminals by law enforcement. A broad understanding of girls and women as vulnerable to sex trafficking helps reduce the likelihood that actual victims are ignored or mistreated by the criminal justice system.

These respondents and the NGOs they represent also gender the problem of human trafficking by employing gendered terms in their descriptions of the actors involved in sex trafficking. This is evident in the following characterization of sex trafficking for sex tourism made by a feminist NGO policy advocate:

I don’t think that there’s a lot of overt force with the women who wind up being patronized by sex tourists just because a big part of the sex tourist thing is the idea that they’re [the sex tourists] popular and these women actually want them…If the women were chained to a wall in a brothel, it would defeat…what the companies really sell these guys… “You go here, you’ll feel like Tom Cruise…” That’s a big part of what they’re selling is…these aren’t “American Bitches,” you know, and they know how to treat a man… (Interviewed 2006)

As demonstrated here, when these respondents discuss sex trafficking, they gender the victims (women) and the individuals constituting the demand (men). When prostitution is constructed as inherently violent and the parties involved are gendered, girls and women are the principle victims and men are the chief perpetrators. While these respondents take a stance against the commercial sex industry broadly and not only the
prostitution of women by men, their narratives primarily highlight girls and women as the individuals used in prostitution and men as the actors perpetrating this violence.

Respondents and their NGOs further gender the problem of sex trafficking by characterizing prostitution and, in turn, sex trafficking as violence against women. As noted in previous literature, these NGOs’ framings challenge distinctions between “forced” and “coerced” prostitution and “voluntary” prostitution. This is illustrated in the following faith-based abolitionist’s explanation of the barriers to working on sex trafficking with groups that recognize prostitution as a form of labor:

…if a group…adopts the notion that sex can be a form of work for women, and can’t see the harm that prostitution does to women irrespective of their degree of agency in making that choice, then I don’t really see a whole lot of fruitfulness coming with us working together. Because I think that view actually results in more women being trafficked, more women being victimized, and that it’s completely counterproductive to my mission, which is to not have these things happen to women. (Interviewed 2007)

Starting from the position that prostitution is inherently exploitive and a form of violence mainly perpetuated by men against women, respondents that understand sex trafficking as fundamentally a gendered problem dispute the idea that one can choose exploitation or violence as a form of labor. As one representative of a feminist NGO articulated:

In patriarchy, women are controlled and dominated and their bodies are commodities… Prostitution is violence against women. It’s not empowering and it isn’t a victimless crime…Little girls don’t wish when they grow up to be prostitutes...How does someone choose violence? (Interviewed 2008; Emphasis in the original)

As the above indicates, these respondents and their NGOs also gender the problem of sex trafficking through their characterization of prostitution. Specifically, they recognize “patriarchy” or, more commonly, “gender inequality” as a structural factor making
prostitution and, in turn, sex trafficking possible. Indeed, for these respondents, gender inequality and patriarchy informs the specific causes of and subsequent solutions to sex trafficking they identify through their diagnostic and prognostic frames of sex trafficking.

**Framing Sex Trafficking through a Gendered Ideology**

As demonstrated in Table 5.4, the types of diagnostic frames conveyed by respondents drawing on a gendered ideology include demand for a commercial sex industry, and girl’s and women’s economic and social marginalization, cultural gender norms. Of these diagnostic frames, respondents and their NGOs primarily emphasize the demand for a commercial sex industry.

Given that demand for a commercial sex industry is identified as a central cause of sex trafficking, respondents’ prognostic frames communicate that combating this demand is key to ending sex trafficking. As noted earlier, these respondents’ narratives indicate that this demand cannot be disentangled from gender inequality. As a result, these respondents commonly expressed that combating demand is also a means of tackling gender inequality. Specific policies they support for dismantling the demand include the criminalization of prostitution where such penalties do not exist, and greater penalties where criminalization does exist. Meaningful criminal penalties should be directed toward users of the commercial sex industry, pimps, brothel owners and managers, and traffickers in order to deter their participation in using, maintaining, and promoting prostitution. Since these NGOs construct prostitution as a form of violence against women, they argue for the law to recognize prostituted women as “victims” that
should not incur criminal penalties as “prostitutes.” These types of policies send a broader social message that prostitution is intolerable and harmful to women.

NGOs that gender the problem also support programs geared at raising public awareness of the relationship between demand and sex trafficking and the harms of prostitution. To this end, all of these respondents’ NGOs engage in awareness raising activities. They do this through presentations to target audiences and informational campaigns. Some of these NGOs support integrating curriculum within colleges to raise students’ awareness. An additional program endorsed by several of these NGOs is “John Schools.” Generally, the objective of “John Schools” is to educate users of prostitutes on the dangers of prostitution for women used in prostitution, themselves and their families. The aim of all these awareness raising programs is to deconstruct and dismantle the demand that encourages prostitution and sex trafficking.

While these NGOs emphasize demand as a cause of sex trafficking and focus much of their efforts on tackling this demand, they also identified women’s economic and social marginalization and cultural belief systems on gender in their diagnostic frames of sex trafficking. Reflecting the impact of these factors on sex trafficking, one feminist NGO represented noted:

I think part of the whole problem is the whole status and role of women in their societies or in their cultures…you are expected to make money for the family so you can send… you bratty little brother to school… I think, girls tend to look at it as a duty almost, you know? Or they see somebody from down the street went to Bangkok and now came back with all these nice clothes and jewelry and…I just think there’s so much pressure…and then…going to the police when you don’t think they’re going to do anything anyway…or cops were among your customers, which is not unknown either… Or if… law enforcement or government officials were involved in your trafficking, I mean it doesn’t give you any confidence that you’ve got anywhere to go… (Interviewed 2006)
These respondents’ NGOs convey prognostic frames that identify ending gender-based economic and social marginalization and sexist cultural belief systems as part of the solution to ending sex trafficking. Their NGOs attempt to do this in varied ways. One NGO works with local communities to implement economic development programs geared at reducing girl and women community members’ vulnerability to sex trafficking. Two other NGOs promote empowerment programs for girls and women with the aim of preventing their initial entry or reentry into prostitution. These entail after school programs for girls in areas characterized by high rates of underage prostitution, self-esteem building programs, and education, skills training, and job placement programs. To tackle cultural belief systems that encourage sex trafficking, NGOs also engage in campaigns to show how popular culture normalizes and glamorizes objectifying women and the commercial sex industry, and make links between culture and sex trafficking.

These respondents also identified a vibrant social movement in their prognostic frames of sex trafficking. As noted by this faith-based abolitionist:

Earlier on in the movement…we had to do a lot of education. I think a lot of people were just completely clueless about prostitution and how it relates to sex trafficking and what prostitution does to women and girls. So we’ve had to do a lot of just general awareness about sex trafficking, how it connects to prostitution, and the experiences of women in the sex industry. Once you do that, once you connect those dots, most people get it right away and they’re like wow and they’re blown away and they wanna do something. So a lot of it is just simply education and then the rest just sort of follows on its own…I do get worried that there will be this point, this tipping point and people aren’t going to care anymore. I mean that’s just sort of a natural part of movements, you know? You have this big crescendo and…this big mounting effort and then for whatever reason, people’s passions wane and they go on to do other things and the movement gradually dies. So probably at some point that will happen, but…recognizing that tendency, what can we do to fight it, what can we do to keep things going…this is part of our vision is that we know that when…a lot of people hear about
trafficking, in particular sex trafficking, they really get touched. They really wanna do something... so...one way that we can keep this energy, this thing moving forward is by training these people who are gonna replace us...that are gonna go out into the field and be in the communities and start revolutionizing the world. (Interviewed 2007)

As the above indicates, movement efforts to raise awareness and transmit frames are seen as critical to mobilizing target audiences, growing the movement, and ensuring the movement’s longevity and impact.

In sum, the diagnostic and prognostic frames these NGOs convey, and their specific strategies for ending sex trafficking grow out of an ideology that identifies gender as central for understanding sex trafficking. Gender inequality is manifested in the demand for a commercial sex industry, women’s social and economic marginalization, and sexist cultural belief systems, which reinforce one another. According to NGOs that construct human trafficking, particularly sex trafficking, as a gendered social problem, these factors must be addressed in order to effectively end human trafficking.

*Human Trafficking and the Matrix of Domination*

Table 5.3 illustrates that thirty-four respondents’ frames of human trafficking reflect a belief that individual’s experiences are shaped by what Collins (1991) characterizes as a “matrix of domination,” which describes how people’s lives are shaped by multiple, intersecting oppressions, and the cultural, ideological, and political conditions that maintain them. These respondents represent abolitionist, feminist, faith-based, child advocacy, human rights, immigrant and refugee advocacy, sex worker advocacy, and domestic violence NGOs. Ten focus on sex trafficking, one on labor
trafficking, and twenty-three respondents on human trafficking inclusively. Unlike respondents that fundamentally gender the problem of sex trafficking, these respondents possess different perspectives on prostitution, which is reflected in their diagnostic and prognostic frames. Table 5.5 illustrates the types of prognostic and diagnostic frames of human trafficking these respondents convey along with their corresponding ideology and perspectives on prostitution. In the following, I detail this matrix of domination ideology and the ways in which it informs respondents’ specific diagnostic and prognostic frames.
Table 5.5 Types of Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames Communicated by Respondents Reflecting a Matrix of Domination Ideology by Their Corresponding Perspective on Prostitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Perspective on Prostitution</th>
<th>Diagnostic Frames</th>
<th>Prognostic Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matrix of Domination (n=34)</td>
<td>Prostitution Inherently Exploitive; Sex Worker Advocacy; Neutral Stance on Prostitution</td>
<td>Intersecting Structural Inequalities Including Gender Inequality</td>
<td>Economic and Social Empowerment of Peoples Adversely Affected By Structural Inequalities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AHT Policies that Address Structural Inequalities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of Criminal Penalties for Human Traffickers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise Awareness of the Relationship between Human Trafficking and Structural Inequalities, Discrimination, and Disparity in Wealth between Nations Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution Inherently Exploitive</td>
<td>Demand for a Commercial Sex Industry</td>
<td>End Demand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demand for Exploitable Labor and Inexpensive Goods</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise Awareness of the Relationship between Demand and Human Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Beliefs Systems about Women and Men</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise Awareness of the Link between Cultural Beliefs and Human Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expand Opportunities for Women and Girls to Prevent (Re)Entry into Prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral on Prostitution; Sex Worker Advocacy</td>
<td>Restrictive Immigration Policies</td>
<td>Reform Immigration Policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Worker Advocacy</td>
<td>Social and Legal Marginalization of Sex Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Empower and Ensure Human Rights of Sex Workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Matrix of Domination Ideology

In discussing the matrix of domination, Collins (1991) emphasizes the social structures of gender, race, and class, which intersect, overlap, and support one another. People face varying levels of privilege and disadvantage depending on where they are situated within this matrix. Structural changes within society, including shifts in economic and political structures or social transformations influenced by globalization, impact people differently depending on their position within this matrix of domination (Anderson 2005; Collins 1991). While scholars highlight the interlocking character of race, class, and gender structures, they also note that the matrix of domination paradigm allows inclusion of other aspects of social location, such as nationality, age, and sexuality (Purkayastha 2010; Anderson 2005; Collins 1991).

NGOs conveying frames that reflect this ideology share an understanding that human trafficking is a product of broader, interlocking structural systems of oppression and look at human trafficking through an intersectional analytical lens. This is particularly evident in their characterization of human trafficking. Respondents primarily emphasized intersecting inequalities based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, and national origin as most profoundly encouraging human trafficking and one’s vulnerability to human trafficking, and affecting trafficked people’s lives. Some NGOs also stressed how these statuses intersect with age, sexuality, and ability. Reflecting an intersectional analysis of human trafficking, one representative of a NGO that provides direct services to immigrant and refugee women noted:

[We] really highlight that there’s these social factors that could facilitate trafficking…or just marginalization of women generally…like homophobia,
sexism, nationality, immigration issues, socioeconomic status. Not all organizations highlight all those factors that intersect with gender and being a woman…[In our] outside trainings with other agencies…I feel like we do try to insert some of that, some of those values around anti-oppression and interconnection of…the different “isms” and how that contributes to one’s experience as a victim. (Interviewed 2007)

While NGOs highlight different inequalities and conditions that facilitate human trafficking, they believe that people adversely affected by intersecting inequalities are left most vulnerable to human trafficking.

Throughout their narratives, direct service providers also emphasized how an intersectional analytical framework informed their approach to service provision. For instance, one domestic violence advocate whose NGO provides direct services to women and children immigrants asserted, “Our philosophy is to always work with clients where they’re at. That’s why it is so important for us to communicate with them in the same language and offer culturally competent services” (Interviewed 2007). The importance of offering culturally competent services and working with clients “where they’re at” is also demonstrated by this legal service provider for immigrant and refugee communities:

So I remember a couple of weeks ago, we were approached by Catholic nuns. They wanted to set up housing for the victims of human trafficking. And so they were actually going to purchase the house. And so we started asking them, “Well what are you going to provide for them?...What kind of food are you gonna give them? You know they aren’t gonna speak English, so are you gonna be able to communicate with these women who come and stay at your shelter?” And they had not thought about that. So even though they’re well-intended, those are the issues that you need to think about if you really want to help the victims… (Interviewed 2007)

While NGOs informed by a matrix of domination ideology commonly apply an intersectional analytical framework to human trafficking, they are more varied in their specific frames of human trafficking compared with NGOs that construct human
trafficking as essentially a gendered problem. This variation is largely due to NGOs’
different perspectives on prostitution and the relationship between demand and human
trafficking.

**Framing Human Trafficking through a Matrix of Domination Ideology: The
Continuing Significance of Demand**

Twelve respondents that situate human trafficking within a matrix of domination
conveyed frames that identify demand for a commercial sex industry as a cause of sex
trafficking. Unlike NGOs that primarily analyze sex trafficking through a gendered
framework, these NGOs emphasize how gender inequality intersects with other
inequalities to encourage human trafficking of particular peoples. Illustrating this, a
direct service provider who focuses on domestic sex trafficking commented:

> We’re different than a lot of other non-profits…our very foundation is all about
facing the social, sexual, and economic subordination that lies beneath…the
violence in women’s lives and the racism that encourages that violence.
(Interviewed 2007; emphasis in original)

This respondent’s NGO focuses on sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of
U.S. citizens and emphasizes that all forms of prostitution are exploitive, but that women
of color, marginalized by their gender, race, and socio-economic status (SES) are
particularly vulnerable to this exploitation. As the quote above demonstrates, this NGO
also embeds sex trafficking in multiple structures of inequality. Several NGOs also argue
that popular culture legitimates this demand by glorifying “pimps” and the sexual
objectification and subordination of women of color. These cultural messages are
particularly harmful for women and girls most vulnerable to commercial sexual
exploitation, who are often adversely affected by the intersection of economic, racial, gender inequality.

Eight of the twelve respondents that identified demand as a cause of sex trafficking also identified demand as a cause of labor trafficking. In terms of labor trafficking, consumers, businesses, subcontractors, and human traffickers constitute the demand for the services of and products produced by individuals whose labor is exploited and coerced. Specifically, consumers’ demand for goods and concurrent disregard for the conditions by which those goods are produced creates a context that both encourages and permits human trafficking. As long as these conditions exist, people’s labor will be exploited and coerced to meet consumer demand. Further, human traffickers and “employers” demand the services of and goods produced through trafficked labor in order to maximize their own profits. As they do in their analysis of sex trafficking, these respondents identify intersecting structural inequalities as encouraging labor trafficking and increasing certain people’s vulnerability to labor trafficking.

While these eight respondents also identified demand as facilitating sex trafficking, they expressed concern that labor trafficking receives inadequate attention compared to sex trafficking. They also noted the difficulties in compelling target audiences to recognize labor trafficking as a serious problem and to engage in efforts to combat it. As noted by this faith-based policy advocate:

[Labor trafficking], that’s a harder one to tackle, I gotta tell you, because we’re really addicted to our Wal-Mart’s and…these huge stores that everything comes from China, everything’s coming from Korea. That is a tough one. And it’s also harder to draw the direct link….It’s easier to point out the sexual exploitation. It’s much more of a no brainer. It’s happening right here and you can see the direct impact from demand to victim, where as with labor trafficking, it’s a little
bit more obscure, especially if that labor is happening overseas. So you get some kid in the rubber plantation….who is through the whole system of--it’s almost a hereditary system of exploitation and that latex is shipped to one place and then another place and then another place. And by the time it turns into a tire here in the U.S., you’ve really lost your emotional impact. And to draw that line for people is difficult to do. But we’re trying….promoting fair trade goods and telling people to demand blood free diamonds or fair trade diamonds, things like that. (Interviewed 2007)

NGOs that situate human trafficking within a matrix of domination and identify demand as a central cause of human trafficking share a perspective that any solution to human trafficking must address the multiple inequalities that adversely affect people’s lives, a culture that legitimates these intersecting inequalities, and demand. Those focusing on domestic sex trafficking endorse solutions similarly proposed by NGOs primarily emphasizing sex trafficking as a gendered problem. For instance, they too support programs to raise awareness of the relationship between demand and sex trafficking, and several of these NGOs are very active in the AHT movement and organize marches and other demonstrations to help increase the public’s awareness of sex trafficking.

These NGOs also support greater criminal penalties on parties that comprise the demand, no criminal sanctions for women used in prostitution, and “John Schools.” They further support empowerment programs geared towards girls and women in areas characterized by high rates of prostitution. The objective of these programs include preventing the entry or reentry of girls and women in prostitution, building girls’ and women’s self esteem, and helping women achieve self-sufficiency. One NGO carries out a program in which they discuss and deconstruct with youths cultural messages about women and prostitution. The objective of this program is to have youths critically think
about how these cultural messages maintain the subordination of women, not perpetuate these messages, and help prevent the entry of girls into prostitution.

NGOs that identify demand as a cause of labor trafficking also assert that any effective solution must dismantle this demand. The ways in which they attempt to accomplish this is through raising people’s awareness of labor trafficking and promoting consumers to buy goods they know are not produced through exploitive means. Several respondents also supported labeling goods to indicate if they are made or not made by workers in exploitive conditions. They believe that consumers armed with this information are less likely to buy goods made through trafficked and exploited labor. Respondents also advocated that government more aggressively address labor trafficking and they supported the implementation of stricter criminal penalties on corporations and employers that knowingly use trafficked labor. Two of these NGOs that work abroad also implement empowerment programs through partnerships with communities characterized by high rates of human trafficking. These programs aim to create economically self-sufficient communities and alleviate economic and gender inequality in order to prevent the human trafficking of community members.

**Framing Human Trafficking through a Matrix of Domination Ideology: Deemphasizing the Role of Demand**

As previously noted, not all NGOs informed by a matrix of domination ideology identify demand as a cause of human trafficking. Seventeen respondents did not recognize demand in their diagnostic frames of human trafficking, including two sex worker advocates and fifteen respondents representing NGOs that take a neutral stance on prostitution. A common theme raised in these respondents’ narratives is that people
adversely affected by multiple inequalities are most vulnerable to human trafficking when they attempt to sustain themselves and their families, secure work, migrate for work, and when faced with natural disasters, war, and other armed conflict. Respondents emphasize how this vulnerability is exacerbated in nations characterized by economic and political instability. Sex worker advocates further stressed that the social and legal marginalization of sex workers makes sex workers particularly vulnerable to a range of abuses, including slavery and slave-like conditions within the context of the sex industry. According to many of these respondents, human traffickers take advantage of people’s vulnerability for their own benefit. For these NGOs, the intersecting structural inequalities create the conditions of possibility for human trafficking to occur, and explain certain groups’ heightened vulnerability to human trafficking.

Another common theme raised in these respondents’ narratives is the role of immigration policies in facilitating human trafficking. As noted by this policy advocate for refugee and immigrant women:

…women have unique reasons why they…migrate. They have to support themselves and sometimes their children and families. We have to consider the "why" to prevent [human trafficking]… [Our organization] is trying to do…much more prevention work….I think the economic programming stuff is sure more powerful on the prevention side, but I don’t think that’s to say that if we didn’t have less restrictive employment policies and immigration policies in this country, I think that would be a way to sure offer economic opportunity and alternatives to people… If they knew they could legally work instead of having to…maybe sign up for some scary…illegal situation…I think that would offer an alternative and opportunity… (Interviewed 2007)

For many of these respondents, structural inequalities that encourage migration for work coupled with restrictive immigration policies increases people’s vulnerability to human trafficking. Respondents commonly noted that demand-centered frames of sex
trafficking rooted primarily in gender inequality fail to recognize this critical point. As not noted by this sex worker advocate and direct service provider:

…if you just focus on sex trafficking and say that well these men, their demand for sex, to buy sex causes a sex industry and now it’s causing large numbers of trafficking situations. If you just look at it this way with that tunnel vision then it sort of clouds over just the debate around immigration and migration and the necessity to migrate to work and just general economics and poverty and what leads people into vulnerable situations where they’re being led to work as a prostitute or as a restaurant worker, as a fruit picker and all these things. So…people just focusing on the sex trafficking, they just look at it as the sex industry fueling it and they’re not looking at economics and vulnerability and what gets people into these situations. (Interviewed 2007)

The above quote exemplifies three general features of these respondents’ narratives. First, these respondents primarily focused on international human trafficking, not domestic human trafficking. Second, respondents commonly deemphasized the role of demand in facilitating sex trafficking and generally did not comment on the role of demand in encouraging labor trafficking. Third, they deemphasized demand while concurrently emphasizing structural inequalities as the root cause of human trafficking. From this perspective, people adversely affected by structural inequalities are pressured to migrate for both “legitimate” work (i.e. restaurant work) and “unlawful” work (i.e. prostitution). However, people’s ability to legally migrate for work is largely shaped by the receiving nation’s immigration policies. Restrictive immigration policies encourage people to rely on available avenues for migration, including seemingly “legal” and “illegal” avenues presented by third parties.

Respondents with this perspective commonly argued that human traffickers take advantage of individual’s vulnerability, possible desire to migrate for work, and restrictive immigration policies and offer these individuals’ employment opportunities
and a means to migrate with the intended purpose of trafficking them. Traffickers employ a variety of abusive and coercive tactics to continue this exploitation, including physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, threats of abuse toward them and their families, and threatening to report them to law enforcement and immigration officials.\(^8\) Traffickers further threaten victims by claiming that if they escape, law enforcement and immigration officials will identify and treat them as criminals and arrest and deport them. Victims are further isolated if they are unfamiliar with the broader culture and their general surroundings, are non-native language speakers, and lack support systems.\(^9\)

These respondents also commonly criticized other demand-centered NGOs that construct human trafficking as primarily a problem of sex trafficking. They did this by discussing how girls and women are victims of labor trafficking, experience sexual abuse and coercion within labor trafficking situations, and by arguing that these other NGOs overlook labor trafficking and its effects. As demonstrated by this respondent who engages in direct service and policy advocacy work for immigrants and refugees:

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\(^8\) Respondents commonly argued that these are not empty threats. They discussed cases in which victims’ family members faced violent or economic retaliation after the victims reported their trafficking to law enforcement or agreed to work with law enforcement to prosecute their traffickers. Respondents also regularly discussed how victims’ fear of law enforcement is legitimate for several reasons. First, victims may perceive law enforcement as corrupt, in collusion with their traffickers, or unable to protect them from their traffickers. This perception can be based on the role of law enforcement within their home countries or their direct experiences with law enforcement in their home countries or in the U.S. Second, respondents evoked cases in which trafficking victims were first identified as criminals, detained in jails, and deported. Third, respondents further identified cases where suspected trafficking victims were detained in jails for indefinite periods of time, made to where jail uniforms, and overall treated as criminals while law enforcement investigated if their case actually constituted human trafficking.

\(^9\) Across their frames and ideologies, respondents overwhelmingly emphasized the abusive and coercive tactics employed by human traffickers, the abuse victims face, and the criminal treatment of victims. However, the narratives of respondents that draw on a matrix of domination ideology and deemphasize demand often suggest that vulnerability to this treatment and a lack of recourse when this treatment occurs is heightened for foreign national victims who often lack legal status within a country, support systems, and speak non-native languages.
…from the direct service work I did, I saw people that were just as traumatized by labor trafficking as ones that were traumatized by sex trafficking and because there’s such a similarity between how the cases happen, how they unfold, the same types of psychological coercion…I personally don’t see that you can make that kind of distinction between those cases. They’re all slavery cases…and I know that people say that prostitution, even if it isn’t work, but the idea that one type of exploitation is necessarily different than another I think undermines the whole idea that slavery is wrong…[I]f slavery is wrong in one area, it’s wrong everywhere…And I absolutely understand where the advocates around sex trafficking and prostitution come from. I mean I think it makes a lot of sense. But I think if you’re looking at trafficking as it has come to be defined in a more inclusive manner… like you may even see it internationally that Nepali girls are separated out and the pretty ones are sent to brothels and the not pretty ones are sent to carpet factories and how do you say which one of them have the worst experience…? (Interviewed 2007)

The above illustrates a common theme present within these respondents’ narratives. These respondents not only try to bring attention to labor trafficking and women’s exploitation through labor trafficking, but also challenge the perspective that certain forms of human trafficking are qualitatively worse than others or distinguished by different processes.

Many of these respondents also challenged demand-centered frames of sex trafficking rooted primarily in gender inequality by highlighting men as victims of human trafficking. To illustrate this point, one respondent, who preferred not to have the interview audio-recorded, relayed a labor trafficking case within the U.S. involving a group of foreign national, adult men (Interviewed 2009). These men, disadvantaged by their class and immigrant status, took what they thought was a legitimate job opportunity. However, their traffickers forced these men to work without pay for extended hours and the men were constantly under the surveillance of an armed guard. Their traffickers further controlled them through sexual, physical, and psychological abuse and threats of
violence. The men were further isolated because they lacked knowledge of their general surroundings and were non-English speakers.

The NGO representative noted that when she told others about the case, people’s initial reactions were often to question how this happened to a group of grown, able-bodied men who outnumbered their traffickers and to ask why these victims had not forged an earlier escape. People also questioned if these men intended on entering and working in the U.S “illegally.” The respondent further noted how the characteristics of these men (i.e. male, foreign-national, not too young and not too old) led some to question if this really was a human trafficking case because the victims did not epitomize vulnerability. These types of reactions are in stark contrast to other respondents’ experiences when relaying to others cases of sex trafficking, particularly involving children, in which people offer highly emotional and sympathetic reactions.

In this study, all the respondents reflecting a matrix of domination ideology and not identifying demand as a cause of sex trafficking supported an inclusive definition of human trafficking and emphasized women’s and men’s vulnerability to different forms of human trafficking. This is true even for respondents whose AHT work primarily encompasses women who are victims of sex trafficking. Given their position that intersecting structural inequalities and restrictive immigration policies cause human trafficking, respondents’ prognostic frames indicate that these inequalities and policies must be addressed in order to end human trafficking.

The solutions to human trafficking these NGOs propose vary. They support and engage in programs that raise awareness of human trafficking, inclusively defined, of
both women and men into different industries and the factors that cause it. NGOs in this
category also insist that any effective solution to human trafficking must address the
structural inequalities that facilitate it. To that end, most of these respondents assert that
their NGOs actively lobby the U.N., the U.S. government, and/or their subnational
governments to address these inequalities in their AHT policies. They further call
attention to the linkages between multiple, intersecting inequalities and human trafficking
and restrictive immigration policies in their organizational documents. In addition,
several of these NGOs engage in work abroad in which they collaborate with
communities, adversely affected by poverty and often times ethnic and racial persecution,
on economic development programs and programs aimed at increasing girls’ access to
education, protecting girls and women from violence, and raising girls’ and women’s
status within their communities. Sex worker advocates also identified empowering sex
workers and enforcing their human rights as a means to preventing slavery and slave-like
practices within the context of the sex industry.

Across their perspectives on the role of demand in encouraging human trafficking,
respondents reflecting a matrix of domination ideology commonly identified the
importance of a social movement to raise awareness of human trafficking, pressure
government to address it, and mobilize others to engage in AHT efforts. They also share
a belief that people’s lives are shaped by multiple oppressions, and the social, cultural,
and institutional conditions that maintain them. This ideology informs their construction
of human trafficking, the causes of and solutions to human trafficking they identify, and
the programs they implement to prevent human trafficking and to assist victims.
Degendering Human Trafficking

Table 5.3 illustrates that seventeen respondents degendered the problem of human trafficking. Fifteen represent NGOs that focus on human trafficking broadly and two on labor trafficking exclusively. They include children advocates, faith based NGOs, immigrant and refugee advocates, abolitionists, human rights advocates, and labor advocates. In terms of ideology, the only common feature present within these respondents’ narratives is that “gender inequality” does not inform their construction of human trafficking.

Of these seventeen respondents, six represent NGOs that take an apolitical stance on human trafficking, do not provide a socio-cultural analysis of human trafficking, and do not identify themselves as part of a social movement. However, the remaining eleven respondents are political, degender human trafficking, and often situate themselves or their NGOs within a social movement. These respondents’ perspectives on human trafficking generally fall into two categories: 1) Degendering human trafficking and deemphasizing inequality; and 2) Degendering human trafficking and emphasizing inequality. The remainder of this section presents the ideologies and corresponding frames of these NGOs that both politicize and degender human trafficking, first for those NGOs that deemphasize inequality and second for those NGOs that emphasize inequality.

10 While these respondents and their NGOs generally characterize human trafficking as a human rights abuse or violation, their frames both degender and depoliticize the issue of human trafficking. They are all neutral on the issue of prostitution and they do not comment on the causes of or solutions to human trafficking. These NGOs tackle human trafficking because they see their organization as well suited to address it. For example, the service providers became involved with human trafficking because they came in contact with human trafficking victims through their work. Two of these NGOs are direct service providers, three respondents focus on strengthening relationships between civil society and government agencies, and one respondent represents a faith-based organization.
Framing Human Trafficking and Deemphasizing Inequality through a Degendered Ideology

Three respondents did not identify social inequalities, including gender inequality, or broader socio-cultural conditions as central to understanding human trafficking. Table 5.6 illustrates the types of diagnostic and prognostic frames of human trafficking these respondents conveyed along with their corresponding ideology and perspective on prostitution.

### Table 5.6 Types of Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames Communicated by Respondents Reflecting a Degendered Ideology of Human Trafficking and Deemphasize Inequality by Their Corresponding Perspective on Prostitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Perspective on Prostitution</th>
<th>Diagnostic Frames</th>
<th>Prognostic Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degender/Deemphasize Inequality</td>
<td>Prostitution Inherently Exploitive; Neutral Stance on Prostitution</td>
<td>Lax Or Nonexistent Criminal Penalties for Human Traffickers</td>
<td>Criminal Penalties for Human Traffickers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise Awareness of Human Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vibrant Social Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prostitution Inherently Exploitive</td>
<td>Demand for a Commercial Sex Industry</td>
<td>Raise Awareness of Relationship between Demand and Human Trafficking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demand for Inexpensive Goods and Services Provided through Trafficked Labor</td>
<td>Criminal Penalties on Individuals Comprising the Demand for Sex Trafficking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage Consumers and Companies to Not Buy Goods or Use Services Provided through Trafficked Labor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All three respondents characterized human trafficking as a major human rights violation and identified themselves as part of the AHT movement. One respondent is a
service provider and policy advocate and the other two respondents focus on awareness-raising and movement mobilization. One respondent, engaged in awareness-raising, is committed to ending all forms of human exploitation, but did not comment on the causes of human trafficking. However, the respondent identified raising awareness of human trafficking, the execution of strong criminal penalties against human traffickers, and a vibrant AHT movement as solutions to ending human trafficking.

The other two NGOs that deemphasize inequality both characterized prostitution as inherently harmful and identified demand as the sole cause of sex trafficking and labor trafficking. For these respondents, degendering human trafficking highlights how individuals across gender are trafficked for different purposes. Both of these respondents expressed a deep concern with constructing human trafficking in the U.S. as primarily a problem of the sex trafficking of foreign national women and children, and advocated for an understanding that people across nations, including within the U.S., are victims of labor and sex trafficking. One respondent explicitly argued that while social inequalities may help contextualize the problem of human trafficking, they are not the causes of human trafficking:

"[Human traffickers] are out to profit by meeting the demand. Blaming inequality for [human trafficking] takes attention off the traffickers and the customers who create the demand. (Interviewed 2008)"

As reflected above, degendering human trafficking and deemphasizing inequality shifts attention away from the victims and their characteristics to the parties held responsible for encouraging human trafficking. This frame also suggests that emphasizing victims and their characteristics may promote “blaming the victims” for their victimization.
Given that these respondents identified demand in their diagnostic frame of human trafficking, they both argued that the solution to ending human trafficking lies with ending the demand. Specifically, these respondents argued that human traffickers profit from this demand and therefore are invested in maintaining it. A lack of criminal consequences encourages them to engage in this enterprise. Thus, they advocated for strong criminal penalties to deter human traffickers as a solution to ending human trafficking.

Both of these respondents also argued for strong criminal penalties for individuals that create this demand through their use of the commercial sex industry. Both respondents also identified demand as a cause of labor trafficking, but only one discussed this in-depth. The respondent identifies demand for inexpensive goods and services provided by trafficked labor as the cause of labor trafficking. This NGO advocates that companies and individual consumers not use the services and products provided through human trafficking in order to reduce the demand and end labor trafficking. As may be evident, this NGO does not advocate for the same strict criminal penalties for parties constituting the demand that causes labor trafficking as it does for sex trafficking. Both respondents also identified raising awareness and an active AHT movement as a means to educate people about the relationship between demand and human trafficking, to reduce the likelihood that people will contribute to this demand, to mobilize others to engage in AHT efforts, and to increase the number of people that vigorously petition their government representatives to enact AHT legislation.
Clearly, all three of these respondents that draw on a degendered ideology and deemphasize inequality recognized the importance of a social movement to ending human trafficking. However, either by not identifying causes of human trafficking or by identifying individual demand as the sole cause of human trafficking that must be eliminated to end human trafficking, these respondents do not apply a socio-cultural analysis to human trafficking.

**Framing Human Trafficking and Emphasizing Inequality through a Degendered Ideology**

Eight respondents degendered human trafficking and inequality takes a central role in their frames of human trafficking. All of the respondents’ NGOs take a neutral stance on prostitution. Table 5.7 illustrates the types of diagnostic and prognostic frames of human trafficking their NGOs convey along with their corresponding ideology and perspective on prostitution.
Table 5.7 Types of Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames Communicated by Respondents Reflecting a Degendered Ideology of Human Trafficking and Emphasize Inequality by Their Corresponding Perspective on Prostitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Perspective on Prostitution</th>
<th>Diagnostic Frames</th>
<th>Prognostic Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degender/Emphasize Inequality (n=8)</td>
<td>Neutral Stance on Prostitution</td>
<td>Structural Inequalities&lt;br&gt;Largely Based in Ethnicity and Race, Nationality, and SES&lt;br&gt;Restrictive Immigration Policies&lt;br&gt;Oppressive and Corrupt Political Regimes&lt;br&gt;Lax Or Nonexistent Criminal Penalties for Human Traffickers</td>
<td>Raise Awareness of Human Trafficking&lt;br&gt;Empower Vulnerable Peoples and Enforce Their Human Rights&lt;br&gt;Reform Immigration Policies&lt;br&gt;Vibrant Social Movement&lt;br&gt;U.S. Sanctions on Oppressive and Corrupt Political Regimes&lt;br&gt;Criminal Penalties for Human Traffickers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Demand for Profits and Exploitable Labor</td>
<td>Raise Awareness of the Relationship between Demand and Labor Trafficking&lt;br&gt;Criminal Penalties on Individuals Comprising the Demand for Sex Trafficking&lt;br&gt;Strong Criminal Penalties for Corporations Creating this Demand&lt;br&gt;Protest Corporations Engaged in Labor Abuses&lt;br&gt;Enforce Fair Labor Standards</td>
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These NGOs primarily focus on specific immigrant or ethnic minority communities, and center their AHT efforts on the human trafficking of foreign nationals. Respondents’ narratives and their NGOs’ organizational documents and media releases do not identify gender inequality as central to understanding human trafficking. These
NGOs assert that all individuals belonging to groups they identify as structurally disadvantaged are vulnerable to human trafficking, and they do not comment on how gender inequality may encourage this vulnerability. Respondents often identified economic and political structures as facilitating human trafficking of marginalized peoples. The following remarks made by a service provider and policy advocate for a particular immigrant community illustrates this perspective:

The world has basically forgotten what these people go through. They can hardly feed themselves, take care of family, the children hardly go to school…Under the communists people are trying to escape but they aren’t welcome anywhere anymore…

The traffickers are working in [the country] and the…government knows it. Sometimes the government’s involved [in human trafficking]. They’re complicit. (Interviewed 2008)

The above reflects how these NGOs primarily focus on particular groups distinguished by their race, ethnicity and nationality that are also disadvantaged by their SES. The NGOs’ work often centers on helping a specific group within their country of origin and within the countries they have immigrated to. The above quote also reflects these NGOs’ belief that structural inequalities leave particular groups vulnerable to a whole host of abuses.

The above quote also demonstrates these respondents’ perspective that a lack of economic opportunity for particular groups living in economically fragile nation-states and/or within politically oppressive nation-states encourages individuals to migrate for work and to escape political oppression. Individuals’ ability to migrate is complicated by restrictive immigration policies. Human traffickers take advantage of individuals’ vulnerability for their own gain.
In addition, these respondents frequently argued that structurally marginalized individuals are also vulnerable to human trafficking even if they have no intent on migrating. Foreign nationals’ vulnerability to abuse is heightened given their foreign national status. Traffickers may use victims’ foreign national status as leverage against them in order to control them. In addition, if they lack “legal” status, they may be treated as criminals if they come in contact with law enforcement. Overall, these NGOs conveyed diagnostic frames that identify structural inequality and broader economic and political structures as the root causes of human trafficking.

These respondents’ diagnostic frames inform their prognostic frames. The solution to ending human trafficking requires empowering vulnerable groups and enforcing their human rights. They also support enacting strong criminal penalties against human traffickers and reforming immigration policies. Several advocated that the U.S. aggressively admonish oppressive and corrupt political regimes for their abuses of the particular groups they focus on. Further, they recognized an active social movement as necessary to raising awareness of human trafficking, pressuring nation-states to aggressively address it, and mobilizing new recruits to engage in AHT efforts.

Two of these NGOs, both focusing on labor trafficking, primarily work with a particular immigrant community distinguished by their ethnicity, nationality, and SES, but argue that their overarching concern is with migrant laborers no matter their particular ethnicity and nationality. They both identify demand as a cause of labor trafficking. Neither respondent commented on the relationship between demand and sex trafficking. Demonstrating this frame, one respondent asserted:
Ultimately, the way to end slavery today lies with the corporations that benefit from this…They are responsible for cleaning this up and ending their labor abuses…and we’ll keep on working [on AHT efforts] until they do because they aren’t going to change without a fight. (Interviewed 2008)

These NGOs argue that the demand for profits and exploitable labor among corporations is the cause of human trafficking. In order to expand their financial benefit, corporations keep costs down through exploiting their workers either directly or through their subcontractors. These NGOs conceptualize human trafficking as at the extreme end of a broader continuum of exploitation in which actors comprising the demand make laborers work unreasonably long hours in substandard to deplorable, dehumanizing work settings for little to no wages. Poverty, limited employment options, dependence on available work for survival, and a lack of legal rights for foreign nationals create the conditions that leave workers, particularly migrant workers, vulnerable to these labor abuses. Parties constituting the demand are invested in maintaining these conditions for their own profit and actively work to fight laws and circumvent existing regulations that could help alleviate the exploitation of migrant laborers. In labor trafficking situations, employers use forced confinement, threats, and violence to control workers. For these NGOs, corporations clearly cause labor trafficking.

This aspect of these NGOs’ diagnostic frame informs their prognostic frames. They support the implementation of strong criminal penalties on corporations and subcontractors that violate labor laws and advocate for strengthening laws to protect workers. They also argue that corporations largely shape their subcontractors’ practices by, in part, keeping the costs of products artificially low and they should be legally held accountable for what their subcontractors do. Both NGOs work to publicly identify
corporations engaged in labor trafficking and exploitation and organize boycotts of these corporations. These respondents further contended that the solution to ending human trafficking requires a vibrant social movement comprised of workers and other members of the public. They see this as essential to raising awareness of labor trafficking, mobilizing new recruits, pressuring government to strengthen and execute laws and regulations, and ultimately to forcing corporations to change how they conduct their business and to comply with fair labor standards.

CONCLUSION

These results expand knowledge on the AHT movement and extend theory on social movement framing. First, prior scholarship demonstrates that external pressures to remain apolitical can lead NGOs to depolitized the issues they work on (Lehrner and Allen 2008; Dolhinow 2005). Also, the character of service provision work can deter service providers from applying a social movement analysis, measured by Lehrner and Allen (2008) as the identification of socio-cultural causes of and solutions to the issues they work on. Neither is the case within this current study. Most respondents, varying in their human trafficking focus and the character of their work, politicized human trafficking and identified socio-cultural causes of and solutions to human trafficking.

These results also raise questions for how scholars measure “social movement analysis” and using this measure as an indicator for the vibrancy of a social movement. Within this study, several respondents explicitly identified themselves as part of a social movement and engaged in social movement activities, but they did not convey frames that identified socio-cultural causes of and solutions to human trafficking. This suggests
that social movement involvement does not necessarily lead movement adherents to applying a socio-cultural analysis to the issues they tackle. Such results call for distinguishing “socio-cultural analysis” from “social movement analysis” in order to provide more conceptual clarity for future research on social movement framing.

When considering the character of the AHT movement, it is clear that this movement is not only comprised of individuals that strictly see themselves as part of the abolition or AHT movement. Several respondents’ NGOs adopted human trafficking because they saw it as part and parcel of the issues tackled by the other movements they are involved with. This illustrates how social movements affect and spillover into other social movements, with the ideas, objectives, participants, and organizations characterizing one movement crossing over its boundaries to influence other social movements (Meyer and Whittier 1994). Perhaps as a result of coming from and being informed by a diversity of movements, NGOs engaged in AHT work offer a diversity of frames of human trafficking.

This last point speaks to another key result of this research. While respondents commonly evoked a master frame of injustice in their explanations for why human trafficking must be addressed and their own commitment to tackling it, their frames of human trafficking vary. This variation illustrates that NGOs’ frames do not fit neatly into the “anti-prostitution”/“pro-sex worker” dichotomy. Understanding this variation is critical. These frames inform NGOs’ AHT activities and objectives, the types of government AHT policies they endorse, and what they communicate about the problem to target audiences. Regarded as experts on human trafficking, these frames can directly
inform government’s institutionalized response to human trafficking and how bystanders think about human trafficking. Among social service providers, these frames also structure their approach to human trafficking victims and services they provide.

Another important contribution of this research is its demonstration that NGOs’ frames of human trafficking are multilayered and complex. This is partly due to variation in NGOs’ ideological beliefs about prostitution, their constructions of demand, and perspectives on the relationship between demand and human trafficking. However, this only tells part of the story. These results demonstrate that the intersection of NGOs’ ideologies on prostitution and ideologies on gender sheds important light on the multilayered complexity inherent within these frames and the cultural resources they draw when constructing these frames.

NGOs that we may assume are conveying the same frame of human trafficking because of their stance on prostitution are in fact communicating different causes of and solutions to the problem depending on whether they draw on what I identified as a gendered ideology, matrix of domination ideology, or degendered ideology. Drawing on these ideologies, NGOs not only frame human trafficking, but also make broader claims of how gender matters in the social world. Yet it is clear that NGOs’ frames cannot simply be organized around the ideologies on gender that inform them. Doing so would dismiss very important differences in how NGOs, sharing similar ideologies on gender, frame human trafficking based on their divergent ideologies on prostitution.

As noted by Valocchi (1996), identifying the ideologies movement adherents draw on in constructing their movement specific frames challenges the general viewpoint
that movement adherents unite around and convey one frame of the issues they tackle. Indeed, movement actors draw on their ideologies and bring to movements a repertoire of socially constructed perspectives that inform their specific collective action frames (Benford 1997). By identifying the multiple meanings inherent within NGOs’ frames of human trafficking, this study provides important insight into the complexity inherent within frames and social movement framing, and into the variation in frame construction that occurs within social movements. Recognizing this complexity within social movement frames, including frames of human trafficking, enables scholars to more accurately evaluate the extent to which movements achieve frame resonance by identifying what aspects of these frames target audiences respond well to or dismiss.

These results also demonstrate that the current AHT movement marks heightened movement activity around gender. NGOs situating human trafficking within broader systems of patriarchy and gender inequality illustrate how ideas characterizing the second-wave feminist movement, which also highlighted the sexual objectification of women and “sexual slavery, are clearly meaningful within this current AHT movement. This exemplifies how “[the] institutionalized gains of the heyday of feminist activism in the 1970s are enabling the women’s movement to survive and to disseminate its ideas to new recruits” (Taylor, Whittier, and Pelak 2009: 567). These ideas are transmitted within the AHT movement and communicated by feminist NGOs as well as NGOs that do not characterize themselves as feminist.

NGOs informed by a matrix of domination ideology also demonstrate feminist standpoints proposed by Third World feminists and feminists of color, who challenge the
centrality of gender in women’s lives above all other statuses (Segura and Pesquera 1998; Pegues 1997; Collins 1991). These feminists argue against the ranking of oppressions and assert that multiple oppressions intersect and shape women’s and men’s lives. These ideas are vibrant within the AHT movement and conveyed by a diversity of NGOs.

In sum, these results extend knowledge on both the AHT movement and framing within social movements. These results also encourage additional questions. For instance, were the framing efforts of NGOs emphasizing the relationship between demand and sex trafficking overwhelmingly successful, as noted in previous scholarship (Weitzer 2007), when we take into consideration the multiple causes of and solutions to human trafficking their frames entail? In addition, these results leave unanswered questions concerning the process by which SMOs achieve their framing objectives and the role of framing in this process net of other factors found meaningful in the social movement literature. Attending to these questions is imperative to overcoming the ideational bias characteristic of framing scholarship (McAdam 2001; 1996), and to expanding knowledge on the role and function of framing within social movements (Benford 1997). Through an examination of the U.S. AHT movement, I attend to these questions in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER 6
SUCCESS AND FRAMING IN CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

A significant objective and measure of success for many social movements is to have their frame reflected in public policy (Oberschall 1993; Staggenborg 1989; Gamson 1975; Freeman 1979; Zald and McCarthy 1979). However, research on framing in social movements tends to neglect the process by which movement adherents reach their objectives by focusing on the successful framing of movement elites, not considering the context in which frames resonate or fail to resonate, and overlooking the relationship between framing and structural factors, including resources and political opportunities, for shaping movement dynamics, processes, and outcomes (Benford and Snow 2000; Benford 1997; McAdam 1996).

The literature on the anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement largely reflects these weaknesses. It overwhelmingly focuses on public statements of movement and political elites situated within the U.S. national policy context, and the institutionalization of the demand-centered frame of sex trafficking in U.S. AHT federal policy (Weitzer 2007; McDonnell 2007; Soderlund 2005; Crago 2003). While scholars conclude that this frame is reflected in AHT policy because it resonated with certain policymakers, which suggests the importance of frame resonance and political opportunities in determining
framing outcomes, it neglects an in-depth consideration of *how* certain NGOs garnered success. Investigating the firsthand accounts of both movement elites and nonelites, who achieved varying levels of success in different policy settings, provides a more comprehensive understanding into the process by which NGOs accomplished their framing objectives.

Using the contemporary U.S. AHT movement as a research site and employing an integrative theoretical approach to social movements, this chapter attends to the following research question: What is the process by which AHT NGOs achieved success in the U.S. national policy setting and in four additional state-level or subnational policy settings? I label these four U.S. states where I studied NGOs’ activities as: 1) Western State; 2) Eastern State; 3) Midwestern State; and 4) Southern State. Informed by former scholarship (Oberschall 1993), I measure “success” here by NGOs’ meaningful access to policymakers to communicate their frames and the reflection of their frames in AHT polices.

To address this research question, I approached the data in two ways. First, I analyzed data pertaining to each individual case study to identify the factors that facilitated NGOs’ success in their specific policy settings. Secondly, I analyzed the data as a whole for emergent themes that may provide additional insight into how NGOs’ achieved success.

This chapter presents results from these analyses. In the following, I first layout the frames most reflected in AHT polices in the policy settings I studied. Second, I identify what factors helped NGOs achieve success in each case study. Third, I address
two emergent themes I identified through an analysis of the data that shed additional light on the factors facilitating NGOs’ success, including: 1) nonelites that conveyed a similar frame to successful NGOs, yet failed to have meaningful access to policymakers and their intended impact; and 2) “strategic” framing among NGOs that purport a neutral stance on prostitution. Fourth, I synthesize the research results and discuss the process by which these NGOs achieved success, and how these results extend knowledge on the AHT movement and on social movement processes and outcomes.

RESULTS

NGOs Impact on AHT Policies

No respondent in this study claimed to achieve a total victory in having her or his NGO’s particular frame of human trafficking fully reflected in policy. Nonetheless, successful NGOs were more successful in gaining access to policymakers and having important features of their frame institutionalized into policy compared with unsuccessful NGOs. Thus, success is best understood as partial and relative to what competing NGOs achieved. In this study, there existed general agreement among NGO representatives and government actors concerning which NGOs most impacted AHT policies at the national and subnational levels. These perspectives are supported by the institutionalization of important aspects of successful NGOs’ frames in national and subnational AHT policies.

As expected given prior scholarship, this study finds that NGOs conveying a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking were most impactful on federal AHT legislation. At the subnational level, NGOs purporting a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking and advocating for policies that differentiate sex trafficking and labor
trafficking were the most successful in Eastern State and Midwestern State. In Western State and Southern State, the most successful NGOs took a neutral stance on prostitution and advocated for AHT policies characterized by an inclusive definition of human trafficking that did not differentiate between sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

In the following, I review the framing objectives of NGOs in each policy setting and present what respondents’ narratives indicate are the factors that facilitated their NGOs’ success or lack thereof for each case study.

The Significance of Demand in U.S. AHT Policies

As previously noted, NGOs deemed most successful in impacting federal AHT policies advocated that the TVPA and its subsequent reauthorizations recognize prostitution as inherently harmful and a causal relationship between demand for the commercial sex industry and sex trafficking. Among these were NGOs that also asserted that AHT policies recognize and address gender inequality. These NGOs advocated for the strengthening and implementation of criminal sanctions for parties constituting the demand. Illustrating this objective, a faith-based policy advocate that characterizes sex trafficking as a result of gender inequality contends:

… [W]hat…our movement has been trying to do is say…[is] it’s time to look at the demand side on the sex trafficking equation… And we saw some of the fruit of that in the 2005 Reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. There’s a whole title that deals with [it]. Initially it was called the “End Demand for Sex Trafficking Act” and…it deals basically with a lot of these domestic issues, including demand for commercial sex and…authorizes funding…that DOJ [Department of Justice] could provide to local law enforcements to ramp up their efforts on enforcement on, for…example, of men who solicit for prostitution. Problem was…that money didn’t show up and none of those grants were given…So on the congressional level, we’ve gotten support and we’ve made progress. But on the agency implementation side, we still have a long way to go.
to have DOJ be more receptive to the whole enforcement on commercial sex crimes. (Interviewed 2007)

As indicated above, NGOs advocating a demand centered frame of sex trafficking achieved success through the institutionalization of their frame into AHT policy. However, respondents purporting this frame commonly argued that they have only been partially successful due, in part, to the lax enforcement of this policy.

Another key objective noted by NGOs emphasizing gender inequality and demand is that policies recognize individuals used in prostitution as victims and thus not incur criminal sanctions for their role in prostitution. Demonstrating this, a feminist policy advocate, belonging to the same successful coalition as the faith-based advocate quoted above, argued:

… [We] advocate…how Sweden does it [which criminalizes the purchase of sexual services and decriminalizes the selling of sex services\textsuperscript{11}]…I think it’s an argument that’s gonna have a certain appeal….\[T\]o the extent that people think about trafficking, then you have to think about these people as victims. And if you are thinking about these people as victims, then the idea of punishing them for their victimization…it’s not going to be an argument… that logically people are going to be able to…put forth for very long. I think part of the problem though is just politicians are scared to death of the issue…I think if it comes out of [the Bush] administration…that’s cover for anybody who wants to decriminalize it for the women. (Interviewed 2006)

The Swedish Model was never adopted under the Bush administration and people continue to face criminal penalties for selling sex in the context of prostitution in most U.S. states, which further demonstrates the partiality of success for these NGOs.

\textsuperscript{11} For more a more thorough discussion of Swedish laws on prostitution, see Ekberg (2004) and Östergren (2004).
Despite these setbacks, these NGOs clearly achieved success in having the causal relationship between demand and sex trafficking and the recognition of prostitution as inherently harmful recognized in AHT policies and communicated by government leaders. For instance, President Bush’s 2002 National Security Presidential Directive Memorandum Regarding Combating Trafficking in Persons (NSPD-22) states:

Our policy [to combat trafficking in persons] is based on an abolitionist approach to trafficking in persons, and our efforts must involve a comprehensive attack on such trafficking, which is a modern day form of slavery. In this regard, the United States Government opposes prostitution and any related activities, including pimping, pandering, or maintaining brothels as contributing to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. These activities are inherently harmful and dehumanizing. The United States Government’s position is that these activities should not be regulated as a legitimate form of work for any human being. (2002: 2-3)

Policies and public statements made by political leaders also recognize trafficking as a gendered problem. For example, The United States Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 asserts:

Prostitution and other sexual victimization are degrading to women and children and it should be the policy of the United States to eradicate such practices. (2003 Sec 2, paragraph 23)12

In his address to the UN on September 23, 2003, President Bush stated:

There's another humanitarian crisis spreading, yet hidden from view. Each year, an estimated 800,000 to 900,000 human beings are bought, sold or forced across the world's borders. Among them are hundreds of thousands of teenage girls, and others as young as five, who fall victim to the sex trade…

12 The Act also states, “The sex industry, the trafficking of individuals into such industry, and sexual violence are additional causes of and factors in the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.” Because of this institutionalized stance on prostitution, The United States Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 mandates that international organizations declare a position opposing prostitution in order to receive U.S. funding in support of their work on HIV/AIDS (H.R. 1298 [108th] Sec 104A, paragraph D note D).
There's a special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable. The victims of the sex trade see little of life before they see the very worst of life -- an underground of brutality and lonely fear. Those who create these victims and profit from their suffering must be severely punished. Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others. And governments that tolerate this trade are tolerating a form of slavery…

By publicly recognizing prostitution as inherently harmful, the relationship between demand and sex trafficking, and sex trafficking as a gendered problem, the federal government communicated the frame advocated by successful NGOs. NGOs achieved additional success in having this frame influence funding decisions in support of organizations’ AHT work. Section seven of the 2003 reauthorization of the TVPA specifies a “Restriction on Organizations,” stating:

No funds made available…may be used to implement any program that targets victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons…through any organization that has not stated in either a grant application, a grant agreement, or both, that it does not promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution. (TVPRA 2003, PL 108-193; italics added).\(^{13}\)

These examples demonstrate a clear success for NGOs conveying a frame of sex trafficking as a gendered problem resulting from the demand for prostitution. Yet how were NGOs able to achieve this success?

Respondents representing successful NGOs overwhelming identified their coalition as an important factor in facilitating their success. Discussing the importance and function of this coalition, a faith-based policy advocate remarked:

… At the UN, there were negotiations going on [over] the Optional Protocol [to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons 2000]…and the Clinton administration was backing and supporting the Netherlands, and the Netherlands’ approach to the Optional Protocol…what they were wanting to do in the language

\(^{13}\) This policy applies to all organizations receiving federal funding in support of their AHT work, including ones that primarily or solely focus on labor trafficking and victims of labor trafficking.
is use the phrase “forced prostitution” everywhere…[W]e definitely had opposition from the Clinton administration…[I]f you had the administration opposing something that you’re working on, that’s no small obstacle, but because we had a great coalition, we had people that worked tirelessly, we had…a great strategist, we were successful…Ultimately…the greatest strength of the movement was that you had key feminist organizations and religious organizations…We had a lot more access to the Bush administration…And when it looked like the administration may be waning off this issue, [members of the coalition] told them that they could lose our support and they responded. (Interviewed 2007)

As suggested above, this coalition had important resources available to it. It included influential people and “key” NGOs that achieved notable political successes on other issues. The coalition also possessed important intangible resources. They had skilled individuals with successful lobbying experience and activists ready to work “tirelessly” for their cause. The respondent also stated in another part of the interview that larger NGOs within the coalition provided office space and other resources for members of the coalition to do their work and conduct meetings.

The above quote also suggests that during the Clinton administration, this coalition was organized and possessed resources. However, they lacked the ability to fully influence the Clinton administration, which was supporting a definition of trafficking they opposed. The Bush administration presented a political opportunity for this coalition. Possessing key faith-based leaders and NGOs, and the support of others in the faith-based community, this coalition had political capital and received more serious attention from an administration open to working with them. According to this respondent and others within the study, when the administration appeared to wane on its commitment to human trafficking, this coalition argued that the President risked losing their avid support, which could also mean losing the support of what was arguably an
important constituency for the President. While this study cannot confirm the effect of
the coalition’s warning to the Bush administration, it is clear that their frame continued to
be reflected in AHT policies and discourse throughout the tenure of the Bush
administration.

Feminist NGOs also contributed to and utilized the coalition’s resources and
benefited from the coalition’s access to the Bush administration. Respondents
representing feminist NGOs highlight that belonging to a network including faith-based
NGOs was critical in shaping their successes. As one feminist policy advocate argued:

…[W]ell this whole [Bush] administration has actually been very good on
trafficking and to a large extent, I would like to take credit for that, but…I don’t
think the Bush administration really gives a damn about what [our NGO]
thinks…but… a lot of the…religious right has embraced this issue and they
obviously have a big voice that gets heard by this administration, so it’s worked
out for us. And those are groups we’ve worked with on this issue--and I would
say on this issue because…we don’t talk about anything except trafficking.
That’s how it works….I mean they’ve embraced it and you know they’ve been
very active… I guess politics is strange that way, but…we’ve worked with them
closely on the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the reauthorization acts and
…they’re good on the demand side of it. I mean I wouldn’t want to be discussing
necessarily…abortion rights with them…but we don’t have to. At least here we
don’t have to…. (Interviewed 2006; italics in the original)

Within this study, feminist NGO representatives commonly noted that this coalition
provided them greater opportunities to achieve success, arguing that policymakers might
have been less receptive to listening to their perspectives alone because they are feminist
NGOs. The above quote also demonstrates an interesting feature of this coalition
discussed in prior scholarship. Members of this coalition fundamentally disagreed on an
array of other issues they discretely advocated for (Weitzer 2007; Chapkis 2003).

However, both feminist and faith-based NGOs within this coalition stated that their
shared understanding of the causes of and solutions to sex trafficking enabled them to put these differences aside and work together in mutually beneficial ways. In other words, their frame functioned to bring them together, enabling them to pool their resources and AHT efforts, which facilitated their future successes.

While feminist NGO representatives clearly perceived this coalition as beneficial for them, respondents representing faith-based NGOs also contend that their collaboration with feminists helped them. Discussing this, one faith-based NGO representative noted:

…the groups that we were working with reject the idea…of sex as work and…therefore…the strength of this coalition was the fact that… [it] was bipartisan (Interviewed 2007).

The “bipartisan” nature of this coalition demonstrated that the relationship between demand and sex trafficking was not simply asserted by members of the faith-based community on the basis of religious ideology, but also by feminists who typically disagree with faith-based groups on other political issues. For several respondents, the fact that they came together on sex trafficking illustrates the veracity of their frame.

These NGOs’ shared frame of human trafficking is absolutely relevant because it structured their U.S. AHT policy suggestions, formed the basis of their important coalition, and was deployed to mobilize a movement and gain support. However, the political context and the resources available to them facilitated their ability to impact policymakers’ perspective on human trafficking and, in turn, AHT policies. Indeed, a well-organized and resourceful coalition combined with expanded political opportunities
served as the vehicle by which these NGOs could communicate their frame to influential political leaders and influence U.S. AHT policies.

A consideration of why particular frames resonated within subnational AHT policy also provides insight into how resources and political context matter for understanding the impact of NGOs’ framing efforts and objectives. This is particularly evident in states in which there were framing contests between coalitions advocating different frames. Such framing contests were particularly salient within Western State and Eastern State.

How NGOs in Western State Overcame Framing Contests and Garnered Success

According to respondents representing both NGOs and government, Western State is a U.S. state in which there are many NGOs that engage in contentious debate over the character of, causes of, and solutions to human trafficking. This state is also characterized as having one of the highest rates of human trafficking with the U.S. In Western State, an early case of human trafficking that received national attention involved labor trafficking of foreign nationals. Different experts argued that Western State’s large immigrant population could increase the likelihood that foreign national victims, sharing a similar ethnicity or nationality with members of local immigrant communities, would go undetected. Because of this, Western State would be very attractive to human traffickers and experts speculated that human trafficking was a substantial problem within the state. Other high-profile labor trafficking and sex trafficking cases that subsequently occurred in Western State helped bolster the perspective that Western State was a hotbed for human trafficking.
In response to human trafficking, Western State enacted its own state level AHT legislation. This legislation more clearly reflected the policy objectives of NGOs that largely frame human trafficking inclusively, are guided by a matrix of domination ideology, and take a neutral stance on prostitution. These NGOs were overwhelmingly service providers and were primarily located in two metropolitan areas within the state. Table 6.1 identifies the frame reflected in Western State’s AHT policy, the frame presented by challengers that is not reflected in Western State’s AHT policy, and the number of respondents that were actively advocating for each.
Table 6.1 Description of Frame Reflected in Policy and Frame posed by Challengers in Four Subnational Policy Settings and the Number of Respondents Advocating Each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subnational Policy Setting</th>
<th>Frame in Policy</th>
<th>Challenger Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western State</td>
<td>Inclusive definition of human trafficking and no differentiation between sex trafficking and labor trafficking in policy. (n=7)</td>
<td>Definition of human trafficking that distinguishes between sex and labor trafficking; Emphasizes relationship between demand and sex trafficking. (n=8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern State</td>
<td>Definition of human trafficking that distinguishes sex and labor trafficking; Emphasizes relationship between demand and sex trafficking. (n=6)</td>
<td>Inclusive definition of human trafficking. (n=8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwestern State</td>
<td>Definition of human trafficking that distinguishes sex and labor trafficking; Emphasizes relationship between demand and sex trafficking. (n=6)</td>
<td>No significant challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern State</td>
<td>Inclusive definition of human trafficking and no differentiation between sex trafficking and labor trafficking in policy. (n=6)</td>
<td>No significant challenges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guided by their frame of human trafficking, NGOs within a successful coalition advocated that state legislation reflect an inclusive definition of human trafficking, not emphasize sex trafficking over labor trafficking, and not apply differential penalties for different sex trafficking and labor trafficking. They also advocated that state legislation allot state funding for victim services. Finally, they advocated that Western State’s
penalties for human trafficking mirrored federal penalties, so that individuals convicted of human trafficking by the state or in federal courts faced comparable penalties. They achieved all of these objectives but the last.

This coalition garnered success in having their frame of human trafficking reflected in how the state defined human trafficking in AHT law, despite strong opposition posed by NGOs emphasizing sex trafficking and the relationship between sex trafficking and demand. To the disappointment of NGOs that link demand and sex trafficking, city governments located within Western State invited NGOs that primarily did not identify demand as the cause of sex trafficking to discuss human trafficking with government actors and sit on government task forces. The state government also invited several of these NGOs to sit on a Western State’s AHT commission with government actors for the purpose of developing and proposing practical AHT legislation to the state legislature.

How did these NGOs gain access to policymakers, get invited to policy discussions, and impact AHT policy? The characteristics of the NGOs within this coalition shed light on this question. The amount of resources available to NGOs within this coalition varied. Most were mid-sized NGOs that provided direct services and their available resources mostly went to covering operational costs and services for victims. Thus, they possessed limited tangible and intangible resources to use toward their policy advocacy work. The resources they did have, though, benefited them, including office space to conduct movement related business and the willingness of individuals to volunteer their time to fundraise and do policy advocacy work. Several of these NGOs
also received early federal AHT grants, funds from which could be used, in part, to support coalition work with other NGOs.

In addition, a good number of these NGOs already had preexisting relationships with one another. These relationships were primarily developed through their shared work with local immigrant communities. Prior to their AHT activities, these NGOs at times advocated together for policies to benefit the communities they work with. They also sometimes coordinated their services to clients. For example, NGOs that primarily provided shelter and counseling to their clients often worked with NGOs that provided legal services to these same clients. These preexisting relationships formed the foundation for what would be their later AHT coalition work. Characterizing the benefit of this coalition, one direct service provider for immigrant communities noted:

To me, a huge value…is just that we know each other and coordinate…We work well together. We get things done… (Interviewed 2007)

Overall, these NGOs were organized and worked efficiently together. While this coalition as a whole certainly did not have as many resources available to it as the national coalition that worked on federal AHT legislation, they effectively mobilized the resources they possessed.

Another factor that may have benefited this coalition is the timing in which some of its members were established. Most of the elite NGOs within this coalition were founded decades prior to national attention on human trafficking with the objective of empowering and providing services to immigrant communities. Through their direct service work, they came in contact with victims of human trafficking and developed similar concerns. In particular, they feared that foreign national victims were “invisible,”
overlooked by community members and law enforcement, and detained and deported due to the presumption that they were “illegal immigrants.” Because of this, these NGOs worked to raise awareness of human trafficking among members of local, state, and federal government. These NGOs also pushed for law enforcement to contact and involve service providers when they came across possible trafficking cases.

Through their previous work with immigrant communities and on human trafficking, members of government may have come to see these NGOs as the “go-to” organizations on issues related to immigration and human trafficking. For instance, commenting on why the state invited her particular NGO to sit on Western State’s AHT task force, a respondent asserted:

[Our organization] already had a close working relationship with [our state representative]…We were the first NGO providing comprehensive services to trafficking victims in our state. We want to help victims, not spend our time fighting over prostitution. That’s not our issue… [Our state representative] was really passionate about doing something about [trafficking]…She was concerned…and since she knew our work already, she wanted our help. (Interviewed 2009)

According to this respondent, two factors are particular meaningful for understanding the NGO’s success. First, they had a previous relationship with an influential person within state government. This government representative has a reputation as an advocate for immigrant and ethnic minority communities and through this work, built relationships with NGOs known for their work with these communities. Second, the respondent emphasized that the NGO’s objective is “to help the victims,” which is supported by their direct service work, unlike other NGOs embedded in the politics of prostitution. These two factors, political connections and the character of the NGO’s work, were commonly
evoked by other respondents when explaining their success. For instance, another respondent, representing a Western State NGO that provides direct services to immigrant and ethnic minority communities, stated:

… The [state legislator] that we approached, [he was] all for [providing state-funded services to victims] and [he was] really committed to that. And I think that’s important…I think it’s necessary…to have connection or…some kind of relationship with [people] in the legislative office in order for them to kind of see the work that we’re doing… and…we give them ideas of what would work best…[S]o, “if you implement this law, then this will help our victims, and this is the good side and this is why it’s good.” And then they might get opposition from somebody else, but that’s fine. As long as we’re able to communicate what our needs are, then that’s okay with us. (Interviewed 2007)

Expanding on this “opposition,” the respondent commented:

… [T]here is a local agency that’s really committed to doing human trafficking, but…they shape this issue into anti-prostitution or prostitution or [a] women’s rights kind of thing. But that’s not where we wanna go with our collaborative. So [there are] some folks out there who are shaping the conversation that way. But we’re not participating in that, because….we don’t have any opinions about legalizing prostitution or not. That’s not what we deal with here. (Interviewed 2007)

As demonstrated above, respondents perceived political allies as necessary to accomplish their objectives. Further, some NGOs identified their perspectives on human trafficking as valuable because they were informed by their work, and not their ideological perspectives on prostitution. These types of statements distinguish them from other NGOs that emphasize prostitution.

This study is not able to gauge if successful NGOs framed themselves as legitimate authorities to government representatives, while framing their antagonists as primarily political, concerned with prostitution, and not victim-centered. This study also cannot assess if successful NGOs influenced these government representatives’
perspectives of their antagonists. However, this frame was reflected in government actors’ discourse on NGOs within Western State. For instance, one government representative who helped organize Western State’s AHT task force argued:

When it came to deciding who was going to be on our task force to draft recommendations for legislation, we wanted to hold some accountability to the recommendations because we are hoping that they’ll be implemented or developed. We wanted something doable and feasible. So we picked NGOs that were already doing this work and had systems in place that we could expand on...

In our state, sex trafficking is a problem as well as labor trafficking. They [NGOs that focus on sex trafficking] seem to just want to address sex trafficking. But what about labor trafficking?...We’re seeing a lot of labor trafficking cases here…We can’t ignore that that’s going on or say one is worse than the other or that we should focus on one and not the other. (Emphasis in the original; Interviewed 2007)

Together, the above quotes suggest that members of government identified certain successful NGOs as a resource and conveyed a frame of human trafficking similar to these successful NGOs. The former point is particularly critical for Western State. The legislation these NGOs proposed authorized the state to fund services to human trafficking victims. Throughout the interview, this particular representative of Western State government noted that due to budgetary restraints, it was important to work with NGOs that had a preexisting infrastructure to provide services and implement AHT programs. This alleviated some of the financial burden off of the state to create such an infrastructure themselves. The relationship between the NGOs and the state here was mutually beneficial.

As previously noted, unsuccessful NGOs in Western State conveyed a frame of sex trafficking that linked demand for a commercial sex industry with sex trafficking. Together, these NGOs formed a loose coalition. These NGO representatives were critical
of the successful NGO coalition for not emphasizing prevention of human trafficking in their policy recommendations. For these unsuccessful NGO representatives, policies that center on ending the demand are necessary to preventing human trafficking.

A consideration of unsuccessful NGOs bolsters an understanding of what factors explain successful NGOs’ achievements in Western State. In regards to resources, the coalitions were seemingly comparable in terms of the number of highly formalized and less formalized NGOs they included. However, respondents’ accounts suggest that the coalitions operated differently. As previously noted, members of the successful coalition claimed to work well together. Members of the unsuccessful coalition relayed different experiences. For instance, when discussing coalition-building with other NGOs, this abolitionist NGO representative noted:

…I’ve heard of other cities…[that were] really just very great in terms of having all their doors open to everybody else and I don’t think that’s the situation in [this city]…It was really hard to move forward in terms of coalitioning [sic] and stuff. (Interviewed 2007)

The narratives of other coalition members reflect a similar perspective. There existed barriers to developing a coalition and working with like-minded NGOs as a coalition on shared objectives. Comparing these respondents’ narratives with that of respondents belonging to the successful coalition, it is apparent that a cohesive and efficient coalition was available to successful NGOs, but not to unsuccessful NGOs.

Another barrier faced by unsuccessful NGOs was a less welcoming political context compared with what successful NGOs encountered. For instance, when discussing why her particular NGO failed to reach its policy objectives in Western State, a respondent noted:
We were so successful in [another city]. I think we thought that it would be easier here. But when we got here, [the successful] coalition was strong and already working with people at the government level…We are just always fighting for a meeting!...Out here, they don’t know us as well and I think their coalition wants to keep their power and I’ve heard that they try and keep law enforcement, U.S. Attorneys, and other people in government from working with NGOs like us. (Interviewed 2007)

The NGO which the respondent represents is an elite within the U.S. AHT movement.

This NGO is recognized for having policymakers’ support and a major impact on AHT policy in another political arena outside of Western State. This NGO also possessed important resources, which allowed it to expand its operations into other countries and states, including Western State. However, the NGO’s resources and reputation outside of Western State were not enough to insert its representatives into significant policy discussions with Western State’s policymakers and other key government actors.

An additional factor explaining this particular NGO’s lack of success may be the timing in which it came to Western State, which possibly hindered the NGO’s ability to create the same types of relationships with government actors achieved by successful NGOs. For instance, one respondent, representing an abolitionist NGO that was a relative “newcomer” to Western State, remarked:

…[W]hen I had gotten here…there was already some established…task forces, coalitions, and sides and camps and things like that so it just makes it for one person to come in and want to just do work on it, it makes it very difficult for that... I had the benefit of obviously having [my NGO’s] reputation behind me when I came in and everyone sort of knew [of my NGO] but obviously didn’t know that [the NGO] had a presence in [Western State], so that was sort of a task to try to establish ourselves here... (Interviewed 2007)

While this respondent perceived that the time at which the NGO was first established in Western State served as a barrier for the NGO, timing may have also adversely affected
other members of the unsuccessful coalition originally from Western State. While the majority of NGOs within the unsuccessful coalition were based in Western State, most of them were not established as long as the NGOs in the successful coalition and many adopted human trafficking as an issue around the same time or after human trafficking gained increased national attention. As noted earlier, several of the successful NGOs were already known for their work with immigrant communities and built relationships with government actors through this work prior to heightened attention to human trafficking. The time at which successful NGOs built relationships with government actors may have contributed to the welcoming political environment they encountered when working on human trafficking, an environment not available to unsuccessful NGOs.

Lacking the same quality and quantity of relationships with members of government clearly disadvantaged members of the unsuccessful coalition. This may have contributed to their frame of human trafficking not resonating with government actors. By presenting contesting frames, this coalition seemed to discredit themselves to at least some members of government because they were proposing something different than the NGOs whose opinions they trusted. One law enforcement officer, who built close relationships with members of the successful coalition, critiqued the unsuccessful coalition for overemphasizing sex trafficking and being more concerned with prostitution than with human trafficking as a whole. Throughout the interview, this officer characterized the contesting NGOs as “distracting,” “political,” and “making claims they can’t support” (Interviewed 2006). He added, “Where’s their proof?” This officer also
made a point of arguing that members of the successful coalition were “actually doing the work.” His frame of unsuccessful NGOs is closely aligned with how successful NGOs’ framed unsuccessful NGOs. It is unclear if successful NGOs shaped this officer’s perspective of their antagonists or if the antagonists’ frame appeared to him as unreasonable, and therefore did not resonate with him. However, the same kinds of claims and evidence these unsuccessful NGOs used were completely regarded as reasonable by government actors in other states as well as at the federal level. Indeed, at least one of these unsuccessful NGOs is identified as one of the NGOs that influenced federal AHT policy. In Western State, though, the successful NGOs’ frames may have appeared more reasonable because of this officer’s relationship with these NGOs. This relationship reasonably could have been shaped by the timing in which successful NGOs first forged relationships with members of government.

In sum, by comparing positive and negative cases, it becomes apparent that certain contextual features facilitated the success of some NGOs and served as a barrier to unsuccessful NGOs within Western State. Successful NGOs communicated a frame that resonated with government actors. While this suggests the power of frame resonance in determining their success, it is important to note that only a select group of NGOs were invited to sit on the state’s AHT task force and directly take part in AHT policy discussions. The ability of this group to communicate their frame and impact AHT policy was facilitated by the presence of political allies and their available resources, including an effective coalition. Government actors’ narratives suggest that unsuccessful NGOs did not communicate a reasonable frame. This may in large part explain their lack of
success. However, they also suffered from a non-cohesive coalition and a lack of political allies, which possibly hindered their ability to effectively challenge the frames posed by their antagonists. A coalition of NGOs sharing a similar demand-centered frame achieved much more successful in Eastern State.

**How NGOs in Eastern State Overcame Framing Contests and Achieved Success**

Eastern State shares many similar characteristics to Western State including a sizable immigrant population, early high-profile cases involving sex trafficking and labor trafficking of foreign nationals, and being recognized as having one of the highest rates of human trafficking within the U.S. Also like Western State, two separate coalitions of NGOs battled to have their frame of human trafficking reflected in Eastern State’s AHT legislation. One side emphasized the role of gender inequality in encouraging human trafficking, advocated a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking, and sought for stronger criminal penalties for parties comprising the demand and no criminal penalties for parties used in prostitution. The other side advocated for an inclusive definition of human trafficking and strongly argued that legislation not emphasize one form of trafficking over another. Both sides sought for state legislation to make human trafficking a state crime and for the state to fund services for victims of human trafficking. However, unlike Western State, the coalition emphasizing the link between sex trafficking and demand was the most successful in influencing the Eastern State’s AHT policy. This coalition reached many of its objectives, except criminal penalties still apply to people in prostitution. Table 6.1 identifies the frame reflected in Eastern State’s
AHT policy, the frame presented by challengers that is not reflected in Eastern State’s AHT policy, and the number of respondents that were actively advocating for each.

How did this coalition achieve success? As noted by one policy advocate who focuses on commercial sexual exploitation of children:

…[J]ust in the last year, the U.S. government has put out a number of research proposals and made a number of grants to finally start doing research on [human trafficking]. I actually feel very comfortable that a lot of different aspects of it are being covered now finally. Both U.S. victims and international…I mean things have changed dramatically since [our founding]. I would have assessed the U.S. as really bad. And now there’s a tremendous amount of activity. (Interviewed 2006; emphasis in original)

By expressing an increased concern with human trafficking, the U.S. government also signaled an expanded political opportunity to NGOs engaged in AHT work which previously had not existed. Subsequently, political opportunities expanded for NGOs at the subnational level in Eastern State. As noted by another policy advocate focusing on commercial sexual exploitation of children:

[Our organization] had been working on this sex tourism since the early ‘90s…We had a hard time getting policymakers to pay attention for the longest time, but since trafficking has become a “sexy” topic, we’ve gotten more of a reception…(Interviewed 2006)

The above reflects a common perspective shared by other respondents. State policymakers were more receptive to discussing human trafficking with NGOs around this time, probably as a result of heightened national attention to the problem.14 This suggests that Eastern State policymakers’ increased interest in human trafficking provided an expanded opportunity for NGOs to exploit. Further, one of these NGOs

14 NGOs representatives within this sample argued that the issue received increased attention from the media and the federal government as a result of the AHT movement and NGOs’ efforts. However, they recognized the media and members of federal government as the vehicle by which the issue of human trafficking gained widespread exposure and became of interest to subnational policymakers.
already successfully advocated that the governor support criminal penalties for sex tourism prior to the state’s adoption of AHT legislation. The governor also communicated a frame of prostitution and demand that closely resembled that conveyed by the successful coalition. The governor’s previous support of at least one of these NGOs and apparent willingness to crack down on the sex industry also may have presented a political opportunity for these NGOs to achieve their AHT policy objectives.

NGOs within this successful coalition also benefited from their available resources. Members of this coalition received a federal grant in support of AHT coalition work. According to a policy advocate focusing on commercial sexual exploitation of children:

> We already had a coalition with other groups with the same concerns and when a federal grant became available to work on trafficking we applied for it and got it….it was the first grant [for our state] and we got it. And that really helped us make connections with law enforcement, district attorneys, and state legislators and we all worked together on this and we still have a good working relationship to this day… (Interview 2006)

The federal grant these NGOs received allowed them to expand their preexisting coalition to include other NGOs and created opportunities for the coalition to work with government actors. This particular respondent believed that they received the grant because they were already engaged in AHT efforts, asserting “…we have a good reputation for our work” (Interviewed 2006). This reputation possibly contributed to the coalition’s credibility among members of government.

The experience and reputation of certain NGOs within the coalition was not the only factor that qualified them for this early and important grant. As indicated by a policy advocate for women immigrants who belonged to this successful coalition:
[Our city] was where money was coming in, one of the first cities money really
came in for trafficking, because it was identified as this…trafficking hotbed…

It was a very political reason why [a certain NGO] was put on the head of the
grant to receive this funding for this project because at the time, and certainly of
course still now, there was a very strong anti-prostitution…feeling coming from
the government. [The NGO] is clearly an anti-child prostitution…agency. It
seemed it would be in favor with the government at the time…[I]t was this whole
strategic idea of how we could like get in with the government, get the funding,
because all of a sudden all this funding was available for trafficking, you know?
And it was seemingly this sole human rights platform that the Bush administration
had…And what’s more is that we…came up with…a dynamic program model
[that the coalition proposed in the grant application]. (Interviewed 2007)

While this coalition received the grant partly due to the increased funding for AHT work
coming into their city and their “dynamic program model,” the above demonstrates that
members first recognized a political opportunity existed and then developed a strategy to
take advantage of it. They were prime candidates for this particular grant given their
specific geographical location, a “trafficking hotbed,” and their own frame of sex
trafficking, which complimented the federal government’s stance on prostitution. As
noted earlier, this grant enabled these NGOs to expand their network and build important
relationships with subnational government actors.

Respondents also identified the diversity NGOs within the coalition as another
factor facilitating their success. The coalition included policy advocates, service
providers, community-based organizations, and community leaders. These members
strengthened the coalition in different ways. As noted by this policy advocate for
children’s rights:

We were holistic…The [community-based organizations] knew what worked best
in the different communities…how to get the cooperation of members of the
community and how to approach trafficking in those communities since how
trafficking was happening, who was controlling it was different in each
community…And there was social services…who were funded to do service provision…[Our NGOs] weren’t service providers…We were…NGOs…that did policy advocacy…we organized campaigns, committees, lobbying…(Interviewed 2007)

Service providers and community-based organizations possessing limited funding to do policy advocacy benefited from policy advocates within the coalition who had the resources to do this work. Policy advocates benefited from the presence of service providers and community-based organizations who could speak to the dynamics of human trafficking and its direct effects on their clients and communities, thus bolstering the credibility of the policy advocates’ claims. The coalition pulled their resources and while some NGOs provided meeting space and the majority of the funding for coalition work, others contributed in additional ways, including clerical work and awareness-raising among and coalition building with community members and law enforcement. Other members worked on lobbying and building relationships with members of the government.

The coalition also benefited from preexisting political and celebrity support of some of its members. As noted earlier, one particular NGO successfully lobbied and worked with the governor on strengthening laws against sex tourism prior to the state’s adoption of AHT legislation, which was also supported by the governor. Celebrities also conveyed their support for one particular NGO, a feminist policy advocacy organization, via media outlets, including highly-rated television programs. These celebrities helped garner media attention and funding for these NGOs and also signed a letter of support for the legislation advocated by this coalition. When discussing the impact of media attention, a NGO representative commented that prior to a popular television program
highlighting his NGO, 15,000 people, over approximately a ten year period, subscribed to NGO’s list serve to receive information. Two days after the airing of this television program, 10,000 additional people subscribed to the NGO’s list serve. Speaking to the effect of this heightened attention, the respondent remarked:

I don’t think we’ve changed really. I think awareness of the issue has changed, so we get more of a hearing now than we used to. We used to get no hearing…to tell you the truth… I had a meeting with a district attorney’s office in [our state] last week. There were three district attorneys and two investigators in the room. Ten years ago, I couldn’t get a phone call returned from district attorneys’ offices… and we haven’t really changed anything. I think what we’ve done is kept doing what we’ve always done and try and bring attention to it and just the whole issue now has gotten to the point where I guess there’s enough critical mass behind it that people are starting to pay attention. (Interviewed 2006)

In sum, this coalition’s available resources, preexisting organization, and frame of sex trafficking made them likely candidates to receive an important federal grant, which resulted from the federal government’s own increased concern with human trafficking. This grant provided monetary support for the coalition and allowed it to expand its membership. It further enabled coalition members to build relationships with subnational government actors who were increasingly receptive to discussing human trafficking with NGOs. This political opportunity at the subnational level provided NGOs an opportunity to effectively communicate their frames, as evidenced in the AHT polices the state adopted. Unsuccessful NGOs in Eastern State were operating within a very different context.

In Eastern State, the unsuccessful NGOs share similar characteristics to successful NGOs in Western State. They too are overwhelmingly service providers, focus primarily on foreign national victims of human trafficking, and advocate for an inclusive definition
of human trafficking in AHT state policy. Most of these NGOs take a neutral stance on prostitution and their frames of human trafficking are guided by a matrix of domination ideology. They also formed a coalition in order to meet their policy objectives. In Eastern State, why were these NGOs unsuccessful in achieving their policy objectives?

According to one advocate and service provider for immigrant and refugee communities:

[The successful coalition] was very well-funded and they had full time people working on the lobbying and advocacy…We didn’t have any of that. We were pulling time from all the other work that we have to try to advocate for our position…[We] couldn’t compete with [their] PR assault. There was no way! And they were very successful. I was like, “We need to use some of those techniques!” (Interview 2007)

The above reflects a perspective conveyed by several unsuccessful NGOs. They clearly lacked resources in comparison to the successful coalition, which they attributed to the fact that their coalition was comprised of service providers while the successful coalition was mostly made up of policy advocates.

Another factor explaining this coalition’s lack of success may come down to the frame it conveyed, which did not resonate with important members of state government. Illustrating this, a sex worker advocate and service provider argued:

… There was so much focus on sex trafficking [in Eastern State]. Particularly the governor…a few years ago had some big case around travel sex tourism, things like that. So I think that’s also in his focus as well. (Interviewed 2007)

As noted earlier, prior to Eastern State’s adoption of AHT legislation, the governor supported criminal penalties on the sex tourism industry, and communicated a frame of prostitution that closely resembled that of the successful NGOs. This suggests that unsuccessful NGOs did not communicate a frame that resonated with an important government leader, which may further explain their lack of success. While it is unclear if
successful NGOs shaped the governor’s perspective on prostitution or if these NGOs’ frame resonated with the governor’s own understanding of prostitution, it appears that the governor was more sympathetic to successful NGOs than to unsuccessful NGOs. This provided a political opportunity to the successful NGOs that was not available to the unsuccessful NGOs.

In both Eastern State and Western State, NGOs engaged in framing contests and faced significant challenges from their antagonists. In both cases, the successful coalitions worked in a context more conducive to success compared with the unsuccessful coalitions, which facilitated their ability to impact AHT policies despite resistance. Similar factors also advantaged the successful coalition within Midwestern State. However, the successful coalition in Midwestern State possessed another key benefit not available to successful coalitions in Eastern State and Western State: the absence of framing disputes among competing NGOs.

How NGOs Attained Success in Midwestern State

Table 6.1 identifies the frame reflected in Midwestern State’s AHT policy and the number of respondents that were actively advocating for it. In Midwestern State, state AHT policies and legislation differentiate sex trafficking from labor trafficking, link sex trafficking with the demand for a commercial sex industry, create increased penalties for parties constituting the demand for a commercial sex industry, and emphasize domestic trafficking. All these points were advocated by a successful coalition of NGOs within Midwestern State. One objective they did not achieve was state funding in support of victim services.
Midwestern State is characterized as having high rates of sex trafficking when compared to the majority of other U.S. states. Compared to Western State and Eastern State, Midwestern State does not have a sizable immigrant population and early and notable cases of human trafficking involved domestic sex trafficking, which may help explain why human trafficking was regarded as largely a domestic problem of sex trafficking within the state.

The coalition found most impactful on Midwestern State’s AHT policies was comprised of service providers and policy advocates. Members of this coalition were also invited to participate in a state task force commissioned with developing policy suggestions for the state legislature. In addition, members of this coalition were also asked to discuss human trafficking with different government agencies at the local and state level, and at least one member provided expert testimony on sex trafficking to federal agencies.

As a coalition, they advocated for AHT policies that reflected their demand-centered frame of sex trafficking. However, their perspectives on prostitution varied, with one member arguing all forms of prostitution are trafficking and other members arguing that most instances of prostitution are exploitive. Ideologically, members of this coalition also varied with some NGOs characterizing sex trafficking as a gendered problem and others situating sex trafficking and labor trafficking within a matrix of domination. Members of this coalition also diverged somewhat in their focus and AHT work. The majority of these NGOs primarily focus on sex trafficking and strongly advocated for AHT policies to address domestic trafficking. Still, a few members of this
coalition chiefly worked with immigrant communities, focused on foreign national
victims, addressed both sex trafficking and labor trafficking, and did not emphasize the
role of demand for either.

While members of this successful coalition may frame human trafficking
differently, respondents argued that contentious debates over how to best frame sex
trafficking did not occur among its members. Further, respondents claimed that they did
not face external resistance from other NGOs posing competing frames. While a lack of
negative cases makes it difficult to confirm what factors explain this coalition’s success,
certain themes emerged throughout respondents’ narratives that help explain their
accomplishments.

According to respondents, certain contextual factors specific to Midwestern State
shed light on why the coalition’s frame of human trafficking is reflected in AHT policies.
One such factor is the large number of NGOs within the state focusing on violence
against women. When discussing why the state’s AHT policy emphasizes sex
trafficking, a direct service provider, whose NGO works on violence against women,
remarked:

I think there were some things that probably primed the pump a little bit. We’re…better covered by victim service providers then almost any state in the
country. [All but three of Midwestern State’s] counties have a battered women’s
or sexual assault program…So I think [sex trafficking] rang true for victim
service providers too who were saying, “Yeah, that’s not a shock to us.” They’re
seeing it too…More people may be looking…there are more feet on the ground in
communities dealing with especially violence against women issues and that
might explain too why it’s been more at the forefront at people’s thinking than
labor trafficking…(Interviewed 2007)
The above perspective was conveyed by most respondents in this coalition who also noted that activists in this state were central in mobilizing the violence against women movement decades earlier. These efforts resulted in the establishment of a large number of service provision and policy advocacy NGOs that worked professionally on issues related to violence against women within the state. Their overall objective to end violence against women facilitated coalition building. While initially their movement efforts centered on sexual assault and domestic violence, their advocacy efforts extended to others forms of violence against women that they identified and adopted over the years, including sex trafficking. They often went and lobbied their state legislators together and supported one another’s specific campaigns. As established and professional NGOs, they also possessed the infrastructure to provide direct services and had the resources to engage in awareness raising and policy advocacy work.

In addition to or possibly resulting from this NGO infrastructure to address violence against women, the issue of forced prostitution was familiar in this state prior to the initial passage of the U.S. TVPA. This point was a critical factor referenced in respondents’ explanations of why Midwestern State’s AHT legislation emphasized sex trafficking. As noted by this direct service provider and policy advocate that focuses on violence against women:

…[Y]ears ago another federal case of human trafficking, all within the border, of teenage girls used in prostitution…[Midwestern State] girls…was a big deal… So they [the traffickers] were recruiting girls into this prostitution ring that was interstate and I think that a lot of the folks in law enforcement… knew that case, so they weren’t completely shocked at the notion that this kind of stuff could be going on…(Interviewed 2007)

One government representative also argued:
Well...this issue of human trafficking is nothing new to [people of this state]. Girls from [our state] disappeared and we find out later they were forced to be prostitutes...Back in the ‘70s we were talking about this...This has been a major concern for us for many years now. (Interviewed 2007)

The fact that sex trafficking was an issue in Midwestern State prior to the more recent national attention to human trafficking was commonly noted by respondents representing both NGOs and government. Respondents often discussed high-profile cases of sex trafficking that occurred ten to twenty years prior to the initial enactment of the TVPA. In addition, service providers were claiming to consistently encounter victims of sex trafficking and the historical context may have made these NGOs’ claims appear credible to some government actors.

A coalition of NGOs advocated that the state adopt AHT policies to address human trafficking and conveyed their perspective of the problem to policymakers. While legislators were committed to implementing AHT legislation, not all shared the same commitment to allocating resources to address human trafficking. As argued by this direct service provider who works with battered women:

I would say that when it [human trafficking] was first raised at the legislature, part of the reason they established the [state AHT] task force and asked for a study is I think that many of the legislators were incredulous as to whether or not this was a serious problem in [Midwestern State]. They didn’t put any money toward victim services. They passed a law and established a task force to find out, I think, if there really were victims. (Interviewed 2007)

A representative of government noted:

[The director of the legislative office]...was...struck by it [sex trafficking]...We have kind of an extensive and unpleasant history of having quite a bit of juvenile prostitution in [our state]. In fact, if you talk to people who work with women who’ve engaged in prostitution, they talk...a lot about [how]...so many girls were just being shipped to [other states] and that they were all from [Midwestern
State]…So I think that it started from that and that kind of caught people’s eyes…. So a group of concerned people [representing government and NGOs] got together… and thought, “Okay, we need to do something.” And trafficking itself was just sort of becoming talked about and recognized…domestically in the United States… So they put together a proposal for the legislature asking for a statewide coordinator and a study and some resources to address the issue and the legislature said, “That’s great, but…we want the study first before we do anything else.” (Interviewed 2007)

As reflected in the above quotes, representatives of government hesitated to commit resources to address human trafficking within the state. However, there were members of government who expressed serious interest in addressing the issue. These committed government representatives provided an expanded political opportunity for NGOs to convey their frame of human trafficking and make demands of the legislature. In addition, the increased national attention to human trafficking beginning in the 1990s may have served to peak some government actors’ concern with the issue, thus providing NGOs a favorable context in which to work with concerned government actors.

Another likely factor that facilitated this coalition’s success is the absence of antagonists. When the state decided to create its task force, government representatives invited NGOs from this coalition to be members of it, offer their perspectives, and work directly with law enforcement and other government representatives on AHT policy suggestions for the legislature. Generally, these NGOs shared a similar perspective of prostitution as exploitive, which they voiced on the task force. Interestingly, coalition members noted that the one debate that occurred on the task force centered on how to define sex trafficking despite their similar perspectives on prostitution. Recounting this event, a service provider that focuses on violence against women remarked:
The only debate we had [on the task force] was about--I mean there’s lots of women in the world who view themselves as sex workers and wouldn’t agree that they’re victims of trafficking…[It] was just raised as an issue…and I think [another coalition member] raised it actually because she’s into a lot of international women’s human rights work and I think…she raised the question and people were like, “No.” And it wasn’t a big issue. And everyone turns to [the one NGO in the coalition that works exclusively on prostitution] to check that stuff out and they’re very clear. They’re like, “We’re not working with sex workers. Sex workers don’t come to us and say, ‘Everything’s great and I need help and housing…’ We haven’t met any of these sex workers who are happy…” So they’re pretty clear from their perspective, but I guess when and if sex workers articulate that they have different needs and they’re not this other population of [trafficked] people, they would listen to it, but that hasn’t been articulated by anybody… [T]here wasn’t any really organized opposition to it. (Interviewed 2007)

While a sex worker frame of sex trafficking may not have resonated with the majority of task force members, even if sex worker advocates sat on this task force and directly conveyed their frame, NGOs communicating a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking benefited from the lack of “organized opposition” to their frame.

As previously noted, not all NGOs on this task force emphasized sex trafficking and demand. According to respondents’ narratives, coalition members with different emphases easily worked together. What explains this? First, the number of NGOs focusing on sex trafficking and demand far exceeded that of NGOs that did not have this same focus. Further, NGOs that did not frame sex trafficking as a product of demand reported not taking any serious issue with this frame. As noted by one direct service provider that primarily works with immigrant communities:

Prostitution is not my expertise, and I don’t work on the domestic side…I’m focused on immigrants and more trafficking of immigrants…so I’m fine with those groups that do work on prostitution to try and shape the legislation in that way…I don’t see our goals as contradicting. My concern is with immigrants, making sure they get the services they need…and [state] legislation recognizing
This NGO focuses on all forms of human trafficking of both women and men and identifies structural inequalities combined with restrictive immigration policies as forces that leave immigrants vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking. However, the respondent did not see her NGO’s perspective on human trafficking as conflicting with the frame posed by other NGOs that emphasize sex trafficking. Rather, when the issue of prostitution came up during coalition meetings, this respondent deferred to the expertise of NGOs that focused on prostitution. Essentially, instead of constructing this coalition as comprised of members with conflicting interests and goals, the respondent constructed this coalition as encompassing members that worked on different aspects of the overarching problem of human trafficking. This perspective was voiced by other respondents within this coalition. These coalition members commonly referenced different NGOs’ contributions to the task force, including their expertise on domestic trafficking, international trafficking, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, prostitution, or victims’ needs. They seemingly respected each other’s distinct focuses and expertise and the differences in their frames did not impede their ability to work with one another. Indeed, their responses suggest that these framing differences were inconsequential to the work that they do.

Similarly to the successful coalition in Midwestern State, the successful coalition within Southern State also benefited from a lack of challenges posed by antagonists. Unlike Midwestern State, though, the successful coalition in Southern State advocated for
an inclusive definition of human trafficking and for similar treatment of sex trafficking and labor trafficking in Southern State’s AHT policy.

**How NGOs Realized Success in Southern State**

Table 6.1 identifies the frame reflected in Southern State’s AHT policy and the number of respondents that were actively advocating for it. In Southern State, state AHT policy defines human trafficking inclusively, does not apply differential penalties for sex trafficking and labor trafficking, mandates state funding for victim services, and requires AHT training for state and local law enforcement. All these features were advocated by a successful coalition of NGOs, in which the members overwhelmingly engage in direct services for immigrant, refugee, and minority communities, define human trafficking inclusively, take a neutral stance on prostitution, and do not link demand and sex trafficking. These NGOs were called on to offer their expertise on human trafficking to policymakers and several were invited to sit on the state’s AHT task force to devise effective AHT strategies.

Like Western State and Eastern State, Southern State has a sizable population of immigrants and is noted as having one of the highest rates of human trafficking in the U.S. Similarly to Western State, an early and high-profile case of human trafficking involved labor trafficking of a large group of foreign nationals and subsequent cases entailed both labor trafficking and sex trafficking. Also like Western State, successful NGOs defined human trafficking inclusively and overwhelmingly took a neutral stance on prostitution. However, more like Midwestern State, respondents argued that there were no major challenges posed by antagonists. Also, a minority of coalition members
emphasized sex trafficking and demand as a cause of sex trafficking. Despite this, respondents reported that debates over prostitution were not relevant to their coalition work.

Why were NGOs advocating an inclusive definition of human trafficking and neutral on prostitution successful in having their frame of human trafficking reflected in Southern State’s AHT policies? Respondents’ narratives suggest that the context of human trafficking within the state provides insight into this question. As previously noted, the early case of labor trafficking involving a large number of foreign nationals highlighted the threat of human trafficking within Southern State. This resulted in NGOs advocating that Southern State’s government address human trafficking. When state legislators decided to adopt AHT legislation, they called on certain NGOs to offer expert testimony on human trafficking. These professional NGOs were overwhelmingly service providers that served immigrant and refugee communities. As noted by this direct service provider that focuses on immigrants and refugees:

So there is some legislation and…it’s a typical political deal there. They’re willing to listen and they might introduce something and… you may be invited to talk with them. The last couple of times [human trafficking] came up before the legislature, I went down to testify before different committees…[or] we send someone down to do some advocacy work, [talk] to some people at the state. (Interviewed 2009)

The above suggests that a political opportunity emerged, in the form of policymakers’ interest in human trafficking and receptiveness to discuss human trafficking with NGO representatives. Given the early context of human trafficking within Southern State, NGOs focusing on immigrant communities seemed well-suited to offer their expertise on human trafficking to representatives of state government.
While Southern State’s specific human trafficking context makes it reasonable that policymakers drew on the expertise offered by NGOs that focus on immigrants and refugees, not all NGOs within Southern State focusing on immigrants and refugees were called on to offer their expertise. How did some NGOs become recognized by government as the experts on human trafficking? Resources and prior experience helps explain this. Three NGOs in particular were relatively large, established, and resourceful agencies that were called on to help the federal government serve human trafficking victims within Southern State prior to adoption of state-level AHT legislation. A direct service provider that focuses on domestic violence of immigrants and refugees noted:

We started a program working with survivors of domestic violence from immigrant populations [over ten years ago]…And even before that we had some refugee service programs and…I’m sure you’ve heard about the [early labor trafficking case involving foreign nationals in Southern State]. Well some victims from that case were brought to [our city]…and so we were contacted by what was then the INS [U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service15] telling us, “We’ve got all these [people] coming. Can you get ‘em settled, help ‘em find a place to live, get a job, help ‘em apply for their T visa?” We’d never heard of a T visa at that point. But we said, “Sure, that’s what we do.”…Because we were already doing the work when the first grants became available from the ORR [U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement], we thought, well, we should apply for one of those, we’re doing this anyway and…about a year later after that case [came] another case…and we got involved in that… (Interviewed 2009)

The above illustrates that these NGOs possessed an infrastructure to work with immigrants and refugees, which likely explains why INS requested these NGOs’

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15 The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135) dismantled Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, responsible for enforcing immigration law and administering services and benefits to eligible immigrants. Three new agencies within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) assumed the responsibilities formerly under the purview of INS: 1) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS, responsible for immigration service functions); 2) Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE, responsible for immigration law enforcement); and Customs and Border Protection (CBP, responsible for border security functions) (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2010).
assistance. These three NGOs then applied for and received federal AHT grants, which enabled them to build an infrastructure to specifically work with victims of human trafficking. At least two of these NGOs went on to do AHT policy advocacy at the national level and are members of a well-known national AHT coalition of NGOs. In all, these NGOs’ focus, infrastructure, and experience combined with the context of human trafficking within the state helps explain why they in particular were regarded as experts and invited to discuss human trafficking with the state legislature.

Another factor benefiting these NGOs was the lack of challenges to their frame of human trafficking by antagonists. As previously noted, a minority of the coalition of NGOs took a clear position against prostitution and emphasized the role of demand in encouraging sex trafficking. Despite the differences in framing among members of this coalition, respondents argued that they did not engage in framing contests with one another. For instance, one representative of a NGO that provides direct services to immigrants and refugees argued that the debates around prostitution impacted the NGO at the federal level, but not the state level. The respondent stated:

…I understand that we get dragged into [debates on prostitution] because there’s a very strong voice, very loud…voice…on a certain side…But…in [our state]…we haven’t faced those challenges directly from those groups…We haven’t seen it…the people who are strident about that [prostitution] side of the argument…haven’t taken up a strident position the way people in some other parts of the country have. I mean we work with them usually. We talk to them, we…go together to lobby for trafficking change and stuff and …things don’t get out of hand really, which…you would think if they could, this might be the place where that would happen, but it hasn’t. (Interviewed 2009)

The above demonstrates that NGOs worked together across their framing differences within Southern State. It also reflects the perspective that if such debates would occur,
Southern State “might be the place where that would happen,” because the state possesses a large contingent of conservative faith-based groups. Such groups within the AHT field tend to support a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking and some are known for adamantly arguing that AHT policies should recognize prostitution as inherently harmful.

What explains the absence of framing contests among these NGOs? First, respondents’ narratives suggest that different NGOs focused on different aspects of human trafficking and they did not perceive other NGOs as threatening their own position. It appears, then, that they respected each other’s frames to the extent that others did not directly undermine their own frame of human trafficking.

Second, the majority of the NGOs actively engaged in AHT policy advocacy promoted an inclusive definition of human trafficking and took a neutral stance on prostitution. This group included some of the largest and most resourceful NGOs engaged in AHT efforts that the state legislature also recognized as experts on human trafficking. Challenging these NGOs could serve to exclude less resourceful and less recognized NGOs with alternative frames from policy discussions and resources made available through the coalition.

Third, the frame proffered by NGO representatives emphasizing the relationship between demand and sex trafficking, particularly domestic sex trafficking, may not have fully resonated with government actors. Early, high profile cases involving labor trafficking of a multitude of foreign national victims complimented some NGOs’ claims that labor trafficking was a problem within this state characterized by a large immigrant workforce. Given this, an emphasis on sex trafficking over labor trafficking potentially
fails to wholly represent the problem of human trafficking as demonstrated in Southern State.

In all, certain factors help explain these NGOs’ success, including the state’s unique trafficking context and a lack of internal and external framing disputes. Further, they effectively mobilized resources to take advantage of a political opportunity in order to communicate their frame of human trafficking. A consideration of nonelite NGOs that shared a similar frame to that posed by successful NGOs, but failed to have their intended impact further demonstrates the importance of resources and political opportunities for understanding NGOs’ policy successes.

“Right” Frame, “Wrong” Context: Understanding Some Nonelites’ Lack of Success

Present within this study are nonelites who wanted government to create and execute AHT policies, but expressed no desire to directly inform the policymaking process. However, there are nonelites in this study who communicated a similar frame to that conveyed by successful NGOs, but did not have the direct impact on AHT policy that they desired. For instance, they wanted to speak directly with policymakers about human trafficking or sit on exclusive task forces with government actors, but were unable to do so. Considering these nonelites’ narratives provides important insight into the factors that facilitate NGOs’ successes.

A lack of resources is one critical factor explaining nonelite NGOs’ inability to be impactful. An example of this is evident with a feminist NGO, emphasizing domestic and international sex trafficking and demand, that desired to have a greater impact on federal legislation. This NGO shared a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking with the elite
coalition credited with impacting policy. The NGO possessed some important resources, including office space to work in, three to four paid employees, several volunteers, and several grants in support of its work. However, they constantly struggled to obtain additional resources necessary to engage in policy advocacy. As this respondent noted:

…[O]ne of the biggest issues for organizations that look to do grassroots work and directly participate in policy…is organizational development and how you can get capacity building funding so that your organization can sustain itself beyond just the program funding…[I]f you strengthen the…development side…for grassroots organizations, then grassroots organizations could do so much more. (Interviewed 2007)

This NGO consistently struggled to secure funding simply to maintain its programs and to “keep the doors open.” This took time away from engaging in policy advocacy, expanding its grassroots efforts, and growing the NGO.

One respondent perceived that securing additional resources and joining a coalition of likeminded groups could help her NGO reach its objectives. Yet the respondent also identified its lack of resources as a barrier to accomplishing this:

Like [well-known NGOs]…I think they have an easier time getting funding. I feel like if you say [the name of our NGO] people don’t know what [it] is…People want more. They want you to send documents, information letting them know that you’re not just gonna…go in there and create a mess… [For] a [well-known NGO], people just know. They know who you are when you work on projects. (Interviewed 2007)

In regards to the obstacles to working with likeminded NGOs, the respondent remarked:

…They’re like, “Oh, I don’t know [your organization]”… [Other NGOs] saying they work with [us]…they wanna know that that’s gonna help them, and that’s a good name to have a connection with. (Interviewed 2007)

These statements suggest the circular character of the NGO’s problem. Lacking name recognition and a credible reputation makes it difficult for the NGO to secure external
funding and join coalitions, both of which could facilitate its ability to engage in policy advocacy. However, establishing a credible reputation and making a name for itself is largely contingent on the NGO building its capacity and expanding its AHT efforts, which requires resources to accomplish.

The above quote also demonstrates another characteristic common to these nonelites. They did not have meaningful access to government representatives or belong to successful coalitions whose members possessed important political connections and resources. This is a significant barrier given that nonelite NGOs can benefit from the resources provided by a successful coalition and make connections with government actors through other coalition members already possessing such connections.

Certain obstacles exist to these nonelites joining successful coalitions. For example, one small, relatively new NGO made attempts to work with the established, successful coalition in Midwestern State. The NGO also wanted to sit on the state’s AHT task force alongside other members of the successful coalition. This nonelite policy advocate shared a similar demand-centered frame of sex trafficking with the majority of coalition members. The respondent did not gain access to this coalition, as well as government actors, despite repeated attempts to do so. When explaining why this coalition would not work with the nonelite NGO, the respondent argued:

I don’t know why [their coalition] won’t work with us. And I’ve totally requested like a hundred meetings with them and people at the statehouse and they don’t return my calls! It’s like if you aren’t a big organization and no one knows you, then you don’t have anything to offer…And I do have something unique to offer, but they don’t seem to care…I think they just want to keep their power to themselves and they see me as a threat or something. (Interviewed 2007)
From this respondent’s perspective, not being a “big organization,” which requires resources to accomplish, hindered the NGO’s ability to get a meeting with government actors and members of the successful coalition. The respondent further perceived that the successful coalition wanted to maintain its power, suggesting that this coalition was the gatekeeper to other NGOs gaining power and having influence.

None of the successful coalition members I interviewed spoke about this nonelite NGO specifically, yet their narratives suggest that they were not open to working with every NGO on policy advocacy that desired to work with them. For instance, one direct service provider that belonged to the successful coalition argued:

There are groups that try to join us, but we only really work with groups that are seriously working on this. (Interviewed 2007)

Another direct service provider echoed this point:

I don’t think there is a huge demand of people [trying to be part of our group]…We don’t have people trying to break down our door, trying to come in…We are fairly discriminating. We do want people that are doing this work. (Interviewed 2009)

These two examples demonstrate how NGOs framed other NGOs as qualified or unqualified to join their coalition, based on their assessment of whether or not these other NGOs were “seriously working” on human trafficking. When I asked these respondents to expand on this point, they both expressed a concern that with the increased attention to human trafficking, more NGOs were forming to address it that lacked the necessary knowledge and expertise. Such knowledge and expertise was important to ensure the productivity and reputation of the coalition. As noted above, these NGOs selectively chose which NGOs to include in their “fairly discriminating” coalition to work on
specific policy suggestions and create strategies on how to best meet their policy objectives.

Overall, these examples demonstrate that at least for some nonelite NGOs, their frames alone were not enough to ensure their access to policymakers or entry into elite coalitions, both of which could have facilitated their ability to reach their goals. Lacking resources, connections with elite NGOs, and an established reputation, as well as being perceived by other NGOs as not having much to contribute, posed barriers to these nonelites achieving their goals. In other words, the structural context in which they were embedded affected their ability to directly inform AHT policies in ways that reflected their frame. Another way in which the relationship between structural factors and framing manifested itself within this study centers on context in which NGOs neutral on prostitution attempted to garner success.

Understanding the Role of Strategic Framing for NGOs Neutral on Prostitution

Framing is strategic. Movement actors construct frames in ways that maximize their potential to reach movement goals (McCammon, Hewitt, and Smith 2004; Benford and Snow 2000). In this study, the importance of strategic framing was prevalent among a diversity of NGOs. However, it was particularly salient among NGOs that take an institutionalized neutral stance on prostitution. The fact that these NGOs do not see a perspective on prostitution as relevant to their own work or perspective on human trafficking calls us to question why they take any sort of institutionalized stance on prostitution, albeit a neutral stance. Respondents’ narratives suggest that taking this
stance was necessary to maximize the likelihood they could reach their objectives given the specific context in which they were embedded.

While these NGOs did not always successfully impact AHT policies, their neutral stance on prostitution helped them in critical ways. For some NGOs, this neutral stance was deemed necessary given the types of communities and NGOs they work with, such as sex worker communities and faith-based NGOs. Taking a position one way or another could alienate one of these communities. However, many respondents within this study also emphasized the necessity of a neutral stance given the “anti-prostitution pledge” required of NGOs’ working both domestically and internationally. The anti-prostitution pledge refers to federal policies stating that eligibility for AHT funding is contingent on organizations taking an organizational stance against prostitution and sex trafficking and explicitly agreeing that they will not promote, support, or advocate for the legalization or practice of prostitution.\textsuperscript{16}

Discussing these reasons for taking an institutionalized neutral stance on prostitution, a Northern State policy advocate and direct service provider for immigrant and refugee communities stated:

\ldots [We] don’t take any position on prostitution because we don’t feel that we have to.\ldots And frankly because some of our international work…taking a stand either way would probably hurt us in a lot of the communities we work in. [Our NGO] \textit{did} take a stand against the prostitution pledge although we have signed it, obviously, or I wouldn’t be sitting here. We obviously have signed it, but you know we signed onto a very strong letter opposing it...But we had to sign [the

\textsuperscript{16} The “pledge” is required through \textit{The United States Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act} of 2003 and the 2003 Reauthorization of the \textit{TVPA}. In 2004, certain organizations were exempted from taking the pledge required by \textit{The United State Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act}, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the World Health Organization; the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative; and any United Nations agency (USAID 2005).
pledge]. There wasn’t any other choice….We looked at it to figure out…what do we have to do for implementation of this….how do we interpret what it means...You know, it’s absolutely putting restrictions on what we can do and what we can’t do because of some organizations’ and some legislators’ beliefs about trafficking… I mean we certainly…do advocacy based on what we think is…the best from…what we hear directly from clients on what they need, what we see in the field…[We] do advocacy based on that for how we think things need to shift or change or can be improved at the local level as well as at the national level. (Interviewed 2007; emphasis in the original)

As indicated here, a neutral stance on prostitution enabled the NGO to do its work.

However, the requirement to take the pledge compelled the NGO to take a stand against it alongside other NGOs, although they already signed it given their reliance on federal funding. Signing the pledge, though, did not prevent the NGO from publicly contesting it. Protesting the pledge apparently did not endanger the NGO’s eligibility for federal funding, evidenced in federal grants it received after stating its opposition. Sex worker advocacy organizations would not be able to sign the pledge (something that both sex worker advocates represented in this study said they would never do) and be eligible for this funding if they took an organizational stance supporting the legalization of prostitution. A neutral stance on prostitution, then, allows NGOs to contest this policy, while protecting their eligibility for federal funding.

Some of these respondents noted that they directly disputed these funding requirements with funding agencies on a one-on-one basis, as illustrated by this Western State service provider whose neutral NGO signed the pledge:

So there is this money that came out of the Bush administration and they had given it to [the United States Council of Catholic Bishops] to be the auditors or monitors. So they get to select whatever they want in their contract and part of their contract was that if you are receiving money from us, then your clients cannot participate in rallies that have anything to do with prostitution…So whether that’s our federal government putting some kind of restriction on us or
them knowing that this other monitor...is telling us what to do, I’m not sure where that’s coming from but we have been very resistant to abide by that... Not that we would go out there and rally for prostitution, but we don’t want that kind of restriction...[W]hy is that even an issue for us? That’s not an issue for us. ‘Cause we don’t deal with that stuff. (Interviewed 2007)

I then asked this respondent if this restriction deterred them from applying for federal funding. This representative responded:

No, we do apply for the money, because the money is always needed, and we try and negotiate, so, “Is that language really necessary because the history of our organization is that we don’t participate in that type of discussion.” But we still don’t feel comfortable having that language here...That’s not for us to actually decide...“Oh you can’t do that or you cannot do that.” We’re not going to restrict our clients...So I think the discussion is going back and forth still, but that wouldn’t make us turn away for applying for funding. But it would definitely make us … more of an advocate in trying to change the wording of the contract. (Interviewed 2007)

Similar to the respondent previously quoted, this NGO signed the pledge despite its disagreement with it due to its reliance on external funding. The NGO’s concerns over funding, though, did not preclude it from challenging and resisting this policy it opposed based on its own organizational principles. At a time at which it was applying for funding, this NGO communicated its opposition and concerns with signing the contract directly to the party with power to decide which NGOs get funding. This NGO also received federal funding after declaring its opposition to the funding policy. Being neutral and concerned with funding, this NGO could have signed the contract as worded without ever stating its dissent. Yet the NGO’s organizational stance and disagreement with the policy mobilized the organization to challenge the policy. Its neutral stance on prostitution enabled the NGO to do this without apparent repercussions.
A neutral stance on prostitution not only provided NGOs the space to contest policies they opposed without jeopardizing their eligibility for funding, but it may also have protected certain NGOs from harmful political ramifications. For instance, the Western State NGO respondent quoted above is a movement elite in Western State, has close relationships with government representatives, and was an invited member of the state’s AHT commission. While the NGO from Northern State did not achieve its policy objectives in Northern State, the respondent noted that the NGO achieved its policy objectives in other U.S. states. The policy successes which NGOs neutral on prostitution achieved in some policy settings demonstrates that their neutrality did not hamper the possibility that they could receive a serious hearing by government actors and achieve success. This point is particularly salient when considering the experiences of sex worker advocates. For instance, a sex worker advocate observed:

… [The] anti-trafficking policies have been developed from the beginning to exclude sex workers and to exclude sex worker organizations, certainly officially to exclude anyone who won’t condemn prostitution. So my own involvement with [the] trafficking context has been very limited and frustrated due to the fact that my perspectives are specifically excluded. (Interviewed 2007)

Within this study, sex worker advocates argued that government actors are resistant to their frames of human trafficking. This suggests that no matter these NGOs’ expertise on human trafficking or available resources, many government actors would strongly oppose working directly with sex worker advocates on AHT policy or appointing them to government AHT task forces. Government actors’ own potential anti-prostitution perspectives, federal policies and discourse on prostitution, and laws criminalizing prostitution likely restricted or closed off political opportunities to sex worker advocates,
limiting their ability to take part in policy discussions with government actors and impact AHT policies in ways that reflect their own frame of human trafficking.

Frames are clearly one factor that can facilitate or hinder NGOs’ ability to be successful. Based on NGOs’ frames, the broader political context restricts or allows for the possibility that NGOs are eligible for federal funding and can be successful. Sex worker advocates’ frames pose obstacles for them in this political context. While a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking may not always be reflected in AHT policies, their frame does not jeopardize their eligibility for federal AHT funding. NGOs neutral on prostitution are in a unique situation. A perspective on prostitution does not play a central role in their frame of human trafficking. However, they must take a stance against the promotion or legalization of prostitution to remain eligible for federal AHT funding, something that most of these NGOs represented in this study opposed doing. Already not supporting the promotion or legalization of prostitution makes it possible that they can sign the pledge. At the same time, their institutionalized neutral stance on prostitution allows them to oppose and resist such policies, while buffering them from certain material and political repercussions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to demonstrate the process by which NGOs garnered success in national and subnational settings. The results presented here accomplish this in several ways. First, these results support an integrative theoretical perspective to understanding the process by which NGOs achieved success. NGOs’ ability to inform AHT policy in ways that reflected their frame was facilitated by a combination of factors,
including the political context in which they were embedded, mobilization of available resources, membership to important coalitions, the ability to exploit identified political opportunities, and the content of their frames. Alone, each factor cannot explain NGOs’ successes, but together they provide key insight into how NGOs gain meaningful access to government actors and directly influenced governmental AHT policies. This result is bolstered by a comparison of successes and negative cases, and the experiences of elites and nonelites. In all, combining an integrated theoretical perspective and an instrumental, collective case-study methodological approach yields results that provide a more comprehensive understanding of social movement processes and outcomes than could be captured when solely focusing on a single case or one or two particular causal factors found meaningful in the social movement literature (Benford 1997; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996).

Other contextual factors may provide additional insight into why certain NGOs were successful and others not, including the timing in which the NGOs were first established and working on human trafficking and the human trafficking context characterizing the locations they worked in. Some NGOs also benefited from a lack internal and external framing disputes and challenges posed by antagonists.

Understanding the contextual factors that facilitated NGOs’ ability to effectively inform AHT policies does not negate the importance of framing within this process. Expanded political opportunities and the availability of sufficient resources could not ensure NGOs’ frames were reflected in policy if those frames did not resonate with policymakers. NGOs’ frames functioned to restrict or allow for the possibility that NGOs
could engage in policy discussions with government actors, be invited to sit on
government AHT task forces, and be eligible for federal funding.

Additionally, success for NGOs is gauged in large part by the extent to which
their frames are reflected within AHT policies. NGOs’ frames shape their policy
objectives and drive them to reach their objectives. NGOs would not have an apparent
reason to engage in AHT efforts and attempt to impact AHT policy if they did not first
interpret human trafficking as a problem, possess a clear idea of how it should be tackled,
and believe that the institutionalization of their frame would help alleviate the problem
while the success of opposing frames would exacerbate the problem. Framing is central
in the process by which NGOs achieve success, and this process is clearly mediated by
contextual factors.

These research results also expand knowledge on the AHT movement. At the
national level, these results provide mixed support for prior scholarly assertions that
shifting political opportunities allowed NGOs’ purporting a demand-centered frame of
sex trafficking to be overwhelmingly successful as measured by the institutionalization of
their frame in AHT policies, enforcement practices, and discourse of government leaders
under the Bush administration (Weitzer 2007). While respondents’ narratives suggest
that the political opportunity the Bush administration presented was significant and
facilitated their success, the ability of certain NGOs to successfully exploit this political
opportunity was contingent on their access and ability to mobilize existing resources
made available through their coalition. Thus, attributing these NGOs’ success to the
substance of their frame, which resonated with government actors open to discussing
policy issues with faith based groups and their allies, does not present a complete picture of how these NGOs’ garnered success.

These results also suggest that these NGOs were not overwhelmingly successful as suggested in prior research (Weitzer 2007). This is evidenced in federal agencies not fully executing the policies these NGOs endorsed and by prostitution remaining illegal for individuals “used” in prostitution. Therefore, these frames were not fully institutionalized and enforced and, based on their own gauge of success, these NGOs at best were partially successful.

Further, while previous research presents a picture in which NGOs proffering a demand-centered frame of sex trafficking have been overwhelming successful in impacting federal AHT policy (Weitzer 2007), respondents within this study know that they have not reached the same success in all subnational settings. Indeed, results from this research find that these NGOs and NGOs neutral on prostitution have achieved varying levels of success in influencing AHT policy. This indicates that framing contests between sex worker advocates and demand-centered NGOs within the AHT movement is not the only meaningful conflict occurring within this movement.

Demand-centered NGOs and NGOs neutral on prostitution contend with one another to see their frame reflected in AHT policies. When one particular frame successfully resonates within AHT policy, NGOs with competing frames are motivated to challenge this success and attempt success in other policy settings. Because not one single frame is reflected in AHT policies throughout the U.S., members on all sides recognize that they have not fully achieved their objectives and will persist in contending
with one another in different political arenas to shape subnational policies as well as future reauthorizations of the TVPA. Essentially, NGOs’ successes often cause unsuccessful NGOs to react, and the successes they have achieved in some contexts give them reason to attempt success in other contexts.

The above reflects a movement-countermovement dynamic characteristic of social movements. Successful framing for SMOs in a particular arena compels SMOs with alternative frames to attempt success in other venues that offer greater opportunities for success (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). However, the language of “movement-countermovement” does not clearly capture this dynamic within the U.S. AHT movement in which movement adherents share a similar objective of ending human trafficking, but offer different understandings of the problem and solutions for overcoming it. As noted by one Northern State AHT policy advocate and service provider:

> Well obviously there are really similar goals and it’s such a shame that there’s so much disagreement because ultimately everybody has the same goal. Nobody wants to see anybody put through a trafficking situation. So it’s a shame that like here’s the goal up above and then in between there is a lot of grey area and disagreements about things so I mean it’s really a shame. (Interviewed 2007)

Despite their shared objective to end human trafficking, clear differences in adherents’ frames of the problem lead them to work toward achieving disparate policy objectives. Successful framing for some inspires others within this movement to attempt success elsewhere. Given this, it is more appropriate to conceptualize this phenomenon as an “internal action-reaction movement dynamic” rather than a movement-countermovement dynamic. Doing so highlights the significance and effects of internal movement conflicts and competition between movement adherents.
That this movement is characterized by groups conveying distinct frames in which the differences are significant among its members calls us to question if these groups, across their framing differences, recognize common successes of the movement as a whole, identify common barriers to effectively addressing human trafficking, and share similar perspectives on the U.S. AHT approach. I turn to these questions in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 7
SUCCESSES, BARRIERS, AND THE U.S. ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

The research questions addressed in this chapter represent the original impetus for this dissertation. Given their critical role in mobilizing the anti-human trafficking (AHT) movement, garnering international attention to human trafficking, pressuring governments to actively engage in AHT efforts, and implementing the U.S. AHT approach, I recognized NGOs as possessing valuable knowledge. By compiling common insights, my objective was to expand knowledge on the AHT movement’s achievements and the existing barriers to effectively addressing human trafficking within the U.S., and to assess the U.S. AHT approach. This last point became particularly relevant early in my research when the U.S. Government Office of Accountability submitted a report stating that the U.S. government’s estimates of the scope of human trafficking were “questionable” (2006: 10). Suggesting that the U.S. government exaggerated the figures, critics publicly questioned the necessity of a U.S. AHT campaign (Markon 2007).

Informed by their rich experiences, NGOs possess valuable knowledge from which to assess: 1) the successes of the AHT movement and NGOs’ AHT efforts; 2) the
barriers to these successes being fully realized; 3) the U.S. AHT approach; and 4) criticisms of the U.S. AHT campaign. However, scholarship emphasizing the differences in how NGOs frame human trafficking (McDonnell 2007; Soderlund 2005; Hughes 2005; Miriam 2005; Raymond 2004; Bertone 2003; Crago 2003; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; Colimoro 2008) raises questions if there exist any general consensus on successes, barriers, and the U.S. AHT approach among NGOs conveying different frames.

To address these research questions, I analyzed transcripts individually and indexed the information each yielded pertaining to the research questions. I then cataloged where this information overlapped. Despite their framing differences, respondents’ share some general insights, which provide insight into these research questions. I also analyzed supplementary data in the form of government documents to gain a greater understanding of the U.S. AHT approach. This chapter presents the results from these analyses. In the following, I first present the successes and the barriers commonly recognized by NGO representatives. Next, I offer an assessment of the U.S. AHT approach. Third, I demonstrate how an understanding of NGO’s insights and the U.S. AHT approach provides important insight into criticisms raised of the U.S. AHT campaign. I conclude with a discussion of how these results expand knowledge on the U.S. AHT movement and the U.S. AHT approach.

RESULTS

NGO Perspectives on Successes and Existing Barriers

Respondents conveying diverse frames of human trafficking commonly identified certain successes of the AHT movement and their AHT efforts, as well as barriers to
these successes being fully realized. Figure 7.1 illustrates the successes and barriers commonly identified by respondents. This figure guides the subsequent discussion.

**Figure 7.1 Common Successes and Barriers Identified by NGO Representatives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater general awareness of human trafficking, largely facilitated by greater media attention to human trafficking.</td>
<td>General knowledge of human trafficking is often incomplete or inaccurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media presentations of human trafficking are often narrow and inaccurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government sponsored coalitions and task forces comprised of NGO and government representatives.</td>
<td>Conflicting roles of coalition and task force members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distrust of fellow members.</td>
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<td>High turnover of government representatives in coalitions and task forces.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of institutionalized knowledge.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interpersonal issues and competition between members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marginalization of NGO members within coalitions and task forces.</td>
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<td>Government funding in support of NGOs' AHT work.</td>
<td>Funding limited and not guaranteed.</td>
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<td>Restrictions on funding.</td>
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<td>Government sanctioned protections, services, and benefits for victims, largely made available through the TVPA.</td>
<td>Barriers to accessing services and benefits.</td>
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<td>Lack of regulations in place to adjust T nonimmigrant status.</td>
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<td>Inconsistent law enforcement support for victims.</td>
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<td>Stigma of and prejudice toward potential victims.</td>
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<td>Lack of institutionalized knowledge among law enforcement.</td>
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<td>Bystander fear of reporting possible cases to law enforcement.</td>
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Greater Awareness of and Media Attention to Human Trafficking

Respondents regularly identified a greater awareness of human trafficking among government actors, media, the U.S. public, and the international community as an important success. When discussing the evolution of the AHT movement, one feminist policy advocate observed that people’s knowledge and media coverage of human trafficking is greater today than in the past:

…even just last year when I said I worked for an organization that works on human trafficking, they didn’t really know. And…now I get…more people that really do know what human trafficking is. They might not necessarily know very much, but they have heard the word at least. And so I’ve noticed that a lot more. You don’t get as many blank stares….Just even on the news, even if the news organization has gotten the story wrong and it’s actually smuggling and not trafficking, you do see the words used. Like if you’re flipping through the paper, it’s on TV, you will hear the words “human trafficking” a lot more than you did a few years ago…. [So] when you hear people talk about human trafficking, because a lot of times it’s partially correct, but it’s not really correct, they always know that there’s something going on and so I think that’s better than nothing…There’s certainly a greater understanding. (Interviewed 2007)

The above reflects a sentiment commonly conveyed by respondents. Even though people have a greater awareness that human trafficking exists, their knowledge is often incomplete. This can lead to individuals not recognizing human trafficking in all its manifestations. Discussing this, one policy advocate for children commented that common discourse on human trafficking that centers on sex trafficking of foreign national women overlooks others forms of human trafficking:

… [There] are Americans who are trafficked…But do we ever talk about that? I mean, my God, in [this city] alone, 5,000 kids are involved in commercial sexual exploitation, whether that be pornography, prostitution…stripping, dance clubs, whatever it is. And those are American kids and that is trafficking, but do we ever hear about that? No way. (Interviewed 2007; emphasis in the original)
For respondents, this deficiency in knowledge is absolutely critical to overcome because, in part, they deem this knowledge as necessary to effectively combating human trafficking.

Respondents also expressed a deep concern that a lack of knowledge may lead to victims going overlooked. While respondents discussed the necessity of improving the general public’s awareness, they particularly emphasized this in the context of law enforcement. Law enforcement officials may possibly come in contact with victims through their role as “first responders” to crimes, but fail to recognize an incident as human trafficking because they lack knowledge on what constitutes human trafficking.

Illustrating this, one law enforcement official noted:

For me, it took having to change my whole way of looking at things…They look like prostitutes, talk like prostitutes…But after I learned about [sex trafficking]…I think you really do have to look beneath the surface. And I think [law enforcement] might miss a lot of cases because they just don’t know what to look for. (Interviewed 2009)

Law enforcement officials’ failure to recognize cases of human trafficking can adversely affect victims. Law enforcement may leave victims within a human trafficking situation or identify victims as criminals, seeing these individuals as “prostitutes” or, in cases involving foreign nationals, “illegal immigrants.” In turn, victims can be and have been detained and deported. Both scenarios violate the federal government’s guidelines on the treatment of victims as outlined in the TVPA.

Despite this deficiency of knowledge among law enforcement, respondents commonly report that law enforcement’s response to human trafficking victims has
improved as a result of their greater awareness of the problem. Illustrating this point, one direct service provider for immigrant communities commented:

[Law enforcement] would do a bust [of the massage parlors]. They would find the women there. They would arrest them for prostitution and that would be the end of it. But now with education, they know that they could be possible victims of human trafficking, so [the victims] may not be charged immediately with prostitution. Maybe [law enforcement] will give us an opportunity to talk to them. There’s always that level of…these people are still doing something bad, of course, but the treatment has gotten better. (Interviewed 2007)

Given the consequences of overlooking or misidentifying victims of human trafficking, continuing misperceptions, and the benefits of expanded knowledge, respondents regularly identified awareness-raising as an ongoing objective.

Respondents overwhelmingly recognized mainstream media as an important vehicle in raising the public’s awareness of human trafficking, particularly of sex trafficking. For instance, one feminist policy advocate, representing a NGO that focuses on sex trafficking and demand, remarked:

... I think what we’ve done is kept doing what we’ve always done and try and bring attention to it and just the whole issue now has gotten to the point where I guess there’s enough critical mass behind it that people are starting to pay attention. And you know because there’s--it’s such a horrific thing...[You’ve] seen all the news magazine specials and...the Lifetime TV piece on it, and those things have really informed a lot of people about it...It’s not us issuing our actions necessarily, but...to some degree...Lifetime did that piece, I think, because of organizations like ours and others...that they’ve spoken to...We’re just doing what we’ve always done...It’s just that we’re finally starting to get someplace with it...(Interviewed 2006)

Some respondents identified increased media attention to human trafficking as partly an effect of their NGOs’ efforts or the AHT movement’s efforts. This marks a successful outcome of their awareness-raising efforts. However, as indicated by the respondent quoted above, media coverage is critical in raising awareness because it reaches a greater
number of people than an individual NGO or a coalition of NGOs can do on their own.

The media, then, is essential for the AHT movement to transmit its messages to target audiences. Further commenting on the impact of media, the above respondent noted:

… [It’s] so funny with [the Lifetime movie]…it’s become the benchmark for so many people’s understanding of trafficking. Like two weeks ago I was testifying at a grand jury…about this sex tour company. And so I testify and come out, I’m in the waiting area…And the court reporter…comes up to the clerk and…the court reporter says, “Oh, I want to stay on this case. It’s really interesting.” And the clerk says, “What’s it about?” And she says, “Oh, did you see that movie on Lifetime?” And it’s like that’s become people’s frame of reference for trafficking…which I can’t complain too much about because, from our point of view, it was pretty good. The victims were a little too white and a little too young…but in terms of…the way they portrayed the methods of getting the women into the situation and maintaining them, I thought they did a good job with that. (Interviewed 2006)

The above illustrates another common sentiment expressed by respondents. Respondents were not completely satisfied by media presentations of human trafficking, including respondents who were overwhelmingly satisfied with these presentations. For instance, the respondent quoted above identified strengths with how the Lifetime movie presents the methods of coercion involved in sex trafficking and also stated in another part of the interview, “Thank God there was no sort of separating prostitution from trafficking message to [the Lifetime movie]…” However, this presentation of sex trafficking, in which “The victims were a little too white and a little too young…,” does not fully capture the NGO’s position that women across multiple statuses are vulnerable to sex trafficking. Further, this TV movie did not highlight Americans girls as victims of domestic trafficking, which is emphasized by this particular NGO. Essentially, the media’s frame of human trafficking does not completely mirror the NGO’s frame of human trafficking. Nonetheless, this particular respondent was generally pleased with
the *Lifetime* movie’s presentation of human trafficking because it helped raise awareness and transmitted important components of the NGO’s frame to mass audiences.

Respondents that do not share a frame that links demand to sex trafficking, focus on labor trafficking, or define human trafficking inclusively were less approving and more critical of media presentations of human trafficking. While respondents identified greater media attention to human trafficking and the greater public awareness that comes with as important, many respondents took issue with what they saw as the media’s narrow presentation of the problem. One direct service provider and policy advocate for immigrant and minority communities remarked:

> People actually are interested in the subject matter [of human trafficking] and I think that it’s important for our collaborative to go out there and talk about trafficking, not just in terms of sex and prostitution work, or whatever, because that’s all—we get a lot of calls from mainstream media to do some kind of piece on massage parlors or whatever, but you know we’ve done that and it hasn’t really gotten anywhere. It’s just more sensationalized stories. So we want to shed more light about the other stuff that’s not so “sexy,” or whatever you call it. (Interviewed 2007)

The “other stuff” the respondent later expands on is labor trafficking, a topic that mainstream media has attended less to. Respondents dissatisfied with mainstream media presentations of human trafficking regularly expressed concern that mainstream media does not deem the “realities” of human trafficking as titillating enough to present, which is a disservice to victims. One policy advocate for refugee women argued:

> I think what’s happened now with the glamorization of trafficking and…the *Lifetime* movie and this that and the other thing, it’s like there is a sort of sexiness to certain pieces of it, but the sort of reality day to day…is like men sleeping six in a bunk bed or two, overtop some restaurant in Chinatown…or wherever and it’s like their voices… I feel like their needs are still even to this day not…being heard and not being met… (Interviewed 2007)
A greater public awareness and mainstream media coverage of human trafficking coupled with existing deficiencies in this awareness and coverage demonstrates again the partiality of “success” for these NGOs. This point is further evidenced in respondents’ discussions of federally supported AHT coalitions and task forces.

**Government Supported Coalition Work**

Respondents commonly identified government sponsored coalitions and task forces composed of NGOs, local and federal law enforcement, and other stakeholders as a success for NGOs engaged in AHT work. The U.S. AHT approach clearly recognizes the critical role of collaborative partnerships between NGOs and law enforcement for carrying out the intent of the TVPA, including preventing human trafficking, protecting victims of human trafficking, and prosecuting human traffickers (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2009b; U.S. Department of State 2009). To understand the significance of this, it is first important to understand a traditional barrier to NGOs and law enforcement collaborating.

Throughout interviews, NGOs representatives and law enforcement regularly commented on the obstacles to them effectively working together on a whole host of issues, including human trafficking. The key barrier centered on their different objectives and perspectives on what their roles entail, with NGOs identifying themselves as “victim-centered” or “survivor-centered” and law enforcement officials emphasizing their responsibility to enforce the law, investigate cases, and prosecute cases. Discussing this, one direct service provider for immigrant and minority women argued:

…through the U.S. Attorney General’s Office, like there’s been a lot of emphasis on trying to work together in some capacity because…working with community
based organizations does help them…in a way that the law enforcement agencies working alone wouldn’t be able to… get the… evidence and cooperation that they would need from victims. But at the same time… being very survivor-centered… also could be a challenge in terms of… if a survivor really doesn’t want to speak to law enforcement, we’re not gonna tell them they have to. I mean we’re gonna tell them what the consequences are, but really leave it up to the person to decide… So those kinds of conflicts can happen in terms of… law enforcement [is] really about prosecuting and… getting the criminals and we’re very focused on survivors and… what their needs are to heal and move on in their life [sic]… (Interviewed 2007)

Seeking different and sometimes contradicting objectives can lead to a precarious relationship between NGOs and law enforcement. Being “survivor-centered,” direct service providers, in particular, may support a victim’s decision to not cooperate with law enforcement, which may hinder law enforcement’s ability to build and prosecute a human trafficking case.

In addition, most foreign national, adult victims must cooperate with law enforcement to become eligible for benefits made available through the TVPA, a policy most NGO representatives in this study contested. Respondents expressed concern that law enforcement may further harm victims if they treat them as witnesses they need to extract information from to help them build a case, and are insensitive to the fact that these people are victims of a crime, possibly traumatized and fearful of law enforcement. This can hinder the NGOs’ objectives to meet their clients’ needs and help them in the recovery process.

While their different and possibly conflicting objectives can put NGOs and law enforcement at odds with one another, respondents’ narratives suggest that federally funded coalitions and task forces comprised of NGOs and law enforcement can help smooth tense relationships between them, facilitate their ability to identify and work
toward accomplishing similar objectives, and can be mutually beneficial. The following narrative of a policy advocate, who focuses on commercial sexual exploitation of children and helped organize a federally funded coalition, summarized key benefits of such coalitions commonly evoked by respondents:

[Our coalition] was funded by the Department of Health and Human Services…and [the coalition] did three things. Training of law enforcement and service providers and NGOs in general. Outreach into ethnic communities…And then the third thing was the working group that we created…which was federal and local law enforcement. [The city police department], district attorneys from [our city], federal U.S. attorneys, FBI, ICE, service providers here in the city, and community groups. And [we] brought them all together to figure out how they were gonna work together to make trafficking cases, because both sides of the equation, law enforcement and service providers, both had to be part of the equation. And…very difficult in the beginning, very successful by the end. Unbelievably warm relationships by the end. And they together created…guidelines…. [They] decided what to do if you are a community based organization, federal [law enforcement], local law enforcement, what you do if you have a trafficked person in front of you. And they just hammered it out. Who do you call and what do you ask, what do you say…and it was not just about creating the guidelines, but about creating relationships among the groups so they were not so suspicious of each other anymore. [The city police department]…does not like the feds…City district attorneys don’t really like to be bypassed by a case going to the feds to be prosecuted…especially if it’s a high profile…sort of interesting case that’s gonna be in the newspapers, they wanna do it….Also, of course, service providers and law enforcement, they have to work together on trafficking cases because of the TVPA. Victims must agree to work in conjuncture with law enforcement if they’re gonna get all the services that they’re entitled to under the law…. So service providers and law enforcement gotta work together. And so what was great was getting them to know each other and to know who to call that you can trust and [a NGO] could even say, “Well, I have this potential case but I don’t want to tell you the contours of it until you tell me whether you’re gonna deport them or not.” And of course…the ICE agent, “Well I can’t tell you, but if it meets this, this, and this…” And so…they would have this sort of relationship that they could…talk about a case and work it through in a sort of safe relationship and that was what the [coalition] was all about. Very successful. (Interviewed 2006)

The above demonstrates important functions of federally funded coalitions and task forces. First, although combating human trafficking had become a key national
objective, there existed a lack of institutional knowledge on what human trafficking entailed and how to approach it. No mandatory human trafficking training existed for local and federal law enforcement and the different stakeholders generally lacked a concrete approach to tackling human trafficking. Coalitions and task forces helped NGOs and law enforcement fill this gap in knowledge. They enabled members to figure a means for identifying human trafficking, develop steps to take once a case was identified, learn the specific AHT responsibilities for each organization, and the point person and contact information for individuals within these organizations. Essentially, members of these coalitions together learned about human trafficking, including how to identify and address it.

A second critical function of these coalitions and task forces is that they brought parties together that otherwise were “suspicious” of each other. This distrust was evident between local and federal law enforcement, as well as between NGOs and law enforcement. Meeting on a regular basis overtime allowed these parties to get to know one another, develop relationships, and build mutual trust. The effect of this, as the above respondent noted, was that participants could, “… talk about a case and work it through in a sort of safe relationship…” Through these relationships, NGO representatives knew which knowledgeable individuals in law enforcement they could approach to seek support for their clients, which was necessary for most of their clients to access protection, benefits, and services.

These effects of coalitions and task forces addressed many NGO representatives preexisting concerns. It enabled them to be part of the process of developing AHT
strategies that took into consideration how to best protect and reduce harm to victims. Further, building participants’ knowledge of human trafficking reduced the likelihood that NGOs and law enforcement would overlook victims they came in contact with, and that law enforcement would mistakenly identify victims as criminals and in turn detain them and initiate the process of deporting them in cases involving foreign nationals.

These coalitions and task forces also helped NGO representatives to identify law enforcement officials they knew were concerned with human trafficking and committed to helping victims. For instance, after criticizing law enforcement’s approach to human trafficking as “missing half the game,” a policy advocate for refugee women celebrates the approach of one particular federal law enforcement official, a fellow task force member. Characterizing this individual, the NGO representative noted, “[The law enforcement official]…is right on…cares about victims…gets it…” (Interviewed 2007). The respondent could turn to this specific law enforcement official for support and information. The task force provided an opportunity for the respondent to meet and build a relationship with this law enforcement official, and learn to trust this person to advocate for victims. Such relationships were particularly important to NGOs because they knew which law enforcement official would be open to offering their clients support.

NGOs also benefited from the relationships they developed with representatives of other government agencies through these coalitions and task forces, as demonstrated through the following remarks made by a direct service provider and policy advocate for immigrants and refugees:

[The federal agency]… they’ll sometimes even…tell us…like, “You guys really need to go to Congress right now ‘cause we’re getting screwed on funding and if”
you want…to keep your programs going… you might want to do a concerted push”…Like they’ll give us some kind of…insider information about how things are running if they feel like we really need to be doing some big level advocacy at any given time, kind of like… “If you guys put some pressure on, it will help us to keep our funding level”…so there are times when people within the administration are like, “Hey, we need some outside help with this.” (Interviewed 2007)

The above demonstrates how these federally supported coalitions facilitated the ability of some NGOs to enter into relationships with government actors that were mutually beneficial. As noted by this respondent, this relationship afforded the NGO “insider information” it could use to benefit both the government agency and itself. Having these connections was highly valued by NGO representatives who knew people on the “inside” of government that supported them and that they could turn to for help.

While respondents commonly identified these federally funded coalitions and task forces as a success, their narratives suggest that they were not all equally or fully successful. According to respondents, one factor undermining their full success is high turnover of law enforcement. For instance, one policy advocate working on commercial sexual exploitation of children argued:

…[W]ith law enforcement, people are always moving on and so we had these great [city] cops for three years and all of them have moved on to other cases. Now we have a whole new set of [city] cops who don’t know that much about human trafficking and so we’re starting all over again and I mean that’s the way it is. I guess until there’s a generalized law enforcement training on human trafficking in this country, we’re always going to be playing catch up with them. (Interviewed 2006)

The above demonstrates the often fickle character of these coalitions and task forces that respondents encountered. Knowledge of human trafficking among law enforcement is not fully institutionalized within all law enforcement agencies. When knowledgeable law
enforcement officials were moved off coalitions or task forces, they were replaced by less informed law enforcement officials. “Playing catch up” with these less informed law enforcement officials challenged the functionality and productivity of task forces and coalitions. It further threatened to undermine their main purpose. Illustrating this, the same respondent quoted above noted:

And so here’s an illustration of the problem. We have these new groups of cops who don’t really know very much about human trafficking. We had a working group meeting a couple of weeks ago and at the meeting… the commander was bragging about the fact that they’d been making a lot of prostitution arrests but not finding any trafficking victims. And, you know why? “Because we asked them if they were trafficked and they said no.” And so everyone else at the table… ICE agents, FBI, lawyers, community groups, district attorneys who had all been part of the working group for some time now, all were kind of appalled that you don’t just ask them if they are trafficking victims…because they’re not gonna know, they’re not gonna say, they never are just gonna say on your first question. And then…one of the district attorneys pointed out to a specific case. She said, “You did a brothel raid a couple of weeks ago. You sent in a Mexican, Spanish-speaking undercover because you had already gotten information that it was an international Mexican brothel. And you went in, arrested a guy who was selling tickets to the brothel, put him in jail, set a high bail thinking that these guys usually aren’t able to make bail…but the next morning he made bail and was out and disappeared.” And she said, “If you had called the U.S. Attorney and ICE in advance, and the [city’s] D.A.’s office, and they had looked into this guy’s immigration status in advance and had picked him up, they would have been able to keep him in jail for a few more days on an immigration charge…which you can’t make bail for, and would have given them enough time to see if this was a trafficking case, because trafficking cases don’t reveal themselves immediately. Usually it takes a little bit of time, a little bit of digging.” (Interviewed 2006; italics in original)

As illustrated above, high turnover coupled with a lack of institutional knowledge not only challenges the effectiveness of AHT federally funded coalitions, but can also pose harm to victims and affect law enforcement’s ability to establish cases against human traffickers.
High turnover can also undermine another benefit of task forces identified by respondents. Specifically, it challenges members’ ability to develop long lasting relationships with other members. One direct service provider and policy advocate for immigrants and refugees argued:

…I think that most [work on] trafficking still works on interpersonal relationships. You know…it’s not so much like…the corruption model of…well if you know somebody inside you’ll get further, but it’s more that you know when you can establish and build relationships so that you can trust each other and work well together…that has very good long term effects. And…you see it a lot with local police officers, that a lot of times they’re rotated between departments and so you’ll have somebody that you’ve been working with for two years…who may be working for Vice or another department and then suddenly they’re gone. And their replacement doesn’t know anything about trafficking. You’re starting back again at ground zero…I think that’s really where we see…things break down…Or… the Assistant U.S. Attorneys who were working on the task force were getting reassigned like almost every year and so every year we had a new person who was leading the task force and so it was like rebuilding it every year because there was a new personality at the helm each time….I mean some turnover in the NGOs and there tends to be a lot of turnover in law enforcement, that with constantly shifting personalities, it’s harder to develop and build relationships over the long term…[Where] we see strength is where we’ve had longer term relationships with people because there’s been time to develop trust and they may have worked cases together before so they know, oh, if we call [the NGO] at three o’clock on a Friday they will actually be able to find shelter for the person…or we know…if we call this person at the local police department, they will come and do an initial interview with our client in our office without wearing their gun, you know, that kind of thing…[Because] we’ve experienced that with each other before and have been able to… work it out so when it comes up, there’s a lot more trust. And so…when there’s turnover…those relationships get…destroyed and we have to start over again….Having to reestablish connections takes a lot of time. You know, the [field] office where we see the greatest strength in relationships is the one where there’s been consistent people in the task force for a couple of years. And so from the beginning of the task force till now, there really hasn’t been much turnover and they’ve all been working together very well. (Interviewed 2007)

The shifting composition of coalitions and task forces requires members to build new relationships, a time consuming process, which may further undermine the effectiveness
of coalitions and task forces. The same respondent above, who represents an international NGO with numerous offices across the U.S., further remarked that in locations in which task forces are characterized by high turnover, “…we’re obviously relying on our already existing networks and not as much with our newer relationships with law enforcement” (Interviewed 2007). Thus, federally funded coalitions and task forces characterized by a stable membership were quite beneficial for respondents. However, when high turnover leads its members to rely on preexisting networks and not fellow members as a resource, the intent of these coalitions and task forces—different stakeholders effectively collaborating their AHT efforts—is undermined.

Personalities of existing members can also affect the functionality of coalitions and task forces. Highlighting the tensions that can arise between NGO representatives during task force meetings, one direct service provider for immigrant and ethnic minority communities recounted the following personal experience:

[This other NGO representative]…said [our NGO is] doing nothing for Latinos in the Latino community. Here we are [located] in [a Latino community], everyone speaks Spanish, and she says this about [our NGO]…She just…makes the most unfounded accusations and…she started yelling at us, “You’re trying to cut their throats!” It was like, oh my God, and like why am I sitting in this meeting? Why am I even taking up my time? (Interview 2007)

Respondents’ experiences also suggest that the effect of personal differences among task force members can be exacerbated by competition over resources and power, as indicated by the following comment made by a policy advocate for refugee women regarding a task force experience:

Well a lot had to do with, frankly, personalities at the time. ‘Cause this was a small group of people working on trafficking, fighting viciously for a small pool of money. And I wouldn’t underestimate the effect that that had on a lot of these
dynamics… [I]t had a lot to do with money and…really realizing that trafficking was just starting and everyone had to jockey to take leadership on this issue right away. And in [this state], it’s a very competitive playing field for that. And so you’re either dealing with really strong leaders from this sort of religious moral side of things and really strong leaders from this sort of other…social service, academic side of things. And I just feel like they came to blows about this, mainly about leadership. (Interviewed 2007; italics in original)

As suggested above, tension among coalition and task force members can arise when they vie for leadership positions, particularly in a context in which they are competing for limited resources. This can further threaten the effectiveness of coalitions and task forces. However, respondents more often emphasized characteristics of law enforcement officials when discussing factors that facilitated or challenged the success of coalitions and task forces. Illustrating this, a policy advocate for immigrants and refugees argued:

In some places, we have great relationships with ICE and can’t get a meeting with FBI or … in some places…our relationship with the U.S. Attorney’s office is very strong, but not as much with the local police or…like [in one city], because of the high level of anti-immigrant sentiment combined with…the population being undocumented…they shift all the time. You know, the sheriff’s office…at one point was …an active member of our task force and then decided that they were going to arrest anybody they thought might be illegal and turn them over to ICE. So…with that kind of shifting political landscape, who’s listening to you at any various point changes. (Interviewed 2007)

NGOs encountered a particularly precarious situation within coalitions and task forces when law enforcement hindered their full participation. This is illustrated in the following account of a direct service provider and policy advocate for immigrants and refugees:

…[In] one of our offices, we have what…is probably the…model task force in that they work very closely together…Whereas in some of the other places that we work, the task forces--I was actually at a meeting where they announced that the public portion of the meeting had ended and they invited all the NGOs to leave. Things like that really don’t foster a good feeling of camaraderie or we’re all working together. So that was kind of a low point in that particular task force.
I think things have gotten a little bit better ‘cause a lot of the city officials and others got up and walked out too ‘cause they said, “We’re not gonna participate if there isn’t total participation”…but it really highlighted some of the…difficulties in this type of work…[W]e have to work together, but…NGOs and law enforcement tend to speak different languages and…I’m an attorney by trade and I understand that there are legal reasons why the law enforcement would want for there to be…meetings without non-profits, that there may be a lot of information or sensitive things that can’t be made more public. But it doesn’t tend to foster the type of relationships that I think are…necessary for trafficking cases to work well. So it’s always a challenge to figure out how do we…move these things forward, how do we overcome the often…long term barriers to working together effectively between law enforcement and nongovernmental agencies. (Interviewed 2007)

While the stated intent of federally funded coalitions and task forces is, in part, for bringing NGO and government representatives together to join forces and develop AHT strategies, the above narrative demonstrates a power differential within these coalitions and task forces between NGOs and government actors. This may be particularly relevant in coalitions and task forces where government actors have more control over the structure, operations, and agendas.

Depending on the government actors in charge, NGOs’ presence and contribution may not be afforded the same weight as government members. There is limited recourse available to NGO representatives when this happens. Respondents with this issue often noted that they brought their grievances to the attention of government agencies responsible for establishing these coalitions and task forces. Also, as suggested above, NGOs may have the support of other government actors who believe NGOs should have a greater role or NGOs may simply depend on their external networks. However, this difference in power between NGOs and government actors helps exacerbate the fissure between them, which in turn threatens the full effectiveness of these coalitions and task
forces. These experiences further illustrate the partiality of success for NGOs. This is also demonstrated in NGOs’ narratives on government funding in support of their AHT work.

*Government Funding in Support of NGOs’ AHT Work*

Government funding in support of NGOs’ AHT work was commonly identified as a success by NGO representatives within this study. First, local, state, and federal government funding for AHT activities allowed NGOs to fund programs originally funded by the NGOs themselves. For instance, one direct service provider for immigrants and refugees noted:

…Because we were already doing the [human trafficking] work when the first grants became available from the ORR [U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement], we thought, “Well, we should apply for one of those, we’re doing this anyway…” (Interviewed 2009)

Government funding also allowed many NGOs to expand their preexisting programs and create new ones. For instance, government funding enabled NGOs to establish and strengthen coalitions, create and implement awareness raising campaigns, offer and expand services to victims, and organize and operate hotline numbers to call and report possible cases of human trafficking. One direct service provider, representing a NGO that serves immigrant and ethnic minority women, recalled how such funding helped strengthen existing partnerships between the NGO and other NGOs:

…I think because we had that previous relationship and then we were able to become… a funded collaborative…we’ve…created…really tight nit and comprehensive services for victims of trafficking. (Interviewed 2007)
This collaborative, comprised only of NGOs, then received an additional grant from the city it is based in to launch an awareness raising campaign. Further describing the outcome of these funding sources, the respondent remarked:

… [One] thing...that…made our collaborative successful is having that initial [federal grant]…because…we’re all sort of doing a lot of different work…but it takes a lot of resources as well…and I think…we’ve been able to really work as a team around…more advocacy and education, so…the [awareness raising campaign] really came out of that. Like, wow, we’ve really done a lot of work and we’ve learned so much… but … the [awareness raising] campaign actually…cost a lot of money, so…it wasn’t as extensive as we would have liked it to be. (Interviewed 2007)

The funding these NGOs received from the government allowed them to strengthen their collaborative and engage in AHT efforts beyond service provision. However, this funding was limited and did not cover all expenses for the awareness raising campaign and its maintenance. So to preserve this program, the NGOs garnered additional resources through fund raising and relied on volunteers’ services. While government funding is not guaranteed or may not cover all costs, receiving such funding helped NGOs bolster preexisting efforts and launch new programs.

Government funding also helped support direct service work, but respondents identified restrictions on how this funding could be used as a barrier. Specifically, many respondents took issue with funding provided through the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) for direct services and related administrative costs. As noted in earlier chapters, ORR contracted United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to allocate this funding to qualified NGOs. This particular funding source reimburses eligible NGOs for services they provide clients on a “per capita” basis, in which they receive funding for each client they are serving for a limited time period. To receive this
funding, NGOs must have a case manager on staff. The shortcomings of this system are recognized by the U.S. government:

Some agencies find it difficult to retain qualified case managers because the compensation is low and the demands of the job are high. Many smaller agencies report struggling with the structure of some funding streams. For example, the per-capita funding available under the ORR Anti-Trafficking Services Subcontracts is based on reimbursement for services and can pose challenges for agencies without diverse funding streams or large infrastructures to support staff during “downtimes” (i.e., low client referrals). Larger agencies are able to support case managers under other funding streams and often have case managers working with different victim populations whereas some of the smaller agencies, often specific to human trafficking, have not been able to diversify their funding. This has resulted in some agencies needing to move to part-time case managers; a challenge given the 24/7 responsibility of their job with some victims. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2007: 3)

While the report goes on to argue that “…those in the field recognize that the current per-capita funding is intended to be a more efficient use of limited resources than previous funding streams…” (2007: 3), respondents in this study overwhelmingly took issue with this funding system and its restrictions, including respondents representing both small and large NGOs. As one direct service provider for immigrant communities argued:

…”[T]he [per capita] concept is ridiculous…I’m not sure why they had to do that anyway… But the concept, which came from ORR, was…foolish…I mean, it didn’t hurt us because…we’ve got these other grants, we’re sort of rolling along with this organization, but anybody else trying to do this trafficking work, how do they do it? I mean, when suddenly a victim appears from outer space and you run off and hire somebody [a case manager] and you pay ‘em and as soon you serve the victim you get rid of them? I mean it just doesn’t work… [Y]ou have to have a program that’s just ongoing to make it work right. (Interviewed 2009)

Prior systems of funding to NGOs focused on capacity building, with restrictions, to handle human trafficking cases. These were replaced in 2006 by the per capita system in which NGOs receive funding for administrative costs, including case management, and client expenses per eligible client. Respondents that took issue with this system for
funding administrative costs argued that it limited many NGOs’ ability to build an infrastructure to take on human trafficking cases and retain case managers to handle these cases as they came in. According to respondents in this study, accessing benefits and services for victims is complicated and requires specialized knowledge to navigate. In other words, they need a full time case manager on staff. Retaining case managers only for the time in which they are funded by the government is impractical. In addition, these cases are often very time consuming and can come in large numbers, which further heightens the need to have case managers on staff. As one legal service provider for immigrant communities argued:

When [cases] come, they come in a rush... Like this case. You know, we’ve got a group of...clients. There are [over fifty] of them and so you’re so overwhelmed that trying to train somebody and get help...It’s just not enough time. (Interviewed 2009)

Other respondents also noted how their NGOs’ own ineligibility for federal funding, based on not having a case manager, was an obstacle they faced. For instance, one NGO representative that provides legal services to immigrant communities remarked:

There’s not enough [funding]...What it comes down to is if you want the client to maximize the benefits that they have, the agencies that can provide that help need the funding to do it. And...it’s a crazy situation now. We don’t even qualify for USCCB funds, as small as they are...Not USCCB’s fault, I don’t think, but we don’t even qualify for those funds because we don’t provide case management...Just straight legal representation I think is very much devalued by the federal government...We can represent them [trafficking victims], we’re not precluded from it, but we have no special funding anymore to represent them.... We had funding and that’s how we built up...our case load, to be able to dedicate that amount of time to working on cases and like I said, we don’t have the funding anymore, but we still take the cases...but it’s very hard for us to play that role if we file and get somebody certified or get them the continued presence... It’s very...time consuming. (Interviewed 2007)
The NGO to which this respondent belongs to at one time benefited from government funding to provide legal services to human trafficking victims, which enabled the NGO to develop an infrastructure to work on future cases. After receiving this initial grant, eligibility for this particular funding became contingent on NGOs having case managers on staff, which this particular NGO lacked. As noted by the respondent, though, a lack of funding did not preclude the NGO from providing representation to victims of human trafficking. To continue this work, the NGO had to draw on its own limited resources, which in turn limited the available funding for the other services they provide unrelated to human trafficking. As indicated here, it is can be clearly taxing on NGOs to engage in AHT work without funding.

Despite restrictive or inadequate funding, respondents valued what was available, even those that were highly critical of the funding structure. For instance, one direct service provider for immigrants and refugees noted:

I have a feeling if the trafficking law…had been passed in 2008 instead of 2000, I mean I’m glad it was passed in 2000 because the funding was there and we could start the work. But if it was passed in 2008 and it was starting to be implemented now, it would be implemented in a very different way. I mean the current government would listen to people. The previous government had a very top down attitude… And we saw that in every government department…So, the way grants were done, there was a lot of wacky stuff…but what I have to weigh that against is not doing anything for eight years. So I don’t think that would have been good…I think it’s better than not having done anything…

To do the trafficking work…it’s really the federal funding that’s kept in going. We have a little funding from the state. But most of the funding comes from the federal grants and…if it weren’t for that, we wouldn’t be able to do it. It’s that simple. (Interviewed 2009)
Valuing government’s contribution while clearly identifying shortcomings in its approach is further evidenced in respondents’ discussions of government services and benefits for victims of human trafficking.

*Government Services and Benefits for Victims of Human Trafficking*

Prior to the TVPA, NGOs argued that law enforcement often misidentified and treated victims as criminals, and the U.S. failed to offer adequate protection and services to victims. Challenging this treatment, NGOs highlighted the vulnerability and experiences of victims and argued that the government should offer protection and services to these individuals.

Due to these concerns, respondents identified the TVPA as a critical achievement because it enabled eligible victims to receive certain benefits and services, such as access to social service programs, immigration assistance, and authorization to work (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2010). The TVPA also “signified a shift in the immigration law policy, which previously treated victims of human trafficking as illegal aliens subject to deportation” (2010:1). Victims could now be granted “continued presence,” allowing victims to remain in the U.S. during the time in which law enforcement investigated and prosecuted a human trafficking case. The TVPA also established the T nonimmigrant visa or “T visa,” which provides victims who would “suffer extreme hardship if removed or forced to leave” the U.S a temporary, legal status within the U.S. After four years, eligible recipients of T visas can choose to apply for permanent resident status if “they are person of good moral character, they have complied with any reasonable request for assistance in the investigation…” and “they will suffer...
extreme hardship if they are removed” from the U.S. (2010:1).\textsuperscript{17} Having continued presence or a bona fide application for a T visa are necessary for most foreign national victims to access available benefits and services.

Respondents frequently argued that while the funding for victims is limited and often does not cover all of their necessary expenses, existing benefits and services available to victims are invaluable. However, accessing these benefits and services is often difficult. Illustrating this, one legal services provider for immigrants argued:

[The state law is] actually a benefit…for trafficking victims who haven’t even filed yet [for certification as trafficking victims]. I mean you can get services. So then once…you’re federally certified, you just have a certain period of time to sign up for the…benefits that are time limited. And…you get the notice, and…by the time you sign up you’ve…probably lost a month of… the eight month benefits.\textsuperscript{18} So…then the benefits that you do get-- it’s a few hundred dollars and it’s important….It’s very time consuming…for us to get them signed up and get plugged into the services that are available when they’re certified by the Office of Refugee Resettlement and I had a couple of cases where…the shelter where [the clients] were staying, there were a lot of problems and they had a case manager but she did nothing to get them signed up for anything…But we only have thirty days to make that decision about [enrolling them in]…the Matching Grant Program [which provides cash assistance and other services]\textsuperscript{19}…I couldn’t get these clients signed up for a matching grant because nobody was

\textsuperscript{17} As discussed in Chapter Two, individuals under the age of eighteen at the time of their victimization and individuals unable to cooperate with law enforcement requests for assistance in the investigation or prosecution due to physical or psychological trauma may be eligible for the T visa without having to assist law enforcement (USCIS 2010).

\textsuperscript{18} The maximum service period in which a NGO in reimbursed for expenses associated with servicing human trafficking victims through the ORR funding stream is currently nine months for pre-certified clients and four months for certified clients. The monthly per capital reimbursement rate for pre-certified clients is up to $1,300 and up to $900 for certified clients (USCCB 2009).

\textsuperscript{19} The objective of the “Matching Grant Program” is to help certain qualifying groups, including refugees, asylees, and certified victims of human trafficking, reach economic self-sufficiency within four to six months from the date they arrived in the U.S, without accessing public cash assistance (ACF 2010). The Program requires that participating agencies “match the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) grant with cash and in-kind contributions of goods and services from the community” (ACF 2010: 2). The Program helps to provide clients case management, employment services, maintenance assistance, and cash allowance. Clients must enroll in the Program within thirty-one days of being eligible for the program. For human trafficking victims, the date of eligibility begins on the date of certification or eligibility letter (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2010: 1).
available at a program that does it\(^20\)… So that was kind of crazy and it took up a lot of my time… (Interviewed 2007)

The above reflects a point commonly evoked by respondents. While they identified the services and benefits for victims as important and necessary, they were also critical of the time limits and complicated process involved in accessing these services and benefits.

At the time of these interviews, respondents were particularly concerned with the process by which a victim with a T visa can achieve a “green card” or permanent residence in the U.S. Although the U.S. Congress established the T visa through the TVPA in 2000, there were no regulations to adjust the “T nonimmigrant status” of T visa holders to permanent U.S. residents until December 2008.\(^21\) The T visa expires after four years, and after three years, T visa holders could opt for applying for permanent residence. However, without regulations in place detailing how to adjust one’s status from T nonimmigrant status to permanent residence status, “thousands of victims have failed to obtain the benefits afforded to them by the TVPA,” and this put victims “in a prolonged period of uncertainty” (2010: 3 Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman).

Commonly, respondents in this study argued that the absence of regulations posed a serious burden chiefly on victims, but also on the service providers themselves. The following narrative of a direct service provider for immigrants highlights these issues:

\(^{20}\) Only a limited number of agencies are qualified to apply for the matching grant for their clients. Only agencies that have “on-going relationships with refugees that have been established as a result of providing reception and placement services under terms of cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State (DOS) or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are eligible to apply” (U.S. Health and Human Services 2010: 1).

\(^{21}\) USCIS issued adjustment regulations for T visa holders in December 2008, effective on January 12, 2009 (2010: 3 Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman). At the time of these interviews, none of the respondents’ clients with T visas had yet seen their statuses adjusted to permanent residents.
So we applied for green cards for...[over fifty] clients back in 2005\textsuperscript{22}...So [the regulations] just came out...and now we're on a scramble to provide all this new evidence that they [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)] want...So you could apply for a green card, you just couldn’t get one...And we actually joined up with a couple of law firms to file a law suit against the government about enacting these [regulations] and then as we went to go file it, they enacted them... [It] was gonna be a class-action because for a lot of the people, they were actually hurt by not being able to get a green card, like for people that had family members still in [another country], they couldn’t petition for them to come, but if they had green card status, they could petition for their relatives to come...[Without a green card]...if they want to travel back to [their home country], they need to apply through Immigration [USCIS] for travel documents that allow them to travel outside the United States. It’s kind of risky, it’s long, it’s expensive...And they couldn’t have...been out of the country for more than ninety days. So even if they have a sick relative...I’ve got another client who-- she has a son...living back in [her home country]...and was very young back in ’03 [when the mother was trafficked and separated from the son] and [the son] has been dying to come live with his mother ever since, but she can’t petition for him...[Because] these regulations about the green cards weren’t in place...they would need to go in and renew their employment authorization card, which...you can get a fee waiver, but if not, that’s $340 [a year]...to get your new employment card and then you at that time would request basically to still have status here. So...that’s what they [the clients] have been doing since ’05...I mean if you think about the paperwork involved, needing to review that annually instead of if you get them a green card, which is good for ten years, that’s a lot easier. I mean it’s a lot less paperwork on the client, it’s a lot less things for them to keep up with, it’s a lot less things for Immigration to keep up with....Some [clients] do definitely get lost in the shuffle...We’ve recently been contacting everyone because we’ve gotten these requests for additional evidence from Immigration\textsuperscript{23} and...we definitely had a lot of bad phone numbers and addresses because people move, get on with their life, and they’re just kind of like, “Well, I’m waitin’ on Immigration,” and there isn’t really a reason for them to check in

\textsuperscript{22} To protect the respondent’s and NGO’s anonymity, I do not include the exact number of clients identified by the respondent since this number could identify the NGO’s participation within this study.

\textsuperscript{23} After an individual submits an application to adjust her or his status, USCIS may request additional evidence (“Requests for Evidence” or RFEs) from applicants before making a determination on the immigration benefit being sought (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010). In this study, NGOs submitted the application on their clients’ behalf and then USCIS communicates and requests additional evidence from the representing NGOs. After completing all the interviews for this study, the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman published a report that stated “Stakeholders continue to express concerns with lack of standardization in adjudications, along with what they term unnecessary, inappropriate, overly-broad, or unduly labor-intensive RFEs” (2010: viii), and made a number of recommendations to USCIS to remedy these issues. This suggests that many of respondents’ concerns with this process that they voiced during interviews were still relevant when this report was published in June 2010.
with us every two or three months… So right now what we’ve gotten [is] this huge stack of Requests for Evidence from Immigration saying, “Okay, you submitted your application for a green card, four years ago now. We need this X, Y, Z updated information…and…literally in like two weeks I got like sixty Requests for Evidence from Immigration and I’m like, “Ah! I can’t come into work today, I can’t get anymore!” (Interview 2009)

Now that the regulations are in place, NGO representatives expressed concern that it would take USCIS a lengthy amount of time to process all the additional evidence submitted, leading another direct service provider for immigrants to say:

…if I send them all this information and then they sit on it for a year, [the victims are] gonna need to renew their employment cards again and… they’re still in this limbo. (Interviewed 2009)

Respondents regularly criticized the process involved in requesting status adjustments for their clients from USCIS, including the long time periods it took to receive responses from USCIS and the short amount of time they had to submit all the necessary information requested by USCIS. They also argued that the paper work involved was labor intensive and some of it unnecessary. Despite the burden it placed on respondents personally, they overwhelmingly emphasized the burden placed on victims when government agencies fail to act judiciously.

The delay between the initial enactment of the TVPA in 2000 and the issuance of regulations detailing how T visa holders adjust their status led many respondents to identify an inconsistency between the federal government’s actions and its stated concern with the well-being of victims. Others explicitly questioned the federal government’s commitment to victims. However, the TVPA provided NGOs ground to put pressure on the federal government to enact these regulations, as well as highlight other instances in which they felt the federal government was not fulfilling its commitment.
Another issue commonly identified by respondents is the requirement that most adult, foreign national victims cooperate with law enforcement officials’ requests to access services and benefits to avoid deportation. As noted in Chapter Two, cooperating with law enforcement is necessary for most victims to receive certification as severe victims of human trafficking and to be granted “continued presence” status. Further, most T visa applicants must provide evidence that they complied with “any reasonable request from a law enforcement agency for assistance in the investigation or prosecution of human trafficking” (USCIS 2010: 1) to be eligible for a T visa. When applying for a T visa, individuals are “strongly encouraged” to submit a “Declaration of Law Enforcement Officer for Victim of Trafficking in Persons,” which demonstrates a law enforcement agency’s support for a victim and also serves as primary evidence that one actually is a victim of human trafficking (USCIS 2010). Respondents often argued that victims’ services and benefits should not be contingent on their cooperation with law enforcement.

While many respondents were critical of the policy, they also pointed out that their clients often wanted to help in the prosecution of their traffickers, as illustrated by this direct service provider for immigrant communities:

If our clients don’t agree to participate in interviews or whatever to help [law enforcement]…catch the perpetrators, then they’re not gonna give them continued presence, right? So we always tell our clients that in order for you to benefit here, you need to be willing to help the law enforcement. And some people have said there’s no way they would do that and have gone back to their country…and then there’s those other people who are saying, “Okay, that’s fine, if that’s what it takes, then I’ll do that.” And then you have those clients who are, “Of course I’ll do that. I want to see something happen to these people who did this to me.” So you get a wide range of people who feel differently about different things…We’re always trying to change the law [that requires victims’ cooperation]… (Interviewed 2007)
When I asked the respondent to explain why they were trying to change the policy, the respondent argued:

…[T]he [law is] so new, that even…when we ask…ICE agents, or whoever we ask for continued presence, “Oh I can’t do that…I would have to talk to my heads”… [Or], for example, let’s say we get a caller…and we identify that person as a bona fide victim. So we might contact ICE, and ICE says, “Okay, let’s have an interview.” So they would interview her. Sometimes this goes on for days…and [the victims are] just talking about what’s happened to them. And then [ICE] will say, “Okay, we’ll get back to you.” And we say, “Well what about that continued presence…because our victim has offered you a statement and she’ll be available to testify if there’s a trial ever.” And they usually say, “Okay, we’ll get back to you.” And …when they do finally call, it’s because…the U.S. Attorney’s Office… [feels] that this isn’t enough evidence or—there’s always something, there’s always that blaming game. You know, this department says we can’t move forward or this department says they don’t believe what has happened is true…I mean what we care about…is to know that these people are victims of human trafficking, so we want to be able to make them whole again. The part where they need to cooperate with the federal agents, yeah, it would be nice to catch the perpetrators, but most of [that] doesn’t happen. So…. it’s just a hoop we need to jump through as we see it now. And you know in order for our clients to access all the social services that’s out there, for them to have to get the continued presence…you know, we’re willing to go there and say, “Hey, here’s a statement…She’s done what she needs to do. Now give us what she deserves.” And it doesn’t happen that way… (Interviewed 2007)

As demonstrated above, victims’ willingness to cooperate in law enforcement investigations and prosecutions does not guarantee their access to services and benefits.

Further, if victims are willing to assist law enforcement, but law enforcement decides not to pursue the case, the victim can be put in jeopardy. Demonstrating this point, another direct service provider for immigrant communities remarked:

ICE would say, “You know, yeah, we don’t think this is a great situation, but we don’t think it’s enough to raise it to the level of trafficking.” And once you’re on ICE’s radar, they’re gonna try and deport you or request for you to voluntarily depart the country or something like that unless there’s some sort of eligible relief for you. And if…they’re not eligible for a T visa because there’s no one to sign off saying that there was trafficking, then I think victims are at a loss. (Interviewed 2009)
Reasons why law enforcement may not pursue a case vary. Both law enforcement and NGO representatives within this study argued that there is a lack of institutional knowledge on how to handle these cases among law enforcement. Further, representatives of law enforcement remarked that their agencies struggle for resources, which encourages them to take on cases in which there is a sufficient amount of compelling evidence to successfully prosecute traffickers. Yet from the perspective of many NGO representatives, this suggests that victims’ value is based on the extent to which they can help law enforcement build a case against a trafficker. Demonstrating this, one policy advocate for women immigrants and refugees relayed the following example involving a victim who was eager to assist in the prosecution of her traffickers:

… [The] NGO worker fought, fought, fought, fought for this client. She wrote letters to law enforcement to get the law enforcement sign off. To go through with the T visa she called, she begged people to listen to this case and basically they were like, “This is small potatoes. Not interested. Just not worth it. It’s not worth our time, not worth our money, not worth our effort. It’s one person,”…It just sent these messages back to everyone that unless we’re talking about…big, glamorous, flashy cases, we just don’t want to get involved in this petty crap. And I think what’s sad about that is that I think a lot of trafficking cases are like that, are small potatoes. I’m not saying all of them, but I think a lot of them are. (Interviewed 2007)

The above example illustrates the obstacles to victims garnering law enforcement support. The policy mandates, in part, that victims demonstrate a willingness to help law enforcement. It does not stipulate that law enforcement actually pursue a case for a victim to receive law enforcement support and, in turn, services and benefits. Further, if victims do not have knowledgeable advocates fighting on their behalf, their chances of receiving services and benefits diminish. For NGO respondents, this was largely why it
was important for them to have relationships with law enforcement officials committed to helping victims.

NGOs also related cases in which law enforcement initially provided support for a victim, but then decided to end their support. Illustrating this, one direct service provider for immigrant communities relayed the following example:

[We’ve] seen some cases where [victims] will get continued presence for years and then [law enforcement] decide they’re not gonna prosecute the case anymore… [The] government recognizes that they’re here and they’re gonna be serving as material witnesses. So they’re still here, they get work permit, and they’re able to work and live in this country, but they have to check in with let’s say ICE every month or so. This one particular case had been going on for three or four years, and now it has come to an end where they say… “We’ve decided we’re not gonna prosecute the case. So basically we’re not gonna renew the work permit and she’ll have to go home.” It’s been four years!...And she’s been reporting to ICE every month and just saying…“I’m not committing any crimes. I’m still here if you need me…” Four years later and now it’s like… “We just decided we’re not gonna pursue the case anymore. So either go find other ways to be legal or our hands are tied.” That’s the response that we get. (Interviewed 2007; italics in original)

Such incidences contribute to the perception among NGO representatives that law enforcement officials’ assessments of which victims to support are based on how much that victim can help law enforcement, and that law enforcement may support victims to the extent that it benefits their own investigations and prosecutions. This clearly affects victims. For instance, as the above example demonstrates, foreign national victims’ status can shift from “legal” to “illegal” if law enforcement ceases to pursue a case, which puts victims at a greater risk for deportation.

The above example also highlights a disconnect between U.S. government discourse on protecting and helping victims and its actual practices and laws.
Articulating this perspective, a direct service provider and policy advocate for immigrants remarked:

I think they [the U.S. government] are focused on helping the victims. But the laws that are in place to implement their ideas are not consistent with the ideology of what our government is saying. That’s the way I see it... [I]t’s not helping what the government is saying...they are committed to do. (Interviewed 2007)

NGOs’ experiences demonstrate that the government provision of services and benefits is not a total success. Further, certain achievements, such as the T visa, bring about new commonly identified additional hurdles to identifying and helping victims and ending human trafficking within the U.S. These include stigmatization of and prejudice toward victims by members of the public and law enforcement, and individuals’ fear of reporting possible incidences of human trafficking to law enforcement.

Stigma, Prejudice, and Fear as Barriers to Addressing Human Trafficking

As previously discussed, barriers exist to individuals identifying victims of human trafficking. They may be “invisible,” kept from public view or simply appear to onlookers as a “prostitute,” “domestic servant,” “construction worker,” “restaurant worker,” etc. According to respondents within this study, as well as the U.S. government, awareness of human trafficking is part of the solution to ending human trafficking (U.S. Department of State 2010). However, a lack of awareness, though, is not the only obstacle to identifying and assisting victims. Respondents’ experiences suggest that victims can suffer from individuals’ prejudices toward them. For instance, perspectives on immigration can affect how people view trafficking victims. Informed by personal experiences with AHT outreach, one policy advocate for refugee women was left with the following impression:
…I think that in fact [human trafficking] may be used in some ways to only support people’s anti-immigration thing, ‘cause they’re just like, “We don’t want this shit in our country, we don’t want to get involved. Let’s just keep foreigners out because look at the problems they bring…” (Interview 2007)

Although the extent to which individuals view trafficking this way is unknown, this perspective suggests that the cause of human trafficking lies with “foreigners” and the solutions rest on keeping “foreigners out.” This viewpoint can promote policies that center on restricting immigration as the solution to combating human trafficking and protecting victims (Chapkis 2003). Further, a perspective of human trafficking as essentially a transnational phenomenon may render domestic trafficking invisible.

The social location of victims can also serve to discredit them by members of society. For example, a policy advocate for children remarked:

…[It] has still been easier to make the case that international victims are victims and the American kids are not. You know, they’re just bad kids who need to be arrested. (Interviewed 2006)

The above further reflects a common concern voiced by respondents. That is, victims who are perceived as criminals can be stigmatized. This perspective discredits individuals as bona fide victims of human trafficking and can prevent their proper identification as such.

Respondents also noted that human trafficking victims can be stigmatized by people who are aware of human trafficking. For instance, one policy advocate for women refugees encountered this while attempting to mobilize community members, residing in a city neighborhood identified as a human trafficking hub, to engage in AHT efforts and report suspected cases. Recounting this experience, the respondent remarked:
…[What] you’re dealing with in the…community was a lot of people who have legally immigrated…who were resettled as refugees…So they have legal status and the last thing they want to do is rock the boat…to help out people who maybe are not from their community, who are here illegally, and who in a lot of people’s minds are stupid sluts for getting themselves in this situation in the first place….[Not] to generalize, because I’m not trying to say that’s what everyone’s opinion was, but that was a resounding kind of push back feeling in the community. (Interview 2007)

Stigmatizing victims promotes attributing responsibility to victims for their victimization.

According to this respondent, community members stigmatized these particular victims because they perceived them as “outsiders,” ethnically different from themselves.

However, respondents also shared examples of community members stigmatizing victims with whom they shared a similar ethnicity. One direct service provider for immigrant communities commented:

You would be surprised how the communities the victims actually come from, that their own communities see them as a shameful thing… (Interviewed 2007)

This respondent further argued that this stigma hindered victims from receiving help:

…I]f we try to approach…the…Consulate…because they may have to go there to get…a new passport or something like that… they have been kind of resistant to welcoming these people. You know, they see this as a shame. It’s too political; they don’t wanna get involved… [Then] they just think… “You’re involved with Department of Homeland Security, ICE. We can’t do anything about that.” So that’s a…sad aspect of it, I think. It’s almost like the victims have no home really to return to. (Interviewed 2007)

In addition to demonstrating how stigma can affect victims, the above quote reflects how the role of law enforcement and government agencies in human trafficking cases can shape people’s responses to victims of human trafficking. Respondents noted examples of community members not reporting cases because they feared the possible
repercussions of law enforcement involvement. Reflecting this point, a policy advocate for children recounted the following experience:

… [This] one woman worked in a brothel voluntarily…to make extra money a couple times a month. And in that brothel, she knew there were women who were there against their will, but there were also a lot of other women who weren’t there against their will who were doing this to basically survive. And a lot of vendors in the street were also getting paid to give out the little cards to their male customers to let them know [about the brothel]…And so she knew…tons of people in her community who were basically making money to get by…working these little side jobs. So her thing was, “Do I go to law enforcement and risk everyone being arrested or do I not say anything and let this go on?” So this was her big qualm that she brought to one of the case workers. (Interviewed 2007)

In addition to fearing that law enforcement involvement may lead to scrutiny and arrests of other community members, respondents also discussed examples in which bystanders feared retaliation from traffickers if they reported a suspected case of human trafficking. One policy advocate for refugee women encountered this while working in a community in which an organized criminal organization had a strong presence:

[In] the…community…there was just no interest whatsoever in working on trafficking. Number one [reason], fear, because the…mafia is hugely powerful…And they were like, “Your pansy ass police…Do you really think we’re going to feel protected, if we decide to do this, from the mafia by [the city policy department]?… [We] laugh at you.” (Interviewed 2007)

The above examples suggest that certain forces can discourage members of the public from identifying and reporting suspected cases of human trafficking. Throughout interviews, respondents also commonly called attention to factors that deter law enforcement officials from identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking.

As mentioned earlier, NGO representatives characterize some law enforcement as uncommitted and others as highly devoted to helping victims. However, even in cases in which NGO representatives gave law enforcement a favorable review, respondents called
attention to factors preventing law enforcement officials from identifying and assisting victims. One children’s policy advocate reported:

…[One] thing I will say is everyone in law enforcement…was very interested in the trafficking issue, but I also feel like they really suffered from a lack of funding and support and general understanding about what we we’re going to do about it…what their agencies really wanted them to do, how far they wanted them to push. (Interviewed 2007)

From this respondent’s perspective, law enforcement officials were unclear on their objectives and lacked support and resources to pursue cases. This latter point was also emphasized by law enforcement officials I interviewed, who argued that a lack of funding and a limited number of personnel, who already have numerous responsibilities in addition to human trafficking, are significant barriers to pursuing these cases.

Respondents also commonly recognized a lack of institutionalized knowledge within law enforcement agencies on how to identify victims, approach possible cases of human trafficking, law enforcement’s role in providing support for victims, and the consequences of this support or lack thereof as major barriers to law enforcement identifying and assisting victims. While respondents stress raising awareness among law enforcement as critical, AHT training for all law enforcement is not mandated and varies from state to state. This may help explain, in part, respondents’ experiences with law enforcement hesitating to apply for continued presence on behalf of victims or to provide letters in support of victims. However, other factors can also provide insight into this hesitancy to assist victims. For instance, one direct service provider, who provides trainings to both federal and local law enforcement, commented:

…I was explaining to [law enforcement] how we would apply for a T visa and kind of the legal parameters of doing that and you do get that, “So you’re tellin’
me just because somebody got trafficked here, they’re gonna get a green card?” And so I tell them, “Well, you know, there’s a lot of requirements to get a green card…” and they seem to come around. But we also did a training and it was a combination of judges, law enforcement, and attorneys last spring… And there is a lot of, “I’m not gonna sign off on anything or doing anything that gives these people immigration status…” And… this was not only local [law enforcement]… I mean there’s quite a few federal agents that had that sentiment as well… And I have a lot of detectives who, you know, tell you outright, “I’ll do anything under the sun that you need to help these people…” So I feel it’s really either end of the spectrum. Like you have the detectives who will do anything and sign off on anything and help you in any way they can and then you have the people that are like, “Well, I’m not gonna do immigration stuff. That’s not my job.” (Interviewed 2009)

Law enforcement officials’ lack of awareness of the effects of their official support for victims, reluctance to “do immigration stuff,” or their refusal to do something that may help trafficking victims adjust their residency status can all hinder foreign national victims’ ability to access certain protections, services, and benefits they are entitled to through the TVPA. While training is vital for law enforcement to fully understand the effects of their support or lack thereof, it may not be enough to compel them to fulfill their specific responsibilities to support possible victims.

Law enforcement officials’ outright refusal to support possible victims can stem from their views of the victims themselves. Recounting experiences with federal law enforcement, one direct service provider for immigrant communities remarked:

ICE…will think that if somebody knows that they can get to stay in America by saying to law enforcement, “I’m a victim of trafficking,” they’ll lie. So if you’re an “alien,” a word that I would never use, but in their language, if you’re an alien, they’re not gonna trust you. If you start telling the story, they’re not even gonna believe it… If you ask… anybody at ICE, they’ll tell you how well trained they are in human trafficking. If you ask me, I will say I’ve met three people that get it. And I’ve met a lot of ICE agents… And some of them talk a very good game. But… they just don’t believe the victim. They think anybody will say anything to get to stay in America and we’ve got to get ‘em out of here. And that’s the attitude. (Interviewed 2009)
While this study cannot gauge the extent to which individuals misrepresent themselves as victims, not one NGO representative or law enforcement official I interviewed claimed to encounter this. In fact, several respondents, representing both NGOs and law enforcement, stated just the opposite in which they encountered victims who fit the definition of a “victim of severe forms of trafficking in persons,” but were reluctant to identify themselves as such.\(^{24}\) Still, respondents representing law enforcement and other governmental agencies often argued that law enforcement must be discerning of individuals possibly misrepresenting themselves as victims to prevent non-victims from taking advantage of services and benefits available to victims. This perspective may, in part, inform some law enforcement officials’ reluctance to provide their support to victims. When law enforcement refuses to provide their support, for whatever reason, NGO representatives stated that they seek out other law enforcement officials who may provide such support. However, this takes time and further extends the period in which victims are in an indeterminate state, unable to fully access certain services and benefits.

The above results suggest that successes commonly recognized by respondents are best conceived as progress made in terms of general awareness of human trafficking, collaboration between NGOs and government actors, funding in support of NGOs’ AHT activities, and services and benefits for victims of human trafficking. Clearly, from respondents’ perspectives, there is still progress to be made in all these areas. Drawing

\(^{24}\) Further, several service providers specifically noted that: 1) heavy case loads; 2) limited resources, and 3) their prior experiences, which demonstrate that individuals must provide very compelling evidence that they are a victim in order to gain law enforcement support and to access certain services and benefits, leads NGOs to screen potential clients very carefully and lessens the likelihood that they take on clients that are actually misrepresenting themselves.
on respondents’ experiences and insights, and information provided through government documents, I now turn to an assessment of the U.S. AHT approach.

**Assessing the U.S. Approach to Human Trafficking**

The U.S. government states that the ultimate objective of the U.S. AHT approach is to rescue, protect, and assist victims and help them rebuild their lives (U.S. Department of State 2008). To that end, the U.S. developed an institutionalized approach to combat human trafficking, also referred to as the “3P” paradigm, which centers on prosecuting human traffickers, protecting victims of human trafficking, and preventing human trafficking (U.S. Department of State 2010; 2008). Certain barriers commonly identified by respondents suggest that there exist an inconsistency between: 1) the declared commitment of the U.S. to offering victims assistance and helping them rebuild their lives and 2) governmental practices and policies that burden victims. What explains this inconsistency between rhetoric and practice?

**Inefficiencies, Complexity, and Breakdowns within Government**

One factor explaining the apparent disconnect between U.S. rhetoric on human trafficking and its AHT practices lies in a lack of institutional knowledge on how to implement U.S. AHT policies within key government agencies. As previously noted, human trafficking trainings are not mandated within most law enforcement agencies, and most local, state, and federal law enforcement officers do not receive training. A lack of institutional knowledge within law enforcement agencies of laws, policies, and law enforcements’ role in executing the U.S. AHT approach can likely increase the possibility
that law enforcement officials will not enforce existing laws and will hesitate in providing their official support for victims.

Considering the complex web of federal departments and agencies responsible for executing and overseeing the U.S. AHT approach also sheds light on this inconsistency between rhetoric and practice. Agencies within and across departments must coordinate their AHT efforts. Throughout interviews, respondents identified breakdowns in and barriers to collaboration between federal agencies in addition to a lack of institutionalized knowledge within these agencies as serious obstacles to overcome. This likely explains certain recommendations the U.S. Government gave itself to “effectively rescue victims and alleviate the problem of human trafficking,” including:

- Increase efficacy and coordination of all task forces and offices dealing with aspects of human trafficking to ensure victims do not go unidentified due to jurisdictional issues or “turf” considerations;

- Examine barriers related to confusion about law enforcement roles in requesting continued presence and completion of the I-914 Supplement B forms that provide local, state, or federal law enforcement endorsement of the victim for the purpose of a T-visa; and

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25 Federal departments charged with specific responsibilities for carrying out the TVPA include the U.S. Departments of Defense (DOD), Education (DOE), Health and Human Services (HHS), Homeland Security (DHS), Justice (DOJ), Labor (DOL), and State (DOS) (U.S. Department of Justice 2009; U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2008). Agencies within these departments carry out the departments’ specific AHT objectives and they often must coordinate their efforts with other intra- and inter-agencies. For example, within DOJ, the Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), the Civil Rights Division, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) all have specific AHT duties. These agencies may have to coordinate their efforts. For instance, BJA collaborates with OVC and the Civil Rights Division “to identify and rescue victims of human trafficking” (U.S. Department of Justice 2009: 23). Agencies within departments often have to coordinate their AHT efforts with agencies outside of their department. For example, ICE agents within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security coordinate cases with Civil Rights Division within DOJ when appropriate. Representatives of DOJ, DOS, HHS, ICE, FBI, NCMEC also “meet quarterly to share information, develop strategies, and coordinate efforts” to combat domestic sex trafficking (2009: 37).
Make intra-agency cooperation a priority on human trafficking cases by, for example, increasing U.S. Attorney involvement with human trafficking task forces in their districts. (U.S. Department of Justice 2009: 8-9)

Shifts in polices and departmental responsibilities, and a lack of oversight on departments’ and agencies’ AHT activities can also explain this discrepancy between rhetoric and practice. For instance, the failure of USCIS to issue the adjustment of status regulations for T visa holders is partly because responsibility for this transferred from INS to USCIS in 2003. At that time, USCIS was a new agency within the new Department of Homeland Security, established on January, 24, 2003 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2008; 2009). USCIS attributes this failure to the adjustment of status provisions being complex and requiring the resolution of “many difficult legal and policy issues” which led to “intricate and often complicated discussions among the many agencies with which we needed to coordinate” (USCIS 2008: 1).

Members of Congress held the Bush Administration accountable for not compelling USCIS to act more efficiently in establishing these regulations. In a statement entitled “Administration Has Failed to Adopt Regulations to Protect Crime Victims Who Cooperate with Law Enforcement,” members of Congress argued:

Congress has been waiting for almost eight years, since the beginning of this Administration, for the issuance of these regulations…Despite the enactment of [TVPA] eight years ago, and an explicit Congressional mandate to issue the implementing regulations more than two years ago, DHS [U.S. Department of Homeland Security] has yet to issue the T…adjustment regulations. (Lofgren 2008:1).

Together, a lack of institutionalized knowledge, a complex web of federal departments and agencies responsible for fulfilling U.S. AHT objectives, issues hindering effective collaboration among them, the transference of departmental and agency responsibilities,
and a lack of accountability for not fulfilling these responsibilities are all factors that provide insight into the disconnect between the U.S. government’s rhetoric and practice. Another important factor to consider is the U.S. law and order approach to human trafficking.

_A Law and Order Frame of Human Trafficking_

How government leaders and, in turn, U.S. policies frame human trafficking also sheds light on the inconsistency between U.S. rhetoric and practice. Rhetorically, government leaders seemingly draw on the master frame of injustice to support their claims that this is a serious human rights problem that the U.S. must be leaders in abolishing both domestically and abroad. This is evident in government leaders’ pronouncements, government reports, and in the language of law. For instance, in his September 23, 2003 address to the UN, President Bush argued:

_There's another humanitarian crisis spreading, yet hidden from view. Each year, an estimated 800,000 to 900,000 human beings are bought, sold or forced across the world's borders. Among them are hundreds of thousands of teenage girls, and others as young as five, who fall victim to the sex trade…_

_There's a special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable. The victims of sex trade see little of life before they see the very worst of life -- an underground of brutality and lonely fear. Those who create these victims, and profit from their suffering, must be severely punished. Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others. And governments that tolerate this trade are tolerating a form of slavery…_

_This problem has appeared in my own country, and we are working to stop it. The Protect Act, which I signed into law this year, makes it a crime for any person to enter the United States, or for any citizen to travel abroad for the purpose of sex tourism involving children. The Department of Justice is actively investigating sex tour operators and patrons, who can face up to 30 years in prison._

_Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the United States is using sanctions against governments to discourage human trafficking._
We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time…

In the 2008 * Trafficking in Persons Report* (TIP Report), Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asserted:

This year, millions of men, women, and children around the globe will have their lives ruined by human traffickers. This form of modern-day slavery shocks the conscience of every civilized nation, and the United States is committed to rallying the world to defeat human trafficking … (U.S. Department of State 2008)

In the TVPA of 2000, the U.S. Congress declared:

Trafficking of persons is an evil requiring concerted and vigorous action by countries of origin, transit or destination, and by international organizations.

One of the founding documents of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of all people. It states that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. The right to be free from slavery and involuntary servitude is among those unalienable rights. Acknowledging this fact, the United States outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude in 1865, recognizing them as evil institutions that must be abolished. Current practices of sexual slavery and trafficking of women and children are similarly abhorrent to the principles upon which the United States was founded.

The United States and the international community agree that trafficking in persons involves grave violations of human rights and is a matter of pressing international concern… (U.S. Congress 2000: Sec. 102 (b) (21-23))

In all of these examples, government leaders characterize human trafficking as a grave injustice, which compels a concerted effort on the part of the U.S. to abolish. The U.S. government argues that to eliminate human trafficking, it “sustained strong law enforcement efforts and continued to encourage a victim-centered approach among local, state, and federal law enforcement” (U.S. Department of State 2010). However, a close examination of the U.S. approach to human trafficking illustrates that this approach is not
so much guided by a “victim-centered” frame of human trafficking. Rather, the U.S. AHT approach is largely informed by a “law and order” frame of human trafficking. A law and order frame emphasizes capturing and prosecuting people who commit crimes as a means to solving social problems (Deprez and Raeymaeckers 2010; Martin 2005). Deprez and Raeymaeckers (2010) argue that the law and order frame manifests itself in problem definitions that rest on individuals breaking the law and the necessity to stop those individuals to restore order. We can see evidence of a law and order frame underpinning the U.S. AHT approach in government leaders’ statements on human trafficking. For instance, in President Bush’s UN address cited above, the President identifies the creation and implementation of laws as a means to stop human trafficking. This frame is not isolated, though, to the discourse of political leaders. Indeed a law and order frame clearly structures and is reflected in each component of the institutionalized U.S. approach to combat human trafficking, also referred to as the “3P” paradigm: prosecution, protection, and prevention (U.S. Department of State 2010; 2008).

Prosecution

“Prosecution” is one key component of the U.S. institutionalized AHT approach. The U.S. government emphasizes the importance of the criminalization of human trafficking and the prosecution of human traffickers as a means to combat human trafficking, demonstrating a law and order frame of human trafficking. This is evident in the TVPA, which criminalizes and stipulates penalties for human trafficking. The U.S. government identifies the enforcement of this legal instrument as critical to deter human trafficking and punish human traffickers both in the U.S. and abroad (U.S. Department of
Thus, the U.S. calls on all nations to prohibit human trafficking, and apply criminal penalties for human trafficking that are “sufficiently stringent to deter the crime and that adequately reflect the heinous nature of the crime, and vigorously punish offenders convicted of these crimes” (2008: 27).

Another way in the U.S. approach reflects a law and order frame of human trafficking is through its attempts to legally enforce its own law in other nations. To ensure that other nations adopt and apply strong criminal penalties for human trafficking, the U.S. has assumed the role of monitoring other nation’s “prosecution” efforts. The U.S. accomplishes this through the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking within the U.S. Department of State. The TVPA mandates that this office produce an annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which assesses countries efforts to combat human trafficking. Nations characterized as not complying with minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking, as outlined in the U.S. TVPA, risk losing non-humanitarian and non-trade related foreign assistance provided by the U.S. (U.S. Department of State 2008). Through these penalties, the U.S. attempts to compel other nations’ compliance with U.S. law, helping to ensure that its own emphasis on prosecutions is adopted by other nations. Overall, the U.S. government’s perspective that prosecutions are a means to end human trafficking, and that all nations must adopt and enforce policies that comply with this perspective, demonstrates an additional way in which the U.S. AHT approach is guided by a law and order frame of human trafficking.

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26 Since 2001, DOS has submitted the Trafficking in Person Report annually. The 2010 report was the first to assess U.S. efforts to combat human trafficking, with previous reports only assessing other countries’ compliance with minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking as outlined in the U.S. TVPA.
Protection

“Protection,” is the second component of the U.S. institutionalized AHT approach. According to the U.S. government, protecting victims is the highest priority. The 2008 TIP Report illustrates this when stating, “Freeing those trapped in slave-like conditions is the ultimate goal of this [TIP] Report—and of the U.S. Government’s antihuman trafficking policy” (U.S. Department of State 2008). Further, the U.S. government claims that a response to human trafficking must entail a victim-centered approach. Characterizing this approach in the 2010 TIP Report, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserted:

A victim-centered approach does not mean assisting a potential witness just long enough to get his or her testimony; it means meeting needs and fulfilling obligations that extend beyond the confines of a criminal case. Such an approach calls for partnerships between law enforcement agencies and service providers—not just to win the case but as colleagues sharing a humanitarian responsibility to act in the best interest of the victim.

Victim protections conditioned on victims’ active role in prosecutions brought by the state also fall far short. In many countries, immigration relief and social services are offered only to victim-witnesses purely as incentives to cooperate. They do not aim to restore the dignity or health of the person who was victimized. Optimally, the response to this human rights abuse should focus on all victims, offering them the opportunity to access shelter, comprehensive services, and in certain cases, immigration relief. Repatriation of foreign victims should not be the first response, but should be undertaken as an informed decision and done so in a manner that serves the best interest of the victim. (U.S. Department of State 2010: 13-14)

To accomplish its protection objectives, the U.S. government, through the TVPA, makes available certain services and benefits to foreign national victims of severe forms of trafficking that were previously discussed (U.S. Congress 2000). However, limits on who is eligible for these protections, benefits, and services suggests that these
“protective” measures largely facilitate law enforcement’s ability to prosecute cases and meet law and order objectives. As discussed earlier, eligibility for a T visa and continued presence for most foreign national victims is contingent on them clearly demonstrating their willingness to assist law enforcement. Law enforcement officials have the power to decide if victims adequately demonstrate this. As previously noted, law enforcement may retract their support after years of providing that support, if they decide to stop pursuing a particular case. This suggests that victims’ willingness alone does not guarantee them law enforcement support. These examples indicate that prosecutions are prioritized within the “protection” component of the U.S. AHT approach.

A law and order frame is further reflected through the nuanced definition the TVPA provides of “victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons” when specifying the requirements for a victim to be eligible for assistance. In Section 103, the TVPA defines “victim of trafficking” as “a person subjected to an act or practice” that constitutes “severe forms of trafficking in persons” or “sex trafficking.” In this initial definition, subjection to human trafficking makes an individual a “victim of trafficking.” However, when the TVPA outlines what qualifies a victim to receive assistance, it provides a second definition of “victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons” in Section 107, entitled “Protection and Assistance for Victims of Trafficking.” In this section, a victim is a person:

1. who has been subjected to an act or practice [constituting “severe forms of trafficking in persons]…; and
2. who has not attained 18 years of age; or
3. who is subject of a certification.
Thus, to receive assistance, adult victims must have been subjected to the act of human trafficking as defined by the TVPA and be “subject of a certification.” “Subject of certification” is “a certification by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, after consultation with the Attorney General” that a person who has been subjected to “severe forms of trafficking in persons”:

1. is willing to assist in every reasonable way in the investigation and prosecution of severe forms of trafficking in persons; and

2. has made a bona fide application for a [T visa]…that has not been denied\(^\text{27}\); or

3. is a person whose continued presence in the United States the Attorney General is ensuring in order to effectuate prosecution of traffickers in persons.

According to the above, “subject of a certification” is part of what constitutes someone as a victim. Here, a victim is defined as such based on her or his willingness to assist law enforcement. According to this logic, victims unwilling to assist law enforcement cease to be victims, thus legitimating their ineligibility for assistance reserved for victims.

Defining victims in this way further indicates that the “protection” component of the U.S. AHT approach is meant to facilitate prosecuting human traffickers, clearly contradicting a “victim-centered approach” as characterized in the 2010 TIP Report (U.S. Department of State 2010). The “protection” component of the U.S. AHT approach further demonstrates the U.S. law and order frame of human trafficking.

*Prevention*

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\(^{27}\) As mentioned earlier, a bona fide application for a T visa requires most adult foreign national victims to have received a law enforcement endorsement, stating that they were willing to assist law enforcement in every reasonable way. The exception to this is adults excused by the U.S. Attorney General from assisting due to extreme physical or psychological trauma (U.S. Health and Human Services 2009).
“Prevention” is a third component of the U.S. institutionalized approach to human trafficking. According to the TVPA, prevention of human trafficking entails the U.S. President establishing and carrying out international initiatives to expand economic opportunities for potential victims and programs that increase public awareness of human trafficking. As a result of this, the U.S. engages in awareness raising campaigns and provides grants to NGOs in support of AHT projects generally intended to reduce certain populations’ vulnerability to human trafficking.

According to the 2010 TIP report, the U.S. has made progress toward preventing human trafficking. Federal departments worked to create recommendations for reducing the likelihood that commodities imported in the U.S. are not produced by trafficked labor. Federal departments also worked with NGOs to produce a “know your rights” brochure that informs visa applicants of their employment rights once in the U.S. and how to obtain help for human trafficking.

Another feature of the prevention component rests on law and order strategies (U.S. Department of State 2010). This includes training law enforcement on how to identify and treat human traffickers and victims, and strengthening and executing laws and closing loopholes in policies that allow trafficking to occur. It also includes tackling the demand that facilitates human trafficking, particularly in regards to sex trafficking. The TIP Report (2010) identifies different strategies to deter human trafficking that are centered on the demand, including strengthening and executing laws that penalize individuals constituting the demand, publicly naming men arrested for solicitation of prostitution, and rehabilitation programs for people arrested for solicitation of
prostitution. Preventing labor trafficking also entails increasing criminal or civil penalties for companies directly relying on the labor of human trafficking victims. Clearly, the U.S. identifies creating and enforcing laws as critical to preventing human trafficking. This further demonstrates the U.S. law and order frame of human trafficking.

An analysis of the U.S. AHT approach provides insight into the apparent inconsistency between U.S. rhetoric on human trafficking and its AHT practices. Creating laws and prosecuting human traffickers plays a central role in the U.S. strategy to prevent human trafficking, protect victims of human trafficking, and, obviously, to prosecute human trafficking crimes. If, as the 2008 TIP Report states, the ultimate goal of the U.S. Government’s AHT policy is “Freeing those trapped in slave-like conditions…,” then the way in which the U.S. attempts to accomplish this is by creating and executing laws and capturing and punishing the “bad guys.” Structured by a law and order frame, the U.S. AHT approach inevitably privileges laws and prosecutions as the solution to the problem. Synthesizing the preceding insights on the U.S. AHT approach and the barriers to effectively addressing human trafficking provides a lens from which to understand why the U.S. approach has yielded minimal results as gauged by the number of victims identified since the initial enactment of the TVPA. I turn to this in the proceeding section.

Finding the “Victim”: A Problematic Measure

As discussed in Chapter Two, different scholars argue that the U.S. government exaggerated the scope of the problem to forward other political agendas, including restricting immigration, penalizing “illegal” immigration, and further marginalizing sex
work (Chapkis 2003; Weitzer 2007; Kempadoo and Doezema 1999). The U.S. Governmental Office of Accountability (2006) finds that U.S. government estimates on the scope of human trafficking are questionable and based on invalid and unreliable data. Further, the U.S. has identified a minimal number of victims in the U.S. relative to its stated estimates. This leads different critics to question if human trafficking really is a problem within the U.S. and if the U.S. investment into an AHT campaign is warranted (Chapkis 2003; Markon 2007; Weitzer 2007). In a 2007 Washington Post article entitled “Human Trafficking Evokes Outrage, Little Evidence,” staff writer Jerry Markon remarks:

…President Bush has blanketed the nation with 42 Justice Department task forces and spent more than $150 million—all to find and help the estimated hundreds of thousands of victims of forced prostitution or labor in the United States. But the government couldn’t find them. Not in this country…

The administration has identified 1,362 victims of human trafficking brought into the United States since 2000, nowhere near the 50,000 a year the government had estimated. (A01)

Due to this, the author doubts that human trafficking is a meaningful problem in the U.S., justifying so much effort and funding to address.

It is beyond the scope of this study to capture an accurate number of victims within the U.S. Further, the actual number of individuals trafficked into the U.S. annually may be significantly less than the U.S. government’s current estimate of 14,500 to 17,500 individuals. However, insights on the U.S. AHT approach and the barriers to effectively addressing human trafficking in the U.S. call us to question if the “1,362 victims” referenced in the Washington Post article is a valid gauge for the number of victims and scope of the problem within the U.S.
First, it is necessary to consider what these figures on identified victims are based on. The “1,362” number of victims used in the Washington Post article refers to the number of victims who had received certification at that time. As discussed earlier, certification is only available to foreign nationals. As a result, this statistic fails to capture the number of identified victims that are U.S. citizens.

Further, to receive certification, adult victims would have to seek it out. If foreign national victims want to return to their home countries and not remain in the U.S, there would be no need to apply for certification. For those individuals that would like to remain in the U.S., a lack of knowledge of certification combined with the complicated application process would pose barriers to garnering certification on their own. Thus, victims would most likely require a knowledgeable advocate to help them navigate the complex system and achieve certification. Lacking access to an advocate would greatly diminish the likelihood one would receive certification.

Law enforcement’s role in certification also poses barriers. If “able” victims choose not to cooperate with law enforcement’s investigations and prosecutions, they would be exempt from certification. Law enforcement retracting their support of victims when they stop pursuing a case would also reduce the probability these victims would receive certification. In sum, there are multiple reasons why actual victims would not received certification and thus not be captured in official government statistics.

Further, certification is not the only avenue pursued by NGO respondents to garner services and benefits for their clients. As noted by this direct service provider:

… [I]mmigrants…don’t have a lot of due process rights. So, if there were…victims in that situation, ICE determined, “We don’t think there’s
trafficking, but…it sure did come close.” If they would refer those people to the local non-profits…to do a screening before they started trying to deport them….you know, sometimes when they do raids and stuff, some attorneys will organize and go and try and meet everyone that was in the raid, and screen them for eligibility for other things…”cause sometimes you have people in there whose grandparent might have been a U.S. citizen or something, somebody who has a way to be here lawfully and they just never knew.  (Interviewed 2009)

As mentioned earlier, NGOs also take advantage of assistance offered by individual U.S. states to garner benefits and services for their clients, particularly in cases where their clients may be ineligible or unlikely to receive certification. In these cases, an individual may be identified by a state as a victim of human trafficking, but not recognized as such by the U.S. government. When NGO advocates use other means outside of certification to secure serviced and benefits for their clients, their clients would not be captured in U.S. government figures on the number of victims identified.

The *Washington Post* article also questions the legitimacy of the U.S. AHT campaign based on the fact that established task forces and money spent toward combating the problem has yielded minimal results, measured by the number of victims identified. This apparently assumes that the creation of task forces and the allocation of funds are sufficient methods for identifying victims, and that these task forces and funds are used efficiently.

Respondents’ insights indicate that the level of expertise within task forces and cooperation among task force members is uneven and inconsistent. Law enforcement officials’ lack of training and expertise pose challenges to accurately identifying, investigating, and prosecuting cases. There are also obstacles to task force members coordinating their AHT efforts, including different organizational policies prohibiting
them from fully sharing information, scheduling conflicts, and personal conflicts. Further, law enforcement officials overwhelmingly have other responsibilities in addition to combating the “invisible” crime of human trafficking. Insufficient funding and personnel dedicated to AHT work are challenges to pursuing human trafficking cases.

The *Washington Post* article also fails to consider that law enforcement may hesitate to identify a suspected victim, given a reluctance to engage in immigration matters, a lack of understanding of their specific role in the U.S. AHT approach, and their own biases toward victims. AHT training is not mandatory for all law enforcement in the U.S., and individuals who receive this training argue that it is insufficient (Caliber 2006). Bystanders that suspect a case of human trafficking may also fail to report it to law enforcement for different reasons, including fear of law enforcement, retaliation, and the consequences of law enforcement involvement for their broader communities. Victims that are never on law enforcement’s radar would not receive certification. In sum, there are multiple reasons why victims may not receive certification and, in turn, not be officially recognized in U.S. statistics on the number of victims identified. Certification, then, is a poor gauge for the number of human trafficking victims present within the U.S. and for how many individuals are trafficked into the U.S. annually.

**CONCLUSION**

Across their framing differences, NGO respondents commonly recognize certain successes of the AHT movement and barriers to achieving total success. Their narratives, though, support scholarly assertions that success for social movements is best conceived
as partial (Oberschall 1993). Respondents have not fully met their objectives and there exists obstacles to accomplishing these objectives.

Clearly relevant for NGO representatives is the role of government actors and policies in deterring the identification and official support of victims, thus hampering victims’ ability to take advantage of certain services and benefits. This illustrates an inconsistency between the U.S. government’s victim-centered rhetoric on human trafficking and its AHT practices. In part, this discrepancy is attributable to bureaucratic matters. It is also attributable to the U.S. government drawing on and applying a law and order frame of human trafficking, which structures its overall AHT approach. Through this frame, identifying, prosecuting, and punishing criminals is a means for ending human trafficking and “freeing” victims, which takes precedence over ensuring that all victims have access to services and benefits. Thus, victims are key to government meeting its law enforcement objectives, and victims’ access to services and benefits is largely contingent on how well they perform their designated role in the U.S. law and order approach to human trafficking.

NGOs also support the criminalization of human trafficking or prosecuting human traffickers. The existence of AHT laws highlights that there are victims when these laws are broken that deserve justice, services and benefits. However, their support for victims is not contingent on victims helping law enforcement and most respondents adamantly argued against such policies.

Combining the insights of NGO representatives with an understanding of the U.S. AHT approach informs a useful framework from which to better assess statistics on the
number of foreign national victims annually trafficked into the U.S. and the scope of human trafficking within the U.S. generally. The multiple reasons why victims may not receive certification makes clear that certification is a poor indicator of the prevalence of human trafficking within the U.S.

It is necessary to more accurately identify the scope of human trafficking within the U.S. to justify its current AHT efforts and to assess the effectiveness of the U.S. government’s AHT approach. In regards to this latter point, this study identifies weaknesses within the U.S. AHT approach that must be resolved in order to bolster its efficacy. Improving and strengthening the U.S. approach would help increase the likelihood that victims would not go overlooked. While the number of foreign national victims trafficked within the U.S. may in fact be significantly less than U.S. projections, the number of individuals receiving certification is ultimately an invalid measure from which to base this conclusion. Better measures and means for collecting data are necessary in order to truly understand if and to what extent human trafficking is a significant social problem within the U.S.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

Through an examination of the perspectives, insights, and experiences of NGO and government representatives, this dissertation increases our understanding of NGOs’ AHT efforts and the U.S. approach to human trafficking and contributes to scholarly knowledge on social movement dynamics and processes. In the following, I discuss the key contributions of this dissertation research to the literature on human trafficking and social movements. I then identify avenues for future research on social movements and human trafficking that this study encourages. I conclude with a discussion of the policy implications this research presents for the U.S. approach to human trafficking.

COMPLEXITY IN FRAMING

Supporting prior scholarship, this study finds that a key feature of this social movement are disputes over how to define human trafficking, the root causes of human trafficking, and the solutions to ending human trafficking (McDonnell 2007; Weitzer 2007; Soderlund 2005; Merriam 2005; Bertone 2003; Crago 2003). Previous research overwhelmingly emphasizes framing disputes centered on sex trafficking. It also tends to focus on the perspectives of activists who either characterize the commercial sex as inherently harmful or advocate that the commercial sex industry and the workers within this industry be treated as a legitimate industry and workers respectively. This dissertation departs from previous research by investigating the frames conveyed by a
diversity of actors with varying focuses, including elite and nonelite NGO representatives working on sex trafficking exclusively, labor trafficking exclusively, and human trafficking inclusively.

Investigating the frames of a diversity of NGO representatives with different human trafficking focuses expands our understanding of the framing activities characteristic of the U.S. AHT movement and is critical for several reasons. First, the frames conveyed by movement actors cannot simply be dichotomized into one of two categories. While previous research provides important insight into the framings of NGOs focusing exclusively on sex trafficking, it may inadvertently present an oversimplified picture of the types of causes of and solutions to sex trafficking communicated by NGOs. Not all NGOs advocate for ending demand or empowering sex workers as a means to ending sex trafficking, and thus they do not fit neatly within this dichotomy commonly portrayed in prior literature. Indeed, while conducting this research, I was taken by the number of NGO representatives who argued that this dichotomous portrayal failed to capture their own perspective on sex trafficking. By only concentrating on sex worker advocates and groups who identify a positive relationship between demand and sex trafficking, we neglect the insights and contributions of a diversity of movement actors. We also fall short in fully capturing and, in turn, assessing the types of discourses on sex trafficking conveyed by NGO representatives to different target audiences, including policymakers.

As suggested above, scholarly studies have attended less to how other actors within this movement frame labor trafficking and human trafficking inclusively defined.
This lack of knowledge is conspicuous given that international, national, and subnational laws criminalize activities constituting both sex trafficking and labor trafficking and not all NGOs are focused on one form of trafficking or another. By investigating a diversity of NGOs’ frames, we gain a greater understanding of what NGOs assert are the causes of human trafficking and the solutions to remedying it. This is a necessary first step to evaluate NGOs’ claims and assess which frames resonate among target audiences.

In addition, a study of a diversity of NGOs’ frames of human trafficking demonstrates the complexity inherent within these frames. While ideologies on prostitution are important for understanding many NGOs’ frames, I find that NGO representatives also draw on diverse ideologies on gender to construct these frames. This suggests that the current AHT movement marks increased movement activity around gender. NGOs situating human trafficking within broader systems of patriarchy and gender inequality illustrate how ideas characterizing radical and liberal feminisms that circulated within the second-wave feminist movement, a movement that also highlighted the sexual objectification of women and sexual slavery, are relevant in the current AHT movement28. This exemplifies how “[the] institutionalized gains of the heyday of feminist activism in the 1970s are enabling the women’s movement to survive and to disseminate its ideas to new recruits” (Taylor, Whittier, and Pelak 2009: 567). These ideas are transmitted within the AHT movement and communicated by feminist NGOs as well as NGOs that do not characterize themselves as feminist.

28 See Kathleen Barry’s *Female Sexual Slavery* (1979) for an example of second-wave feminist attention to sexual objectification and sexual slavery. Also see Chapkis (1997) for an overview on diverse feminist perspectives on women’s sexuality and “sexual slavery.”
NGOs informed by a matrix of domination ideology also demonstrate feminist perspectives proffered by Third World feminists and feminists of color, who defy the notion that gender is the most central status in women’s lives (Segura and Pesquera 1998; Pegues 1997; Collins 1991). These feminists argue against the ranking of oppressions and assert that multiple oppressions intersect and shape women’s and men’s lives and inform broader social phenomenon. These ideas, too, are vibrant within the AHT movement and conveyed by a diversity of NGOs.

Organizing respondents’ framings around their underlying ideologies provides an expanded picture of the cultural resources NGOs draw on to construct human trafficking. It also demonstrates that actors we may assume are presenting the same frame of human trafficking based on their perspective on prostitution (i.e. demand-centered, sex worker advocacy, neutral) are indeed offering different frames based on their ideologies (i.e. gendered, matrix of domination, degendered). In line with this, NGOs that are distinguished by their different perspectives on prostitution sometimes offer similar frames of human trafficking based on their underlying ideologies on gender. Understanding the complexity inherent within these frames better enables scholars to assess how social movement actors’ frames overlap and diverge. Recognizing the nuances of these frames also allows scholars to assess what aspects of these frames resonate with target audiences and what aspects are dismissed.

Examining the complexity inherent within these frames not only sheds light on framing within the AHT movement but also expands knowledge on framing within social movements generally. As noted by Benford (1997), research on framing often fails to
support the scholarly assertion that frames are complex and multilayered and neglects the framing contests internal to social movements. This, in part, is due to research overwhelmingly focusing on frames espoused by movement elites (Benford 1997) and neglecting the ideologies that inform these frames (Valocchi 1996). Investigating the framings of movement elites and nonelites within the AHT movement and the ideologies underpinning these frames demonstrates the variation in frame construction that occurs within social movements and the multilayered, multifaceted, dynamic quality of these frames. Frames are not static cultural resources available to social movements that delineate clear propositions on causes and solutions agreed upon by all movement adherents. Rather, movement actors draw on their cultural repertoires in a diversity of ways when constructing their perspectives on and responses to the issues they tackle. This is evidenced in the mixture of difference and similarity across the frames of issues that movement actors are collectively concerned with.

**FRAMING IN CONTEXT**

In addition to demonstrating the complexity inherent within social movement frames, this dissertation also puts framing in context, including the role of framing in the process by which NGOs influence AHT public policies. Clearly, NGOs seek to shape national and subnational AHT policy in ways that reflect their frames of human trafficking. This study demonstrates that their frames alone do not determine their policy successes and contributes to knowledge on the impact of NGOs on AHT governmental policy in two ways. First, despite literature arguing that NGOs that identify demand as a cause of sex trafficking were overwhelmingly successful in having their frame reflected
into U.S. AHT policy (Weitzer 2007), these dissertation results suggest that such success is best understood as partial. These NGOs’ frames are not wholly evident within policy, nor are the policies they advocated for fully implemented. Further, not all subnational policies reflect their frame of sex trafficking and they struggle for government agencies to execute the policies they endorse.

Second, by taking into consideration the experiences of movement elites and nonelites and instances in which NGOs’ frames fail to resonate within policy, we can see that the process by which NGOs are impactful on policy was informed by a confluence of factors. Not all NGOs purporting a “successful” frame were able to impact policy in ways that they desired because they lacked necessary resources and political opportunities. In cases in which NGOs struggled with one another to have their frame reflected in policy, NGOs that had superior resources and political opportunities available to them proved more successful than their challengers. Further, their available resources allowed them to exploit political opportunities when they presented themselves.

Emphasizing the role resources and political opportunities played in NGOs’ successes does not deemphasize the significance of framing for understanding these successes. Success for NGOs is gauged in large part by the extent to which their frames resonate within policies compared to their challengers. In addition, people in government profess that successful NGOs conveyed a frame that resonated with them more so than the other frames proposed. Yet the process by which NGOs are able to have access to policymakers and see their frame reflected in policy is mediated by the resources and political allies available to them.
There are additional ways in which the intersection of framing, resources, and political opportunities manifested itself within this movement. Resources and political context informed the frames themselves, as demonstrated by NGOs’ organizational neutral stance on prostitution. In addition, governmental and nongovernmental actors viewed different NGOs through an interpretative framework. They assessed what these NGOs could contribute to aid them in meeting their own objectives, including what they could offer in terms of resources, political connections, and knowledge.

In all, these results support an integrated theoretical approach to studying social movements, which combines scholarly insights on framing, resource mobilization, and political process for understanding movement processes, dynamics, and outcomes (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). This theoretical approach remains underutilized, although scholars recognize its ability to generate a richer understanding of social movements. This is clear when examining dynamics, processes, and outcomes within the U.S. AHT movement.

This dissertation also illustrates the value of combining an integrated theoretical framework with an instrumental, collective case study approach to examine framing. Together, this theoretical and methodological approach helps address scholarly concerns with the ideational bias within the framing literature, which overwhelmingly focuses on the ideas of movement adherents while neglecting how contextual factors mediate meaning work and movement outcomes (McAdam 1996; Valocchi 1996). It also addresses scholarly concerns with the tautological reasoning characterizing much of the social movement framing literature, in which a particular frame’s success is attributed to
frame resonance and frame resonance is attributed to the success of the frame (Benford and Snow 2000; Kubal 1998). Research on framing based on several case studies that encompass both elites and nonelites and positive and negative cases bolsters scholarly knowledge on the factors that inform SMOs’ meaning work, the ways in which framing matters for SMOs, and the effects of SMOs’ framing activities.

**SUCCESSES OF THE AHT MOVEMENT AND BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

While impacting policy is of critical importance to most NGOs and they contend with one another to do so, this is not the only way in which they gauge success. Despite their differences in how they frame human trafficking, many respondents commonly recognized certain achievements of the AHT movement, which were deemed successes by respondents, as well as existing barriers for the movement to overcome. In addition, these respondents commonly identified certain successes and shortcomings of the U.S. approach to human trafficking. Identifying common perspectives among them is another important contribution of this research, given that prior studies overwhelmingly focus on the differences among NGOs based on their frames of sex trafficking. While these differences in frames are of critical importance, highlighting their common perspectives provides a more holistic picture of the achievements of and barriers faced by the U.S. AHT movement as a whole, and the obstacles posed by the U.S. approach to human trafficking that must be overcome in order to more effectively identify and serve victims of human trafficking.

When considering their perspectives, NGO respondents commonly identified greater awareness of human trafficking and greater mainstream media coverage of the
problem as successes of the AHT movement. They also generally applauded the U.S. government for recognizing human trafficking as a major problem, encouraging the collaboration of NGOs and governments actors, providing funding for NGOs’ AHT work, and providing services and benefits to victims of human trafficking. In discussing these successes, respondents also make apparent existing barriers to overcome. For instance, public awareness is not perfect, media coverage can be narrow and inaccurate, coalitions and task forces comprised of NGO and government representatives can be dysfunctional, and government funding in support of NGOs’ AHT work is limited and not guaranteed. Obstacles also exist to victims accessing benefits granted to them through the TVPA, and external factors like prejudice toward potential victims or fear of the consequences of law enforcement involvement can deter members of the public from identifying and supporting victims of human trafficking.

Clearly relevant for NGO representatives is the role of public policies and government actors in deterring the identification of victims, support for victims, and victims’ ability to take advantage of resources and benefits available to them. This makes visible an inconsistency between government rhetoric on human trafficking and its AHT practices. In part, this is attributable to the relative newness of an institutionalized approach to human trafficking, transferring responsibilities from one agency to another, a complex of agencies having to coordinate their efforts, a lack of accountability for agencies that do not fulfill their AHT responsibilities, and a deficiency in institutional knowledge throughout and across government agencies responsible for carrying out the U.S. approach to human trafficking.
However, this inconsistency is also attributable to the U.S. approach being shaped by a law and order frame of human trafficking. Within this frame, identifying, prosecuting, and punishing criminals is a means for combating human trafficking and takes precedence over ensuring that victims have access to protections, services, and benefits. This frame both constructs and is reflected in AHT government policies and guides how different government agencies treat human trafficking and human trafficking victims. Indeed, this frame encourages and ensures that victims’ status and treatment are largely dependent on their ability to serve as effective witnesses for the state and to help government achieve its law and order objective, rather than being based simply on the fact that they were victimized.

NGOs also support the criminalization of human trafficking and clearly many NGOs identify criminalizing human trafficking as one means to end human trafficking. Yet when they discuss human trafficking, NGO respondents evoked a victim-centered frame in which their definition of a victim and understanding of what a victim deserves because they are a victim of a crime is more inclusive. For many of these respondents, the criminalization of human trafficking can facilitate victims’ ability to seek justice and garner the services and benefits they are entitled to. This is in contrast to the U.S. government, which proclaims to take a victim-centered approach to human trafficking, but is guided by policies informed by a law and order frame that discourages a victim-centered approach. This discrepancy between rhetoric and practices largely informs NGO representatives’ criticisms of the U.S. approach to human trafficking and compels them to challenge the government on practices they see as harmful to victims. This
approach to victims may also help explain why the number of victims identified is lower than current projections.

**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

These research results present avenues for future scholarship on social movements. First, these results call us to reconsider what exactly constitutes a “social movement frame.” Lehrner and Allen (2008) argue that a social movement frame incorporates diagnostic and prognostic frames that reflect a socio-cultural analysis. Yet within this study, there existed NGO representatives that did not apply a socio-cultural analysis to human trafficking that adamantly identified themselves as actively engaged in a social movement. Given their commitment and identification with this movement, it seems inaccurate to conclude that these respondents are not conveying social movement frames because these frames fail to apply a socio-cultural analysis to human trafficking. Results from this study suggest that recognizing oneself as part of a social movement and identifying collective action as a remedy for addressing issues is potentially more indicative of a social movement frame than situating the causes of and solutions to issues within a socio-cultural framework alone. However, these research findings may be unique and social movement actors’ frames may overwhelmingly encompass a socio-cultural component. Thus, future scholarship should investigate characteristics that comprise a “social movement frame” and revisit how the concept is currently operationalized to ensure its validity.

Second, prior research on service provision for domestic violence finds that a reliance on external funding combined with the character of direct service work
encourages service providers to depoliticize the issues they work on and locate the causes of and solutions to these issues at the individual-level (Lehrner and Allen 2008). These forces do not affect direct service providers working on human trafficking in the same way. Indeed, in this study, most direct service providers applied a social movement analysis and identified socio-cultural level causes of and solutions to human trafficking.

What may explain this? The answer possibly lies with human trafficking being a relatively new issue that service providers are developing an approach to in a period marked by heightened movement activity. In addition to their role as service providers, many of these NGOs also work as policy advocates and attempt to shape emergent AHT government policies. Also, through my own participation at human trafficking conferences attended by many service providers, I observed “movement talk” with keynote speakers discussing the AHT movement, its achievements and ongoing objectives, and characterizing conference participants as part of a movement and encouraging their continued AHT efforts.

Service providers focusing on domestic violence today may not see themselves as embedded within the domestic violence movement, which gained momentum in the 1970s (Lehrner and Allen 2009). They may also lack experience with policy advocacy and are not as exposed to social movement discourse compared with service providers focusing on human trafficking today. This suggests that when a direct service approach to human trafficking victims is more institutionalized and policy advocacy and AHT movement activity wanes, service providers may be less likely to apply a social movement analysis and identify socio-cultural causes of and solutions to human
trafficking. Future research can expand knowledge on the context in which the character of service providers’ work impacts their framing of the issues they focus on by investigating if the time in which service providers are engaged in their work relative to heightened movement activity mediates their frames. This would provide a more complete picture of what factors and contexts encourage social service providers to either politicize or depoliticize the issues they address and the state of social movements over time.

Third, this research highlights how perspectives on prostitution and beliefs about the importance of gender in the social world inform respondents’ framing of human trafficking. However, a perspective which acknowledges that movement adherents draw on a complex of cultural repertoires when constructing issues promotes an understanding that activists’ constructions of human trafficking are not informed by perspectives on gender and prostitution alone. Future research should consider how movement adherents draw on and negotiate a multitude of ideologies that intersect and influence their collective action frames. For instance, the presence of faith-based NGO representatives in this study, who draw on different gendered ideologies, raises questions on how religious ideologies intersect with gendered ideologies to inform movement adherents’ constructions of human trafficking. Researching the overlapping ideologies underlying frames will further demonstrate the complexity inherent within frames and framing and more fully illustrate this complexity. It will further contribute to needed scholarship on the relationship between ideologies and frames and framing processes, and how ideas
inform political action (Westby 2005; Oliver and Johnston 2000; Snow and Benford 2000; Valocchi 1996).

Fourth, as previously noted, these results demonstrate that NGOs assumed to be conveying similar frames based on their perspective on prostitution are communicating divergent diagnostic and prognostic frames based on the gendered ideologies underlying their frames. Do frames or ideologies best explain which other groups these NGOs work closely with to tackle human trafficking? When attempting to shape policy in settings characterized by groups engaged in framing contests, NGOs generally coalesce around their perspectives on prostitution. In these contexts, it is imperative for some NGOs that government policy reflect the causal relationship between demand and sex trafficking. For other NGOs that are overwhelmingly neutral on prostitution, it is more critical that laws define human trafficking inclusively and not differentiate between sex trafficking and labor trafficking. However, through the course of this study, NGO representatives commonly noted their good working relationships with other NGOs proffering a different perspective on prostitution. Similarities in ideology may help explain how movement adherents can work together across their framing differences. Resources and political context may further explain SMOs decisions on which other SMOs to work with. In all, these results call us to question how exactly frames and ideologies inform networks and coalition work. This is important to consider given the significance of coalition work for SMOs to reach their movement objectives (Staggenborg 1988), and will further provide important insight into how ideologies and frames mediate social movement dynamics and processes.
Fifth, certain questions emerge when considering the fact that NGOs emphasizing the link between demand and prostitution were not overwhelmingly successful in having their frame wholly adopted by policymakers and institutionalized into policy. Future research should consider what aspects of SMOs’ frames do policymakers adopt or dismiss and what factors shape these decisions? Addressing this can contribute to much needed scholarship on the impact of ideas on policymakers’ policy decisions in lieu of other considerations, such as resources or potential political gains (Campbell 2004).

Finally, while this research illustrates how the confluence of framing, resources, and political opportunities inform the process by which SMOs achieve success and the effects of their efforts, it also raises questions on how other contextual factors shape this process and its outcomes. For instance, timing in which NGOs first addressed human trafficking, and the demographic characteristics and unique trafficking context of different states may all have helped inform how NGOs achieved success and the outcomes of their efforts. Future research should consider how the sequencing of events and characteristics of a social movement setting matters within the AHT movement specifically and social movements generally, which in turn will further advance knowledge of the contextual factors that mediate social movement processes and outcomes.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The framings, insights, and experiences of NGO representatives also encourage additional opportunities for future research on human trafficking. First, the diversity in NGOs’ framings of human trafficking raises important questions specifically for scholars...
of gender to pursue. Are patriarchy, gender inequality, and the demand for a commercial sex industry the causes of sex trafficking? To what extent can we disengage demand from broader systems of inequality? Is gender inequality not central to understanding why human trafficking occurs, but rather explained by other structural and institutional factors identified by respondents who degender human trafficking, such as economic inequality, ethnic and racial inequality, disparities in wealth between nations, and immigration policies?

From an intersectional analytical framework, how does gender inequality intersect with other inequalities to encourage human trafficking? Collins (1991) argues that the multiple oppressions that shape people’s lives shift across groups. Gender scholars can investigate this by specifying the systems of oppression and economic, political, and ideological factors that support these systems that encourage human trafficking across place and of individuals characterized by diverse social locations. Pursuing the questions posed above will demonstrate in what ways gender structures the phenomenon of human trafficking and individuals’ experiences of human trafficking. Such an examination will also provide greater insight into why human trafficking occurs. The answers to these questions are of great interest to governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations that engage in ongoing debate over the causes of and solutions to human trafficking. These answers are also needed to develop effective AHT policies, and assess the efficacy of existing AHT policies and programs.

Second, respondents’ narratives suggest that prejudice and a lack of awareness deters people from properly identifying victims as such. In regards to this, the current
study raises more questions than it answers. What is the extent to which these forces prevent properly identifying or aiding possible victims of human trafficking? Clearly these forces can be detrimental, but in order to gauge the effect of these, it is first important to assess the current state of individuals’ awareness of human trafficking and attitudes toward victims, including that of government actors who create policies and law enforcement who enforce these policies. Such research will contribute to knowledge on the extent of individuals’ awareness and what gaps in knowledge should be addressed.

This research would be undoubtedly valuable to different stakeholders, including government and nongovernmental actors who seek to raise awareness and address common misperceptions. This research can also help assess the efficacy of existing awareness-raising campaigns.

In addition, research can advance knowledge on the factors that mediate individuals’ perceptions of victims, and their support for victim services and benefits. For instance, do general attitudes toward prostitution or unlawful immigration inform individuals’ opinions of what constitutes a victim of human trafficking, how victims should be treated, and what victims deserve? To what extent do individuals assign blame to victims for their victimization based on victims’ nationality, immigration status, the means by which they were trafficked, and what field they are trafficked into? Is there less sympathy for American victims versus foreign national victims? Is there less sympathy for foreign national victims who originally intended to enter the U.S. unlawfully but ended up controlled by a trafficker versus foreign national victims who did not intend on entering the U.S. unlawfully? Does the type of coercion involved (i.e.
force, fraud, threat, debt bondage, etc.) and the type of trafficking (i.e. sex trafficking or labor trafficking) influence how people view victims and their level of support for victims?

Prior research demonstrates that individuals take into consideration the context of victimization and victims’ characteristics when constructing their perspectives on the severity of harm done to victims, their level of sympathy for victims, and their assessments of victims as either worthy or unworthy of consideration and support (Madriz 1997; Hollander 2001). Empirical research into people’s perceptions of victims of human trafficking and the factors that shape these perceptions is lacking. However, if such research demonstrated similar findings to prior studies on people’s perceptions of victims generally, then awareness alone will not induce people to support victims and it may deter them from reporting suspected cases. It may further deter law enforcement from identifying individuals as victims and enforcing AHT laws. Thus, stakeholders, not already doing so, will have to address people’s underlying biased attitudes and beliefs in addition to raising awareness. This is necessary to maximize the likelihood that actual cases of human trafficking will be identified, reported, and investigated and, in turn, victims will receive the treatment, services, and benefits they are entitled to under the law.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study has clear policy implications. Despite asserting a victim-centered approach to human trafficking, U.S. AHT policies and practices reflect a law and order frame of human trafficking and place a burden on most foreign national victims.
Particularly telling is the requirement that most adult foreign national victims comply with any reasonable request from law enforcement to access important benefits and services and that their status as “victim” is measured by this compliance. This suggests that individuals’ “worthiness” as victims is determined by what they can contribute to the U.S. law and order approach to human trafficking. This policy further indicates that, at least in regards to foreign nationals, there are deserving victims and there are undeserving victims.

This policy is contrary to the stated commitment of the government to helping victims and employing a victim-centered approach to human trafficking. In order to narrow the gap between rhetoric and practice, U.S. AHT policies must balance victim-centered and law and order objectives. This requires that the process for victims’ to access important services and benefits is streamlined and government agencies are held accountable for providing these services and benefits in a timely manner. Further, victims “fall through the cracks” in this process that is characterized as difficult, complicated, and costly. Thus, the procedures for accessing services and benefits must be adjusted in order to be less burdensome on the victims themselves. NGO representatives assert that doing all of this facilitates victims’ recovery and helps them gain stability, both of which can make them better able to assist in prosecutions and therefore help the government fulfill its law and order objectives.

To further narrow the gap between U.S. AHT rhetoric and practice, services and benefits should not be contingent on victims’ willingness to assist law enforcement and law enforcements’ support of victims should not be based on their decision to pursue a
case. This raises a dilemma. How will individuals be recognized as victims and who will decide this? Presumably, government agencies will not simply rely on NGOs’ judgment that someone is a bona fide victim of human trafficking. Further, many law enforcement officials most likely will not (or cannot) investigate a case they cannot prosecute simply to provide official support for victims and facilitate victims’ ability to access services and benefits. Thus, finding a means to identify individuals as victims would be a significant challenge for government agencies. If law enforcement identifies probable victims of human trafficking, it is not in line with the stated intent of U.S. AHT policy for official support for those victims to be based on their compliance with every reasonable request from law enforcement or law enforcement’s decision to pursue the case.

Respondents’ insights also promote certain suggestions for facilitating law enforcements’ ability to identify cases. For instance, mandating law enforcement for enforcement appears necessary to obtain the stated objectives of AHT public policies. This is not an easy feat given the limited resources available to local, state, and federal governments particularly during this current economic climate. However, the effectiveness of current and future AHT laws is threatened when the individuals responsible for enforcing those laws are not empowered with knowledge on how to identify and treat human trafficking cases, which in turn threatens the well-being of human trafficking victims. Thus, to have their AHT policies be successful, a chief objective for government at different levels that have taken a commitment to addressing human trafficking must be to ensure that all law enforcement officials that may come in contact with human trafficking receive thorough AHT training.
In addition, respondents often suggested that law enforcement agencies commit a number of agents to solely focus on human trafficking or create human trafficking divisions where they do not currently exist. This may also be difficult to achieve since many law enforcement agencies lack resources. Further, a lack of human trafficking cases possibly makes it difficult to justify committing agents to chiefly work on human trafficking. However, creating a special human trafficking division or incorporating AHT objectives within existing law enforcement divisions would likely increase the ability of and likelihood that law enforcement will properly identify victims and investigate cases.

Respondents’ experiences further encourage certain suggestions for making AHT task forces more productive. First, training of law enforcement would help ensure that law enforcement members of task forces are knowledgeable about human trafficking. Task forces can benefit from having consistent members, particularly members that represent government, which will facilitate the efficacy of these task forces. Further, respondents who have experiences with mediators on task forces identify them as invaluable for facilitating communication between different members, resolving tensions between members when they arose, and helping members to identify and collaborate on common objectives. Thus, knowledgeable and committed individuals should be appointed to task forces as mediators in order to facilitate the collaboration between law enforcement agencies and between law enforcement and NGOs.

In all, the insights and experiences of NGO and law enforcement representatives that have direct experience with implementing the U.S. approach to human trafficking
encourage concrete suggestions on how to improve this approach. Incorporating these suggestions can help the U.S., as well as individual U.S. states, to meet law and order objectives and better protect and serve victims of human trafficking.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. When, why, and how did your organization first come to address human trafficking and create a campaign to address it?
2. What is your organization’s perspective on human trafficking?
3. What are the major or core strategies your organization has adopted to address trafficking?
4. Which of these strategies has been the most effective and why?
5. Which of these strategies has been the most difficult to implement and why?
6. Does your organization work with other organizations in its efforts to address trafficking?
7. What factors determine whether you will work with another organization?
8. What other organizations does your organization work with?
9. Can you please describe the nature or character of these relationships with other organizations?
10. Can you discuss your experiences working with other NGOs?
11. Have you had experiences working on human trafficking with local/city government and law enforcement? If so, can you describe these experiences?
12. Have you had experiences working on human trafficking with state government and law enforcement? If so, can you describe these experiences?
13. Have you had experiences working on human trafficking with federal government and law enforcement? If so, can you describe these experiences?
14. Have you had experiences working on human trafficking with other national governments and law enforcement? If so, can you describe these experiences?
15. What specific successes has your organization encountered in terms of your anti-human trafficking efforts/activities/objectives?
16. From your perspective, what factors help explain these successes?
17. What specific challenges or obstacles has your organization encountered in terms of your anti-human trafficking efforts/activities/objectives?
18. From your perspective, why do these challenges exist? What factors explain these challenges?
19. Overall, what would you describe as your organization’s greatest accomplishments in addressing human trafficking?
20. Overall, what would help your organization achieve your goals? Or what would you need in order to do this?
21. From your perspective, what accomplishments have been made in terms of addressing or ending human trafficking within the U.S.?
22. What are the remaining goals your organization would like to meet?
23. From your perspective, what must be done to effectively address human trafficking within the U.S.?